TO EXAMINE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTACHMENT STYLES AND EMPATHY AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT: This research investigates the relationship between attachment styles and empathy dimensions among young adults. The study explores how secure, anxious, and avoidant attachment influences aspects of empathy, including Perspective-Taking (PT), Empathic Concern (EC), Fantasy Scale (FS), and Personal Distress (PD). Qualitative analysis of personal narratives revealed that secure attachment showed a weak and insignificant relationship, while avoidant attachment is associated with emotional distancing, resulting in lower empathetic engagement. Anxious attachment showed weak correlations with empathy dimensions, suggesting that emotional preoccupations may hinder empathic responses. These findings enhance our understanding of how attachment styles impact empathy and provide valuable insights for mental health professionals and educators, emphasizing the need for interventions that promote emotional connections and social skills among young adults.

Key words: Attachment styles, Empathy, Interpersonal relationships, social skills

INTRODUCTION:

In this introductory chapter, we will lay the groundwork for an in-depth exploration of the relationship between Attachment styles and Empathy. This chapter will begin by outlining the key components that shape our study, emphasizing how various Attachment styles influence Empathetic behaviour. We will first look through the core Attachment styles, such as secure attachment style, anxious attachment style and Avoidant attachment style and their potential impact on Empathy. Understanding these styles in individuals may help us to understand how a person empathesize in their interpersonal relationship and with others. Next, we will look into the concept of Empathy, essential for building social connections, involves both *cognitive* (understanding others' emotions) and *affective* (sharing others' feelings) components. Various *theories of empathy* included in this explain how individuals relate to and understand others' emotional experiences. By investigating how Attachment styles and Empathy, we can uncover how attachment styles and empathy offers valuable insights into the dynamics of human relationships, especially among young adults. This exploration will serve as the foundation for our research, offering insights into the complex interplay between Attachment styles and empathy. This chapter will provide a comprehensive understanding or insight in improving interpersonal skills in young adults which is essential for healthy relationships and well being**.**

The term "attachment" describes an infant's emotional bond to a parent figure or other caregiver, as well as how people view and handle connections, all of which are impacted by early experiences as children and infants (Bowlby, 1982). Moreover attachment has the ability to form bonds with certain individuals throughout infancy and to search for emotionally sympathetic social connections in later life (Ainsworth et al., 1978). This implies that a person's level of connection as an adult is strongly correlated with how effectively they connected with others as children (Bowlby, 1988). How well you bonded in your first relationship and how you handle intimacy in the future are typically markers of each other's degree of bonding (Ainsworth et al., 1978).

ATTACHMENT STYLES:

The most famous experiment is about the "strange situation." It was conducted way back in 1969 (**Ainsworth et al. 1978**). Attachment Stability Variations of Infants during An Experiment: Ainsworth et al. developed a laboratory technique called the Strange Si tuation, which explained attachment stability variations in infants through an experiment. The experiment involved designing a playing field for a series

of laboratory events when baby, caregiver, and stranger played along and the various behaviours of the infant were noted. After a short period of separation, the infant's behaviour is observed when he or she is reunited with their caregiver. This research allowed Ainsworth to distinguish three different attachment styles. Mary Main (Main & Solomon, 1990), Ainsworth's doctoral student, completed more research. She presented the four types of connection, originating from the disorganized attachment classification.

Four distinct styles emerged from the Strange Situation experiment: secure attachment, avoidant attachment, disorganized attachment, and anxious attachment.

. Secure Attachment style:

The stable attachment type is a reflection of a loving and caring relationship between a parent and kid. The youngster experiences affection and care as a result, and they also learn how to form wholesome bonds with other people (Bowlby, 1988). Infants develop safe interactions when their caregivers when they constantly tend to attend their physical and emotional needs (Ainsworth et al., 1978) Infants who are securely bond frequently find comfort in the presence of their caregiver and have a preference to other caregivers (Ainsworth et al., 1978). These children are confident since their connection figure is always present. The caregiver offers a safe place to explore the world and protection when needed (Bowlby, 1988). The individual is likely to form a deep, secure link with you if your primary caregiver showed you empathy and comfort when you were a baby, attending to your cries and accurately identifying your evolving needs, both physically and emotionally (Ainsworth et al., 1978). As an Adult this often results in a sense of confidence, trust in other people, and a optimistic outlook, along with the capacity to resolve conflict, engage in closeness, and handle the complexity of romantic relationships. Those who have a constant connection with their partner can enjoy happy, close relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Stable attachments Style College students are better at negotiate social settings than non-stable attachment style students, according to study (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Relationships really benefit from secure attachment types in numerous significant ways because securely bonded individuals often have a belief system and sense of security that promotes open conversation (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). They communicate their needs and feelings clearly, which encourages constructive dialogue and reduces misunderstandings (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). The kind and successful resolution of issues is also facilitating their capacity for emotional regulation. People will be firmly bonded to one another and are ready to seek for assistance whenever necessary, which leads to a strong mutual bond. They love intimacy but also respect other individual's personal limits or boundaries (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). The attachment creates a bond that enhances commitment, leading to steady, long-lasting relationships (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). The adult with the secure attachment style has the best adult mental health and overall well-being. People with a secure attachment tend to have high self-esteem and a life attitude. This also reduces the risk of developing anxiety and depression in those people (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). They have the capability to develop trust-based relationships. This makes them ask for or accept help when they need it, which develops emotional stability and resilience (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Adults with secure attachment are able to have control over their emotions, thus enhancing their coping in stressful or challenging situations (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). The ability to control emotions increases happiness and fulfilment during everyday life as well as reduces the effects of adverse experiences. Attachment stability also decreases loneliness feelings and increases the degree of satisfaction with life among these adults (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

. Avoidant Attachment style:

Children who have an "avoidant" attachment style learned to accept the idea that their emotional needs will never be met and they will always be ignored and not loved. Attachment avoidance can be described as an expression of how a person is uncomfortable with intimacy and closeness (Bowlby, 1982). Avoidant individuals attempt to stay psychologically and emotionally away from love partners, especially during stressful or dangerous conditions (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). They also tend to foreclose the experience of closeness and pain and instead wish to be self-sufficient and independent rather than interdependent and emotionally close to someone (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Attached avoidant actively avoid intimacy as well as dependence because they think that their attachment figure won't be responsive and accessible (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). If they, or their partners, or their relationships suffer problems, highly avoidant people tend to use distancing strategies. They also avoid intimacy to prevent emotional vulnerability They tend to become less sympathetic to others in their need as a result of this emotional estrangement (Fraley et al., 1998) In addition, because a partner's feeling would be an indication that they need more closeness and care, avoidant individuals may react negatively to their other person's emotions. For instance, avoidant people are less likely to react well towards their partners who create discomfort or bring social support attack angrily and defensively others' negative emotions expressed during a conflict discussion and show less willingness to compromise. The primary caregiver's position during infancy usually is defined as emotionally inconsistent or unavailable within the framework of avoidant attachment. Feelings of rejection may thus arise from these caregivers' rejecting or inaccessible responses to the infant's needs. They could, for instance, over-respond to crying, ignore the baby, or enforce independence too early in the relationship and then find that the child is expressing inappropriate or irrelevant feelings. The same caregivers limit the child's emotional and physical intimacy, so the child comes to understand that it is neither proper nor safe to look for comfort in people (Ainsworth et al., 1978). The infant learns to suppress their wants and emotions as a way of coping with the pain of abandonment and develops a self-reliant mentality (Bowlby, 1988). An avoidant attachment style causes immense detrimental effects on relationships and social relationships (Fraley et al., 1998). The individual making all of his values revolve around independence shies away from emotional contact and displays fragility (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). On a deeper, more long-term basis, relationships may also be abused in this rejection to communicate feelings or draw upon one's supports (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Avoidantly attached people generally turn out to be so that they are incapable of making commitment in love relationships and generally behave superficially, which makes the partners of each of them both doubly disappointed (Fraley et al., 1998). Their tendency of avoiding any kind of argument results in unsolved problems and feelings of being ignored with anger in the relationship (Simpson & Rholes, 2017). Socially these persons may have problems in holding deep friendship because they tend not to create an emotional bond with others, and people distance themselves from them (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). They may be surrounded by people but end up alone and isolated as they shun up chances for cooperation and assistance (Fraley et al., 1998). It is not at all easy to avoid a cycle of disconnection over a period of time under this mode of behaviour, making it hard for Avoidantly attached people to create an intimacy and trust base necessary for strong, long term relationships (Simpson & Rholes, 2017). It directly affects mental

health and wellbeing due to posing various kinds of emotional as well as interpersonal challenges (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). People with this kind of attachment often stay in anxiety and depression (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). They are not able to address the feelings and ask for their needs, which they force into suppression at times, and this causes a number of unresolved internal conflicts, which increases stress and has caused distress (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007) For instance, this shunning of intimacy brings about feelings of loneliness as avoidant stay detached from people and find missed opportunities to help them feel emotionally supported (Fraley et al., 1998) their reluctance to attend therapy is also due to their vulnerability, which worsens mental illness (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). This will likely result in negative emotions being internalized and a cause for problems such as low self-esteem or inferiority feelings (Simpson & Rholes, 2017). By the increasing influence of all of these traits, over time these may restrict personal growth and lower general life satisfaction of avoidantly attached subjects may face challenges to happiness and fulfilment in personal and interpersonal relations (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

3. Anxious Attachment style:

This anxious-preoccupied attachment sometimes called anxious-ambivalent or simply "anxious attachment style," is characterized by a sense of needing constant assurance and confirmation from others (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). It is associated with uneven early experiences of care giving as well as emotional hunger (Bowlby, 1982). Children brought up in homes whose parents are emotionally unresponsive or unreliable often get anxious about getting rejected and abandoned (Ainsworth et al., 1978). People with this attachment style may repeatedly cling to the caretakers as children for attention and affirmation. When adults, they can adhere desperately in adult relationships, often overcome by feelings of jealousy or possessiveness and projecting feelings of fear of rejection (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). In infancy, it is characterized as an insecure form of attachment style, that is, there is a huge and chronic need for assurance caused by the presence of their caregivers, and at the same time, there is an absolute fear of losing them due to inconsistent care during infancy (Ainsworth et al., 1978). These children, based on early experiences like caregivers who do not always answer their cries, expect connections in life that frighten them and make them even more cautious in the attempt to keep connected (Bowlby, 1982). Anxious attachment styles can also be resulting from being exposed to traumatic events and parents' abuse or family stress following negative early experiences (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). The children who face negligence or emotional abuse tend to look for approval from others as they feel an experience of low self-esteem or inadequacy (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Such a situation exacerbates and increases the fear and insecurity in their lives following experiences related to family conflicts or trauma situations, causing their problems with attachment issues (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Insecure attachment patterns are passed on to generations when care-providing adults, who themselves still possess unresolved attachment issues, unconsciously pass on their anxieties to their children. It is in the form of behaviours that reflect the caregivers' own attachment fears-inattentive emotional accessibility, overprotection, or excessive controlling behaviour (Main & Hesse, 1990). Ultimately, the initial fragilities limit the development of security and trust between children, thereby putting them at a higher risk for relational anxiety and insecurity. Children belonging to an anxious attachment style develop a high need for continuous reassurance along with a nagging fear of abandonment due to getting an inconsistent and unreliable emotional support that can impact their ability to build stable, healthy relationships in adulthood (Bowlby, 1988).

Over-attachment can manifest as excessively clingy or needy behaviour that may easily overwhelm partners and cause unnecessary relationship tensions (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). The anxious attached individual can react emotionally to a conflict, fearing abandonment and responding with anger or fear when they feel any signs of disconnection (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Push-and-pull dynamics can also occur because of this instability since parties seem to go through an oscillation of being attracted to and drained by the power of the relationship (Shaver & Hazan, 1993). A social anxiety disorder may mean a person isn't capable of forming long-term friendships, as they do tend to be too dependent on the one or ones they are building a relationship with for comfort (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). The anxious individual works hard at their relationships and needs to bond with their partner in such a way emotionally that they feel safer (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). It is more likely that people anxious have low views of themselves as well as cautious yet optimistic views of the romantic partner (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Because of these conflicting beliefs, anxious people often lose faith in their worth, fear the loss of their relationships, and seek signs that their partners may be moving away from them (Shaver & Hazan, 1993). As such, they end up fighting to strengthen the weak sense of felt security, which leads them to make actions that sometimes strangle or isolate their relationships (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Major influence on mental health and wellbeing can be recognized towards anxious attachment styles, often predicts increased stress, anxiety, and emotional dysregulation (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Such attachment cause continuous worry about relationships and the fear of rejection or abandonment, thereby making them feel uncomfortable all the time (Cassidy & Shaver, 2008) Since they are acutely sensitive to their other person's behaviour, they may develop low self-esteem and feelings of inadequacy because they tend to believe that they are not lovable and can never be trusted (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). The emotional instability associated with anxious attachment will make the mental condition worse as one may begin acting irrationally, becoming impatient, and failing to concentrate (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). What's more, an intense need for approval can result in becoming overly dependent on others to stay emotionally stable-a stressful hindrance to being able to manage without help from others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2002).

4. Disorganized Attachment style:

Among the four attachment styles, the disorganized attachment, which is also referred to as fearful-avoidant attachment, is considered to be an insecure attachment style (Main & Solomon, 1990). The ones with a disorganized attachment type generally face complications regarding how to behave in situations involving other people and will apply both avoidant (emotional inactivation) and anxious (emotional hyper-activation) ways of coping with their anxieties (Liotti, 2004). Attachment disorganization is indicated by unreliable behaviours and responses, stemming from an individual uncertainty about the reliability of his caregivers (Main & Hesse, 1990). Such a condition typically goes hand in hand with unstable or stressful early life conditions. Disorganized attachment tends to develop in children who experience extreme care irregularities, abuse, or neglect during early life (Crittenden, 1995). Such experiences can drain the children's security feelings and, in extreme cases, even undermine their trust in their care-givers (Lyons-Ruth & Jacobvitz, 2008). Children who are exposed to poor childhood conditions also face the risk of manifestations of disordered attachment. Experiences which include neglect, abuse either physical or psychological, substance use

by the parents, domestic violence or other extreme adversities, but is equally important to remember that maltreatment or abuse in the childhood period does not necessarily lead to disorganized attachment (Crittenden, 1995). Unresolved trauma or loss can make parents reflect unstable and troubled mental states onto their children (Main & Hesse, 1990) such persons tend to exhibit unpredictable and intermittent behaviours within their relationships (Liotti, 2004). Those attached to a lover who has an unorganized attachment style will likely have to experience push and pull. Sometimes they will want to see them close while, at other times, not (Main & Solomon, 1990). It is anxious and fearful of intimacy- a type of connection that has a greatly adverse effect on social as well as interpersonal interactions (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). They become hard to trust other people, which create a push-pull situation for them: they fear vulnerability but yearn for intimacy (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). The feeling of losing control over their emotions can cause trouble in a relationship, which may ultimately lead to miscommunication and even conflict (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2006). Communication is what complicates the interaction with the person because they might express inconsistent needs or have ambiguous non-verbal clues (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). This most of the time leads to emotional withdrawal or inaccessibility that nurtures feelings of loneliness (Bowlby, 1982). Again, they might also terminate relationships based on a fear of rejection that keeps them in circles of loneliness and abandonment (Kobak & Sceery, 1988). An inability to attach to others and insecure attachments may find expression in parenting style, while an inability to understand the barriers that lead to a failure in attachment may arise from an inability to empathize with others (Schore, 2003). For people with disorganized attachment then, therapeutic support may be the most critical factor for working through previous trauma and forging more constructive relationships (Liotti, 2004). An unorganized attachment style can really have an adverse effect on one's well-being and mental health (Liotti, 2004). People usually suffer from increased anxiety levels, depression, and emotional inconstancy due to the unstable patterns of their relationships and the issue of being abandoned (Main & Solomon, 1990). This disturbance can be difficult while maintaining the self-control needed to fight emotional imbalances like temper tantrums and irritation (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). An insecure attachment style can seriously interfere with the well-being and psychology of an individual in a negative way (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2006). Insecurity, anxiety, depression, and vulnerability to emotions in individuals often arise due to inconstant interpersonal patterns and perceived abandonment issues (Bowlby, 1982). This emotional distress leads to control issues, which worsens problems like mood swings and irritation (Hesse, 2008). This trauma often associated with disorganized attachment might express itself in hyper vigilance and nightmares (van der Kolk, 2005). Mental disorders and relationship issues cannot be separated, and the combination can create a cycle of misery; thus, it is important for individuals to consider therapy to facilitate recovery and development of healthier attachment styles (Liotti, 2004).

ATTACHMENT THEORY:

British psychologist John Bowlby was the first to be a pioneer of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1982). A "lasting psychological connectedness between human beings" he defined attachment as (Bowlby, 1969). Bowlby tried to understand the feelings of anxiety and pain children experience when they are removed from their primary care-giver (Bowlby, 1982). Freudian theorists suggested that infants develop an attachment to the object of their pleasure (Freud, 1953). Because their oral needs are fulfilled, infants at the oral stage of development become attached to their mothers. According to some of the first behavioural theories, attachment is merely a shown behaviour (Watson & Rayner, 1920). The child and caregiver feeding interaction is all that contributes to the attachment (Watson & Rayner, 1920). This makes the child become attached to the caregiver because they feed and support them (Bowlby, 1982). According to the theory advanced by John Bowlby (1969-1982), such early experiences of attachment are, as it were, assembled into internal working models-of a sort of mental representation.

These models include cognitive affective models in which one assumes the role of either being worthy or unworthy of being cared for and others as reliable or unreliable supporters (Bowlby, 1982). The child learns their world, other people, and themselves through the social and emotional responses of the primary caregiver (Bowlby, 1982). This information is what Bowlby termed an internal working model (IWM), the base from which an individual's attachment style operates and which begins as a mental and emotional picture of the infant's first attachment bond (Bowlby, 1982). According to him, the attachment style plays a very important role in intimate partnerships (Bowlby, 1982). The internal working models of attachment, which form through the bonding experiences with early caregivers, are a kind of central mental image by which an individual thinks about himself or herself and her or his social relationships (Bowlby, 1982). These internal working models become positive or "secure" if characterized by a consistent, nurturing care-giving experience based on self-worthiness and faith in others' availability when needed (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). On the contrary, inept, frightening, or dismissive care giving experiences usually result in a poor or "insecure" inner work model, comprising less-than-constructive perceptions of one as well as other persons. These inner images of one and others result as attachment styles that influence people's beliefs as well as behaviours in close relationships (Bowlby, 1982). Indeed, it is the effect of the inner working model of attachment by which a person responds to both negative and positive emotions (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). The more insecure the inner working model of the person, the more intensive is the reaction of the person to negative emotions and less receptive and open to the exploration of positive emotions. Thus, people who have an internal working model of attachment that is more insecure are likely to face greater challenges in terms of controlling feelings and interpersonal interaction (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). This will expose them to the threat of social exclusion, loneliness, and inadequate which will negatively impact their level of life satisfaction and in relationships (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Psychologist Mary Ainsworth greatly made the constructions developed by Bowlby in his first studies during the 1970s her "strange situation" experiment revealed how big an impact attachment has on behaviour (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Researchers studied children in this experiment, aged between 12 to 18 months, as they reacted to short separations and then were reunited with their mothers (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Ainsworth categorized secure attachment, ambivalent-insecure attachment, and avoidant-insecure attachment as the three main forms of attachment based upon the reactions the researchers found (Ainsworth et al., 1978).

EMPATHY:

Definition: It is defined as the ability to perceive the feelings of another and to communicate that understanding, helping them to feel understood (Brunero et al., 2010; Cunico et al., 2012; Dulay et al., 2018)

Empathy is a person's sociability and improvement in health form through empathy, being one of the more basic forms of moral growth that leads to positive outcomes. High levels of empathy are associated with higher-quality interpersonal relationships and thus could contribute to prosocial behaviour and people's welfare. On the other hand, externalization of violent behaviours and adjustment socially are strongly associated with low empathy. There has been a continuous development of the concept of empathy (Davis, M. H. 1983). It can focus on either or both dimensions of empathy as an individual dimension, which can be emotional or cognitive. According to Davis, "Empathy is a personality tendency that is construed as a relatively consistent feeling tendency, comprising both affective and cognitive aspects, and the ability to understand and perceive others' feelings." While the cognitive empathy corresponds with emotional knowledge or understanding, affective empathy refers to sharing of emotions relating to the situation of other people. Conversely, several researchers assert that empathy also encompasses action empathic, which is an act of kindness that stemmed from emotional or cognitive empathy (Eisenberg, N., & Strayer, J. 1987). It was observed that according to some researchers, there are two forms of empathy, specifically: the trait empathy and the state empathy. While the former is a personal trait that is relatively stable, the latter is due to a particular condition. Though there are many other definitions of empathy, most scholars agree on the two-dimensional component view of empathy which splits empathy into affective and cognitive components (Davis, M. H. 1983); (Batson, C. D. (2009). Cognitive empathy is the ability to put oneself in other people's shoes and reflect their inner states. Perspective-taking, mentalization, and the theory of mind are all involved. The ability to feel or react emotionally to the sentiments of other persons is referred to as emotional empathy. It encompasses empathic suffering, motor emotion, and emotional contagion. Cognitive empathy is primarily related to the ventromedial prefrontal cortex. TOM and self-reflection fall within this domain. Additionally, the cognitive empathy might also encompass the medial temporal lobe, the superior temporal sulcus and the temporoparietal (Decety, J., & Jackson, P. L. 2004); Schulte-Rüther et al., 2008). The areas in the brain that are involved in emotional empathizing vary. These include the inferior parietal lobule (IPL) and inferior frontal gyrus. What is very interesting is the fact that these areas have been proven to part of the mirror neuron system. It is also supposed to be linked with the anterior cingulate cortex and the anterior insula through emotional empathy, because these parts are active in shared suffering experiences (*Gallese, V. 2003); (Singer, T. et al. 2004).*

TYPES OF EMPATHY:

There are countless varieties of expressions that empathy takes, and among the experiences that one finds themselves in. Among the other types that you may undergo are as follows:

- Affective Empathy: Affective expression is symbolic of one's expression of someone else's emotions and capacity to react appropriately motional compassion may result in a person being concerned over the welfare of another individual, or it may provoke feelings of personal distress (Davis 1983)
- Somatic Empathy: Is the condition of physically responding to what the other person feels. At times, human beings go through physical strains of what the other person is experiencing. For example, if you see another person feeling embarrassed, you may feel a flush or stomach upset (Decety & Jackson, 2004).
- Cognitive empathy enables one to understand the other person's mental state and what that individual might be thinking in reaction to the situation. This is related to the concept, by psychologists, known as the theory of mind or thinking about what other people are thinking (Premack & Woodruff, 1978).

Theoretical Framework:

In literature, (Lipps 1903) is often referred to as the founder of the concept of einfühlung, a word that Titchener translated into English as empathy, though it was Vischer (1873) who first started using the term einfühlung to explain the way in which people experience inanimate objects within the realm of philosophical aesthetics and the manner in which they understand the mental states of others. Even before Vischer, the verb einfühlen had been used by Herder (1778) when describing the God-given ability of humans to recognize everything in nature in analogy with oneself, in order to understand the inside of it. The great contribution of Lipps is that he took the term einfühlung together with its systematization toward, on the one hand, the description of how an art object causes phenomena of internal resonance in those who contemplate him and, on the other, trying to solve the problem how we come to know other people's minds. Einfühlung would thus be the way in which one inhabits one's own subjectivity while reaching out to someone else's. Lipps believes that, for example, emotion-expression produces an immediate and spontaneous reaction in one. Throughout history, a discussion about empathy started into distinguishing its cognitive component and emotional components. There were discussions that considered empathy as a non-cognitive social intelligence. Others discussed it on four separate but related components: perspective taking, fantasy, empathetic concern, and personal distress. Studied from different points of view, the concept of empathy was reviewed. Some authors started with the approach of Dymond (1949) who assumed that an empathic person is one who is able to understand and predict thoughts and feelings of another through imagination. Others focused their attention on the kind of emotional response produced by exposure to someone else's emotional situation. This approach was from which Mehrabian and Epstein (1972) pointed out that the process of cognitive taking another's perspective is very different from the ability to respond empathetically to that as it does not only mean that there is an ability to recognize emotions of other people but also to share in them. Eisenberg and Strayer (1987), an affective response or an emotional response due to the understanding of the emotional state of another person is defined as empathy. Even though the authors give priority to the affective component, they find that empathy consists also of cognitive components that may, in turn, make differentiation between one's own emotional state and that of others. Concepts in the literature review, strongly interlinked, are often used in the sense of a synonym for empathy, such as theory of mind, mentalization, and perspective taking. All refer to higher cognitive functions and characteristics of human beings and include understanding one's own and others' mental states. Premack and Woodruff (1978) defined theoretically practically as synonyms the concepts of theory of mind and empathy referring to the former as "the attribution of mental states of intention, purpose, knowledge, and belief of oneself and others" and to the latter as "understanding the other's situation through the attribution of a

purpose to him, specifically, empathy would be a theory of mind restricted to the purpose or intention of other people" and Frith and Frith (2003) utilized the theory of mind concept to describe the process of mentalization, that is, the process by which inference about the mental states of other subjects can be ascertained. Such a feat in the human brain occurs automatically, but it is achieved deliberately through non-verbal communication (such as facial expressions, and body movement, etc). Mentalization further enables one to take the view, that is, the capability to infer how another person thinks about the world from his or her perspective. According to Baron-Cohen (2002), empathy is described as the ability to identify what another person thinks or feels and to respond in a corresponding manner. On the other hand, there exist integrative models of empathy that respect the complexity of the construct and combine modes of automatic affective experience and controlled cognitive processes, like the perception and comprehension of the emotional states of others. From this perspective, Davis (1983) introduced a framework to explain empathy as a set of interconnected constructs with regard to a person's responses to the observed experiences of others. There are four constructs: antecedents, processes, intrapersonal results, and interpersonal responses. Antecedents include the observer, observed subject, and/or situation characteristics that can affect the empathetic process. These mechanisms encompass the actual mechanisms whereby empathetic effects are wrought, which are either cognitive or affective and belong to three classes according to the amount of cognitive effort required and the degree of sophistication needed for their working: non cognitive processes, simple cognitive processes, and complex cognitive processes. Intrapersonal results describe the internal effects that take place in the observer in the course of an empathetic experience but which do not necessarily find expression in his or her behaviour. These results may be cognitive, affective, or motivational. Finally, interpersonal results denote behaviour directed toward the observed subject. It can be easily seen that the concept of empathy is not easy to verbalize. It is a construct as complex as it is necessarily important for life in society. For this purpose, at this point, it will be interesting to make clear that a conceptualization by Davis was applied for interpretation of results from the current research study.

The Relationship between Empathy and Attachment

Three patterns are possible in the empathy–attachment relationship. The first pattern is that attachment serves as the antecedent variables of empathy. Attachment theory reveals that infants develop their social emotions based on the attachment (Bowlby, 1969). Infant–caregiver interaction is important for infants to recognize and understand the feelings and emotions of caregivers. Furthermore, the theory points out the particular mechanism by which children's attachment quality influences empathy. Secure attachment would assist children in forming positive IWMs, for instance self-confirmation and trusting other people, which enable people to pay fewer attentions to their feelings but to the feelings of others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). In contrast, insecure IWMs form rejection of self and mistrust of others that also prevent individuals from considering or feeling the emotions of other people. Attachment also promotes empathy based on emotional regulation (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005) as well. The second pattern shows that empathy influenced attachment. During the age of childhood to becoming an adolescent, the individuals develop peer attachment. The equal status of the individuals and their peers enables them to share and understand emotions for each other to fulfil their needs, thus sustaining and developing peer relations (Buhrmester, 1990). This can further strengthen peer secure attachment .The third pattern is the interaction effect across time. According to the cascade mode, empathy and attachment may influence each other at different development stages (Sroufe et al., 2005). The general tendency in early childhood is that secure attachment encourages empathy, whereas insecure attachment discourages empathy. A reasonable number of researches have indicated attachment to be a critical factor in adult development toward empathy and attachment security in adults is associated with increased empathic skills (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). There are many factors behind why securely attached individuals tend to be more empathetic. One may argue that people with secure attachment are not concerned with their emotional needs and are more motivated to respond to the emotions of others as well as to their needs (Gilbert, 2005). Another explanation is that securely attached individuals hold positive views of themselves and others, and therefore, they are likely to view others as deserving of having their needs met, which increases the likelihood of providing the necessary support to ensure others' welfare however, empirical evidence is inconsistent regarding whether secure attachment differentially affects cognitive and affective empathy (Cuff et al., 2016).

NEED FOR THE STUDY:

- This study is necessary because both Attachment styles and empathy are critical factors in emotional regulation and social functioning
- Understanding this relationship can provide insight in improving interpersonal skills in young adults which is essential for healthy relationships and well being.
- This may be particularly true for college students because college is a time of intense focus on career and identity exploration as well as individual growth and development and it often also involves transition from the family-of-origin and the formation of new relationships.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

This chapter generally provides an overview of existing scholarship and research that relate to the topic chosen. This helps in framing the intellectual foundation upon which the research will be articulated-including key theories, concepts, empirical findings, and gaps in the knowledge base to date. Normally, it provides the basis on which the research question is formed and the objectives framed, providing insight into its relevance and meaning. It would be a discussion of the literature review chapter not only based on leading or expanding the work of others but also highlighting the regions within which the current study could make its contributions and progress. An exploration of the current body of knowledge will enable the research to establish its own path and leave a significant impression on the scholarly conversation. It explains the significance of comprehending the prior research, which influences not only design and methods but also how data are interpreted and conclusions are developed.

2.1 Research studies on Attachment styles

Mitali Das and Dr. Sandhya Bhatt, 2024 Investigated the Adult attachment styles in India the 18-29-year-old category. This study established whether or not anxious and avoidant attachment styles have associations with any one of the five different conflict management strategies: competition, collaboration, compromise, avoidance, or accommodation. Results are based on a survey of 135 respondents. These results came because both avoidant and anxious attachment styles correlated positively with avoidance strategies and negatively with collaboration. The results were also gendered by fact such that females had scored higher on the collaboration score of males but lower on competition.

Rishika B. et al., (2024) conducted a study on attachment style dynamics and well-being in romantic relationships among young adults, this study sample comprised fifteen participants with nine females and six males aged above eighteen years and also those who are currently or previously in a romantic relationship. These participants were sampled using a purposive sampling strategy and the data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews; thematic analysis was carried out. The findings provided highly valuable insights into how various facets of well-being relate to attachment styles, and highlighted in no unclear terms how early emotional deprivation in childhood can subsequently lead to difficulties in trust and reciprocity within adult relationships

Sushma S. et al., (2019) conducted a research to understand about Attachment styles, perceived social support, and loneliness among college students, the study focused on comparing male and female college students with respect to attachment styles, perceived social support, and loneliness, and also studied loneliness relation with attachment styles and perceived social support and their predictive roles also. 256 students from Jamia Millia Islamia and Delhi University were purposively sampled and surveyed using specific questionnaires. Findings indicated that ambivalently attached styles and styles of avoidance are the predictors of loneliness, more frequent in males than in females.

Siyyam, T. et al., (2016) conducted this study aimed at comparing the attachment styles and behavioural problems between preschool attending first-grade children and those who did not attend preschool. Their mothers taught them at home. This was a casual-comparative exploratory research in which 320 participants were involved in the study. The tools applied included a separation anxiety test, an adaptive behaviour scale as well as a children's symptom inventory. Multivariate statistics were used to analyze the collected data. Children with preschool experience had significantly higher secure attachment than those who received home-based instruction. Parent education and father's income were not significant to attachment style and adjustment but father's education was related to the symptom levels of the children. The age of entry into preschool, attachment style, and behavioural problems were nonlinearly and multivariate related. Increase in parental awareness and sensitivity, good quality care, and also reduction of hours of preschool will lessen risks from early separation and institutional care

2.2 Research studies on Empathy

Anu priya M. et al., {2022) conducted a cross-sectional study on Empathy and its assassinated factors among Medical students of Bangalore Medical college using a simple random sampling, 180 students from first to fourth year participated, using the Jefferson Scale of Empathy-Student version (JSE-S). Results showed first-year students with the highest levels of empathy and a very significant decrease in the fourth year. Additionally, female students exhibited a higher level of empathy than males

Kanchan G. et al., (2021) conducted a study to find the relationship between Empathy and Perceived Stress among College Students. The purpose of this study is to analyze whether there is a significant relationship between empathy and perceived stress among college students in the state of Karnataka and West Bengal, India. Responses were derived from 214 participants using Basic Empathy Scale for Adults (BES-A) and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10). The results indicated that no positive association existed between the two: cognitive empathy and perceived stress. A positive association, however, has been found to exist between affective empathy and perceived stress. Gender differences of empathy is concerned were highly significant; girls had reported much higher levels of empathy than the boys. However, the difference of girls in comparison with boys was not considered significant. Girls had reported slightly higher levels of stress than males.

Yanfei J. et al., (2021) conducted the research to study about Influence of College Students Empathy on Prosocial Behaviour in the COVID-19 Pandemic. This study that took place in China's prevention continuation comprised 898 college students and used the Interpersonal Response Scale, the Prosocial Tendencies Measure, and the Big Five Personality Questionnaire. The results indicated partial mediation of social responsibility between the association of empathy and prosocial behaviour among the students. These effects are very crucial in making it possible to deliver better mental health amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

2.3 Research studies on Attachment styles and Empathy

Karos K. et al., (2018) conducted this study looked at how attachment styles affect empathy, especially in pain management. They worked with 180 patients who have chronic pain. The researchers used the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale (ECR) along with the Empathy Concern Subscale. From the analysis they found that people with secure attachment had more empathy and better relationships with their caregivers. And those with insecure attachments especially anxious one had a harder time in understanding others' pain and tended to get less social support.

Soenens.B, et al., (2015) conducted research in parenting, attachment, and empathy in adolescents, in which 478 adolescents participated in the study. Instrument used in this research includes Parental Bonding Instrument, the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment, and Empathy Quotient analyzed by structural equation modelling. In the findings, it was shown that authoritative parenting had a positive relationship with secure attachment but also related to greater empathy levels in the adolescence. Insecure attachment, by a large portion typically stemming from authoritarian or neglectful parenting was related with lower empathy and poor peer relationships

Graaff V. et al., (2014) conducted a longitudinal study to investigate the relation between adolescent attachment styles and empathy. Attachment and empathy among 384 adolescents, who were participants for this study, were estimated by using Empathy Concern Subscale and Adolescent Attachment Questionnaire (AAQ). For conducting data analyses, longitudinal cross-lagged panel models were applied. The primary findings of this study indicated that the development of empathy was predicted by the presence of secure attachment and there was also correlation between lower levels of empathy and insecure attachment styles such as avoidant and anxious

Behrens, Y. and Kaplan, N (2011) conducted this study that examines if attachment styles had an impact on empathy across cultures by utilizing 300 mother-infant dyads. Use the AQS in researching attachment and the meaning that is held in cultures to empathy. Findings observed that the attached pairs who were secure would always hold high quantities of empathy. And low quantities of empathy always went along with insecure attachment patterns

Levy, K. Kelly, K., N. M. (2010) investigated the Psychopathology of Personality Disorders Using Structural Equation Modelling. Investigators applied the EQ and ECR in assessing the attachment style with the application of EQ/ECR. Outcome for the secure attachment therapy was good with better interpersonal functioning and empathy. Instead, attachment style defined as "insecure" was associated with lower empathy and resistance to change in therapy

Borelli. J et al., 2010 discovered adult attachment styles in romantic relationships in terms of their connection to empathy. For the research, 200 adults participated and the ECR and IRI scales were applied. Based on the results, it was revealed that when attachment in adults is secure, then the empathic ability in love relationships is higher, while lesser empathic ability goes along with other insecure attachment styles, like avoidant attachment, which causes problems with emotional intimacy.

Steele, H., & Steele, M. (2008) conducted a study with 150 children, looked at the relationship between attachment and empathy in early and later childhood. The authors reported that using Attachment Story Completion Task (ASCT) and Empathy Questionnaire, secure early childhood attachment is a protector for relatively high levels of empathy that extend into later childhood whereas insecure attachment was related to low levels of empathy and more social relationship difficulties

Smith, J. A., and Pedersen, D.R. (2008) conducted this study has tested the attachment style of a mother focusing on the way in which she influences the empathetic ability of the child. For this, a total of 150 mother-child dyads was administered the Child Empathy Scale and the Adult Attachment Interview According to this analysis, children with mothers who are insecurely attached report the lowest levels of empathy along with the highest trend in antisocial behaviours, while on the other hand, children with mothers securely attached report higher levels of empathy According to this analysis, children with mothers who are insecurely attached report the lowest levels of empathy along with the highest trend in antisocial behaviours, while on the other hand, children with mothers securely attached report higher levels of empathy

Mikulincer and Shaver 2007 conducted a study on attachment theory in adult empathy.480 adults at different age were used in this study. The researchers used EQ and ECR to measure empathy and evaluate attachment styles. Empathy scores showed significant associations with secure attachment in Correlational as well as regression analyses. The results indicated
that the securely attached individuals tend to be more empathetic and the insecurely attached people, especially anxious and displayed lower degrees of empathy.

Siemens B. et al, (2007) the association between parenting, attachment, and empathic responses during adolescence. The study combined the use of Empathy Quotient (EQ) with the Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI), the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA), and structural equation modelling (SEM). Results obtained demonstrate positive correlations between secure attachment and higher levels of empathy among adolescents with authoritative parenting. The following were associated with insecure attachment, often the outcome of authoritarian or neglectful parenting: lower empathy and problems in the relationships with peers.

Buchheim A. et al. 2006 conducted the neuro imaging study of adult attachment in adults that comprised 27 adults with different attachment styles. The study made use of the Correlational analysis and functional magnetic resonance imaging on participants with the use of Adult Attachment Interview and empathy tasks from the fMRI. These increased activations were found with secure attachment representations particularly in areas like anterior insula and anterior cingulate cortex, which are empathy-related. And with insecure attachment styles, decreased activation in these regions was found; hence, it was indicated that lower empathic responses existed.

Wilkinson R.B. et al., (2006) conducted this study to investigate the role of attachment styles in affect regulation and empathy on 340 university students. The EQ and the ECR were applied in the study, while analysis used structural equation modelling. Results of the study found that people with secure attachment are those who better control their emotions and have more empathy. People with insecure attachment, especially avoidant attachment cannot be able to control their emotions and hence have fewer feelings of empathy.

Mallinckrodt and Wei, 2005 demonstrated attachment, social competencies, and empathy with 209 college students. IRI as well as Adult Attachment Scale were used in measuring empathy and the attachment style. The analysis of data was carried out with the help of SEM (SEM).

The researchers concluded that the higher level of empathy shows positive relationships with secure attachment rather than insecure attachment styles. It also showed that individuals with a secure attachment style can better understand and share emotions with others.

Nitzberg A. et al., (2005) conducted a study to investigate the connection that exists between altruism, care giving, and attachment and it was carried out on 310 adults. Researchers used the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale (ECR) and the Altruism and Empathy Scale and the researchers performed hierarchical regression analysis. By the analysis, it was found that attachment security is correlated with larger empathy levels and higher altruistic behaviour. In contrast, avoidant attachment has negative correlations with empathy and lower readiness to give care.

Gillath.O et al., (2005) conducted this study by using 520 adults with ECR and EQ to observe the relation between attachment and empathy. The researchers found that secure attachment is a strong predictor of empathy. Avoidant attached people were especially less empathetic and self-reliant, and many often avoided intimacy, including emotional intimacy.

Britton and Fuendeling (2005) conducted a study on the role of attachment style in empathic processing among 300 university students. Attachment style was measured using the Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ), while the Empathy Assessment Index (EAI) was used in measuring empathy. The data of this research were analyzed using ANOVA and Path Analysis. The results showed that securely attached people are more empathically accurate in their responses and emotionally responsive, but individuals with insecure attachment styles have lower empathetic accuracy.

Jolliffe and Farrington (2004) conducted a study in the year to test the relationship between empathy and attachment styles through the assessment of a population of 720 adolescents. Empathy and attachment styles were measured with the help of the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) and the Basic Empathy Scale (BES). It was found out using multiple regression analysis that adolescents with secure attachment styles reflected more awareness of empathy. And attachment styles more avoidant or anxious were found to relate to a lower degree of empathy. The study emphasized that there emerges empathy through secure attachment.

A. W. Bateman and P. Fonagy(2004) carried out a clinical study with 134 patients with Borderline Personality Disorder reported that improvements in the attachment security through treatment predict improved levels of empathy and metallization capacities. Comparisons of RFS and AAI before and after treatment have shown that secure attachment is essential for developing empathy.

Joireman J. et al., (2002) conducted a study using a sample population of 168 adults who were in romantic relationships to see if attachment styles and forgiveness do correlate with empathy. Interpersonal Forgiveness Scale and the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale (ECR) were used. The mediation analysis was carried out. In this particular case, it was found that empathy was the mediator, though between forgiveness and secure attachment. Attachment styles characterized by insecurity, especially of the avoidant type, were less empathetic and less forgiving of others, while attachment styles that were secure were more likely to forgive others.

Oppenheim D., and Koren-Karie, N (2002) conducted a study that sought to uncover mothers' awareness of the inner life of their children. The Study included 112 mothers of toddlers and also administered the insightfulness assessment and AQS. The findings indicated that for the researchers, the mothers who were securely attached were more empathized and greater insight of the emotional condition of their child than the mothers who were insecurely attached were less attuned to the needs and feelings of their child.

Shaver, P.R., & Mikulincer, M. (2002) conducted a study of 1,200 adults. The researchers used the Empathy Quotient (EQ) and the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale (ECR) to explore the relationship between attachments related psychodynamics and empathy. The result showed that better empathy and better personal functioning are associated with a secured attachment. In anxious and avoidant styles of attachment, characterized as vulnerable, inadequate empathetic response and poor regulation were observed.

Schore, A.N. (2001) investigated how early attachment alters emotional and social development from the study of the development of 250 infants and toddlers to answer the question and the researchers utilized the Strange Situation Procedure and assessments of emotional regulation to determine that secure attachment was associated with healthy emotional and social development, including more empathy. Of course, findings revealed that attachment, particularly disorganized attachments, correlated with lower levels of empathy and emotional regulation.

Fraley, R.C., and Shaver, P.R. (1997) investigated adult romantic attachment in relation to empathy in a sample of 524 university students by using the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale (ECR). The use of regression analysis revealed that only highly empathetic relationships correlated with secure attachment, avoidant attachment was linked to non-empathic or emotionally distant relationships, and anxious attachment with hyper-vigilant empathy.

DeWolff, M.S., and Van Ijzendoorn, M.H. (1997) did a meta-analytical review of 66 studies with 4,176 participants to review the association between parental sensitivity and attachment. The study found that children with secure attachment are more likely to develop empathy and have a higher level of parental sensitivity. Insecure attachment was correlated with lower parental sensitivity and reduced empathy.

Fonagy, P., and Target, M., (1997) in this study with 300 clinical and non-clinical adults emphasized the significance of the secure attachment to develop the reflective functioning and empathy. They used the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) and Reflective Functioning Scale (RFS)

and found that people who were insecurely attached tend to have more reduced levels of reflective functioning, which made it difficult for them to understand what other people were thinking.

Kunce, L.J., and. Shaver, P.R (1994) conducted this study to explore the care giving system from an attachment-theoretical perspective. It was analyzed based on a sample of 398 parents and the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) and Care giving Scale was used. The study established that parents with a strong sense of bonding were more empathetic and responsive to the attachment needs of their children as caregivers. And parents with insecure attachment styles were less empathetic, and were often detachment or intrusively caring

Simpson. J et al., (1992) conducted this study, which included 144 dating couples and examined support-seeking and support-giving behaviours in relationships. The researchers used the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) and the Support Behaviour Questionnaire and the researchers found that more empathetic support-giving behaviours were associated with secure attachment. And insecure attachment styles were associated with behaviours in romantic relationships that were more self-centred and less supportive.

Bartholomew, K., and Horowitz, L.M. (1991) used the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) and Empathy Scale to explore attachment styles in 428 young adults. The researchers identified four types of attachment: discharging, preoccupied, terrible, and protected. They found that people who were secure had the highest levels of empathy. Empathy was significantly lower in those who had attachment styles that were dismissing and fearful

Hazan, C., and Shaver, P. (1987) had done a study by bringing forth the concept of adult romantic attachment styles found out a relationship wherein they stated secure attachment is such a thing that becomes more empathetic and compassionate responses in the romantic relationship. Based on the research, Attachment Questionnaire and Love Scale were deployed with 620 adults who had factor and Correlational analysis. In the research, it was determined that insecure attachment styles were associated with less empathy and more emotionally distant behaviours, particularly avoidant style.

METHODOLOGY: The methodology section describes the outline of how research was conducted in general, as well as the procedures, instruments, and techniques applied in data gathering and analysis. Methodology is an important part of the research study. It is a blueprint of the research that reflects the process, explaining in detail the particular procedures used to gather and analyze data. A thorough description of the tools and instruments used for data collection, a step-by-step procedure for data collection that outlines participant recruitment and ethical considerations, the sampling technique used for participant selection, the clear articulation of our study objectives and hypothesis, the criteria for participant inclusion and exclusion, and the specific data analysis methods and statistical techniques applied to derive research findings are all important components of this methodology. This chapter provides readers with the essential knowledge to assess the study's quality and the validity of its conclusions by acting as a critical guide to the research design and execution.

3.1 Hypothesis:

- *(H1):* There will be a significant relationship between Attachment styles and Empathy among college students

3.2 Objectives:

- To identify any demographic variables (age, gender) that may influence the relationship between Attachment styles and empathy
- To examine the relationship between Attachment styles and Empathy among college students

3.3 Research design:

This study will employ a Correlational research design to investigate the relationships

between Attachment styles and Empathy among college students

3.4 Sample:

The sample for this study comprised a total of 200 college students, carefully selected to provide a diverse representation of the student population. The sample displays a balanced gender distribution, with 100 participants identifying as female and 100 as male reflecting near equality between the two genders. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 24 years to capture the varying experiences of college students across different colleges, different academic departments, and participants were carefully selected from different academic years also. A convenience sampling technique was employed to select participants. Convenience sampling involved recruiting participants based on their accessibility and willingness to participate.

3.5 Operational Definitions

Attachment: Attachment can be defined as a deep and enduring emotional bond between two people in which each seeks closeness and feels more secure when in the presence of the attachment figure.

Empathy: Empathy is the ability to understand and share another person's feelings, thoughts, and experiences.

3.6 Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria:

- Participants must be currently enrolled as students at a college or university

- Only participants from Coimbatore were included in this study

- Participants should be within a specified age range, such as 18-24 years old

- Participants must be fluent in the language in which the survey instruments are administered (e.g., English).

Exclusion criteria:

- Excluded who have already participated or are participating in relevant studies on attachment styles or on empathy
- Excluded Individuals who do not participate voluntarily or provide any sort of informed consent are excluded.
- Excluded Persons who are widely above the standard age of an undergraduate college student, for instance, more than 30 or less than 18 years.
- Excluded those without adequate fluency in the language in which a survey is conducted excluded from participating.
- Other than college students at present, all other individuals were barred from participating in the exercise

3.7 Tools Description:

Adult Attachment scale (AAS): An 18 item self reported questionnaire developed by Hazen and Shaver in 1987. It is designed to measure the adult attachment styles. It uses a 5 point Likert scale for scoring with 1 representing 'strongly disagree' and 5 representing 'strongly agree'. The scale's reliability has been reported with Cronbach's alpha for secure, avoidant and anxious attachment is 0.72, 0.82 and 0.85 and Test-Retest reliability ranging from 0.70 to 0.85 and it has demonstrated strong construct validity and convergent validity

Interpersonal Reactivity Index: A 28 item self reported questionnaire developed by Davis.M.H in 1980, this measure has 4 subscales each made up of 7 different items which designed to measure different aspects of empathy. It uses a 5 point Likert scale with 1 representing 'Does not Describe me' and 5 representing 'Describe me very well '. The scale found to have a good internal consistency for the total scale, Cronbach's alpha values are around 0.70 to 0.80. For the individual subscales, values often range from 0.70 to 0.85, indicating that the items within each subscale are reliably measuring their respective constructs. And Test-Retest reliability ranging from 0.61 to 0.85 and it has demonstrated strong construct validity and convergent validity

3.8 Procedure:

Following the selection and definition of the variables, the research question and a preliminary hypothesis were developed. I then looked over relevant research papers, which gave me useful details that supported my theory. College students chosen as the study's target population and i chose to employ, the scales of Adult attachment scale and Interpersonal reactivity index. Convenient sampling method was employed, and the sample size was established based on previous studies. Physical questionnaires were distributed to collect data directly from the participants. Informed consent was collected from each participant prior to the involvement of the study. The first step was to build rapport with the participants and explain the reason for gathering the data. Following collection, the data was recorded and evaluated in preparation for a further investigation.

3.9 Ethical considerations:

Participants were adequately informed about the study's purpose, significance, and procedures. They were reassured that their involvement would not lead to any unexpected issues. Prior to data collection, verbal consent was obtained, ensuring that participants understood their rights

to decline participation and to withdraw at any stage without facing any negative repercussions. This process emphasizes their autonomy and the importance of making informed decisions and It is also essential to clarify that any personal information, sensitive data, or research findings that could identify participants will remain confidential and will not be disclosed to unauthorized individuals or entities

3.10 Statistical analysis:

- Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the samples and the scores on the scales
- Correlation analysis will be employed in the case of this research in explaining the relationship among the variables. Correlation analysis is one of the most powerful tools of statistics that have a huge variety of use in many areas. Its primary utilization is in investigating the existence and the magnitude of the association between the variables. The analysis is widely used in research in such a way that it will enable the assessment of predictive power between variables, selection of relevant factors for further investigations, and testing of hypotheses on expected relationships. In Psychology this kind of research depends on Correlational analysis to investigate the relationship between variables, such as Attachment styles and Empathy among college students

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

This is the crucial stage of any research exercise. Here, results of the study emerge and are examined in great detail and interpreted. This chapter can be said to bridge the empirical findings with the objectives of the research. It will therefore provide an account of what has been discovered as well as implications of those discoveries. It is here that the data is presented, analyzed, and put in the correct context by giving it a place within the vast body of knowledge. The section answers research questions but further goes into the importance of findings, their alignment with or deviation from theories and the consequences in actuality. The "Results and Discussion" chapter concludes the research process, for it is here that issues can be explored in depth, reflective thought engaged, and findings synthesized into meaningful understandings. It is such space for researchers not only provides an avenue for revealing what they have found but also allows them to engage in scholarly conversation with the literature already available, stakeholders, and the broader academy Community.

Table 4.1 *Descriptive Statistics*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
AS	201	1	3	2.22	.687
PT	201	7	28	16.29	4.332
EC	201	5	27	16.04	4.382
FS	201	7	28	15.66	4.473
PD	201	6	26	15.10	3.710
Valid N	201				

Table 4.2 *This table shows the correlation between secure attachment style and empathy dimensions (PT, EC, FS, and PD)*

			PT	EC	FS	PD
Secure	Pearson Correlation	1	.042	.136	.073	.082
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.553	.054	.306	.250
	N	201	201	201	201	201
PT	Pearson Correlation	.042	1	.232**	.238**	-.034
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.553		.001	.001	.629
	N	201	201	201	201	201
EC	Pearson Correlation	.136	.232**	1	.324**	.054
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.054	.001		.000	.448
	N	201	201	201	201	201
FS	Pearson Correlation	.073	.238**	.324**	1	.219**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.306	.001	.000		.002
	N	201	201	201	201	201
PD	Pearson Correlation	.082	-.034	.054	.219**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.250	.629	.448	.002	
	N	201	201	201	201	201

The analysis of the relationships between secure attachment, Perspective-Taking (PT), Empathic Concern (EC), Fantasy Scale (FS), and Personal Distress (PD) reveals varying degrees of correlation. Secure attachment shows weak positive correlations with PT (r = 0.042, p = 0.553), EC (r = 0.136, p = 0.054), FS (r = 0.073, p = 0.306), and PD (r = 0.082, p = 0.250), but none are statistically significant. PT is positively correlated with EC (r = 0.232, p = 0.001) and FS (r = 0.238, p = 0.001), both at a significant level (p < 0.01), indicating that higher perspective-taking is associated with greater empathic concern and a tendency to immerse in fantasy. The correlation between PT and PD is negative and non-significant (r = -0.034, p = 0.629). EC is also positively correlated with FS (r = 0.324, p = 0.000) and PD (r = 0.054, p = 0.448), with the former being statistically significant. FS and PD show a moderate positive correlation (r = 0.219, p = 0.002), which is significant. These results suggest that while secure attachment does not strongly relate to the empathy components, significant positive associations exist between PT, EC, and FS, indicating that these aspects of empathy are interrelated. These findings suggest that while secure attachment does not have a strong direct influence on the empathy measures. This aligns with research by Mikulincer and Shaver (2007), which indicates Although Mikulincer and Shaver discussed how secure attachment fosters positive interpersonal behaviours, their research also indicated that not all aspects of empathy are significantly influenced by attachment style. Their findings highlight that while secure attachment may promote a supportive relational context, it does not consistently predict high levels of empathy across all situations. The significant correlations between PT, EC, and FS corroborate findings by Davis (1983), which highlighted that cognitive and affective aspects of empathy are interconnected. This implies that even if secure attachment does not directly enhance empathic behaviours, the cognitive processes associated with perspective-taking and empathic concern may still play a crucial role in empathy development among individuals with secure attachment styles.

Table 4.3 *This table shows the correlation between avoidant attachment style and empathy dimensions (PT, EC, FS, and PD)*

			PT	EC	FS	PD
Avoidant	Pearson Correlation	1	-.025	-.017	-.052	.022
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.727	.810	.461	.755
	N	201	201	201	201	201
PT	Pearson Correlation	-.025	1	.232**	.238**	-.034
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.727		.001	.001	.629
	N	201	201	201	201	201
EC	Pearson Correlation	-.017	.232**	1	.324**	.054
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.810	.001		.000	.448
	N	201	201	201	201	201
FS	Pearson Correlation	-.052	.238**	.324**	1	.219**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.461	.001	.000		.002
	N	201	201	201	201	201
PD	Pearson Correlation	.022	-.034	.054	.219**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.755	.629	.448	.002	
	N	201	201	201	201	201

The analysis of the relationships between Avoidant attachment and the components of empathy, Perspective-Taking (PT), Empathic Concern (EC), Fantasy Scale (FS), and Personal Distress (PD) shows mostly weak and non-significant correlations. Avoidant attachment has a very weak negative correlation with PT (r = -0.025, p = 0.727), EC (r = -0.017, p = 0.810), and FS (r = -0.052, p = 0.461), indicating no meaningful relationship with these empathy components. The correlation between Avoidant attachment and PD is also weakly positive (r = 0.022, p = 0.755) and not statistically significant. PT shows a moderate positive correlation with EC (r = 0.232, p = 0.001) and FS (r = 0.238, p = 0.001), both of which are significant (p < 0.01), suggesting that higher levels of perspective-taking are associated with greater empathic concern and engagement in fantasy. EC is positively correlated with FS (r = 0.324, p = 0.000) and PD (r = 0.054, p = 0.448), with the previous being statistically significant. FS is moderately and positively correlated with PD (r = 0.219, p = 0.002), indicating a significant relationship. These results suggest that while avoidant attachment does not strongly relate to the empathy components, significant positive associations exist between PT, EC, and FS, indicating that these aspects of empathy are interrelated. These findings suggest that Avoidant attachment does not significantly impact the measures of empathy, which is consistent with research by Mikulincer and Shaver (2007). They noted that individuals with Avoidant attachment styles tend to distance themselves emotionally, leading to less engagement in empathetic responses. This aligns with Dykas and Cassidy (2011), who found that the relationship between attachment styles and empathy is often weak, particularly for individuals with Avoidant attachment, as their emotional detachment can hinder empathic understanding and concern. Kobak and Sceery (1988) observed that while Avoidant individuals might exhibit lower levels of empathic concern, contextual and individual factors can influence their empathetic

responses, further explaining the lack of significant relationships in this analysis. These studies highlight that the characteristics associated with Avoidant attachment may limit empathic engagement, emphasizing the importance of considering attachment styles when examining empathy in interpersonal relationships.

Table 4.4 *This table shows the correlation between anxious attachment style and empathy dimensions (PT, EC, FS, and PD)*

			PT	EC	FS	PD
Anxious	Pearson Correlation	1	-.023	-.119	-.033	-.095
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.746	.092	.644	.182
	N	201	201	201	201	201
PT	Pearson Correlation	-.023	1	.232**	.238**	-.034
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.746		.001	.001	.629
	N	201	201	201	201	201
EC	Pearson Correlation	-.119	.232**	1	.324**	.054
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.092	.001		.000	.448
	N	201	201	201	201	201
FS	Pearson Correlation	-.033	.238**	.324**	1	.219**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.644	.001	.000		.002
	N	201	201	201	201	201
PD	Pearson Correlation	-.095	-.034	.054	.219**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.182	.629	.448	.002	
	N	201	201	201	201	201

Analysis of the relationship of anxious attachment and components of empathy Perspective Taking (PT), Empathic Concern (EC), Fantasy Scale (FS), and Personal Distress (PD) reveals non significant low correlations. Anxious attachment reflects a very weak negative correlation with PT (r = -0.023, p = 0.746), EC (r = -0.119, p = 0.092), FS (r = -0.033, p = 0.644), and PD (r = -0.095, p = 0.182), none of them are statistical significant. PT positively correlates with EC, r = 0.232, p = 0.001, and FS, r = 0.238, p = 0.001, which suggests that greater levels of perspective-taking were positively associated with greater empathic concern and fantasy engagement. EC positively correlates with FS, r = 0.324, p = 0.000, and PD, r = 0.054, p = 0.448, while the former is statistically significant. FS is also positively correlated to PD (r = 0.219, p = 0.002). Generally, these findings indicate that attachment anxiety had limited relationships to the components of empathy but PT, EC, and FS all had significant positive relationships between each other, so that these factors of empathy are interrelated. These findings indicate that anxious attachment may not be associated with a direct and strong influence on empathic behaviours. These findings are in line with previous research by Mikulincer & Shaver (2007) this study examined how different attachment styles affect emotional responses and interpersonal behavior. While they noted that individuals with anxious attachment styles often experience heightened emotional states, their findings indicated that these emotional states do not consistently translate into higher levels of empathy. Also, they found that anxious individuals might struggle with empathic concern due to their own emotional preoccupations. These patterns of relationships among PT, EC, and FS in this study suggest previous findings by Davis, where the interconnected nature of cognitive and affective components of empathy was highlighted. This could suggest that even though anxious attachment may not contribute highly to these measures of empathy, other factors like cognitive perspective-taking and emotional engagement are highly related.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

The summary chapter represents the culmination of the research endeavour, encapsulating key findings, insights, and contributions of the study. It gives an overview of the whole research process, from question formulation, data collection, and analysis all the way to the central findings and their Implications. This chapter draws out the key outputs into a consumable format, focusing on the worth of the study to the field of academia, practical applications, and policy considerations. Summary Chapter Plainly restates the research work's objectives and clearly expresses its contribution to the established body of knowledge. Typically, it ends with a call for further research or practical implementation, for it is the last chance for researchers to underscore the relevance and significance of their contributions. The paper aims to finally make a lasting impact on the readership, making it evident why the results are important for future studies and applications.

This quantitative research study aims to examine the complex relationship between attachment styles and their influence on various dimensions of empathy, specifically Perspective-Taking (PT), Empathic Concern (EC), Fantasy Scale (FS), and Personal Distress (PD). The study

underscores the complexity of the relationship between attachment styles and empathy dimensions and it recognizes the importance of understanding how different attachment styles can shape individuals' emotional responses and interpersonal behaviours, particularly in social contexts and Understanding this relationship can provide insight in improving interpersonal skills in young adults which is essential for healthy relationships and well being. The findings reveal secure attachment does not strongly relate to the empathy components. This suggests that fostering secure attachment may not directly enhance empathy. And avoidant attachment is associated with minimal correlations across the empathy dimensions, which are no meaningful relationship. This indicates that individuals with avoidant attachment may distance themselves emotionally, leading to a lack of engagement in empathic responses, which highlights the potential barriers to developing empathy in individuals with this attachment style. Anxious attachment also exhibits very weak negative correlations with empathy components, suggesting that individuals with anxious attachment do not consistently demonstrate empathic concern or perspective-taking abilities. This indicates that the emotional preoccupations associated with anxious attachment may hinder individuals from effectively engaging with others' emotional states. It shows attachment styles that is Avoidant, Anxious, and Secure, make no difference to empathy in general or in the specific dimensions (PT, EC, FS, and PD) There is no significance relationship to attachment styles across any of the four dimensions of Empathy. This broadly explains that, irrespective of attachment orientation, these dimensions are consistent, thus pointing out that attachment style may not be crucial in determining how one tends to be empathetic. These findings justify further research to elicit a clearer understanding of the factors underlying it. Future studies would require large samples and more demographic and psychological variables to enable overall relationships to be understood in even greater depth. The findings that attachment styles may not be good predictors of empathy allows for more reasonable assumptions regarding human behavior. It provides information to adjust interventions aimed at effective improvements in emotional connections and social skills to improve interpersonal relationships and mental health. It might contribute toward a better and more understanding of the pattern of development of empathy across different populations by broadening the focus to include related and situational factors.

Review of Literature

The reviewed literature examines the intricate relationship between attachment styles and their influence on different aspects of empathy, including Perspective-Taking (PT), Empathic Concern (EC), Fantasy Scale (FS), and Personal Distress (PD). The research emphasizes the need for a deeper understanding of how attachment styles shape emotional responses and interpersonal behaviours, which is crucial for fostering healthy relationships and overall well-being in young adults.

Findings from the study reveal that secure attachment has weak correlations with empathy dimensions. Specifically, the relationship between secure attachment and PT is insignificant ($r = 0.042$, $p = 0.553$), suggesting that those with secure attachment do not necessarily engage more in perspective-taking. This indicates that having a secure attachment style might not directly contribute to enhancing one's cognitive empathy, or the ability to understand others' viewpoints.

Similarly, avoidant attachment is minimally related to empathy components. The correlation between avoidant attachment and PT ($r = -0.025$, $p = 0.727$) is negligible, indicating that individuals with avoidant attachment tend to emotionally distance themselves, potentially leading to reduced engagement in empathetic responses. This lack of emotional connection may present challenges in developing empathy for those with avoidant attachment.

Anxious attachment also shows weak negative correlations with empathy dimensions, such as PT ($r = -0.023$, $p = 0.746$) and EC ($r = -0.119$, $p = 0.092$). This suggests that those with anxious attachment are not consistently able to demonstrate empathic concern or perspective-taking. The preoccupation with their own emotional needs may interfere with their capacity to connect with the feelings of others, limiting their empathetic engagement.

Overall, the study suggests that attachment styles whether secure, avoidant, or anxious do not significantly influence the various dimensions of empathy (PT, EC, FS, and PD). This finding implies that the nature of one's attachment style may not be a determining factor in their ability to empathize with others.

The research looks for further investigation into the underlying factors affecting the relationship between attachment styles and empathy. Future studies with larger sample sizes and consideration of more demographic and psychological variables could provide a deeper understanding of this relationship.

Need for the Study

Attachment styles develop during the infancy stage. It influences how an individual forms a relationship, maintain a relationship it actually continues to influence interpersonal relationships throughout an individual's life. It plays a significant role in an individual's interpersonal interactions and in handling of emotions. Empathy is the ability to understand and share another person's feelings, thoughts, and experiences. This study is necessary because both Attachment styles and empathy are critical factors in emotional regulation and social functioning. Understanding this relationship can provide insight in improving interpersonal skills in young adults which is essential for healthy relationships and well being. This may be particularly true for college students because college is a time of intense focus on career and identity exploration as well as individual growth and development and it often also involves transition from the family-of-origin and the formation of new relationships. This knowledge can lead to the development of targeted interventions, such as empathy training for individuals with avoidant attachment styles who may struggle with emotional engagement, or strategies to address the barriers that anxious attachment individuals face in expressing empathic concern.

 The results showed that attachment styles show no significant relationship with empathy, from this findings more effective therapeutic and educational programs can be addressed for empathy development, also for promoting healthier relationships and improving social skills among young adults and college students, also the research will pave the way for future studies to explore other variables that might interact with both attachment styles and empathy, such as cultural influences or situational factors, thus providing a deeper understanding of the factors that shape empathetic behavior. This enhanced understanding has the potential to improve social interactions and emotional resilience, leading to better mental health outcomes and well-being.

Methodology

The sample for this study comprised a total of 200 college students, carefully selected to provide a diverse representation of the student population. The sample displays a balanced gender distribution, with 100 participants identifying as female and 100 as male reflecting near equality between the two genders. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 24 years to capture the varying experiences of college students across different colleges, different academic departments, and participants were carefully selected from different academic years also. A convenience sampling technique was employed to select participants. Convenience sampling involved recruiting participants based on their accessibility and willingness to participate.

Scales used

- AAS (Adult Attachment scale)
- IRI (Interpersonal Reactivity Index)

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were calculated to provide an overview of the sample characteristics and to explore the relationships between attachment styles and empathy dimensions, correlation analysis was performed. Specifically, Pearson's correlation Coefficients were calculated to assess the strength and direction of associations between different attachment styles (secure, anxious, and avoidant) and each of the empathy dimensions. This approach allowed for the identification of potential relationships between how individuals' attachment styles might influence their tendencies to engage in perspective-taking and exhibit empathic concern.

Results

- Secure attachment has weak correlations with empathy dimensions
- Avoidant attachment had least correlations with empathy dimensions
- Anxious attachment exhibited weak associations with empathy dimensions
- All three attachment styles (secure, anxious, and avoidant) there was no significant relationship with empathy dimensions, indicating that attachment style does not strongly influence levels of empathy.

Conclusion

The findings reveal that there is no strong relationship between attachment styles and various dimensions of empathy. The weak correlation between secure attachment and suggests that secure attachment may not directly enhance cognitive empathy, or the ability to understand others' perspectives. There is a least correlations between avoidant attachment and empathy dimensions this implies that individuals with avoidant attachment may be emotionally distant themselves leading to a lack of engagement in empathetic responses. The weak negative correlations with anxious attachment suggest that while emotional preoccupations might hinder empathetic responses, they do not completely hinder the ability to empathize. Overall, the results highlight that attachment styles (secure, anxious, or avoidant) do not significantly impact the ability to engage in empathy. This suggests that factors other than attachment may be more influential in shaping empathetic capacities in young adults. This knowledge can lead to the development of targeted interventions, such as empathy training for individuals who may struggle with emotional engagement, or strategies to address the barriers that individuals face in expressing empathic concern. It gives the potential for empathy development across different attachment orientations, encouraging a broader approach to developing emotional connections and enhancing social well-being.

Limitations:

- The study's methodology heavily relies on self-report measures, such as the Interpersonal Reactivity Index and the Adult Attachment Scale. These are known as self-report biases, people may state their attachment style or degree of empathy in a way that is distorted by socially acceptable answers or by their own ignorance.
- The study captures a broad age range of 18 to 24 years, it excludes older or non-traditional college students
- Cross-sectional design: Because the cross-sectional study was conducted at a single point in time, data was only collected once. It doesn't show how things have changed over time, it just gives a quick overview of their connection.
- The timing of data collection might influence results
- Sample Size: A limited sample size could affect the statistical power of the study, making it difficult to detect.

- Measurement Limitations: The scales used to measure attachment styles and empathy may not fully capture the complexity of these constructs.
- Lack of Depth: While quantitative methods provide numerical data and can establish patterns, they may lack the depth of understanding provided by qualitative methods.

Implications:

Different paths:

The finding could encourage researchers to explore for understanding empathy development

Tailoring Interventions: Teachers, counsellors, and mental health experts may need to modify their approach in creating solutions for students if attachment types have no impact on empathy. They might put more of an emphasis on teaching empathy skills directly, such as through role-playing games, empathy training, or group activities that aid in understanding and connecting with people, rather than on attachment history.

Focusing on Other Influences on Empathy:

Since attachment styles might not play a major role, this finding could shift the focus to other aspects that contribute to empathy among college students. For instance, factors like life experiences, peer interactions, cultural background, or even specific courses and activities in college might have a stronger impact on developing empathy.

Emphasizing Contextual Factors in Emotional Development:

The absence of a relationship could point to the importance of current situational factors over past attachment experiences. This would imply that experiences during the college years such as involvement in community activities, exposure to diverse perspectives, or participation in social clubs might play a more crucial role in shaping empathy than early attachment history. This could encourage colleges to invest more in activities that foster empathy directly through real-world interactions.

Highlighting the Role of Education and Curriculum:

The findings might suggest that empathy is more significantly shaped through educational experiences rather than through personal attachment histories. This could emphasize the role of courses like ethics, psychology, or sociology.

Highlighting or understanding the Role of Later-Life Experiences:

If attachment history is not a determining factor, it would imply that experiences during adolescence and early adulthood such as friendships, romantic relationships, or even educational influences play a more significant role in shaping empathy.

Empowering Students with Different Attachment Styles:

It implies that they have the capacity to acquire empathy in different ways, independent of their early relationship experiences or emotional connection. For people who might have felt constrained by their attachment type, this can be comforting and encourage a growth perspective

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