

The Relationship between Parental Attachment and Stress: A Review of Literatures Related to Stress among Students

Mohtaram Rabbani

*PhD Candidate in Psychology of Child Development
Universiti Putra Malaysia
mina.rabbani@yahoo.com*

Sara Kasmaienezhadfad

*PhD Student in Curriculum and Instruction (Educational Science)
Universiti Putra Malaysia
sara_kasmaie@yahoo.com*

Masoumeh Pourrajab

*PhD Candidate in Educational Administration
Universiti Putra Malaysia
mpourajab@gmail.com*

Abstract

The aim of this literature review paper targets to show the relation between attachment with parents and stress among students that provides valuable information for future study. A relationship between parental attachment and stress has been described in some previous studies. According to the conclusions of many studies, there is a significant and negative relationship between parental attachment and stress. Although there are several studies about the relationship between parental attachment and stress but still insufficient information about this relationship in many countries and in different cultures. It can define the importance role of parents and their relationships with their adolescents. The results are beneficial for parents, teachers, counselors and educational psychologist.

Keywords: Parental attachment, stress, students

Selye's definition (Selye, 1956) of stress is the usual response that given to the body to each command which has considered stress as common and natural (cited by Fink, 2009). Among various definitions of stress, there is a definition which conflates most of the elements and factors that many of researchers have applied for identifying and investigating the effects of stress. When one encounters with the experiences either over excitation or under excitation, the result of this are mental or physiological is stress (Aldwin & Werner, 2009). Aldwin (2007) mentioned the definition of stress by Mason (Mason, 1975) that stress has three elements which are an inner condition of the organism, an extrinsic event and an experience that derive from a deal between a person and environment.

Stress is one of the important factors which effect on the ability of students to encounter with their problems and can interfere and induce potentially with the studies (Rathakrishnan, Molugulu, Parasuraman, & Narasappa, 2012). Besides, emotional and mental health problems, are tied by chronic and excessive stress that decrease self-esteem and impact on students academic performance, personal and professional development (Yusoff et al., 2010). So, stress can be affected on many mentally and physically problems and there are many factors that influencing on stress like, age, gender, parents, academic performance (Taragar, 2009).

Among students although the time consumed with peers increase significantly but, parents remain to have an important role in influence their adolescent's development (Moretti & Peled, 2004). Parental attachment refers to relational bond existing between a parent or guardian and child. Parental attachment is established through proximity, safety, and security that is offered by a parent or guardian and experienced by a child; however, parental attachment is expressed through varying levels of trust, communication, and alienation (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Nickerson & Nagle, 2005; Schnyders, 2012).

Attachment is a phenomenon that is determined at the first ages of life and is thought to be incessant; it similarly outlines person's pattern of founding relationship (Dogan, Gur, Sener, & Cetindag, 2012; Kesebir, Luszczynska, Pyszczynski, & Benight, 2011). Variances in attachment result from their insights about whether porter is accessible when the want rises or whether he/she is sensitive. While children whose parents act perceptively and reliably toward child's desires grow secure attachment style, children whose parents don't deliver child 'desires expressively and bodily develop insecure attachment style. Attachment relationship proven at the initial ages influences the relations which are skilled in the future stages. Secured attachment children are self-assured and they have secure attachment manners in

their social and close relations. Insecured attachment children affection themselves more valueless and faith other people less, they agonize from problems in personal and relational relationships as well as showing traditionalism difficulties (Kesebir et al., 2011).

An implication of this literature review shows the significance of attachment security in child improvement and its initiation in times of crisis or stress. Supporting parents through group-based parent education or individual consultation on ways to increase attachment security (typically through behaviors showing consistency, availability, and responsiveness) would appear to be an important role for school psychologists. The importance of raising securely attached students cannot be undervalued given that research has demonstrated that attachment schemas formed in early childhood can have behavioral consequences well into the adolescent and early adult periods and beyond. When students faced with a crisis, although they use parents as sources of support.

Li, McCarthy et al, Petroff showed that there is a significant relationship between parental attachment and stress (Li, 2008; McCarthy, Moller, & Fouladi, 2001; Petroff, 2008). Also in another study students with secure parental attachment are better able to develop and maintain positive relationships, and are better able to handle unfamiliar or stressful situations (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). In addition, some researches have indicated that young adults who have secure attachment to caregivers tend to report lower levels of perceived stress (Compas, Malcarne, & Fondacaro, 1988). Those studies examining the relationship between parental attachment and stress find that young adults with more secure attachment to parents report lower perceived stress (Howard & Medway, 2004; Kenny & Rice, 1995). Also, reported that in general students who report higher levels of attachment are less likely to report high levels of stress (McCarthy, Moller, & Fouladi, 2001). Several studies have investigated the relationship between parental attachment and stress but there are still insufficient studies in many countries and cultures.

Stress among students

Students more willingly tend to absorb in familiarities or meet circumstances that are stressful and are related with the development of emotive and behavioral difficulties (Saffari, Ghofranipour, Mahmoudi, & Montazeri, 2011). It is extensively recognized that students are in stressful period that these stresses can hypothetically cause to serious disorders lie, substance abuse, affective disorders, violence, eating disorders, sexual acting out, and a variety of other psychiatric conditions (Hoffmann, Cerbone, & Su, 2000; Howard & Medway,

2004). Stress is one of the significant issues which effect on the capability of students to meet with their difficulties and can interfere and persuade potentially with the studies (Rathakrishnan et al., 2012).

Stress among students is related to developmental challenges by adolescence, like puberty, school changing, the growth of academic demands, divorce, deaths and daily hassles for example, the conflict between parent–child and academic pressure (Suldo, Shaunessy, & Hardesty, 2008).

Importance of parental attachment among students

Parents have a crucial person in manipulating their adolescent's improvement. Adolescent-parent attachment has deep special effects on reasoning, societal and emotive operative. Secure attachment is related with less engagement in high threat behaviors, fewer psychological health difficulties, and improved societal skills and coping strategies (Moretti & Peled, 2004). Attachment dynamics have been investigated in various contexts and across a spectrum of age ranges. Secure attachment is related to self-confidence, healthy adjustment, and positive life transitions (Allen, Moore, Kuperminc, & Bell, 1998; Paterson, Pryor, & Field, 1995). They want close relation and physical obtainability of parents to deliver ease when they are upset; they do not want the same degree of closeness and can derive ease from knowing their parents are reassuring even when they are not present. Nevertheless, parental feeling continue to be critical in upholding attachment safety during adolescence, particularly in the province of independence needs (Moretti & Peled, 2004). Insecure attachment is related to anxiety, stress, depression, personality disorders, marital distress, and suicidal ideation (DiFilippo & Overholser, 2000). So, one of the factors to decrease stress is attachment.

The relation between parental attachment and stress among students

The attachment relationship forms the foundation of the attachment system that is revolved to when persons have stress (Bernier, Larose, Boivin, & Soucy, 2004). When undergoing stress, persons with secure attachments see themselves as nearer to and more gullible of others; they construe stress as thought-provoking, instead of intimidating. Secure attachments prepare persons to encounter with lifetime's contests and stresses. When persons are intricate in insecure attachments, their evaluation of occasions might be changed. Spirits of uncertainty, distrust, and absence of self-possession that is typical of insecure person attachments avoid optimum presentation and rise susceptibility to stress (Bernier et al., 2004).

Therefore, less secure attachment is deliberated a susceptibility or reactivity issue. Securely attached persons may be susceptible to stress special effects. Secure person attachment acts as a defensive mechanism and decreases the stress (Petroff, 2008; Solberg & Viliarreal, 1997). Related to previous studies, securely attached students have fewer psychological health problems, lower levels of depression, stress. Also, they less likely to engage in substance use and disruptive manners (Doyle & Moretti, 2000). Those students that had stronger attachment with their parents had less stress and more adjustment (Mattanah, Lopez, & Govern, 2011; Power, 2004).

Howard and Medway (2004) examined that coping with stress is one of the most important functions of attachment style among students. Their attachment security was positively connected to family communication and negatively connected to negative avoidance behaviors such as drinking or using drugs. According to the results of many studies, there is a negative relationship between attachment and stress (Howard & Medway, 2004; McCarthy et al., 2001; McCarthy, Lambert, & Moller, 2006; Vogel & Wei, 2005). Results proved that difficulties in attachment were revealed in emotional stress and dysfunctional interactive relations (Mallinckrodt & Wei, 2005). Although, there was a negative relationship between attachment and stress, but the investigators highlighted that this was a correlational, not causative, relationship. Low parental attachment was definitely correlated with stress indications and stress created feelings. Secure attachment was related with lower levels of stress indications and lower levels of stress-produced feelings than insecure attachment (McCarthy et al., 2006). As secure attachment augmented, stress indications and stress-produced feelings weakened (Petroff, 2008).

Some investigators have established a contact outcome between attachment and stress. For example, McCarthy, Moller and Fouladi (McCarthy et al., 2001) found attachment styles change the ways that persons respond to stress. Secured attachment students perceived less stress (Petroff, 2008). Throughout adolescence lifespan, secure attachment is connected to fewer difficulties of psychological wellbeing, linking lower levels of depression, anxiety and stress. Securely attached students engross less in antisocial actions. It is likewise cope the changing to high school more successfully, and definitely more enjoy the relations with their family and nobles. They show less concern and stress in difficult conditions (Li, 2008).

Parental friendliness is related to reduced adolescent psychological problems, including less antisocial behavior , stress and substance use (Operario, Tschann, Flores, & Bridges, 2006). Several studies have shown attachment is a predictive of antisocial behavior

and adolescent stress (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Howard & Medway, 2004; Warren, Huston, Egeland, & Sroufe, 1997).

Moreover, for supporting the contributing factor of parental attachment, both attachment and coping involve cognitive interpretations of stressful events and decisions regarding how much trust to place in self and others. Secured students may be viewed as using more effective coping mechanisms and thereby perceiving less stress impact compared to less secure children (Compas et al., 1988; Howard & Medway, 2004). Howard and Medway concluded that secure students would endorse the stress coping techniques of family communication and positive avoidance, and report relatively low stress. These students would see their families as supportive and available and use active coping strategies (Howard & Medway, 2004).

Conclusion

The reasoning of the present article is to appraisal the relationship between parental attachment and stress. Consequently, the family could be considered as one of the effect and parental attachment has an influential impact on stress. Therefore, secured attachment students perceive less stress, they have fewer problems and lower levels of depression and anxiety. Most of them do not have antisocial activities. They cope the changing to high school more successfully and encounter with less problems in school environment.

The results of this study appear to have particular relevance for educators and school counselors and educational psychologists who work with students. Lastly, the results of this study seem to have implications for counseling. So far, several studies have produced estimates of the relationship between parental attachment and stress, but there are still insufficient studies in many countries.

References

- Aldwin, C. M. (2007). *Stress, coping, and development: An integrative perspective*. The Guilford Press.
- Aldwin, C. M., & Werner, E. E. (2009). *Stress, coping, and development: An integrative perspective*. United States of America: The Guilford Press.
- Allen, J. P., Moore, C., Kuperminc, G., & Bell, K. (1998). Attachment and adolescent psychosocial functioning. *Child Development, 69*(5), 1406-1419.

- Armsden, G. C., & Greenberg, M. T. (1987). The inventory of parent and peer attachment: Individual differences and their relationship to psychological well-being in adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 16*(5), 427-454.
- Bernier, A., Larose, S., Boivin, M., & Soucy, N. (2004). Attachment state of mind: Implications for adjustment to college. *Journal of Adolescent Research, 19*(6), 783-806.
- Compas, B. E., Malcarne, V. L., & Fondacaro, K. M. (1988). Coping with stressful events in older children and young adolescents. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 56*(3), 405.
- DiFilippo, J. M., & Overholser, J. C. (2000). Suicidal ideation in adolescent psychiatric inpatients as associated with depression and attachment relationships. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 29*(2), 155-166.
- Dogan, D., Gur, K., Sener, N., & Cetindag, Z. (2012). The Ways of Handling Stress and the Attachment Forms to Parents of University Students. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 47*, 470-476.
- Doyle, A. B., & Moretti, M. M. (2000). Attachment to parents and adjustment in adolescence: Literature review and policy implications. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 64*, 244-253.
- Fink, G. (2009). Stress: definition and history. *Stress Science: Neuroendocrinology, 3*.
- Hoffmann, J. P., Cerbone, F. G., & Su, S. S. (2000). A growth curve analysis of stress and adolescent drug use. *Substance Use & Misuse, 35*(5), 687-716.
- Howard, M. S., & Medway, F. J. (2004). Adolescents' attachment and coping with stress. *Psychology in the Schools, 41*(3), 391-402.
- Kenny, M. E., & Rice, K. G. (1995). Attachment to Parents and Adjustment in Late Adolescent College Students Current Status, Applications, and Future Considerations. *The Counseling Psychologist, 23*(3), 433-456.
- Kesebir, P., Luszczynska, A., Pyszczynski, T., & Benight, C. (2011). Posttraumatic stress disorder involves disrupted anxiety-buffer mechanisms. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, Forthcoming*.
- Li, M. H. (2008). Relationships among stress coping, secure attachment, and the trait of resilience among Taiwanese college students. *College Student Journal, 42*(2), 312-325.
- Mallinckrodt, B., & Wei, M. (2005). Attachment, Social Competencies, Social Support, and Psychological Distress. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(3), 358.

- Mason, J. W. (1975). A historical view of the stress field. *Journal of human stress, 1*(2), 22-36.
- Mattanah, J. F., Lopez, F. G., & Govern, J. M. (2011). The contributions of parental attachment bonds to college student development and adjustment: A meta-analytic review.
- McCarthy, Moller, & Fouladi. (2001). Continued attachment to parents: Its relationship to affect regulation and perceived stress among college students. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development; Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development.*
- McCarthy, C., Moller, N., & Fouladi, R. (2001). Continued attachment to parents: Its relationship to affect regulation and perceived stress among college students. *Measurement and evaluation in counseling and development.*
- McCarthy, C. J., Lambert, R. G., & Moller, N. P. (2006). Preventive resources and emotion regulation expectancies as mediators between attachment and college students' stress outcomes. *International Journal of Stress Management, 13*(1), 1.
- Moretti, M. M., & Peled, M. (2004). Adolescent-parent attachment: Bonds that support healthy development. *Paediatrics & Child Health, 9*(8), 551.
- Operario, D., Tschann, J., Flores, E., & Bridges, M. (2006). Brief report: Associations of Parental Warmth, Peer Support, and Gender with Adolescent Emotional Distress. *Journal of Adolescence, 29*(2), 299-305.
- Paterson, J., Pryor, J., & Field, J. (1995). Adolescent Attachment to Parents and Friends in Relation to Aspects of Self-esteem. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 24*(3), 365-376.
- Petroff, L. L. (2008). Stress, adult attachment, and academic success among community college students.
- Power, T. G. (2004). Stress and coping in childhood: The parents' role. *Parenting: Science and Practice, 4*(4), 271-317.
- Rathakrishnan, B., Molugulu, N., Parasuraman, B., & Narasappa, K. (2012). The Relationship of Stress, Alcoholism and Sexual Behavior with Mental Health among Secondary School Students: A Study in Sabah, Malaysia. *European Journal of Social Sciences, 31*(3), 376-383.
- Saffari, M., Ghofranipour, F., Mahmoudi, M., & Montazeri, A. (2011). Stress, Coping Strategies and Related Factors in a Sample of Iranian Adolescents. *Iranian Red Crescent Medical Journal, 13*(9), 641.

- Selye, H. (1956). The stress of life.
- Solberg, V. S., & Viliarreal, P. (1997). Examination of self-efficacy, social support, and stress as predictors of psychological and physical distress among Hispanic college students. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 19*(2), 182-201.
- Suldo, S. M., Shaunessy, E., & Hardesty, R. (2008). Relationships among stress, coping, and mental health in high-achieving high school students. *Psychology in the Schools, 45*(4), 273-290.
- Taragar, S. (2009). *Stressors among the Students of High School*. University of Agricultural Sciences.
- Vogel, D. L., & Wei, M. (2005). Adult Attachment and Help-Seeking Intent: The Mediating Roles of Psychological Distress and Perceived Social Support. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(3), 347.
- Warren, S. L., Huston, L., Egeland, B., & Sroufe, L. (1997). Child and adolescent anxiety disorders and early attachment. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 36*(5), 637-644.
- Yusoff, M. S. B., Ahmad Hamid, A. H., Rosli, N. R., Zakaria, N. A., Che Rameli, N. A., Abdul Rahman, N. S., . . . Abdul Rahman, A. (2010). Prevalence of stress, stressors and coping strategies among secondary school students in Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Malaysia. *International Journal of Students' Research, 1*(1), 23-28.