
Psychology: the Journal of the Hellenic Psychological Society

Vol 31, No 1 (2026)

Special Issue: Counseling and Positive Psychology in dialogue: Encounters, narratives, challenges, a tribute to Professor Anastassios Stalikas

Perceptions of early attachment experiences and quality of romantic relationships among Greek adults

Kalliope Kounenou, Christos Pezirkianidis, Dimitra Findani, Antonios Kalamatianos, Ntina Kourmousi

doi: [10.12681/psy_hps.45298](https://doi.org/10.12681/psy_hps.45298)

Copyright © 2026, Kalliope Kounenou, Christos Perzikianidis, Dimitra Findani, Antonios Kalamatianos, Ntina Kourmousi



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

To cite this article:

Kounenou, K., Pezirkianidis, C., Findani, D., Kalamatianos, A., & Kourmousi, N. (2026). Perceptions of early attachment experiences and quality of romantic relationships among Greek adults. *Psychology: The Journal of the Hellenic Psychological Society*, 31(1), 143–158. https://doi.org/10.12681/psy_hps.45298



ΕΜΠΕΙΡΙΚΗ ΕΡΓΑΣΙΑ | RESEARCH PAPER

Perceptions of early attachment experiences and quality of romantic relationships among Greek adults

Kalliope KOUNENOU¹, Christos PEZIRKIANIDIS², Dimitra FINDANI³, Antonios KALAMATIANOS⁴,
Ntina KOURMOUSI¹

¹ Department of Education, School of Pedagogical & Technological Education

² Lab of Positive Psychology, Department of Psychology, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences

³ Department of Special Education, University of Thessaly

⁴ Department of Education, School of Education, University of Nicosia

KEYWORDS

Early attachment experiences
Attachment style
Mother
Romantic relationships
Adults

CORRESPONDENCE

Kalliope Kounenou
Department of Education,
School of Pedagogical &
Technological Education
151 22, Marousi, Attica, Greece
kkounen@aspete.gr

ABSTRACT

Early experiences with caregivers play a crucial role in shaping individual's relational functioning, particularly in romantic relationships. This study focuses on the association between early attachment experiences with the mother and the quality of adult romantic relationships. The sample consisted of 400 adults aged 18 to 67 who completed the Perceptions of Adult Attachment Questionnaire and the Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory–Revised. The findings showed significant gender and age differences; women reported higher levels of avoidance, vulnerability, and forgiveness concerning early maternal attachment experiences, while men reported higher levels of criticism. Emerging adults reported higher levels of anxious attachment in their romantic relationships and recalled fewer early experiences of maternal love. Furthermore, early maternal experiences characterized by love, and lower levels of rejection, criticism, and vulnerability were significantly related to avoidant attachment styles in adulthood. In contrast, early attachment experiences characterized by vulnerability, reverse of roles, and lack of maternal care—particularly when recalled with anger—were associated to higher levels of anxious attachment in adult romantic relationships. These findings are of high importance for research and theory in the field of interpersonal relationships. They are also crucial for the development of targeted psychological interventions for new parents, couples, and young adults seeking support to face romantic relationship challenges and process early relational experiences.

Attachment experiences with a caregiver

Bowlby (1980), who developed attachment theory, argued that early relationships with caregivers, particularly the mother, are central in shaping how people later understand relationships. These ways of relating are created through daily interactions, as infants come to recognize whether their caregivers are emotionally present, responsive, and reliable. Moreover, Bowlby (1973) further found that attachment styles begin to form during the first year of life and establish during the second and third year. The main goal of attachment is to provide a sense of safety, when people feel threatened or distressed (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2012). However, at the same time, attachment supports child's willingness to explore the world (Fraley & Roisman, 2019). When caregivers respond consistently and are sensitive to child's needs, children are more likely to develop secure attachment. Secure attachment relates to positive views of self and others. However, when care is not consistent or the caregiver is not emotionally available, children develop insecure attachment

styles. These styles include negative beliefs about themselves and difficulties in later relationships (Fraley & Roisman, 2019).

Insecure attachment takes two main forms: attachment-related anxiety and attachment-related avoidance (Fraley et al., 2013; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2012). People with insecure attachment style often struggle with closeness in interpersonal relationships and they experience a need of dependence, fear of rejection, and vigilance toward others (Bowlby, 1988). For example, in anxious attachment, children may often complain or take on a caregiving role in an attempt to maintain the relationship. Individuals with avoidant attachment, on the other hand, usually avoid closeness in order to prevent disappointment or rejection (Holmes, 2009). Previous studies show that these early patterns of relating influence how people understand the world and themselves, and relate with the others. Ross et al. (2016) reported that insecurely attached individuals experience the world as unpredictable and feel unable to gain control of their lives. Furthermore, research found that avoidant attachment relates to lower levels of psychological insight on personal emotions and weaker memories of past experiences, while anxious attachment associates with an increased chance to recall negative events in an exaggerated way (Bourne et al., 2013; Edelstein et al., 2008; Gentzler & Kerns, 2006).

Adult attachment styles

Adult attachment refers to the internalized representations of self and others that are shaped by early attachment experiences (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) categorized adult attachment into four styles, namely: a) secure attachment, which is characterized by low anxiety and low avoidance, a positive image of the self and trust in others, b) preoccupied attachment that is characterized by high anxiety, low avoidance, and dependence on others in order to perceive self as worthy, c) fearful-avoidant attachment, which is connected to high anxiety, high avoidance, low trust to others and negative perceptions of the self, and d) dismissive-avoidant attachment, which is characterized by low anxiety, high avoidance, self-reliance and avoidance to create close interpersonal relationships. In contrast to this categorical model, recent theories focus on dimensional models of attachment (Simpson, 1990). For instance, Fraley and Shaver (2000) conceptualized adult attachment based on two dimensions: avoidance and anxiety. Based on this model, securely attached individuals tend to score low on both dimensions.

Adult attachment and romantic relationships

Several studies agree that individual's attachment style plays a significant role on how they perceive security in close interpersonal relationships (Holmes & Johnson, 2009). Based on the similarity hypothesis, individuals tend to select partners with similar attachment styles in order to enhance their sense of self and feelings of self-worth and this leads them to align with their goals for their relationship and their desired levels of closeness. This, in turn, leads to obtain positive feedback, which further enhances their self-esteem. This need for affirmation by the others in order to enhance one's self-image is also in accordance with Baumeister's self-enhancement theory (1982). Furthermore, the self-consistency theory provides evidence on these relational patterns focusing on the fact that individuals are attracted to partners who validate their expectations, which is a way to maintain a consistent perception of their selves (Swann & Read, 1981). Regardless of attachment style, individuals generally prefer partners with a secure attachment, as security fosters emotional stability and deeper relational bonds (Chappell & Davis, 1998).

Apart from the partner selection, even though individuals initially seek security in romantic relationships, as relationships progress, they tend to experience early distressing emotions, such as disappointment, and they actively search for healing experiences (Austin et al., 2022). This finding has its roots to Bowlby's theory



(1980), which suggests that attachment remains stable, even though it evolves with maturity. During adulthood, the romantic partners become the primary attachment figures (Holmes, 2015; Umemura et al., 2017). Thus, research suggests that adult attachment patterns predict how individuals behave in both romantic relationships and parenting roles (Szepeswol & Simpson, 2019). However, Booth-LaForce et al. (2014) argue that secure attachment in adulthood is not determined only by early caregiver experiences. While early attachment experience play an important role, they do not always have a fixed impact on the first two decades of life. Disruptions in individual's development because of changes in the caregiving environment, further shape attachment style.

Gender differences in adult attachment

Research suggests that women report higher levels of anxious attachment than men, while men report higher levels of avoidant attachment (Feeney, 2016; Haydon et al., 2014; Scharfe, 2016). However, these findings are not consistent, since Chopik et al. (2013) found that women had higher levels of both anxious and avoidant attachment compared to men, while Gleeson and Fitzgerald (2014) found that both men and women report high levels of avoidant-fearful attachment, while women report high levels of secure attachment, as well. Additional studies found that men report high levels of preoccupied attachment that lead to experiencing lower levels of meaning in life, while women report high levels of avoidance and difficulties in interpersonal relationships, especially under stress, during early adulthood (Bodner et al., 2014). Finally, Del Giudice (2015, 2016) noted that avoidance can be interpreted as autonomy by men, or as a fear of intimacy by women and suggested that gender differences may not necessarily relate directly to the two dimensions of avoidance and anxiety, but rather to undetectable aspects of attachment.

Adult attachment and romantic relationship experiences from emerging to late adulthood

Emerging adulthood describes a distinct developmental phase among ages 18 and 29, which is characterized by exploration of personal identity, frequent changes in employment and romantic relationships, increased focus on the self, and a sense of being in-between adolescence and adulthood (Arnett, 2014; Arnett et al., 2014; Sommantico et al., 2018). The quality of romantic relationships during emerging adulthood are affected by the relationship functions during childhood and adolescence, such as social support, trust, and intimacy (Brumbaugh, 2017). Moreover, Guarnieri et al. (2014) found that young adults balance their desire for independence with their dependence on parents as a secure base, while Kumar and Mattanah (2016) found that a secure attachment to one's mother leads to higher levels of satisfaction in romantic relationships during emerging adulthood. This secure attachment promotes a sense of fulfillment and a better psychosocial development compared to individuals with ambivalent or avoidant attachment styles. Finally, Konrath et al. (2014) suggest that young people may prefer casual relationships over stable, long-term ones, which could explain lower levels of anxious attachment among them.

Adults experience a stronger sense of competence and a better understanding of how to engage with partners who fulfill their needs for care, attachment, and sexual satisfaction comparing to emerging adulthood (Furman & Wehner, 1997). The early life experiences do not determine the nature of adult romantic attachment, since repairing experiences in romantic relationships, social support systems and high-quality friendships also play a crucial role in shaping attachment style in later adulthood (Fraley et al., 2013; Fraley & Roisman, 2019; Hudson et al., 2015). Moreover, research shows that anxiety in close interpersonal relationships decrease over time, particularly for individuals that formed a stable romantic relationship (Chopik et al., 2013). On the other hand, avoidant attachment seems to increase during middle adulthood, especially for men, because of the life challenges faced by individuals, like raising children and relationship

conflicts (Del Giudice, 2011; Hill & Roberts, 2012; Konrath et al., 2014). However, levels of avoidance decrease in old age (Chopik et al., 2013). In addition, securely attached individuals seem to maintain their secure attachment in future relationships (Pinquart et al., 2013).

The purpose of the present study

The primary objective of this cross-sectional quantitative study is to explore the relationship between perceptions of early attachment experiences with mother and the quality of romantic relationships during adulthood (Rousos & Tsaousis, 2011). Gender and age differences in both variables are also addressed. Another goal of this study is to examine the association between perceptions of early attachment experiences and adult romantic relationship quality in both emerging adulthood (ages 18-29) and later life stages, since various factors may significantly influence this relationship. Based on this rationale, the present study aims to address the following research questions:

RQ1: Are there gender differences on the perception of early attachment experiences and the quality of romantic relationships among Greek adults?

RQ2: Are there differences among emerging adults and adults over 30 years on the perception of early attachment experiences and the quality of romantic relationships among Greek adults?

RQ3: Do the perception of early attachment experiences significantly associate to the quality of romantic relationships among Greek adults?

RQ4: Are there differences between emerging adults and adults over 30 years on the associations between early attachment experiences and the quality of romantic relationships among Greek adults?

Method

Participants

A total of 400 participants ranged in age from 18 to 67 years took part in the study. Of these, 180 were male (45%) and approximately 66% were between the ages of 18 and 29, while 33% were over the age of 30. In terms of employment status, 76% of the participants were currently employed. Regarding educational background, the majority (89%) were enrolled in or had completed tertiary education, while 8.5% had completed secondary education, and 2.3% had only completed primary education. Most participants (92.5%) resided in urban areas, with 6% living in suburban areas and 1.5% in rural areas. The vast majority identified as heterosexual (92.5%), while 3% identified as homosexual and 3.3% as bisexual. Regarding relationship status, 38.8% reported being in a romantic relationship, 23.5% were single, 18.1% were married, and 12.8% were not currently in a romantic relationship. Additionally, 89.8% of the participants indicated they had been in at least one stable romantic relationship in the past.

Measures

Demographics. A questionnaire was used to gather information regarding gender, age, occupation, current employment status, educational level, place of residence, sexual orientation, as well as personal life experiences both in the present and the past.

Perceptions of Adult Attachment Questionnaire (PAAQ). The PAAQ consists of 60 items and it is designed to assess individuals' beliefs about their early attachment experiences, particularly in relation to their maternal figure, who typically serves as the primary caregiver during childhood. The instrument was



translated into Greek by Kygeridou (2014) and evaluates adults' internal representations of attachment across three core dimensions: perceptions of early attachment experiences, current evaluations of attachment relationships, and the accessibility of childhood memories. These dimensions are captured by six subscales, namely: Rejection, Loved, Role reversed, Vulnerable, Balancing/Forgiving, Angry, Derogating Attachment Experiences, and Reporting no memory. Higher scores indicate stronger endorsement of the corresponding dimension of attachment experiences or evaluations. Cassidy et al. (2009) evaluated the psychometric properties of the original scale, reporting both internal consistency and test-retest reliability for each subscale. In the present study, the subscales showed an acceptable internal consistency reliability ranging from $\alpha = .71$ to $.80$ except for the Balance-Forgiving subscale ($\alpha = .63$) and the Avoidance subscale ($\alpha = .62$).

Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory-Revised (ECR-R). The ECR-R is a self-report measure that consists of 36 items measuring how individuals feel and behave in the context of close romantic partnerships. Specifically, it evaluates two primary dimensions of attachment: anxiety and avoidance. The anxiety dimension reflects a heightened concern with relationship security, including preoccupations with abandonment, fears of rejection, and emotional over-involvement with a partner. In contrast, the avoidance dimension reflects discomfort with intimacy, reluctance to depend on others, and difficulty in trusting or approaching one's partner emotionally. The psychometric properties of the ECR-R have been evaluated in multiple samples across different cultural contexts showing high reliability and validity levels. In Greece, the study of Tsagarakis et al. (2007) proved that the measure is psychometrically sound in this cultural context, as well. In the present study, the subscales demonstrated adequate internal consistency levels ($\alpha = .81$ and $.80$, respectively).

Procedure

The present study was conducted during the 2022–2023 academic year. Data collection was carried out through an online survey hosted on the Google Forms platform, which participants accessed via a link distributed on social media. Prior to participation, individuals were presented with an informed consent form outlining the purpose of the study, the intended use of the data, assurances of anonymity and confidentiality, and the voluntary nature of their involvement. Participants were required to provide their informed consent before proceeding to complete the questionnaires and confirm that they are above 18 years old.

Results

Gender differences

To answer the first research question, potential gender differences across perceptions of early attachment experiences and the quality of romantic relationships were examined using a series of Kruskal–Wallis H tests since the data did not follow a normal distribution. Results indicated that women reported significantly higher levels of Avoidant Attachment than men, $\chi^2(1) = 10.34, p < .001$, as well as greater feelings of being Vulnerable with their mother, $\chi^2(1) = 21.94, p < .001$, and greater tendencies to Balance negative feelings and Forgive past hurts in their relationship with their mother, $\chi^2(1) = 10.78, p < .001$. Women also reported significantly more feelings of Love and acceptance from their mother, $\chi^2(1) = 4.88, p < .027$. Conversely, men scored significantly higher on Derogating perceptions and criticism of their mother, $\chi^2(1) = 16.97, p < .001$.

Age group differences

To address the second research question concerning the age group differences across perceptions of early attachment experiences and the quality of adult romantic relationships, a series of Kruskal–Wallis H tests

were conducted comparing two age groups: individuals aged 18–29 and those aged 30 and above. Statistically significant differences were observed in specific subscales of the PAAQ. Significant age group differences were found for Anxiety Attachment, $\chi^2(1) = 10.62, p < .001$, with emerging adults reporting higher levels than older adults. Older adults reported significantly more feelings of Love based on their early attachment experiences, $\chi^2(1) = 6.29, p = .012$, and more detailed childhood attachment experiences recall, $\chi^2(1) = 5.73, p = .017$, while younger adults were more likely to report gaps or vaguer recollections.

Associations between perceptions of early attachment experiences and the quality of adult romantic relationships

To address the third research question, Spearman's rho correlation analyses were conducted between the Anxiety and Avoidance subscales of the ECR-R and the subscales of the PAAQ. As presented in Table 1, Anxiety Attachment in romantic relationships was significantly and positively correlated with several early attachment experiences with the mother. These included feelings of rejection, role reversal (feeling responsible for the mother), vulnerability, anger toward the mother, criticism of her, reporting no clear memories of early interactions, and efforts to balance negative feelings by forgiving past relational hurts. In contrast, Avoidant Attachment in romantic relationships showed statistically significant negative correlations with all of these same early maternal attachment experiences.

Table 1. Spearman's correlations among perceptions of early attachment experiences and the quality of adult romantic relationships ($N = 400$)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Attachment: Anxiety	1									
2. Attachment: Avoidance	-.28**	1								
3. Rejected	.26**	-.25**	1							
4. Loved	.04	-.04	.59**	1						
5. Role Reversed	.27**	-.16**	.19**	-.16*	1					
6. Vulnerable	.36**	-.21**	.37**	.10*	.36**	1				
7. Balancing/Forgiving	.10*	.03	-.11*	-.29**	.26**	.18**	1			
8. Angry	.29**	-.25**	.67**	.49**	.14*	.44**	-.17**	1		
9. Derogating	.11*	-.22**	.41**	.29**	.11*	.11*	-.20**	.36**	1	
10. Reporting No Memory	.19**	-.17**	.37**	.28**	.17**	.17**	.02	.34**	.36**	1

To further investigate the associations between perceptions of early attachment experiences and the quality of adult romantic relationships, two multiple regression analyses were conducted. The dependent variables were the two adult attachment styles: anxiety and avoidance. The independent variables were various perceived early attachment experiences with the mother: feeling rejected, loved, role-reversed, vulnerable, balancing/forgiving, angry, derogating, or reporting no memory of early attachment.

The results showed that the *Anxious Attachment* style in adulthood was significantly predicted by higher levels of anger and vulnerability toward the mother, greater feelings of being responsible for her (role reversal), more reports of having no clear memories of early interactions, and lower levels of perceived maternal love, $R^2 = .21, F(5, 395) = 20.565, p < .001$ (see Table 2).



In contrast, the Avoidant Attachment style was significantly predicted by lower levels of perceived rejection and vulnerability, less criticism of the mother, and higher levels of perceived maternal love, $R^2 = .13$, $F(4, 396) = 15.033$, $p < .001$ (see Table 3).

Table 2. Multiple regression analysis for perceptions of early attachment experiences with mother explaining anxious attachment style in adult romantic relationships ($N = 400$)

Predictors of Anxious Attachment in Adult Romantic Relationships	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	B	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
(Constant)	2.906	.18		16.330	<.001
Vulnerable	.113	.04	.16	2.927	.004
Angry	.205	.05	.27	4.505	<.001
Role Reversed	.149	.05	.16	3.084	.002
Reporting No memory	.076	.03	.12	2.435	.015
Loved	-.116	.05	-.12	-2.156	.032

Table 3. Multiple regression analysis for perceptions of early attachment experiences with mother explaining avoidant attachment style in adult romantic relationships ($N = 400$)

Predictors of Avoidant Attachment in Adult Romantic Relationships	<i>b</i>	<i>SE b</i>	B	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
(Constant)	4.733	.09		50.816	<.001
Rejected	-.152	.04	-.30	-4.303	<.001
Loved	.131	.03	.23	3.830	<.001
Derogating	-.074	.03	-.14	-2.739	.006
Vulnerable	-.047	.02	-.11	-2.203	.028

The role of age group on the association between perceptions of early attachment experiences and the quality of adult romantic relationships

To examine whether age group (emerging adults vs. adults over 30 years) moderates the associations between perceptions of early attachment with the mother and adult attachment styles, moderation analyses were conducted using the PROCESS macro for SPSS. The independent variables were those identified in the regression models above, and the dependent variables were anxious and avoidant attachment in romantic relationships. The analyses revealed no significant moderating effect of age group.

Discussion

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between perceptions of early attachment experiences with the mother and the quality of adult romantic relationships, while taking into account gender and age differences (Rousos & Tsaousis, 2011). The findings indicated that there is a strong association between early attachment perceptions and the attachment styles applied in adult romantic relationships. More specifically, higher levels of negative perceptions of early attachment with the mother were significantly associated with anxious attachment in adulthood. On the other hand, avoidant attachment was significantly associated with more positive perceptions of early experiences with the mother. In addition, significant gender and age group differences were found in both the perceptions of early attachment experiences and the attachment styles in

adult romantic relationships. These findings have important implications for theory, research, and clinical practice in the fields of interpersonal relationships, social development, and psychotherapy.

More specifically, the findings of the present study indicate that higher levels of perceived vulnerability, anger, reversing of roles, and lack of memory, as well as lower levels of perceived maternal love, were significantly associated with anxious attachment in adulthood. Previous research lays the ground to explain these associations since it indicates that early-life difficulties in the attachment with the caregiver predict insecure attachment during adulthood and patterns of mating, in turn (Szepeswol & Simpson, 2019). Individuals with insecure attachment tend to carry a pervasive fear of rejection throughout their lives (De Paoli et al., 2017). Early childhood trauma and feelings of vulnerability associate with anxiety in adult romantic relationships and leads to more frequent reports of deficits in memory and the ability of recalling early life attachment experiences (Chiu et al., 2018; Ogle et al., 2015; Ross et al., 2016). Furthermore, the expression of anxiety in adult romantic relationships seems to increase when the early-life interactions include reversal of roles in the relationship with the caregiver, where the child feels responsible for the mother (Holmes, 2009). Adult individuals with such early experiences often hold strong early maladaptive schemas of rejection and other-directedness and experience anxiety in their romantic relationships and insecurities about whether their emotional needs are being met (Karatzas et al., 2023). Moreover, they may exhibit dependent behaviors, seek constant reassurance, and experience distress or even hostility when their expectations are not fulfilled (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2012). Taking everything into account, there is a strong connection between negative early attachment experiences and experiencing anxiety in romantic relationships during adulthood.

The findings concerning avoidant attachment in romantic relationships indicated, in some cases, avoidance is a result of positive early attachment experiences. More specifically, avoidant attachment was associated with lower levels of perceived rejection and vulnerability, less criticism of the mother, and higher levels of perceived maternal love. These results diverge from the traditional understanding of avoidant attachment that is a result of emotional distance or rejection in early caregiving (Ainsworth, 1978; Bowlby, 1988). One possible explanation is that individuals with avoidant tendency may have developed their independence and emotional self-sufficiency within caregiving environments that were not rejecting, but instead emphasized autonomy. Fraley and Roisman (2019) suggest that avoidant attachment may not always springs from negative caregiving, but can also emerge from environments where emotional expression is discouraged or independence is encouraged. This leads children to learn that intimacy or emotional closeness are potentially threatening or negative. This alternative pathway is in line with previous research indicating that avoidant individuals may not always report traumatic childhood experiences. However, they describe their early relationships as emotionally neutral or idealized. In such cases, autonomy as a core relational value may lead to an avoidant attachment style during adulthood (Grossmann et al., 2006). Moreover, the tendency of avoidant individuals to minimize the importance of their emotional needs possibly affects how they retrospectively perceive and report their early experiences with their caregiver (Bourne et al., 2013; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). These findings highlight the complexity of attachment development from infancy to adulthood and suggest that avoidant attachment may not always result from traumatic caregiving, but can also emerge from relational experiences that prioritize emotional autonomy over intimacy.

Furthermore, the findings of the present study indicate significant gender differences in both early attachment experiences and adult attachment styles in romantic relationships. In particular, women reported higher levels of avoidance in romantic relationships when comparing to men, while at the same time women reported perceptions of their early interactions with their mothers characterized by greater feelings of love, vulnerability, and a tendency to forgive past relational difficulties with their mother. In contrast, men reported



higher levels of derogating attitudes toward their mothers. However, previous findings have not reached a consensus regarding the gender differences on attachment. Some studies indicate that women report higher levels of attachment anxiety and lower levels of avoidance in romantic relationships than men (Del Giudice, 2011), while other studies suggest a shift in levels of avoidance among women because of a greater emphasis on autonomy and ongoing changes on gender norms and the expectations by others and society towards women (Bonder et al., 2014). Increasing educational and occupational opportunities have transformed women's roles and concept of self, since career and independence are now core parts of their identity (DiPrete & Buchmann, 2013). These changes in gender roles could lead to changes in relational patterns in romantic relationships. Bonder et al. (2014), for example, found that women, especially when facing high relational stress or conflicting role expectations, may adopt avoidant strategies as a form of emotional protection. Moreover, increasing social acceptance of diverse romantic behaviors may also affect how women feel and behave in their close interpersonal relationships (Calzo, 2013).

Regarding early attachment experiences, the findings indicated that women reported more positive emotional memories with their mothers, such as, feeling loved, being able to forgive, and experiencing vulnerability, when compared to men. These findings are in line with research suggesting that women are more emotional in their relationships and they tend to internalize more their caregiving experiences (Thompson & Meyer, 2007). In contrast, men tend to derogate their mothers, which is in accordance with findings from previous studies showing that men are more likely to underappreciate their caregivers, especially when their early attachment experiences were characterized by inconsistency or emotional distance (Fraley & Shaver, 2000). Moreover, girls are generally encouraged to express their emotions, which may enhance their ability to access early attachment memories (Brody & Hall, 2008). Boys, on the other hand, are often encouraged to suppress their emotions and their vulnerability, which possibly creates a path to avoidance or derogation (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016).

Finally, significant age group differences were found in attachment anxiety, with emerging adults reporting higher levels of anxious attachment compared to older adults. This finding is consistent with previous findings indicating that attachment insecurity, and particularly anxious attachment, is more frequent during young adulthood and may decrease with age (Chopik et al., 2013). Since emerging adulthood is a period characterized by identity exploration and instability (Arnett, 2014), individuals are prone to experience emotional fluctuations, dependence on romantic partners in order to obtain validation and increased fear of getting abandoned (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). On the other hand, older adults in the present study reported significantly higher perceptions of receiving maternal love during their early attachment experiences and more clear recallings of relational memories with their mother. This possibly means that autobiographical memory and attachment are more and more intertwined with age (Fivus & Haden, 2003). Younger individuals frequently report fragmented or vague early attachment memories, while older adults had adequate time to self-reflect, process and make sense of their early experiences; this is called "earned security" (Birditt et al., 2012; Bluck & Habermas, 2001; Habermas & Bluck, 2000; Kennedy et al., 2004; Labouvie-Vief, 2003; Roisman et al., 2002; Saunders et al., 2011). Additionally, engagement in psychotherapy over the life course may play a key role in revisiting, reconstructing and making a new meaning from early attachment experiences through a safe relational context, like the therapeutic alliance, which leads to more positive interpretations and deeper emotional integration (Levy & Johnson, 2019; Roisman et al., 2002; Saunders et al., 2011). Even though, in the present study, age groups were not found to moderate the associations between early attachment experiences and attachment in adult romantic relationships. Taking everything into account, as individuals age, they tend

to view early attachment experiences with greater insight but it is not yet clear if this process directly affects adult romantic relationship quality.

However, the present study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. Firstly, self-report questionnaires were used increasing the potential for response biases, such as social desirability or lack of introspective accuracy. These instruments capture participants' subjective perceptions of their attachment experiences and relational dynamics, which may not always align with the actual behaviors or interactions that could be observed in everyday interactions. Additionally, some items on the Perceptions of Adult Attachment Questionnaire required participants to retrospectively evaluate their early-life attachment experiences with their mother figures. Such retrospective reporting could be influenced by memory reconstruction, current emotional state, current relationship status, and intervening life experiences, which may alter or bias individuals' answers. Moreover, the study employed a cross-sectional design, collecting data at a single point in time. This fact limits the potential to gather information on causal relationships or track developmental changes in attachment patterns across the lifespan. Consequently, longitudinal studies that follow individuals over time could provide more robust data on how early attachment experiences evolve and influence adult relational functioning.

In addition, future research could benefit from incorporating multi-method and dyadic analysis approaches, such as relational observations, in-depth interviews, or third-party reports (e.g., from parents or partners), to enhance this study's findings and enhance ecological validity. Moreover, future research attempts to study diverse attachment figures (e.g., fathers), different cultural contexts, and attachment in different types of relationships, such as friendships, could also lead to a more comprehensive understanding of attachment dynamics. Finally, future studies might investigate the role of psychotherapy or major life events in reshaping attachment style, using longitudinal or mixed-method designs in order to explore how attachment changes over time and in which ways this affects psychological and relational wellbeing.

In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight a strong association between individuals' early attachment perceptions and the attachment styles they develop in adult romantic relationships. The results also reveal important gender and age-related differences in how people recall and interpret their early attachment experiences, and how these memories influence their relational patterns later in life. These findings add to the growing body of research showing that early relational experiences have an enduring effect on adult relationship dynamics, while also suggesting that these patterns are shaped by broader developmental and social influences. The implications of this study should be understood within the Greek cultural context, which represents a unique blend of Western individualistic and Eastern collectivistic values. In such a sociocultural environment, traditional family structures and gender roles often coexist with emerging values of independence and romantic individuation. The study also offers valuable insights for psychotherapeutic practice. It emphasizes the role of psychotherapy in helping individuals reflect on, make sense of, and potentially reshape their attachment narratives and experiences. Since attachment styles and autobiographical memories are dynamic, they can evolve through personal growth, meaningful life experiences, reparative relationships, and psychological interventions. Thus, these findings have significant implications for counselling and psychotherapeutic interventions targeting new parents, couples, and young adults seeking guidance on romantic relationship issues.

References

Ainsworth, M. D. S. (1978). The Bowlby-Ainsworth attachment theory. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 1(3), 436-438. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X00075828>



- Arnett, J. J. (2014). *Emerging adulthood: The winding road from the late teens through the twenties*. Oxford University Press.
- Arnett, J. J., Žukauskienė, R., & Sugimura, K. (2014). The new life stage of emerging adulthood at ages 18–29 years: Implications for mental health. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 1(7), 569–576. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s22150366\(14\)00080-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/s22150366(14)00080-7)
- Austin, K. W., Kane, H. S., Williams, D. D., & Ackerman, R. A. (2022). Emotional approach coping and daily support behavior in romantic relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 39(3), 526–548. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075211041657>
- Ayduk, O., Downey, G., & Kim, M. (2001). Rejection sensitivity and depressive symptoms in women. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27(7), 868–877. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167201277009>
- Bartholomew, K., & Horowitz, L. M. (1991). Attachment styles among young adults: A test of a four-category model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 61(2), 226–244. <https://doi.org/10.1037/00223514.61.2.226>
- Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117(3), 497–529. <https://doi.org/10.1037/00332909.117.3.497>
- Birditt, K. S., Tighe, L. A., Fingerman, K. L., & Zarit, S. H. (2012). Intergenerational relationship quality across three generations. *The Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 67(5), 627–638. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbs050>
- Bluck, S., & Habermas, T. (2001). Extending the study of autobiographical memory: Thinking back about life across the life span. *Review of General Psychology*, 5(2), 135–147. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.5.2.135>
- Bodner, E., Bergman, Y. S., & Cohen-Fridel, S. (2014). Do attachment styles affect the presence and search for meaning in life? *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 15(5), 1041–1059. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902013-9462-7>
- Booth-LaForce, C., Groh, A. M., Burchinal, M. R., Roisman, G. I., Owen, M. T., & Cox, M. J. (2014). Caregiving And Contextual Sources of continuity and change in attachment security from infancy to late adolescence. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 79(3), 67–84. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mono.12114>
- Bourne, K., Berry, K., & Jones, L. (2013). The relationships between psychological mindedness, parental bonding and adult attachment. *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*, 87(2), 167–177. <https://doi.org/10.1111/papt.12007>
- Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment and loss: Separation*. Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1980). *Attachment and loss: Loss, sadness, and depression*. Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1988). *A secure base: Parent-child attachment and healthy human development*. Basic Books.
- Bretherton, I. (1992). The origins of attachment theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. *Developmental Psychology*, 28(5), 759–775. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.28.5.759>
- Brody, L. R., & Hall, J. A. (2008). Gender and emotion in context. In M. Lewis, J. Haviland-Jones, & L. Feldman Barrett (Eds.), *Handbook of emotions* (pp. 395–408). The Guildford Press.
- Brumbaugh, C. C. (2017). Transferring connections: Friend and sibling attachments' importance in the lives of singles. *Personal Relationships*, 24(3), 534–549. <https://doi.org/10.1111/perc.12195>
- Calzo, J. P. (2013). Hookup sex versus romantic relationship sex in college: Why do we care and what do we do? *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 52(5), 515–516. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.03.001>

- Cassidy, J., Lichtenstein-Phelps, J., Sibrava, N. J., Thomas Jr, C. L., & Borkovec, T. D. (2009). Generalized anxiety disorder: Connections with self-reported attachment. *Behavior Therapy*, 40(1), 23-38. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.beth.2007.12.004>
- Cassidy, J., & Shaver, P. R. (Eds.). (2016). *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (3rd ed.). Guilford Press.
- Chaplin, T. M., & Aldao, A. (2013). Gender differences in emotion expression in children: A meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 139(4), 735-765. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0030737>
- Chappell, K. D., & Davis, K. E. (1998). Attachment, partner choice, and perception of romantic partners: An experimental test of the attachment-security hypothesis. *Personal Relationships*, 5(3), 327-342. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.14756811.1998.tb00175.x>
- Chiu, C.-D., Tollenaar, M. S., Yang, C.-T., Elzinga, B. M., Zhang, T.-Y., & Ho, H. L. (2018). The loss of the self in memory: Self-referential memory, childhood relational trauma, and dissociation. *Clinical Psychological Science*, 7(2), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167702618804794>
- Chopik, W. J., Edelstein, R. S., & Fraley, R. C. (2013). From the cradle to the grave: Age differences in attachment from early adulthood to old age. *Journal of Personality*, 81(2), 171-183. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.14676494.2012.00793.x>
- Cole, M., & Cole, S. (2011). *Η ανάπτυξη των παιδιών*. Gutenberg.
- Collins, N. L. (1996). Working models of attachment: Implications for explanation, emotion, and behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 71(4), 810-832. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.71.4.810>
- De Paoli, T., Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, M., & Krug, I. (2017). Insecure attachment and maladaptive schema in disordered eating: The mediating role of rejection sensitivity. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy*, 24(6), 1273-1284. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.2092>
- Del Giudice, M. (2011). Sex differences in romantic attachment: A meta-analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 37(2), 193-214. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167210392789>
- Del Giudice, M. (2015). Gender differences in personality and social behavior. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 9, 750-756. <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-08-0970868.25100-3>
- Del Giudice, M. (2016). Sex differences in romantic attachment: A facet-level analysis. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 88, 125-128. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.09.004>
- DiPrete, T. A., & Buchmann, C. (2013). *The rise of women: The growing gender gap in education and what it means for American schools*. Russell Sage Foundation.
- Edelstein, R. S., Ghetti, S., Quas, J. A., Goodman, G. S., Alexander, K. W., Redlich, A. D., & Cordón, I. M. (2005). Individual differences in emotional memory: Adult attachment and long-term memory for child sexual abuse. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 31(11), 1537-1548. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167205277095>
- Feeney, J. A. (2016). Adult romantic attachment: developments in the study of couple relationships. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (435-436). The Guilford Press.
- Fivush, R., & Haden, C. A. (Eds.) (2003). *Autobiographical memory and the construction of a narrative self: Developmental and cultural perspectives*. Psychology Press.
- Fletcher, G. J. O., Simpson, J. A., Campbell, L., & Overall, N. C. (2015). Pair-bonding, romantic love, and evolution. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 10(1), 20-36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691614561683>



- Fraley, R. C., & Shaver, P. R. (2000). Adult romantic attachment: Theoretical developments, emerging controversies, and unanswered questions. *Review of General Psychology, 4*(2), 132–154. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10892680.4.2.132>
- Fraley, R. C., Roisman, G. I., Booth-LaForce, C., Owen, M. T., & Holland, A. S. (2013). Interpersonal and genetic origins of adult attachment styles: A longitudinal study from infancy to early adulthood. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 104*(5), 817–838. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031435>
- Furman, W., & Wehner, E. A. (1997). Adolescent romantic relationships: A developmental perspective. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 78*, 21–36. Retrieved August 1, 2025, from: <https://liberalarts.du.edu/sites/default/files/2021-04/furman-wehner-1997.pdf>
- Gentzler, A., & Kerns, K. (2006). Adult attachment and memory of emotional reactions to negative and positive events. *Cognition & Emotion, 20*(1), 20–42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699930500200407>
- Gleeson, G., & Fitzgerald, A. (2014). Exploring the association between adult attachment styles in romantic relationships, perceptions of parents from childhood and relationship satisfaction. *Health, 6*(13), 1643–1661. <https://doi.org/10.4236/health.2014.613196>
- Gómez-López, M., Viejo, C., & Ortega-Ruiz, R. (2019). Well-being and romantic relationships: A systematic review in adolescence and emerging adulthood. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 16*(13), 1–31. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16132415>
- Grossmann, K. E., Grossmann, K., & Waters, E. (Eds.). (2006). *Attachment from infancy to adulthood: The major longitudinal studies*. Guilford Press.
- Guarnieri, S., Smorti, M., & Tani, F. (2014). Attachment relationships and life satisfaction during emerging adulthood. *Social Indicators Research, 121*(3), 833–847. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-014065>
- Habermas, T., & Bluck, S. (2000). Getting a life: the emergence of the life story in adolescence. *Psychological Bulletin, 126*(5), 748–769. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.126.5.748>
- Haydon, K. C., Roisman, G. I., Owen, M. T., Booth-LaForce, C., & Cox, M. J. (2014). Shared and distinctive antecedents of adult attachment interview state-of-mind and inferred-experience dimensions. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 79*(3), 108–125. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mono.12116>
- Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. (1987). Romantic love conceptualized as an attachment process. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52*(3), 511–524. <https://doi.org/10.1037/00223514.52.3.511>
- Herz, L., & Gullone, E. (1999). The relationship between self-esteem and parenting style. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 30*(6), 742–761. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022199030006005>
- Hill, P. L., & Roberts, B. W. (2012). Narcissism, well-being, and observer-rated personality across the lifespan. *Social Psychological and Personality Science, 3*(2), 216–223. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550611415867>
- Holmes, B. M., & Johnson, K. R. (2009). Adult attachment and romantic partner preference: A review. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 26*(6–7), 833–852. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407509345653>
- Holmes, J. (2009). *Ο John Bowlby και η Θεωρία Δεσμού* (Γ. Αθανασίου & Θ. Αθανασίου, Μτφ.). Ελληνικά Γράμματα.
- Holmes, J. (2015). Attachment theory in clinical practice. *British Journal of Psychotherapy, 31*(2), 208–228. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjp.12151>
- Hudson, N. W., Fraley, R. C., Chopik, W. J., & Heffernan, M. E. (2015). Not all attachment relationships develop alike: Normative cross-sectional age trajectories in attachment to romantic partners, best friends, and parents. *Journal of Research in Personality, 59*, 44–55. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrjp.2015.10.001>

- Karantzas, G. C., Younan, R., & Pilkington, P. D. (2023). The associations between early maladaptive schemas and adult attachment styles: A meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 30(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cps0000108>
- Kennedy, Q., Mather, M., & Carstensen, L. L. (2004). The role of motivation in the age-related positivity effect in autobiographical memory. *Psychological Science*, 15(3), 208–214. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0956-7976.2004.01503011.x>
- Konrath, S. H., Chopik, W. J., Hsing, C. K., & O'Brien, E. (2014). Changes in adult attachment styles in american college students over time. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 18(4), 326–348. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868314530516>
- Kumar, S. A., & Mattanah, J. F. (2016). Parental attachment, romantic competence, relationship satisfaction, and psychosocial adjustment in emerging adulthood. *Personal Relationships*, 23(4), 801–817. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pere.1216>
- Kyrgeridou, E., Vorria, P., & Kioseoglou, G. (2020). Couple relationships and their perceptions of attachment to their mother. *Psychology: The Journal of the Hellenic Psychological Society*, 21(2), 183–201. https://doi.org/10.12681/psy_hps.23275
- Labouvie-Vief, G. (2003). Dynamic integration: Affect, cognition, and the self in adulthood. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 12(6), 201–206. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.0963-7214.2003.01262.x>
- Levy, K. N., & Johnson, B. N. (2019). Attachment and psychotherapy: Implications from empirical research. *Canadian Psychology / Psychologie canadienne*, 60(3), 178–193. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cap0000162>
- Li, T., & Chan, D. K.-S. (2012). How anxious and avoidant attachment affect romantic relationship quality differently: A meta-analytic review. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 42, 406–419. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.1842>
- Matsuoka, N., Uji, M., Hiramura, H., Chen, Z., Shikai, N., Kishida, Y., & Kitamura, T. (2006). Adolescents' attachment style and early experiences: A gender difference. *Archives of Women's Mental Health*, 9(1), 23–29. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00737005-0105-9>
- Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. R. (2012). An attachment perspective on psychopathology. *World Psychiatry*, 11(1), 11–15. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wpsyc.2012.01.003>
- Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. R. (2016). *Attachment in adulthood: Structure, dynamics, and change* (2nd edition). Guilford Press.
- Mosquera, D., Gonzalez, A., & Leeds, A. M. (2014). Early experience, structural dissociation, and emotional dysregulation in borderline personality disorder: The role of insecure and disorganized attachment. *Borderline Personality Disorder and Emotion Dysregulation*, 1(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1186/2051-6673-1-15>
- Ogle, C. M., Rubin, D. C., & Siegler, I. C. (2015). The relation between insecure attachment and posttraumatic stress: Early-life versus adulthood traumas. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 7(4), 324–332. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000015>
- Pinquart, M., Feußner, C., & Ahnert, L. (2013). Meta-analytic evidence for stability in attachments from infancy to early adulthood. *Attachment & Human Development*, 15(2), 189–218. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616734.2013.746257>
- Roisman, G. I., Padrón, E., Sroufe, L. A., & Egeland, B. (2002). Earned–secure attachment status in retrospect and prospect. *Child Development*, 73(4), 1204–1219. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00467>
- Ross, L. T., Short, S. D., & Garofano, M. (2016). Scale of unpredictability beliefs: Reliability and validity. *The Journal of Psychology*, 150(8), 976–1003. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.2016.1225660>



- Saunders, R., Jacobvitz, D., Zaccagnino, M., Beverung, L. M., & Hazen, N. (2011). Pathways to earned-security: The role of alternative support figures. *Attachment & Human Development*, 13(4), 403–420. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616734.2011.584405>
- Scharfe, E. (2016). Sex differences in attachment. In T. Shackelford, & V. Weekes-Shackelford (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of evolutionary psychological science*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-16999-6_3592-1
- Shaver, P. R., & Hazan, C. (1988). A biased overview of the study of love. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 5(4), 473–501. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407588054005>
- Shaver, P. R., Mikulincer, M., Sahdra, B. K., & Gross, J. T. (2017). Attachment security as a foundation for kindness toward self and others. In K. W. Brown & M. R. Leary (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of hypo-egoic phenomena* (pp. 223–242). Oxford University Press.
- Simpson, J. A. (1990). Influence of attachment styles on romantic relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 59(5), 971–980. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.59.5.971>
- Sommantico, M., Donizzetti, A. R., Parrello, S., & De Rosa, B. (2018). Predicting young adults' romantic relationship quality: Sibling ties and adult attachment styles. *Journal of Family Issues*, 40(5), 662–688. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x18820381>
- Soto, C. J., John, O. P., Gosling, S. D., & Potter, J. (2011). Age differences in personality traits from 10 to 65: Big Five domains and facets in a large cross-sectional sample. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 100(2), 330–348. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021717>
- Sternberg, R. J. (1986). A triangular theory of love. *Psychological Review*, 93(2), 119–135. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.93.2.119>
- Swann, W. B., Jr., & Read, S. J. (1981). Acquiring self-knowledge: The search for feedback that fits. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 4(6), 1119–1128. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.41.6.1119>
- Szepeswol, O., & Simpson, J. A. (2019). Attachment within life history theory: an evolutionary perspective on individual differences in attachment. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 25, 65–70. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2018.03.005>
- Tsagarakis, M., Kafetsios, K., & Stalikas, A. (2007). Factor structure, validity, and reliability of the Greek version of the Revised Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR-R) measure of adult attachment. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment* 23(1), 47–55. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1015-5759.23.1.47>
- Umamura, T., Lacinová, L., Kotrčová, K., & Fraley, R. C. (2017). Similarities and differences regarding changes in attachment preferences and attachment styles in relation to romantic relationship length: Longitudinal and concurrent analyses. *Attachment & Human Development*, 20(2), 135–159. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616734.2017.1383488>

Οι αντιλήψεις των πρώιμων εμπειριών δεσμού με τη μητέρα και η ποιότητα των συντροφικών σχέσεων Ελλήνων ενηλίκων

Καλλιόπη ΚΟΥΝΕΝΟΥ¹, Χρήστος ΠΕΖΗΡΚΙΑΝΙΔΗΣ², Δήμητρα ΦΙΝΔΑΝΗ³, Αντώνιος ΚΑΛΑΜΑΤΙΑΝΟΣ⁴, Ντίνα ΚΟΥΡΜΟΥΣΗ¹

¹ Ανώτατη Σχολή Παιδαγωγικής και Τεχνολογικής Εκπαίδευσης

² Εργαστήριο Θετικής Ψυχολογίας, Τμήμα Ψυχολογίας, Πάντειο Πανεπιστήμιο Κοινωνικών και Πολιτικών Επιστημών

³ Τμήμα Ειδικής Αγωγής, Πανεπιστήμιο Θεσσαλίας

⁴ Παιδαγωγικό Τμήμα, Πανεπιστήμιο Λευκωσίας

ΛΕΞΕΙΣ ΚΛΕΙΔΙΑ	ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ
Πρώιμες εμπειρίες δεσμού Ύψος σύναψης δεσμού Μητέρα Συντροφικές σχέσεις Ενήλικες	Οι εμπειρίες με τους φροντιστές κατά την παιδική ηλικία διαδραματίζουν καθοριστικό ρόλο στη διαμόρφωση της λειτουργίας ενός ατόμου, ιδιαίτερα στο πλαίσιο των συντροφικών σχέσεων. Η παρούσα μελέτη εξετάζει τη σχέση μεταξύ των πρώιμων εμπειριών προσκόλλησης με τη μητέρα και της ποιότητας των ρομαντικών σχέσεων στην ενήλικη ζωή. Το δείγμα της μελέτης αποτελείται από 400 ενήλικες, ηλικίας 18 έως 67 ετών, οι οποίοι συμπλήρωσαν το Perceptions of Adult Attachment Questionnaire και το Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory-Revised. Τα ευρήματα ανέδειξαν σημαντικές έμφυλες και ηλικιακές διαφορές. Οι γυναίκες ανέφεραν υψηλότερα επίπεδα αποφυγής, ευαλωτότητας και συγχώρεσης αναφορικά με τις πρώιμες εμπειρίες προσκόλλησης, ενώ οι άνδρες παρουσίασαν υψηλότερα επίπεδα κριτικής. Επιπλέον, οι αναδυόμενοι ενήλικες παρουσίασαν υψηλότερα επίπεδα αγχώδους τύπου δεσμού στην ενήλικη ζωή και λιγότερες ενθυμήσεις πρώιμων εμπειριών αγάπης από τη μητέρα. Επιπλέον, βρέθηκε ότι πρώιμες εμπειρίες με τη μητέρα που χαρακτηρίζονται από στοργή, χαμηλότερα επίπεδα απόρριψης, κριτικής και ευαλωτότητας συσχετίζονται σημαντικά με την υιοθέτηση ενός αποφευκτικού τύπου δεσμού στις συντροφικές σχέσεις στην ενήλικη ζωή. Αντίθετα, πρώιμες εμπειρίες προσκόλλησης που χαρακτηρίζονταν από εαυλωτότητα, αντιστροφή ρόλων και λιγότερη φροντίδα και βιώνονται στο παρόν με θυμό συνδέονται με αυξημένα επίπεδα αγχώδους τύπου δεσμού στις ενήλικες συντροφικές σχέσεις. Τα ευρήματα αυτά είναι υψηλής σημαντικότητας για την έρευνα και τη θεωρία στο πεδίο των διαπροσωπικών σχέσεων και δημιουργούν ουσιαστικές προεκτάσεις για τον σχεδιασμό και την εφαρμογή ψυχολογικών παρεμβάσεων που απευθύνονται σε νέους γονείς, ζευγάρια και νεαρούς ενήλικες που αναζητούν καθοδήγηση σε θέματα που αφορούν τις ρομαντικές σχέσεις και τις πρώιμες σχεσιακές τους εμπειρίες.
ΕΠΙΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ	
Καλλιόπη Κουνενού Παιδαγωγικό Τμήμα, Ανώτατη Σχολή Παιδαγωγικής και Τεχνολογικής Εκπαίδευσης, 151 22, Μαρούσι, Αττική, Ελλάδα kkounen@aspete.gr	