

Differential Impacts of Maternal and Paternal Attachments on Adolescent Delinquency: Implications for Counselling

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ABSTRACT

Delinquency among adolescents is a growing concern in Iranian society. Research on the role of maternal and paternal attachments, particularly in the Iranian context, has received limited attention. This correlational study aims to concurrently investigate the predictive capacity of both maternal and paternal attachment on delinquent behaviours among Iranian adolescents. The sample included 528 students aged 15 and 17 from 10 government high schools in Tehran who were selected using multi-stage cluster sampling. Participants completed self-administered questionnaires using two established instruments. The findings highlighted a significant association between high parental attachment scores and low adolescent delinquent activity. Secure attachments to mothers and fathers were found to reduce engagement in delinquency. Adolescent age, fathers' educational level, and maternal attachment emerged as significant predictors of delinquency. Adolescents with insecure maternal attachments and older adolescents with educated fathers showed greater susceptibility to delinquent behaviour. The study also emphasises the vast contribution of mothers to adolescent development, suggesting the need for further exploration of

paternal influence on internal dynamics and delinquency in future research. In a broader sense, understanding the differential impacts of these attachments on adolescent delinquency may help counsellors to effectively address these issues and provide appropriate interventions.

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INTRODUCTION

According to United Nations estimates (UNICEF, 2020), millions of children and adolescents grapple with delinquent behaviours, with a notable concentration observed in densely populated cities across Africa, Latin America, and India. Research by Fatehi et al. (2018) underscores the persistent nature of teenage delinquency as a shared concern globally, extending its impact to Iran.

Considering the high incidence of delinquent behaviour among Iranian adolescents (Ardalan et al., 2010; Mohammadiasl, 2006) and the consequent effects on families and communities, a thorough investigation into the factors influencing adolescent delinquency is essential.

Parents, educators, and government agencies are under increasing pressure to investigate the underlying factors contributing to Iran's startling rise in delinquency rates. In the context of Iran, Fatehi et al. (2018) emphasise the vital need to give top priority to developing and applying successful preventive measures to reduce the societal impact of rising delinquency.

Delinquent behaviour is influenced by a multitude of factors, including societal dynamics, familial influences, and genetic predispositions. Social interactions, community context, parenting styles, parental attachment, family structures, and hereditary elements all contribute significantly to shaping the complex landscape of delinquent tendencies.

Recognising and understanding these interconnected factors is crucial for devising holistic strategies to prevent and address delinquency effectively.

Iran's unique cultural, social, and familial dynamics set the stage for distinctive parent-child relationships, influencing adolescent behaviour. Cultural values, extended family networks, and specific norms shape attachment patterns differently than in Western contexts. Factors like collectivism, religious influences, and socio-economic conditions contribute to these nuances. Despite the recognised importance, only a few studies have explored the relationship between parental attachment and adolescent delinquency, specifically within the Iranian context. (Mohammadi & Khalatbari, 2012; Mousavi et al., 2020; Pournaghash-Tehrani et al., 2021)

Our study aims to fill this gap, building on the limited existing research and contributing to a more nuanced understanding of how these factors intersect in Iran. Recognising these unique contextual elements is crucial for tailoring effective interventions and strategies for Iranian families, providing insights not readily applicable to studies in other cultural contexts.

A study conducted in Iran revealed a significant association between the extent of parental involvement, parental attachment security, and the frequency or intensity of aggressive behaviour observed in school-aged children. Parenting dynamics and emotional connections formed during childhood were highlighted by their substantial impact on the behavioural

patterns of children in educational environments (Mohammadi & Khalatbari, 2012).

Despite the recognised importance of parental attachment as a fundamental determinant influencing adolescent behaviour and delinquency outcomes in Iran, little research has been conducted into the relationship between parental attachment and delinquency. While recent global studies, such as those by Hardie (2022), Meeus et al. (2002) and Choon et al. (2013), support the critical role of secure parent-child attachments in reducing the likelihood of adolescents engaging in deviant behaviours, there is a significant gap in the Iranian research landscape regarding this critical association, with only a few studies examining it.

As researchers further explore this area, investigating the differing impacts of maternal and paternal attachments becomes increasingly crucial; however, Solakoglu (2020) points out that few studies have been carried out in non-Western cultural contexts. Recognising that children form distinct attachment patterns with mothers and fathers emphasises the necessity of conducting more thorough research in the Iranian context.

It is now widely recognised that children develop unique attachment patterns with their fathers and mothers, shaping their behaviour and susceptibility to delinquency (Buist et al., 2020; Doherty & Beaton, 2004; Klahr et al., 2014). This evolving body of literature aims to shed further light on the distinctive influences exerted by maternal

and paternal attachments on adolescent behaviour and the risk of engaging in delinquent acts.

In recent years, studies have provided valuable insights into the specific impact of mother-adolescent relationships on developmental outcomes and delinquency. Notably, research has underscored the importance of secure attachments to mothers, characterised by emotional closeness and supportive interactions, demonstrating a positive association with developmental outcomes and a reduced risk of delinquency (Guo, 2022; Jeet & Jain, 2019), highlighting the critical role of a strong and secure mother-adolescent bond.

Conversely, recent investigations have also shed light on the significance of father-adolescent interactions in understanding the risk of delinquency (Ali et al., 2021; Jackson et al., 2023; Svensson & Johnson, 2022). Troubled father-adolescent relationships have been identified as contributing factors to increased engagement in delinquent behaviours among adolescents. Research by Widmer et al. (2023) further supports the importance of cultivating secure maternal attachment relationships in relation to the progression of delinquency among adolescents who display symptoms of ADHD.

While previous research has provided valuable insights into the significance of parental attachment, recent studies focusing on the differential effects of maternal and paternal attachments have advanced the understanding of their unique impacts on adolescent delinquency (Hoeve et al.,

2012). The researchers aim to discern each parent's specific contributions and attachment dynamics to better comprehend the intricate interactions between parental-child attachment and adolescent delinquency, contributing to a more nuanced comprehension of this important matter. In addition, this research may help to deepen counsellors' understanding of how to approach these problems and offer appropriate interventions. In a literature review of 21 studies, Wright and Edginton (2016) reported that therapeutic interventions increased secure attachment behaviours in children.

Prior studies (Bakermans-Kranenburg et al., 2003; Dozier et al., 2006) and more recent studies (Jugovac et al., 2022) provide strong support for attachment and emotion-focused parenting interventions in improving parental sensitivity and effectively reducing non-compliance and aggression in adolescents. However, sample sizes from this research are frequently small; therefore, there is currently little information regarding the efficacy of interventions attempting to enhance secure attachment among particular child age groups (Wright & Edginton, 2016). Additional research has revealed large demographic gaps and a lack of effective interventions for older children and at-risk populations (Wright & Edginton, 2016). By analysing the unique contributions of maternal and paternal attachments, the study aims to provide fresh insights into how each parent's role influences adolescent susceptibility to engaging in delinquent acts.

Rationales and Objectives of the Study

The study seeks to investigate the distinct influences of paternal and maternal attachment on child delinquency outcomes. Previous research has highlighted the importance of examining paternal and maternal attachments in shaping child behaviour and involvement in delinquent activities (Ji et al., 2022). As parental attachment is a protective factor against child delinquency, exploring the intricacies of distinct maternal and paternal attachment roles is significant to the body of research (Allen, 2023).

In regard to therapeutic intervention, attachment-derived evidence-based treatments have demonstrated positive effects on attachment security and emotional and behavioural functioning; however, most studies are based on samples with infants and preschoolers rather than adolescents (Bernard et al., 2012). Allen et al. (2014) stated that comparatively little attachment-related parent-child intervention research has occurred with school-age children. Jugovac et al. (2022) conducted a meta-analysis reporting successful outcomes with attachment and emotion-focused parenting interventions; however, there were limited studies with children under 3 and over 12 years old.

By exploring maternal and paternal-child relationships, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the relative contributions of fathers and mothers on their understanding of their roles in child development and delinquency. Additionally, this research could contribute to evidence-

based clinical decision-making regarding the kind of intervention that would best meet the requirements and preferences of families (Lilienfeld et al., 2013; Spring, 2007). Ultimately, this study aims to fulfil two research objectives: (1) to explore the relationship between paternal attachment and adolescent delinquency and (2) to explore the relationship between maternal attachment and adolescent delinquency.

Theoretical Framework

One counselling theory that is particularly relevant to understanding the differential impacts of maternal and paternal attachments on adolescent delinquency is Attachment Theory. Developed by John Bowlby and further expanded upon by Mary Ainsworth and others, Attachment Theory focuses on the importance of early attachment relationships in shaping an individual's socio-emotional development (Allen, 2023). Attachment Theory posits that the quality of attachment formed between infants and their primary caregivers (often the mother and father) influences an individual's internal working models of relationships, sense of self, and ability to regulate emotions (Berk, 2013). Secure attachments, characterised by responsive and sensitive caregiving, provide a foundation for healthy emotional and social development. Insecure attachments, on the other hand, can contribute to difficulties in emotion regulation, low self-esteem, and behavioural problems, including delinquency.

When people engage with other people of significance in their lives, they feel

pleasure and excitement. They also find comfort in their proximity during stressful times. It is known as attachment. (Berk, 2013). Specific influences exerted by each parent in shaping child behaviour and susceptibility to delinquency can be identified (Davis & Tyson, 2022; Sayler et al., 2022). From this, researchers can understand how fathers and mothers contribute to child development and delinquency. Recognising parental attachment as a protective factor against child delinquency underscores the significance of studying both paternal and maternal attachments (Ji et al., 2020). By examining the unique aspects of each parent-child relationship, this study aims to pinpoint factors that promote positive developmental outcomes and resilience in children (Johnson & Arditti, 2023), informing interventions and programs to strengthen parent-child bonds and reduce the risk of child delinquency.

Moreover, investigating the differential effects of paternal and maternal attachment on child delinquency advances the understanding of the distinct roles played by each parent in child development. By exploring these dynamics, the study contributes to the existing literature on parental attachment and how it correlates with child behaviour, informing future research and refining theories and models in the field. In this study, two hypotheses were developed:

H_{a1}. There is a significant relationship between paternal attachment and adolescent delinquency.

H_a2. There is a significant relationship between maternal attachment and adolescent delinquency.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Population and Sampling Procedures

The population of this correlational study is the adolescent population in Tehran. The population of students from various regular high schools is 170,205 (90,368 females and 79,837 males) in Tehran. The students are in their middle and late adolescence, from age 15 to 17 years old. The multi-stage cluster random sampling approach was used in this study to identify potential respondents. Several steps were taken to ensure sample selection was done randomly:

1. First, the Ministry of Education released a geographical representation of the five geographic regions, including the location of Tehran’s schools (North, West, East, South and Centre). Each region consists of some districts, namely: North (District 1, District 2, And District 3), West (District 5, District 9, And District 10), East (District 4, District 8, District 13, and District 14), South (District 15, District 16, District 17, District 18, And District 19) and Centre (District 6, District 7, District 11, And District 12) of Tehran.
2. Next, one educational district was randomly chosen from each geographical region, and one girls’ and one boys’ school were selected from each district. Each school

consists of first, second and third grade (three grades), and every grade consists of various classes. Randomly, one class from each grade was chosen to take part in the study.

3. The researcher obtained permission from the Tehran Department of Education and school principals before distributing study questionnaires, ensuring compliance with academic purposes, and providing necessary certifications.

The demographic information of the respondents’ background characteristics, such as adolescents’ gender and age, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic information on adolescents

Variable	Category	N	%
Gender	Female	332	63
	Male	196	37.1
	15 years	158	30
Age	16 years	192	36.4
	17 years	178	33.7

Determination of Sample Size

Determination of sample size is the process of selecting the number of observations to include in a statistical sample. The sample size is determined by selecting a calculated portion of an entire population for the study. In practice, the sample size used in a study is determined based on the extent of data collection and the need for sufficient statistical power. Sample sizes may be calculated in several different ways. Given that the population size was known

for this study, the formula below was used (Israel, 1992):

$$n_1 = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$\text{Sample size } (n_1) = \frac{170205}{1 + 170205(e)^2}$$

$$n_1 = 399.99 \approx 399$$

where n = Sample size; N = Population size; e = Sampling error

The number of respondents calculated was 399, but through data collection, some participants might not fully cooperate in this research and provide incomplete data. Thus (Salkind & Frey, 2019) recommended a new sample size to account for the unavailability of respondents as below:

$$\text{Sample size } (n_2) = 399 + (399 \times .5) = 598$$

Therefore, 598 school-age adolescents in Tehran, Iran, made up the study's total sample of respondents.

Instrumentation

Delinquency Scale. The original Delinquency Scale by Harris et al. (2013) contained 15 items. In this study, the researcher designed 16 new items based on the delinquent behaviours of Iranian adolescents. This 31-item scale was developed to determine delinquent behaviours among Iranian adolescents over one year. The researcher and her three supervisory committee members were involved in preparing the additional 16 items of the delinquency scale. Sources related

to delinquency, such as school discipline reports of blacklisted behaviour committed by students in Iran and Islamic literature, were referred to during the process of developing the items.

Based on the results from the pilot study, all items of the delinquency scale were reliable, with a Cronbach's alpha value of .88. Thus, all the items of this scale were retained and used in the present study. The delinquency scale was rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from "not at all" (1) to "five times or more than five times" (4). The total score was derived by summing up all items. A higher total score on the scale indicates high delinquent behaviour. Examples of items included in the delinquency scale are (1) In the past 12 months, how many times did you get into a serious physical fight? (2) In the past 12 months, how often were you loud, rowdy, or unruly in a public place? and (3) In the past 12 months, how often did you possess forbidden personal properties (i.e., ornaments, mobile phone, camera, improper books, magazines, CD)?

Inventory of Parents and Peer Attachment (IPPA). This inventory was used to understanding the respondents' affective and cognitive dimensions of their relationships with their mother and father (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). This scale originally had three subscales to assess adolescent relationships with mother, father, and peers. However, only the mother and father scales were utilised in the current study. Each scale consisted of 25 items with a five-point Likert

scale response ranging from “Almost Never or Never True (1)” to “Almost Always or Always True (5)”. Total scores for these scales were obtained by summing all 25 items after reverse scoring negative worded items (3, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 17, 18, 23) in the scale. High scores on the IPPA suggest a secure maternal and paternal attachment.

The IPPA was reported to be a reliable instrument for measuring attachment, with a Cronbach’s alpha value of .93 (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). A study by Nosrati (2018) in Iran showed that Cronbach’s alpha values for paternal and maternal were .83 and .82, respectively. Furthermore, the IPPA proved to have good construct validity. Examples of items included in the mother and father attachment scale are (1) My mother/father respects my feelings, (2) I feel my mother/father does a good job as parents, and (3) I wish I had a different mother/father.

Data Collection and Analysis

Prior to the actual data collection, a pilot study was conducted involving 100 high school students in Tehran. This sample was selected by the cluster random sampling method from the total population of high school students. The pilot study’s results helped the researcher calculate and measure the reliability of the instruments used in the study. The data collection period occurred within a specified time, from 5th to 12th December in Tehran. This duration allowed for comprehensive and systematic data collection while minimising potential confounding factors associated with varying times (Smith et al.,

2022). The specified teachers were given clear instructions on administering the questionnaires to the participants during regular class hours, ensuring a consistent and controlled environment for data collection (Babbie, 2016).

The study questionnaire included self-report measures and did not involve any personally identifiable information to guarantee the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. Participants were provided with clear instructions on completing the questionnaire, emphasising the voluntary nature of their participation and the importance of providing honest and accurate responses. The research team was readily available to address any questions or concerns raised by the participants during the data collection process, further ensuring the data’s integrity and quality (Creswell & Creswell, 2022).

Data were collected, securely recorded after completion, and then transferred to the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) programme for analysis. This software is widely recognised and employed in statistics, ensuring compatibility and facilitating efficient data processing and analysis (Pallant, 2020). Overall, the data collection process adhered to rigorous ethical standards and utilised a well-planned approach that involved obtaining appropriate permissions, employing trained research personnel, and ensuring participant confidentiality (Bryman, 2016). These measures contribute to the credibility and reliability of the study’s findings and enhance the validity of the research outcomes.

Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA) is a fundamental technique researchers employ to efficiently organise, summarise, and interpret data (Tukey, 1977). Its primary purpose is to identify patterns, trends, and potential errors within the data that may significantly impact the interpretation of study results. EDA addresses missing values, transforms variables as necessary, and validates the assumptions needed for model fitting and hypothesis testing (Baillie et al., 2022). One essential aspect of EDA is the evaluation of data normality, which involves a comprehensive series of steps in data presentation. This study employed various descriptive statistics, including skewness and kurtosis, histograms, normal Q-Q plots, and box plots, to assess the normality of the data.

Regarding the delinquency data, the analysis revealed a normal distribution, as evidenced by a skewness value of 1.18 and a kurtosis value of 1.52. The visual representations, including the histogram, Q-Q plot, and box plot, further supported the normality of the distribution (Field, 2013). Similarly, the descriptive analysis of paternal attachment data indicated a kurtosis measure of 0.70 and a skewness value of -0.26. These findings suggested a slightly negatively skewed distribution, yet still within an acceptable range, indicating approximate normality. In contrast, the descriptive statistics for the maternal attachment data pointed towards a normal distribution. Although slight negative skewness was observed with a kurtosis value of -0.43 and a skewness value of -0.40, the

distribution remained within an acceptable range, indicating approximate normality (Pallant, 2016).

Inferential statistical analyses were employed to answer the study's research questions. Pearson correlation was utilised to examine the relationships between delinquency and paternal and maternal attachment (Abdullah et al., 2013). All key variables in the study were measured in interval and ratio formats. Furthermore, multiple regression, a statistical technique enabling the prediction of an individual's score on one variable based on their scores on several other variables, was employed to investigate the effects of paternal and maternal attachment on the dependent variable of delinquency (Shek & Zhu, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive Findings

Respondents' Demographic Characteristics and Family Contexts.

The descriptive analyses of the respondent's background characteristics, such as age, gender, and number of siblings, are presented in Table 1. Respondents were between the ages of 15 to 17 years old. Of the total 528 students in the present study, 63% of respondents were females, and 37% were males. According to the study's findings, the respondents' family characteristics were examined, including the age and education levels of both fathers and mothers. The results revealed that a considerable proportion (69.5%) of the respondents had fathers aged between 40

and 54. Furthermore, most mothers in the sample were found to be younger than 40 years old, accounting for 63.1% of the respondents. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Jones et al. (2022). In terms of educational attainment, approximately 40.7% of fathers and 49% of mothers in the study had completed their diploma education.

Level of Delinquency, Paternal and Maternal Attachment. Table 2 presents the findings of descriptive analysis conducted on the key variables of this study. Based on the obtained mean scores, high and low categories of each variable were suggested. The obtained mean for delinquency was 18.68. Based on this mean score, most respondents (81.6%) reported low delinquency levels, while 18.4% reported high levels of delinquency. In terms of paternal and maternal attachment, 69.6% of respondents had high attachment to their fathers, while the majority (73%) reported high attachment to their mothers.

Table 2
Respondent's type of parental attachment and delinquency

Variables	N	%
Paternal attachment (n=514)		
Low < 85.72	156	30.4
High > 85.73	358	69.6
Maternal attachment (n=516)		
Low < 88.74	140	27
High > 88.75	376	73
Delinquency (n=528)		
Low < 18.67	431	81.6
High > 18.68	97	18.4

Bivariate Findings

In this analysis, the correlation between the study's three major variables, paternal attachment, maternal attachment, and delinquency, was tested and presented in Table 3. Pearson correlation showed a negative significant relation between paternal ($r=-.39, p\leq.01$) and maternal ($r=-.38, p\leq.01$) attachments and delinquency. Results revealed that secure paternal and maternal attachment was associated with less engagement in delinquent behaviour. These findings are consistent with past research that showed adolescents with secure parental attachment had lower delinquent behaviours (Freemon et al., 2023; Cho & Braaten, 2021.) Another study by Jackson et al. (2023) revealed that secure parental attachment acted as a protective factor against involvement in delinquent behaviours among at-risk youth. The findings also highlight the importance of parental monitoring and awareness of children's activities, which aligns with previous research (Karababa, 2022; Ripley-Mcneil & Cramer, 2021). Parents who actively supervise, set clear rules, and possess knowledge about their child's behaviours are less likely to have delinquent children (Hardie et al., 2022). This active monitoring protects

Table 3
Correlation matrix

Variables	X1	X2	Y
X1 Paternal attachment	1	.89**	-.39**
X2 Maternal attachment		1	-.38**
Y Delinquency			1

Note. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

against delinquency by providing structure, guidance, and appropriate consequences for undesirable behaviour.

The current study emphasises the significant role of both mothers and fathers in the development of adolescent delinquency. This finding is consistent with past studies that have also highlighted the importance of parental influence on delinquent behaviours among adolescents. Research by Withers (2020) has indicated that both maternal and paternal factors, such as parenting styles and involvement, play a crucial role in shaping adolescents' behaviours, including delinquency. Furthermore, studies by Simons et al. (2006), Hoeve et al. (2009), and Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber (1986) have demonstrated that the quality of the parent-child relationship, both with mothers and fathers, significantly influences adolescents' engagement in delinquent behaviours. Positive parental relationships characterised by warmth, support, and effective communication have been associated with lower delinquency levels among adolescents (Korol & Bevelander, 2021). These findings highlight the importance of considering the influence of both mothers and fathers in understanding and addressing adolescent delinquency. It underscores the need for comprehensive approaches involving parents in intervention and prevention programs targeting delinquent behaviours.

As in this present study, past studies also found that adolescents with insecure attachments to their mothers were more likely to exhibit delinquent behaviour (Mousavi et al., 2020; Pournaghash-Tehrani

et al., 2021). This study found that attachment with the father plays a significant role in the child's level of delinquency. Findings from this study also point to the fact that there is very little difference between the impact of secure attachment of mothers and fathers on adolescent delinquency. Attachment Theory can explain this phenomenon. Secure attachments characterised by consistent and supportive caregiving support a sense of safety, trust, and emotional well-being. The likelihood of delinquency is lower in adolescents who have strong maternal and paternal attachments because they are more likely to grow up with healthy emotional control, high self-esteem, and pro-social behaviour. Insecure attachments, on the other hand, can cause emotional instability, low self-worth, and a higher propensity for engaging in delinquent behaviour.

This study also aligns with Social Control Theory, which states that individuals are much less likely to engage in delinquent behaviour when they are attached and have a strong bond with a significant person (Hirschi, 1969). Effective parenting, in particular, promotes conformity and deters delinquent behaviours by insulating children from negative influences. Adolescents with strong maternal and paternal attachments are more likely to have open lines of communication, receive guidance, and experience parental monitoring. Moreover, children with strong attachments to their parents are less inclined to engage in delinquency because they value their relationship with their parents and do not want to disappoint them through

unacceptable behaviour. This attachment is a protective factor, as children with secure bonds consider the potential negative consequences and choose to avoid delinquent activities. Conversely, weak or disrupted attachments can weaken social control mechanisms, making adolescents more susceptible to external influences, peer pressure, and delinquent behaviour.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The factors underlying the influential role of parental attachment are multi-faceted. Emotional support provided by parents plays a crucial role in promoting secure attachments and reducing the likelihood of delinquency (Smith et al., 2022). Effective communication and trust between parents and adolescents facilitate understanding, empathy, and problem-solving skills, strengthening the parent-child bond (Leonid & Ruth, 2015). Active parental monitoring is a deterrent to delinquent behaviours, including knowing adolescents' whereabouts and setting clear expectations (Davis & Johnson, 2018). Additionally, parental modelling of pro-social behaviours and the overall security of the attachment bond contribute to adolescents' development of ethical standards and reduce the likelihood of engaging in delinquency (Melotti et al., 2018).

IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING

The findings of this study have important implications for parents, counsellors, educators, and policymakers. Recognising the significant role of parental attachment

in shaping adolescents' behaviours can inform intervention strategies to reduce delinquency rates (Jugovac et al., 2022.) Promoting positive parenting practices that emphasise emotional support, sensitivity, effective communication, active monitoring, and positive role modelling can contribute to the development of secure attachments and decrease the likelihood of delinquent behaviours among adolescents (Hardie, 2022). Nevertheless, this study can facilitate counsellors' understanding of how to approach these problems and offer appropriate interventions while working with this particular clientele, outlined as follows:

(i) Attachment Assessment

Referring students who commit disciplinary offences like tardiness, theft, vandalism, and bullying to school counselling teachers or school counsellors is a widespread practice used as one of the actions to address disciplinary problems in schools. There are undoubtedly many reasons why students have behavioural issues, but the school counselling teacher or school counsellor will likely point to the student's attachment to his or her mother or father as the main cause, especially those from broken families (Allen, 2014). In light of this study's conclusions, school counselling teachers or school counsellors might find that attachment assessment is a must in exploring and confirming the factors that influence their client's behaviour.

The Parent-Child Relationship Scale (P-CRS) can assess the parent-child

relationship and explore how different relationship patterns can occur in different clinical conditions. (Quintigliano et al., 2023). There are six dimensions of the emotional availability of the parent or carer towards the child and the child towards the parent in the third edition of the Emotional Availability Scales (abridged Infancy/Early Childhood version) (Biringen et al., 2000). Parental dimensions include sensitivity, structuring, non-intrusiveness and non-hostility, while child dimensions are the child's responsiveness to the parent and the child's involvement with the parent (Biringen et al., 2000).

Assessment and comprehension of the nature of maternal and paternal attachments in an adolescent's life are both facilitated by counselling. Counsellors can learn more about the strength of attachment bonds by using a variety of assessment methods. It allows them to spot any possible problems with insecurity or disruption that might lead to delinquent behaviour (Wright & Edginton, 2016).

(ii) Attachment-based Interventions

Counsellors can aid adolescents in creating strong and healthy emotional ties by focusing on improving parental and father attachments. Strategies like emotion-focused therapy, family systems therapy, and cognitive-behavioural approaches might promote attachment security (Jugovac et al., 2022; Pleines, 2019). Cognitive-behavioural techniques can increase attachment security in adolescents by detecting and altering negative thought patterns, emotions, and

behaviours, encouraging positive cognitive restructuring, and improving interpersonal skills (Kindsvatter & Desmond, 2013).

Adolescents who use cognitive-behavioural techniques can better recognise and control their emotions. It makes it possible for adolescents to constructively express their needs, wants, and worries to parents, promoting safe bonds. Adolescents can form secure attachments when cognitive-behavioural techniques address attachment-related difficulties (Bosmans, 2016).

(iii) Parent-child Relationship Building

Parental participation in counselling sessions can be very helpful in enhancing attachment dynamics. Counsellors can assist both parents in understanding how their interactions and behaviour affect their child's development by working with both of them (Kindsvatter & Desmond, 2013). Parents might not be aware that emotional management issues can be linked to delinquent behaviour (Meeus et al., 2002). Counsellors assist parents in creating a plan for controlling their emotions and exhibiting appropriate emotional expression. Parents may give their children a calmer and more encouraging environment by encouraging emotional management (Wright & Edginton, 2016). It will make it easier for parents to empathise with their children and foster open communication by actively listening to their worries, thoughts, and feelings. Validation strengthens the attachment between parents and children by making the adolescents feel heard and understood. Additionally, counsellors can offer advice on

parenting practices, communication skills, and strategies of positive discipline that will encourage healthy attachments.

Limitations and Future Suggestions

It is important to acknowledge some limitations of this study. First, the study relied on self-report measures, which may be subject to bias and social desirability effects. Future research could incorporate multiple informants and objective measures to enhance the reliability and validity of the findings. Second, the study focused on a specific population of adolescents in Tehran, which limits the generalizability of the results to other cultural contexts. Future studies should include diverse samples to examine the cross-cultural variations in the relationship between parental attachment and delinquency. Most studies focused on parent-child interaction therapy.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant role of parental attachment in shaping adolescents' behavioural outcomes, specifically their engagement in delinquent behaviours. The findings underscore the importance of fostering strong emotional bonds, effective communication, parental monitoring, positive role modelling, and attachment security in promoting positive development and reducing the risk of delinquency among adolescents. Lastly, this study highlights implications for counselling with regard to attachment assessment, attachment-based interventions, and parent-child relationship building that might assist

counsellors when working with parents and adolescents.

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