

Features of Attachment in Father- daughter Relationship and Depressive Symptoms in Daughters Among Emerging Adults



Ooi, Yee Jie., Vaydich, J. L. & Fossum, J. L.

Introduction

Emerging adults (especially female) are at risk of developing depression and the parent-child attachment relationship was found to be accounting for that (Bowlby, 1988). However, only very few of the psychological literature are focusing on emerging adults, despite the increased depression in this developmental stage.

Past studies have suggested the importance of fathers in parental attachment and the psychological well-being of a child but very few of them are focusing on fathers, especially father-daughters relationship compared to other family ties (Bogels & Phares, 2008; Eliezer et al., 2012).

Bowlby's attachment theory suggests that parental attachment relationships are based on "secure base", "safe haven" and "proximity seeking" (Clarke et al., 2020) and were significantly related to depression.

"Trust", "communication" and "alienation" proposed by Armsden and Greenberg (1987) share similar aspects with the 3 characteristics proposed in attachment theory. Past studies suggested trust and communication were positively associated with depression while alienation was negatively associated.

Present study aimed to address the need and fill the research gap by exploring the relationship between features of attachment in the father-daughter relationship and depressive symptoms in daughters among emerging adults.

Method

Participants

- 116 daughters from an existing data set
- Age ranging from 18 to 25 years ($M=19.51$, $SD=1.30$)

Measures

- Revised Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) - Father subscale (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987)
 - Trust, Communication, Alienation
- Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CESD) (Radloff, 1977)

Results

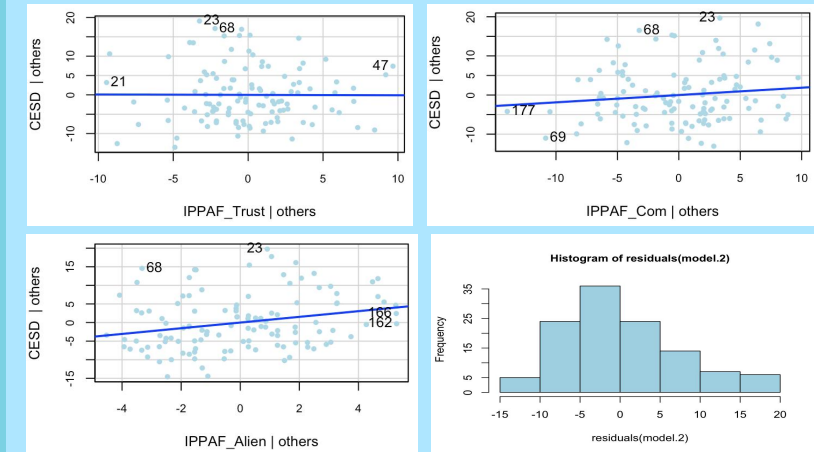
- Correlation test suggested a moderate to strong correlations between the variables (-0.85 to 0.80).
- Positive correlation: trust and communication, alienation and depression
- Negative correlation: trust and alienation, trust and depression, communication and alienation, communication and depression.

Correlation Between Trust, Communication, Alienation and Depression Score

| | Trust | Communication | Alienation | Depression Score |
|------------------|-------|---------------|------------|------------------|
| Trust | 1.00 | 0.80 | -0.85 | -0.27 |
| Communication | 0.80 | 1.00 | -0.80 | -0.20 |
| Alienation | -0.85 | -0.80 | 1.00 | 0.34 |
| Depression Score | -0.27 | -0.20 | 0.34 | 1.00 |

- Case 23 might be a concern for outlier but it was decided to keep that as it might still be a meaningful data for the study

The model including trust, communication and alienation explained 13.25% of the proportion of variance in daughters' depression scores. The overall model was significant, $R^2 = 0.1325$, $F(3,112) = 5.70$, $p < .05$. However, only alienation was significant to predict depressive symptoms while controlling for parental trust and communication, $\beta_{Alienation} = 0.77$, $t(112) = 2.72$, $p < .05$.



The assumption of normality may not hold for the residuals of the model. The normality of the data was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test ($W = 0.96$, $p < .05$).

Discussion

- Girls tended to express greater closeness and shared more personal issues with their mothers than fathers (Collins and Russell, 1991; Van Lissa et al., 2019).
- Emerging adults in autonomy and independence stage may perceive communication with parents as less positive