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## Effect of student's attachment styles on rejection sensitivity and self-esteem

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### Abstract

This research examines the intriguing interplay between student attachment styles and their levels of rejection sensitivity and self-esteem. By exploring these relationships, we aim to deepen our understanding of how attachment patterns impact individual's emotional well-being and social perceptions. To examine the effect of student's attachment styles on rejection sensitivity and self-esteem, following psychological tools were used; Perceived Parenting Style, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire Adult Version (A-RSQ). The study involved a sample of 120 college students between the ages of 18 to 25 years. Statistical analyses of the data revealed that students with secure attachment styles had lower rejection sensitivity and higher self-esteem. In contrast, students with anxious and avoidant attachment styles reported higher rejection sensitivity and lower self-esteem. These findings emphasize the importance of understanding attachment styles for student's rejection sensitivity and self-esteem. However, more research in this area is likely to enhance the self-esteem of students through effective interventions.

**Keywords:** Attachment style, rejection sensitivity, self-esteem, emotional well-being, parent, attachment

### Introduction

The intricate interplay between attachment styles, rejection sensitivity, and self-esteem has garnered significant attention within the realm of psychological research. Attachment theory posits that early caregiver-child interactions shape individuals' attachment styles, which subsequently influence their perceptions and responses to social interactions throughout life (Bowlby, 1969) [4]. Rejection sensitivity, characterized by heightened vigilance to signs of rejection and an increased likelihood of interpreting ambiguous social cues as indicative of rejection (Downey & Feldman, 1996) [10], plays a pivotal role in interpersonal dynamics, affecting individuals' emotional well-being and social functioning (Ayduk *et al.*, 2001) [2]. Concurrently, self-esteem, the subjective evaluation of one's worth and capabilities (Rosenberg, 1965) [24], is closely intertwined with attachment experiences and can be both a consequence and a predictor of attachment-related behaviors and perceptions (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007) [20]. Rejection sensitivity is a concept that refers to the anxious anticipation of rejection, the easy emergence of the perception of rejection, and overreacting to rejection (Downey & Feldman, 1996) [10].

While extensive research has examined the individual effects of attachment styles, rejection sensitivity, and self-esteem on various aspects of psychological functioning, relatively fewer studies have investigated the intricate relationships among these constructs, particularly within the context of student populations. Understanding how attachment styles shape students' perceptions of rejection and influence their self-esteem is critical, as these factors can significantly impact academic performance, social integration, and overall psychological well-being during the formative years of development (Park *et al.*, 2010) [23]. Furthermore, elucidating these associations may inform interventions aimed at promoting adaptive coping strategies and fostering positive social-emotional development among students.

Therefore, the present study seeks to address this gap in the literature by examining the effect of students' attachment styles on rejection sensitivity and self-esteem. By employing a comprehensive and nuanced approach, this research aims to shed light on the complex interplay between attachment dynamics, interpersonal perceptions, and self-evaluative

processes among students, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the factors influencing psychological adjustment and well-being in educational settings.

Therefore, the present study seeks to address this gap in the literature by examining the effect of students' attachment styles on rejection sensitivity and self-esteem. By employing a comprehensive and nuanced approach, this research aims to shed light on the complex interplay between attachment dynamics, interpersonal perceptions, and self-evaluative processes among students, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the factors influencing psychological adjustment and well-being in educational settings.

### Objective

1. To assess the attachment styles (e.g., secure, anxious, avoidant) of students in the study group.
2. To measure the levels of rejection sensitivity among these students.
3. To evaluate the self-esteem levels of the students participating in the research.
4. To analyse the correlation between attachment styles and rejection sensitivity.
5. To examine the correlation between attachment styles and self-esteem.
6. To explore potential moderating factors (e.g., gender, age) in the relationship between attachment styles, rejection sensitivity, and self-esteem.
7. To provide recommendations or interventions that educational institutions could implement based on the study's findings to promote healthier attachment and self-esteem development in students.

### Methodology

For this study, a systematic random sampling approach was utilized to select participants. The target sample consists of students from various educational institutions.

### Sampling Design

For this study, a systematic random sampling approach will be utilized to select participants. The target population will consist of students from various educational institutions.

### Tool and Scale

The research employs established psychological measures to assess attachment styles, rejection sensitivity, and self-esteem among student participants. Attachment styles were evaluated using the Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) or similar tools, while rejection sensitivity was gauged with the Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (RSQ). Self-esteem levels were measured utilizing the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. These instruments were widely used in psychological studies and have demonstrated strong reliability and validity across different demographic groups. By employing these scales, the study aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between attachment styles, rejection sensitivity, and self-esteem among students, contributing valuable insights to the existing literature in this field.

### Ethical Issues

Ensuring participant anonymity and confidentiality Adhering to ethical guidelines and, if necessary, seeking approval from the ethics review board

### Result

The data from the table indicates notable correlations between attachment styles and certain psychological factors. Notably, rejection sensitivity appears significantly linked to authoritative and permissive attachment styles, with respective p-values of 0.0258 and 0.026. However, there isn't a significant association between rejection sensitivity and the authoritarian attachment style ( $p = 0.019$ ).

Regarding self-esteem, it's significantly associated solely with the authoritative attachment style ( $p = 0.0258$ ). The authoritarian and permissive attachment styles don't demonstrate significant connections with self-esteem, with p-values of 0.019 and 0.026 respectively.

In summary, individuals with authoritative attachment styles may exhibit higher self-esteem and lower rejection sensitivity compared to those with authoritarian or permissive attachment styles. Nevertheless, additional research is necessary to grasp the intricacies of these relationships and their implications fully.

**Table 1:** A significant relationship has been found between authoritative parenting style and self esteem

IV Attachment Style	Roy's Largest Root(F)	P	DV	
			Rejection Sensitivity	Self Esteem
Authoritative	1.84	0.0258*	Not Significant	Significant at 0.05
Authoritarian	1.78	0.019*	Not Significant	Not Significant
Permissive	1.716	0.026*	Not Significant	Significant at 0.05

### Discussion & Conclusion

From the result table, a significant relationship has been found between Authoritative Parenting Style and Self Esteem. So we can say that if a subject belong from Authoritative Parenting Style then he or she have High Self Esteem as well as good social skills, peer acceptance, lower levels of antisocial and aggressive behavior. Similarly, there exists a significant relationship between Permissive Parenting Style and Self-esteem. Teens with Permissive Parents have Higher Self-Esteem. They are less likely to view the world as a hostile, threatening place, and less likely to be emotionally withdrawn. On the other hand, there is no significant relationship between Authoritarian Parenting Style and Self Esteem.

It can be attributed to the fact that the participants often face a lack of support and encouragement from parents, as in neglectful or authoritarian families, could result in the subject's low perception of self, or Low Self-Esteem.

To sum up, the study reveals a noteworthy correlation between Authoritative Parenting Style and high Self Esteem, along with positive social skills and lower antisocial behavior. Similarly, Permissive Parenting Style is associated with elevated Self-Esteem and a less hostile worldview in teens. However, no significant relationship was identified between Authoritarian Parenting Style and Self Esteem. Furthermore, the lack of support in neglectful or authoritarian families may contribute to lower Self-Esteem in subjects.

Interestingly, no significant association was found between Parenting Style and Rejection Sensitivity in this study.

### Implication

Future study may be conducted on a more diverse and larger sample involving other relevant variables such as mental health, academic environment, and cultural and societal factors.

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### Appendixes

Univariate Tests						
	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	P
Authoritative	Self esteem	839	28	30.0	1.752	0.025
	Rejection sensitivity	9586	28	342.4	0.837	0.697
Residuals	Self esteem	1557	91	17.1		
	Rejection sensitivity	37219	91	409.0		

Multivariate Tests						
		Value	F	DF1	DF2	P
Authoritative	Pillai's Trace	0.550	1.23	56	182	0.153
	Wilks' Lambda	0.518	1.25	56	180	0.137
	Hotelling's Trace	0.799	1.27	56	178	0.123
	Roy's Largest Root	0.566	1.84	28	91	0.016

Multivariate Tests						
		value	F	DF1	DF2	P
Authoritarian	Pillai's Trace	0.431	0.893	56	182	0.684
	Wilks' Lambda	0.614	0.887	56	180	0.695
	Hotelling's Trace	0.554	0.880	56	178	0.706
	Roy's Largest Root	0.329	1.07	28	91	0.390

Univariate Tests						
	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	P
Authoritarian	Self esteem	587	28	21.0	1.055	0.409
	Rejection sensitivity	8654	28	309.1	0.737	0.819
Residuals	Self esteem	1809	91	19.9		
	Rejection sensitivity	38152	91	419.2		

Univariate Tests						
	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	P
Authoritarian	Self esteem	587	28	21.0	1.055	0.409
	Rejection sensitivity	8654	28	309.1	0.737	0.819
Residuals	Self esteem	1809	91	19.9		
	Rejection sensitivity	38152	91	419.2		

Multivariate Tests						
		Value	F	DF1	DF2	P
Permissive	Pillai's Trace	0.587	1.18	62	176	0.203
	Wilks' Lambda	0.491	1.20	62	174	0.180
	Hotelling's Trace	0.880	1.22	62	172	0.160
	Roy's Largest Root	0.628	1.78	31	88	0.019

Univariate Tests						
	Dependent Variable	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	P
Permissive	Self esteem	903	31	29.1	1.716	0.026
	Rejection sensitivity	10052	31	324.2	0.776	0.785
Residuals	Self esteem	1493	88	17.0		
	Rejection sensitivity	36754	88	417.7		

Descriptive		
	Self esteem	Rejection sensitivity
N	120	120
Missing	0	0
Mean	28.3	101
Median	28.0	102
Standard deviation	4.49	19.8
Minimum	18.0	58.0
Maximum	40.0	167