

Study on how aggression, stress and low self-esteem affect parent-child relations...

[Psychology](#), [Behaviorism](#)



The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of parent-child attachment on aggression, social stress, and self-esteem. According to the internal working model, a parent-child attachment established in infancy is likely to predict how the child will establish relationships in the future. This in turn will impact the child's social competence and overall behavior and demeanor. Based on previous research, the researchers hypothesized that a better quality parent-child attachment would be associated with lower aggression, lower social stress levels, and greater self-esteem. The researchers used multiple regression analyses and indexes to evaluate attachment relationships and various behaviors of the children. The method of data collection used in this study is self-report. The study used a theoretical framework of attachment. Attachment is classified as the emotional bond between an infant and caregiver, typically a mother. Parent-child attachment at a young age has been proven to have an impact on the quality of future relationships. By studying attachment, we are able to better understand developmental trajectories and outcomes later in life. Previous studies display the strong relationship between parent-child attachment quality and aggression, social competence, and self-esteem. This study aims to enhance the prior findings regarding attachment theory by applying them to racially and ethnically diverse samples.

The participants of this study were 91 boys that were recommended to go to a psychiatric clinic in Singapore based on their behaviors. Participants ranged from ages 8-12 with a mean age of 10.23 years. 90.3 percent of the boys were Chinese, 5.4 percent were Malay, 1.1 percent was Indian, and 3.2 percent represented other ethnicities. The boys in this study had to be

diagnosed with a behavioral disorder such as ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, or Conduct Disorder in order to participate. These boys were described as physically aggressive children based on behaviors that included fighting with other children, lying, and teasing their peers. Parental consent was required to participate and each child needed to be able to speak and comprehend English.

The study used various questionnaires and indexes to obtain data. The boys completed a demographic questionnaire to indicate their age, ethnicity, educational level, and marital status of their parents. Using the parent domain subscale of the Parenting Stress Index, parents evaluated their overall function as parents in terms of satisfying their children's needs and being motivated to be close with their children. Parents also evaluated their child's aggression levels and behaviors using the Aggressive Behavior subscale of the Child Behavior Checklist. The children were asked to complete the Social Stress subscale of the Self-Report of personality-Behavior Assessment System for Children in order to evaluate their stress levels in social situations. Finally, the Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale was used to get a sense of the children's overall self-worth. All responses to these inventories were kept confidential.

Multiple regression analyses were used to examine the relationships among the various questionnaires. These regression analyses looked at the correlation between each of the three behaviors and parent-child attachment. Results showed that quality parent-child attachments were associated with low levels of parent-rated aggression, lower social stress,

and higher self-esteem in the children. The reciprocals of these findings are also true in that poor parent-child attachments were associated with higher levels of parent-rated aggression, higher social stress, and lower self-esteem in the children.

Each hypothesis of this study was confirmed. The researchers found that a quality parent-child attachment was associated with lower parent-rated aggression. Parent-child attachment also proved to be a strong predictor of social stress and self-esteem. The boys who had positive attachments with their parents were found to have lower rates of social stress and higher self-esteem. Overall, the study found that positive parent-child attachments were associated with positive outcomes in terms of the child's aggression, social stress, and self-esteem levels. This study's results were consistent with the findings of other studies on parent-child attachment quality in Western countries.

Article Critique

The study sufficiently addressed the research question posed in the study. Prior research demonstrated the relationship of a quality parent-child attachment with developmental outcomes in Western populations. This study allowed us to further apply this research to other cultures. The research conducted strengthened the argument on the impact parent-child attachment can have on a child's aggression, social stress, and self-esteem. This study sheds light on the impact, and importance, of the parent-child relationship on social and emotional development. The findings of this study provide useful information in terms of how to evaluate children who have

diagnosed behavioral disorders in terms of their attachments. More specifically, the results tell us the importance of a secure attachment in establishing self-esteem and preventing behavioral issues in the long run.

This study used five different questionnaires for data collection. The implication that arises with questionnaires is the risk of low reliability. There is no way to confidently determine whether the subjects are being entirely truthful in their responses. Particularly regarding personal and negative information, people may not accurately portray their behaviors in these questionnaires. This being said, research may be treated with skepticism when evaluating how reliable it is. In addition, the parents in the study are the only ones commenting on the parent-child attachment, while the children are the only ones commenting on their aggression, stress, and self-esteem. The study would have yielded more beneficial results if both parties contributed their input on each of their questionnaires.

Further implications arise in terms of the sample of participants in the study. Although the study aimed to test participants that represented non-western populations, the sample only ended up sampling Asian subjects. Additionally, the participants were all boys with behavior disorders and therefore the sample is not representative of the population since it does not take gender or various behaviors into account. The results can be generalized to the Asian population, or to boys with behavior disorders, but do not expand much farther than that. This may lead critics to again question the reliability of the study based on how the participants were recruited and how representative the sample is. Although the lack of diversity among this study

is something to consider, the findings contribute to the growing research of parent-child attachment in Asian clinical settings.

Overall, this study is meaningful. Despite some of the implications discussed, the study provides valuable information about the impact parent-child attachment can have on developmental outcomes. The internal working model displays that the attachment a child establishes with their parents in infancy will provide the framework for future relationships. These attachments may impact social competence, behavior, and other developmental outcomes. In this study, the questionnaires are deemed as an unreliable source for data collection. This being said, future research on this topic should consider using other methods of obtaining data. Using an observational study that is conducted in a laboratory will likely produce more reliable data since variables are easier to control. Not only would the results of an experiment be more reliable, they would also be more valid since laboratory studies are easier to replicate. Even with these implications, this study provides valuable information for those who work with behavioral disorder patients in terms of better evaluating when it is appropriate to intervene and help improve parent-child attachments. The knowledge of the benefits of secure attachments on developmental outcomes will further encourage those working in clinical settings to help secure these parent-child attachments in any way they can.