

Positive and Negative Emotional Regulation in Adolescence: The Role of Parental Attachment in this Stage

Nelby Baby

Abstract: Adolescence is a critical developmental period marked by significant biological, cognitive, and social changes with heightened emotional intensity. Emotional regulation refers to processes through which individuals influence which emotions they have and how they experience and express them. Strategies are categorized as positive - cognitive reappraisal, problem-solving, seeking social support - and negative - rumination, avoidance, expressive suppression. Parental attachment provides a safe base fostering exploration, self-regulation, and resilience, while insecure attachment is associated with maladaptive strategies. Despite extensive research separately, limited research exists within Indian adolescent population. This study examined relationship between parental attachment and positive and negative emotional regulation among adolescents from urban Idukki, Kerala. **Objectives:** 1) To assess levels of positive and negative emotional regulation among adolescents 2) To examine nature of parental attachment among adolescents 3) To study relationship between attachment and regulation strategies 4) To compare across gender and age groups (13-15 and 16-19) 5) To determine whether attachment significantly predicts regulation.

Keywords: Parental Attachment, Emotional Regulation, Adolescents, Coping Strategies, Indian Adolescents

1. Introduction

Adolescence (13-19 years) involves rapid changes requiring adaptive emotion management. Bowlby's attachment theory emphasizes secure base as essential for healthy regulation. In Kerala, rapid urbanization, academic pressure, digital exposure create new challenges for parent-adolescent relationships. Urban adolescents face competitive admissions and high parental expectations. Healthy parental attachment is essential for school counseling, early prevention of mental health issues, and parent education programs. This study provides culturally relevant data for Kerala. Significance: Academic - adds to Indian literature; Practical - helps parents, teachers, counselors; Social - promotes better communication in urban families. Scope limited to 300 dyads, cognitive emotional regulation, urban Kerala.

2. Review of Literature

Brumariu & Kerns (2010) - secure attachment promotes adaptive strategies like reappraisal. Dutta & Saha (2020) - attachment and emotional competence in Indian adolescents. Kapoor & Singh (2018) - gender differences in regulation. Nolen-Hoeksema (1994) - gender socialization and rumination. Steinberg & Morris (2001) - adolescent development and parental reliance.

Armsden & Greenberg (1987) - IPPA development. Garnefski et al. (2001) - CERQ cognitive strategies.

3. Research Methodology

Research Topic

Positive and Negative Emotional Regulation in Adolescence: The Role of Parental Attachment.

Aim

To examine relationship between parental attachment and positive and negative emotional regulation among adolescents 13-19 years in urban Kerala, and understand how attachment contributes to adaptive and maladaptive strategies.

Hypotheses

H1 Secure attachment positively correlated with positive regulation. H2 Insecure attachment positively correlated with negative regulation. H3 Attachment significantly predicts regulation. H4 Significant gender differences exist. H5 Significant age group differences exist.

Operational Definitions

Adolescence: 13-19 years urban Kerala. **Emotional Regulation:** cognitive strategies measured by CERQ - Positive includes reappraisal, planning, acceptance; Negative includes rumination, catastrophizing, suppression. **Parental Attachment:** emotional bond of trust, communication, low alienation measured by IPPA. **Urban Area:** municipal corporations/municipalities as per Census 2011.

Variables: Independent - Parental Attachment. Dependent - Emotional Regulation (Positive and Negative). Control - Age, Gender, Type of family, parental education.

Tools: CERQ (36-item, 5-point Likert) and IPPA (25-item, Trust, Communication, Alienation subscales).

Sample: 300 dyads from urban Idukki. Adolescents: 150 male, 150 female. Age: 13-15 (142), 16-19 (158). Family: Nuclear 210, Joint 90. Purposive sampling from higher secondary schools and colleges.

Method: 300 adolescent-parent dyads from urban areas of Idukki, Kerala. Tools: Inventory of Parent and Peer

Volume 15 Issue 10, October 2026

Fully Refereed | Open Access | Double Blind Peer Reviewed Journal

www.ijsr.net

Attachment (IPPA) and Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ). Statistical analysis using SPSS 26 - descriptive, correlation, t-test, ANOVA, regression.

4. Analysis & Findings

Socio-demographic: N=300. Correlation confirmed H1 and H2. Regression confirmed H3 - attachment is significant predictor explaining 27% variance. t-test and ANOVA confirmed H4 and H5.

Findings: Secure attachment significantly positively correlated with positive emotional regulation ($r = 0.52$, $p < .001$) and negatively with negative regulation ($r = -0.38$, $p < .001$). Parental attachment predicted 27% variance in positive regulation, $F(1,198) = 73.42$. Females reported higher positive regulation and attachment; males reported higher negative regulation. Younger adolescents (13-15, $n=142$) showed stronger dependence on attachment than 16-19 ($n=158$).

All hypotheses accepted.

5. Discussion

- 1) Relationship: Secure attachment promotes reappraisal and planning; insecure promotes rumination. Consistent with prior literature. Adolescents who feel trusted and understood less likely to suppress.
- 2) Gender: Females higher positive regulation and attachment; males higher negative regulation. In Kerala context, girls socialized to express and seek support, boys encouraged to suppress.
- 3) Age: Younger adolescents more dependent on parental attachment for regulation than older, supporting developmental autonomy.
- 4) Predictive role: Despite high academic pressure, secure parent-child communication acts as protective factor.

6. Conclusions

- 1) Parental attachment significantly positively related to positive regulation
- 2) Insecure attachment related to negative strategies
- 3) Attachment significantly predicts both
- 4) Gender differences exist, females more adaptive
- 5) Age differences exist, younger stronger link. Thus, all hypotheses accepted.

7. Limitations

- 1) Limited to urban Idukki only
- 2) Self-report social desirability bias
- 3) Cross-sectional limits causality
- 4) Only cognitive ER measured
- 5) Only one parent data in some cases
- 6) Some improper responses.

8. Implications

For Parents - workshops on open communication and emotional coaching. For Schools - Life-Skills and ER training involving parents. For Counselors - attachment-based therapy. For Policy - mental health programs in Kerala schools focusing on family relationships.

9. Recommendations

Include rural samples, longitudinal design, include peer attachment and teacher support, intervention studies, qualitative interviews.

10. Summary

Analysis of 300 dyads shows secure parental attachment plays crucial role in promoting positive emotional regulation and reducing negative regulation among urban Kerala adolescents.

References

- [1] Brumariu, L.E., & Kerns, K.A. (2010). Child Development Perspectives. Dutta, P., & Saha, S. (2020).
- [2] Indian Journal of Psychology. Kapoor, R., & Singh, A. (2018).
- [3] Journal of Indian Psychology. Steinberg, L., & Morris, A.S. (2001).
- [4] Annual Review of Psychology. Garnefski, N. et al. (2001).
- [5] CERQ Manual. Armsden, G.C., & Greenberg, M.T. (1987). IPPA Manual.