



Faculty of
Psychology and
Educational Sciences
"Ovidius" University
of Constanta, Romania



BLACK SEA JOURNAL OF PSYCHOLOGY



www.bspsychology.ro



9 772068 464001



Attachment patterns

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Abstract. From the moment we are born, until we reach adulthood, we depend on our parents and those who raise us. We have the need to create and form relationships, and, in order to be able to create them in a healthy, stable and harmonious way, it is fundamental to learn about the attachment patterns. The hypothesis of our research was to validate our own questionnaire measuring attachment patterns in adulthood. The tools we used were the questionnaires applied successively, and the first was the one containing the 117 items made up by us. After eliminating the questions that did not respect the normality, we applied the final form of the questionnaire, which includes 90 items. We used the Read and Collins Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) to help us validate our own measurement questionnaire, so we calculated the Alpha Cronbach coefficient, which indicated a high understanding for all three attachment styles, due to the fact that the coefficient values are greater than 0.6. This result indicates that our tool has consistency. Following the application of the Split-Half method, we obtained correlations that confirmed fidelity and consistency, being positive, between sets of questions in the case of scales that measure anxious, avoidant and secure attachment style, so we concluded the validity of questionnaires. The last part of the project boils down to identify the differences between women and men in the attachment style.

Keywords. Attachment, patterns



1. Introduction

Attachment is constantly forming in the first years of life and takes shape throughout adolescence. Attachment styles will have meaning in all modes of interaction in interpersonal relationships that we will have. The attachment (Ainsworth, M.S. 1979,) is an affective bond that is formed in humans and other mammal species from birth, usually between children and adults, and develops through interaction with a person who is the child's first source of affection. Seager (Seager 2014) states that "The first experiences of non-verbal attachment of a human being establish the first pattern or sketch of the 'self in relation to the other' through language, and subsequently, language-based experiences, must be mapped and interpreted through future relationships" (Seager, M. 2014, p.215). The emotional bond that develops between partners, friends, and relationships of any type in adults is influenced by the type of attachment developed in early childhood.

Thus, it is necessary and fundamental to understand that there are three main attachment patterns: the anxious (preoccupied), the avoidant (rejection) and the secure one, in which the child trusts his forces and others. The process of interacting with others begins in infancy. Initially, the focus was on the baby's relationship with his mother, or the person he spends the most time with, and all the emotional reactions of separation. Each of us manifests and perceives these emotional reactions according to our mental construction and the affective nucleus created during childhood. These patterns were discovered and identified by Mary Ainsworth. The most "beneficial" attachment style identified is the secure one, which, unlike the other two, causes individuals to have self-confidence and high self-esteem, which helps them cope with everyday challenges.

We will present each attachment style, along with studies and research on each, necessary to be able to select descriptors, as well as behavioral characteristics and manifestations (descriptors), which we have associated with each type. On this basis we proceed to conduct the study, related to attachment, from our work.

2. Attachment styles

2.1. Anxious attachment style

„As for the anxious (or preoccupied, or anxious-ambivalent) attachment style in children, it is based on hypervigilance and increased preoccupation with relationships, with anxiously attached people having a strong need for emotional closeness, reassurance, and comfort” (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). „Overactivating these people's attachment system is an attempt to gain attention, protection, and trust from others to provide at least a temporary sense of relief and security” (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016).

At the same time, an equally interesting study (Manning et al., 2017) consisting of a systematic review of the literature indicates that there is a correlation between attachment style and social anxiety later in life. Of course, it is not difficult to understand that (negative) experiences that occur in the life of children can lead to feelings of inferiority, rejection or signaling of a lower social status (Brumariu, et al., 2013).

Last but not least, we found information related to this style and the use of the internet, more specifically social media networks. Being anxiously attached was associated with perceived low interpersonal competence.



2.2 Constructs of anxious attachment

2.2.1 Depression

The occurrence and maintenance of depression has been linked to a cognitive processing style involving certain deficits. In his cognitive model of depression, Beck (Beck, A.T., 1983) pointed out that vulnerability to depression involves tendencies toward generalized negative self-assessments, meditations on negative events and experiences, and difficulty counteracting negative self-evaluations and expectations due to the inability to access specific positive information from the past. Beck argued that these cognitive processing deficits contribute to both the onset and maintenance of depression. Moreover, the fact that negative self-evaluations and expectations tend to be acts of self-perpetuation and self-fulfillment to keep depression even longer.

If adult insecure attachment styles are linked to depression, as reported by Carnelley (Carnelley, K.B., Pietromonaco, P.R., & Jaffe, K., 1994), then it is assumed that they involve not only depressive personality characteristics, but also cognitive processing styles associated with depression, vulnerability.

2.2.2 Low self-esteem

„Dysfunctional attitudes about an individual's sense of self are thought to affect self-esteem, a closer and more accessible predictor of psychological distress” (Kuiper & Olinger, 1986). „It has been hypothesized that low self-esteem and dysfunctional attitudes mediate the association between insecure attachment and subsequent depressive symptoms, and results in adults support this claim” (Hankin et al., 2005; Roberts et al., 1996).

2.2.3 Aggressiveness

„Turning to studies that specifically examine bullying, research provides clear empirical support for the relationship between insecure attachment and aggression, both concurrently and prospectively: children and adolescents with insecure attachment patterns have significantly more behavioral problems, including aggressive behavior, than those with secure attachment” (Allen, Moore, Kuperminc, & Bell, 1998;).

Early studies in children have identified the higher levels of behaviour that is aggressive and it shows that they will not conform will show us that they have anxious attachment to all other attachment patterns (Renken, Egeland, Marvinney, Mangelsdorf, & Sroufe, 1989). Anxious-avoidant attachment in childhood can always predict negativity, noncompliance, and also hyperactivity at age 3 to 5.

2.2.4 Lack of trust in others

„Anxious attachment is characterized by a negative view of oneself and a positive view of others. Furthermore, anxious individuals tend to ruminate on these perceived threats and catastrophize about the future of the relationship” (Campbell, Simpson, Boldry, & Kashy, 2005).

2.3 Avoidant attachment style

Unlike individuals with anxious attachment, those with an avoidant attachment style can be described as suppressing and avoiding relational content and needs. People with high levels of attachment avoidance engage in various defensive strategies that deny the need for intimacy and emphasize self-sufficiency, self-efficacy, and personal power (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). They expect relationship failure and have an aversion to commitment and therefore provide less



emotional support, experience less intimacy, and have short, unsatisfying relationships (Vicary & Fraley, 2007).

Infants with avoidant attachment are neither upset nor happy when the caregiver returns. Following Bowlby's theory, Ainsworth suggested that the reason for the infant's behavior described above was due to the attention, receptivity, and availability of the caregiver (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Thus, later in life, these individuals may develop a way of relating in which the need for emotional intimacy may seem to be lacking altogether. They may allow their partner to manifest romantically, but seem unable to reciprocate this.

There are several things that correlate with this attachment style, but most likely, an important factor that can generate it is a parenting style that can: alternate between excessive pampering or detachment and total indifference; included parents who often felt overwhelmed by their duties to their child; included parents who paid attention to the child and then pushed him away; Or it included parents who made the child feel responsible for how they felt.

We also add some signals that can draw attention to the fact that a person may have such a style (being a combination of several of these signs): persistently avoid emotional or physical intimacy; the person manifests a strong sense of independence; discomfort in expressing feelings; a feeling of contempt or superiority towards others; difficulty in investing trust in others; a sense of threat to people trying to get closer, to become intimate; spending more time in solitude compared to time with others; ideation that the person with this type of attachment does not need others; problems of commitment and dedication in a relationship.

In other words, a person with a fearful-avoidant attachment style may have experienced both instability and a lack of care and attention from parents or caregivers, these factors together creating a complicated mix of problems that can be transmitted in relationships with adults.

2.4 Constructs of avoidant attachment

2.4.1 Lack of empathy

„A high level of empathy can promote prosocial behavior and people's well-being, by improving interpersonal relationships” (Juhl et al, 2020). In contrast, a low level of empathy is closely linked to externalization of aggressive behavior and social adjustment (Zych et al., 2019).

In the 1969 Strange Situation experiment, Mary Ainsworth noted that after a period of absence from their mothers, some children were often disoriented, agitated, and avoided eye contact with their mothers at meetings. Ainsworth theorized that avoidant behavior should be viewed as "a conditioned strategy that paradoxically allows for de-emphasizing attachment needs" (Ainsworth, 1979). The behavior of avoiding eye contact allows the child to maintain a conditional closeness to the caregiver, close enough to maintain protection, but distant enough to avoid rejection.

2.4.2 Impulse control problems (impulsivity)

Impulsivity has been associated with an inability to behave reflexively, a deficit of emotional control, an inability to delay gratification (Andreu et al., 2013), behavioral disinhibition and novelty seeking (Osorio, 2013); In addition, it can also refer to premature, unplanned or risky actions that are inappropriate to the situation, without considering the associated negative consequences (Adan, 2012). In the avoidant attachment style, there is a predominance of high



emotional expressiveness, a deficit in anger and impulsivity control, hypersensitivity to negative emotions and intense expressions of anxiety (Barroso, 2014).

2.4.3 Shallowness

"Avoiders often subtly indicate that they are not available when the subject moves toward an agreement with friends or a romantic partner" and "often they choose the wrong things in a partner and focus on those things as reasons to distance themselves from their partners and then regret losing the connection" (Whisman and Allan, 1996). People with an avoidant attachment style will not form deep connections or healthy friendships. Friendships, in general can be based on people's hobbies, experiences, or different contexts They will not be able to have emotional or revealing conversations with their close ones. (Simpson and Rholes, 2002).

2.4.4 Shyness

Shyness is an aspect of social avoidance, in which one desires social contact but avoids social situations with strangers because of the anxiety and embarrassment that accompany that contact. When shy people face such a situation, they are unable to act in an expected or "socially appropriate" manner, which prevents others from interacting with them (Mounts et al., 2006). Shyness has been linked to many things, including depression, negative adjustment (Mounts et al., 2006), and worry in relationships (Cowden, 2005).

2.4.5 Withdrawal

The most recent study that we found (Bretaña et al., 2020) „ provided preliminary evidence on the mediating effect of the conflict resolution model between avoidant attachment orientation and relationship satisfaction from an individual perspective”.

The types of negative, distrustful, and hostile attitudes toward other people that are associated with a rejection attachment style are aggravated by destructive thoughts or critical inner voices. Overly positive and seemingly friendly opinions about oneself that many avoidant people have are also promoted by the inner voice and are often a cover for vicious and self-degrading thoughts. Both types of voices, towards oneself and others, are part of an internal working model, based on a person's first attachments, which acts as a guide for how to relate to a romantic partner. The critical inner voice can be thought of as the language of these internal working patterns; The voice acts as a negative filter through which people look at themselves, their partner and relationships in general.

Current studies support the use of therapy for contemptuous-avoidant attachment (Broderick & Blewitt, 2022). By working with a therapist, especially if we are talking about the one who chooses to specialize in attachment issues, can help people explore and make sense of past experiences (Broderick & Blewitt, 2022). This, in turn, can help them determine what's preventing them from having satisfying relationships and interactions, identify the changes they want, and determine the necessary steps to be able to achieve them.

2.5 Secure attachment style

„The secure attachment style is characterized by a sense of security and trust in relationships” (Ainsworth, 1989). „A secure attachment with one of the parents or one of the caregivers is always considered to be the most positive”. The caregiver will fully respond to the child's needs and that element will result in the child feeling very safe. Bowlby (1988) further explained that such a positive attachment experience allows the child to form future relationships



influenced by early childhood experiences. This supports the feeling of approval from the caregiver, making them feel good about themselves (e.g., "I am loved") (Oppenheim & Goldsmith, 2007).

„Children with secure attachment patterns have been found to exhibit socially appropriate emotional expression and control, engage in more complex play, show more focused attention in class, and greater exploration of their surroundings” (O'Connor & McCartney, 2007).

Based on the principles of attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988), „ the presence of the mother serves as a secure basis, allowing the child to explore the environment and become knowledgeable and competence”.

People who are lucky to develop a secure type of attachment will grow up with the tendency to stay safe emotionally and physically. They will engage with other people in their relationships in a healthy way. People that developed during time a secure attachment will always feel as they are worthy of all the love in the world. They will not need external reassurance.

2.6 Secure attachment constructs

2.6.1 Safety

According to attachment theory, a sense of security contributes to self-building and emotional balance by allowing a person to receive the protection, support, and comfort provided by relationship partners (attachment figures) during times of stress or distress (Bowlby, 1988).

Repeated interactions with others in protective and supportive roles produce a sense of emotional stability and attachment security. Attachment security implies a feeling that you can rely on the other person you are in a relationship with, that they offer you protection and support, that you have the freedom to safely explore your environment, and that you have the ability to engage in harmonious relationships with other people, which somehow leads to the development of a positive self-image and a set of strategies for autonomously regulating effective affects. (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003).

2.6.2 Self-confidence

Self-confidence is a necessary condition of personal autonomy and self-esteem. Self-confidence implies a positive sense of motivation and competence; a desire to depend on oneself and an acceptance of vulnerability at the same time. It also involves trusting others. Self-confidence is essential for functioning as an autonomous human being. (Govier, T. 1993).

2.6.3 High self-esteem

The sense of attachment security contributes to subjective well-being, self-esteem, the perception of a positive image of others, and cognitions and interpersonal behaviors that improve adaptation. (Collins & Read, 1994; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003).

Self-image (roles performed, personality traits, behaviors and expectations) is formed as a result of interactions with attachment figures. „These interactions are an important source of information about oneself, and on their basis can be built an active, strong self and able to effectively cope with threatening events ” (Bowlby, 1973).

2.6.4 „Communication as an interpersonal relational skill” and sociability

People with secure attachment styles tend to cope with stress and distress by seeking closeness and support from attachment figures. They feel comforted and reassured either by the actual presence of an attachment figure, or by the fact that they will feel sure of themselves most



of the time. The secure attachment provides us with communication skills and also with the tendency to always be sociable to others.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Objectives of the work

Identify differences between women and men in attachment style.

3.2 Research hypothesis

It is assumed that there are significant differences in attachment style by gender.

3.3 Batch of participants

The group of participants consists of 64 adults aged between 20 and 40 years, of which 32 women and 32 men. Each participant had a unique identification code and was assured of the confidentiality of the information they provided for the researched data.

4. Applied tools

We transformed the 3 attachment patterns into operational definitions. We composed 38 items for anxious attachment, 39 items for avoidant attachment and 40 items for secure attachment, in total obtaining 117 items. The underlying descriptors for constructing attachment style questions are as follows: Depression Low self-esteem, lack of trust in other people, insecurity, lack of self-confidence, carelessness, aggression, impulsivity, safety, self-confidence, communication, interpersonal relationship skills, sociability, avoidance of eye contact, lack of empathy, impulse control problems, superficiality, shyness, withdrawal. The tools used in this research were questionnaires applied sequentially. In the case of applying the Test-Retest method, we obtained a significant correlation for all attachment styles, the results obtained indicating that the respondents' questions were understood correctly. The final step to establish the validity of our questionnaire is to verify the correlation between the built tool and the established test. The results obtained by us indicate the following: Both in the case of the anxious attachment pattern and in the case of the avoidant attachment pattern we obtained a sig lower than 0.05, which indicates that there is a significant correlation between the established test and the built one. In the case of the secure attachment pattern, we obtained a Sig greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no significant correlation between the established test and the built test.



5. Verification of the working hypotheses findings

Table 1. Results of normality tests, score distributions and statistical coefficients obtained.

Dimension	Gender	Normality Tests		T-test / Mann- Whitney U	Sig. (2- tailed)
		Shapiro-Wilk			
		<i>Statistic</i>	<i>Sig.</i>		
Avoidant attachment	Male	.963	.331	U=472.500	.595
	Female	.940	.073		
Anxious attachment	Male	.985	.933	t=.284	.777
	Female	.922	.023		
Secure attachment	Male	.958	.249	t=1.722	.090
	Female	.972	.563		

Hypothesis 1: It is assumed that there are significant differences in anxious attachment by gender. The normality of distribution test revealed a normal distribution of scores. According to the results in the table, for the female sex the Sig has the value 0.2, and for the male one, the Sig is 0.121. Since with the Levene test we obtained a coefficient of significance Sig ($p=0.777$), greater than $p=0.05$, we suspend the decision, so our hypothesis is not confirmed. So, we can say that, in this case, we did not identify significant differences in terms of anxious attachment by gender.

Hypothesis 2: It is assumed that there are significant differences in avoidant attachment by gender. According to the results in the table, for the female sex the Sig has the value 0.2, and for the male one, the Sig is 0.26. Following the results, the distribution of scores is nonparametric.

Since the Mann-Whitney U test obtained a coefficient of significance ($p=0.595$) greater than $p=0.05$, we suspend the decision, our hypothesis is not confirmed. So, we can say that, in this case, we did not identify significant differences in avoidant attachment by gender.

Hypothesis 3: It is assumed that there are significant differences in secure attachment by gender. According to the results in the table, for the female sex the Sig has the value 0.168, and for the male one, the Sig is 0.2. Following the results, the distribution of scores is parametric. Since the Levene test obtained a coefficient of significance Sig ($p=0.09$) higher than $p=0.05$, we suspend the decision, so our hypothesis is not confirmed. So, we can say that, in this case, we did not identify significant differences in terms of secure attachment by gender.

Discussion

For Hypothesis 1, Men and women differ in the prevalence of several mental disorders, with women showing higher rates of depressive disorders, somatoform disorders, anxiety disorders, and eating disorders (Hasin, D.S.; Sarvet, A.L.; Meyers, J.L.; Saha, T.D.; Ruan, W.J.; Stohl, M.; Grant, B.F., 2018), while men show higher rates for substance use disorders and especially alcohol-related disorders (Grant, B.F.; Goldstein, R.B.; Saha, T.D.; Patricia Chou, S.; Jung, J.; Zhang, H.; Pickering, R.P.; June Ruan, W.; Smith, S.M.; Huang, B., 2015)

This is also consistent with reports suggesting that, overall, men and women experience similar levels of psychological distress and mental disorders, but men use psychotherapy about 30% less than women (Eggenberger, L.; Fordschmid, C.; Ludwig, C.; Weber, S.; Grub, J.;



Komlenac, N.; Walther, A., 2021). However, whether this pattern differs in terms of different types of psychological disorders is insufficiently studied. It has also been suggested that a person's attachment dimension influences their decision whether or not to resort to psychotherapy when experiencing psychological distress. In addition, a frequently discussed reason for less use of psychotherapy in men compared to women is support for the traditional ideology of masculinity with the two main foci of "being in control" and "being different from women" (Levant, R.F.; Hall, R.J.; Weigold, I.K.; Mccurdy, E.R., 2016).

It has been shown in several studies that approval of the traditional ideology of masculinity is significantly associated with attachment orientation, suggesting a common potential to explain the use of psychotherapy (Saldubehere, A. 2019).

Because it has a central role in approaching and acting in social relationships and self-disclosure. Attachment orientation is operationalized using a three-dimensional conceptualization, namely anxious attachment, secure attachment, and avoidant attachment. Individuals with anxious attachment generally have a negative view of themselves, tend to be dependent on others, and are hypervigilant to social and emotional cues from others (Fraley, C.R.; Niedenthal, P.M.; Marks, M.; Brumbaugh, C.; Vicary, A. 2006).

One study looked at gender differences in attachment. In middle childhood, boys exhibit more avoidant attachments and girls more anxious attachments, as a precursor to gender differentiation in reproductive strategies. However, this study did not identify systematic and independent gender differences in scientific approach, in childhood attachment nor in representations of attachment in adulthood (Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J., & Van Ijzendoorn, M. H. 2009).

In another study, sex differences in anxious attachment style were examined. In terms of anxious attachment style, women scored significantly higher than men, as can be seen in the table below (Weber, R.; Eggenberger, L.; Stosch, C.; Walther, A. 2022)

"It is assumed that there are significant differences in anxious attachment by gender," has not been confirmed, there are numerous reasons why anxious attachment style does not depend on gender. As mentioned in the first chapter, childhood and education are fundamental in attachment formation. A person's attachment style is of clinical importance, since attachment difficulties are associated with difficulties in later life. For example, some previous research suggests that avoidant attachment contributes to psychological and behavioral problems, such as antisocial behavior (Bassoon BI, Kavanagh K. 1990) and a weaker ability to cope with stressful life events. We will look at studies looking at gender differences in avoidant attachment style.

Some studies have found differences between the sexes in how childhood attachment is related to later behavior. For example, insecure attachments led to externalizing behavior in girls more than boys. Moreover, differences in attachment style were found between men and women.

Hypothesis 2: in another study, sex differences in avoidant attachment style were examined. Statistically significant differences were found in the relationship between gender and avoidant attachment scale score. Women scored significantly lower while men scored significantly higher (Barry, J. A., Seager, M., & Brown, B. 2015).

According to another 2017 study (Simpson & Rholes), women score higher on anxiety and men score higher on avoidance when it comes to relationships. But these gender differences are small and have no direct impact on a person's attachment style. In any case, regardless of the studies



read, one thing emerged from all of them, and that is that regardless of the primary relationships of the person concerned, it is possible that, through effort and work, the attachment style will be changed, or the person will access a secure attachment style.

It is presumed that there are significant differences in avoidant attachment depending on gender" is not confirmed, on the sample on which we carried out the questionnaire, although this is not supported by the studies previously present, because in those we discovered, the clear difference between the sexes regarding this type of attachment is supported and confirmed. We haven't found a study that supports that there are no significant gender differences in avoidant attachment style.

The hypothesis 3: "In a study investigating the links between attachment and peer interactions, 4-year-olds and their mothers participated. Attachment security was assessed in the laboratory from reunion episodes with the attachment figure after a 10-minute separation. The children were observed doing their activity and playing in a room with other children. It was found that girls and boys with secure attachment styles did not differ significantly. Gender differences in social behavior can be explained by a subset of children, those classified as having insecure attachment styles. The relationships between insecure attachment and peer interactions were different for boys and girls. Insecure boys showed more aggressive, disruptive, assertive, controlled, and attention-seeking behavior than safe children. Girls with secure attachment styles were more open, optimistic, assertive, and conforming, as were boys with the same attachment style. On the other hand, girls with insecure attachment style who showed more addictive behavior. (Turner, 1991).

Another study examined relationships between adolescents' perceptions of their primary attachment figures and negative cognitive styles (i.e., low self-esteem, dysfunctional attitudes, and a negative attribution style) and tested whether these relationships were mediated by attachment insecurity. The results of 134 high school students suggested girls are more affected than boys by adverse parenting and that the association between parenting and cognitive style is largely mediated by attachment insecurity. Adolescents who perceive their parents as critical and perfectionists tend to report insecure attachment styles characterized by difficulty bonding with others and fear of abandonment, and in turn, these dimensions of attachment insecurity seem to contribute to lower self-esteem, dysfunctional attitudes and a negative emotional impact. (Gamble & Roberts, 2005).

Research so far has revealed that the association between gender, attachment and quality of intimate relationships is complex. This study examined the relationship between gender and attachment styles in attitudes toward partner communication and in the number of previous relationships in a sample of 746 Spanish students. They were given the relationship questionnaire to determine the adults' attachment style. The results revealed differences by adult attachment style and gender in the two variables measured and a significant effect of gender-attachment interaction. Between women and men with secure attachment styles, the same behavior was observed. The only significant differences were found between men and women with avoidant attachment. (Garcia-Martinez et al, 2012). The hypothesis "It is assumed that there are significant differences in secure attachment by gender" is not confirmed, and this is supported by the studies presented above.



Limits of our research

Regarding the method of researching the hypotheses formulated by us, in the last part of the project, we performed quantitative and qualitative analysis for the three attachment styles. Unfortunately, in our paper, none of the hypotheses formulated were confirmed, although we identified studies regarding the confirmation of the comparison between women and men carried out over time, which we specified in the qualitative analysis.

Thus, the possibility of generalizing the results is uncertain, due to several factors. The validity of the study depends on the quality of the assessments made by the subjects. Lack of sincerity and attention is a disruptive factor. Another factor is that our research involved a sample of convenience consisting of subjects who were chosen for the study, because they could be easily recruited. Therefore, we will consider the results valid only for the sample we evaluated, under the specified circumstances.

Conclusions

For Hypothesis 1, regardless of one's belonging to the traditional ideology of masculinity, a person's attachment orientation is variable, both women and men can have an anxious attachment. Within attachment theory, attachment means an affective bond or bond between an individual and an attachment figure. These bonds are based on the child's need for safety, security and protection, which is most important in the infant and childhood phase, regardless of gender.

For Hypothesis 2, our work is not confirmed, and causality can be vast. There were certainly limits to the sample, but there are reasons to believe that both men and women can have an avoidant attachment style without significant gender differences. Men are, indeed, according to studies, much more likely to have an avoidant attachment than women. This is due to the way men are raised, to be self-sufficient and not to show their feelings, "Big boys do not cry." But this can only be the surface, a façade of personality that is allowed to circulate externally, and internal attributions can be quite different. Socially, there may be differences in gender manifestation, but avoidant attachment is not the title of a single gender.

For Hypothesis 3, women and men with secure attachment styles have the same way of manifesting, in principle, the differences being noticeable only in those with maladaptive attachment styles. Both women and men with secure attachment styles can build harmonious and lasting relationships with other people, which are based on trust and emotional support. Thanks to communication skills and sociability, confident women and men can adapt to situations more easily and are flexible, which helps them cope with stress and suffering, accepting the support of loved ones. People with secure attachment styles have high self-esteem regardless of gender because they feel valuable, appreciated, and accepted by attachment figures since childhood.

We have specified how attachment theories and their study are of primary importance in the field of psychology, because how security is felt in the first years of life will influence the quality of all our early and future interpersonal relationships. In the first period of our lives, the foundations of cognitive and affective modes of functioning are laid, through which we will carry out our activity throughout our lives.

People with an anxious attachment style will have trouble adapting and solving problems, will be liable to create codependence on those with whom they interact, and will live with a fear of abandonment and rejection. People with an avoidant attachment style will reject many of the



situations they encounter, will prefer to focus on their own forces and rely more on themselves, not being very sociable. People with a secure attachment style will be confident, capable of empathy and will better understand the feelings of others. That's why it's important to know each attachment style and its characteristics.

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