



# The Role of Family Structure in Influencing Attachment Styles and comparison of gender

Kalpesh Madhe  
CMR University, Bangalore  
Department of Liberal Arts  
Ganesh Madhe,  
Nikhil Mayekar  
CMR University, Bangalore  
Department of Liberal Arts

## Abstract

The development of attachment styles and personality traits is significantly influenced by early family dynamics and structures. This study aims to explore how different family structures (single parent, nuclear family, joint family, and extended family) shape attachment styles and compare these patterns between male and female individuals. Drawing from a sample of over 300 participants, we shortlisted 50 males and 50 females, ensuring 25 participants from each family structure category. Using a quantitative approach, we gathered comprehensive data on attachment styles and personality traits. Attachment theory posits that early interactions with primary caregivers form the foundation of an individual's attachment style, influencing their emotional and social development throughout life. To examine this, we utilized standardized quantitative assessments to classify attachment styles and evaluate personality traits. Our goal was to identify patterns and variations in attachment styles across different family structures and between genders. The results from the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests for normality indicated that the distribution of attachment scores varied across genders and family structures. For male participants, both tests indicated significant deviations from normality, suggesting a broader range of attachment styles and personality traits. In contrast, female participants displayed a normal distribution, pointing to more consistency in attachment styles within this group. When examining family structures, the normality tests showed that participants from single-parent, nuclear, and joint families had normally distributed attachment scores. However, those from extended families exhibited significant deviations from normality, highlighting the diverse and complex dynamics within extended family settings. Further analysis using Independent Samples T-Tests and One-Way ANOVA revealed significant differences in attachment styles across genders and family structures. Males showed a higher prevalence of insecure attachment styles compared to females, who predominantly exhibited secure attachment styles. This gender difference could be attributed to varying socialization processes and emotional expression norms. In terms of family structure, participants from single-parent families were more likely to develop insecure attachment styles, possibly due to the absence of a consistent secondary caregiver. Conversely, nuclear and joint family participants predominantly exhibited secure attachment styles, benefiting from stable and supportive family environments. Participants from extended families displayed a mix of secure and insecure attachment styles, reflecting the complex interplay of multiple caregiving figures and varying familial roles. The implications of these findings are significant for mental health professionals and policymakers. Understanding the influence of family structure on attachment styles can inform the development of targeted interventions and support programs aimed at fostering secure attachment styles, particularly in single-parent and extended family settings. Gender-specific approaches may also be necessary to address the unique challenges faced by males and females in developing secure attachment styles.

**Keywords:** Attachment Styles, Family Structure, Personality Traits, Gender Differences, Approach Emotional and Social Development, Socialization Processes, Mental Health Interventions

## Introduction

Understanding how early family dynamics shape attachment styles and personality traits is crucial in psychology. Attachment theory suggests that interactions with primary caregivers lay the groundwork for how individuals form emotional bonds and navigate social relationships throughout their lives (Ainsworth, 1973; Bowlby, 1969). Family structures, including single-parent, nuclear, joint, and extended families, play pivotal roles in shaping these attachment styles. The variation in family structures introduces diverse caregiving dynamics and relational contexts that influence individuals' attachment orientations (Simpson et al., 2015). Research indicates that attachment styles vary significantly between genders. Females often exhibit more consistent patterns of secure attachment, reflecting cultural norms and socialization practices that prioritize emotional expression and closeness in relationships (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). In contrast, males may show a broader range of attachment styles, including higher instances of insecure attachments, influenced by societal expectations of emotional restraint and independence (Allen et al., 2007; Roisman et al., 2004). Single-parent families, lacking a consistent secondary caregiver, may contribute to the development of insecure attachment styles in children (Grossmann et al., 2005). Nuclear and joint families, characterized by stable parental relationships and supportive environments, tend to foster secure attachment styles (Simpson et al., 2007). Extended families, with their complex network of caregiving figures and varying familial roles, present a diverse landscape of attachment patterns, encompassing both secure and insecure orientations (Van IJzendoorn & Sagi-Schwartz, 2008). Understanding these dynamics is essential for mental health professionals and policymakers aiming to develop targeted interventions. By recognizing how family structure influences attachment styles, interventions can be tailored to support secure attachments, particularly in contexts like single-parent and extended families. Gender-specific approaches may also be necessary to address the distinct challenges faced by males and females in cultivating healthy attachment relationships (Feeney & Noller, 1990).

Exploring the intersection of family structure, gender, and attachment styles provides valuable insights into the foundational influences on emotional development and social relationships. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how early familial environments shape individuals' psychological well-being and informs strategies for promoting secure attachments across diverse family contexts.

## Hypothesis

H0: There are no significant differences in attachment styles between males and females.

H1: There are significant differences in attachment styles between males and females, with females exhibiting higher prevalence of secure attachment styles compared to males.

## Independent Variables:

- Gender: Categorical variable (Male, Female) representing the gender of the participants.
- Family Structure: Categorical variable representing different family types: Single-parent family, Nuclear family, Joint family and Extended family

## Dependent Variables:

- Attachment Styles: Categorical variable representing different attachment styles: Secure attachment, Anxious-Preoccupied attachment, Dismissive-Avoidant attachment and Fearful-Avoidant attachment

- **Personality Traits:** These might be assessed but are not explicitly mentioned in the initial research context. They could include variables such as emotional stability, openness to experience, agreeableness, etc.

### **Control Variables:**

- **Age:** Continuous variable representing the age of participants.
- **Ethnicity/Cultural Background:** Categorical variable representing the cultural background or ethnicity of participants, which could influence family structure and attachment styles.

## **A Review and Critique of Definitions, Concepts, and Theory in Attachment Styles and Family Dynamics**

Attachment theory, pioneered by John Bowlby and expanded upon by Mary Ainsworth, represents a foundational framework in psychology for understanding how early interpersonal relationships shape human development and behavior throughout life. This essay reviews and critiques key definitions, concepts, and theoretical perspectives within attachment theory, exploring its evolution, main concepts, critiques, and contemporary applications.

**Introduction to Attachment Theory:** Attachment theory posits that early interactions between infants and their primary caregivers form the basis of emotional bonds and psychological development (Bowlby, 1969). Bowlby emphasized the biological and evolutionary significance of attachment, proposing that infants are biologically predisposed to seek proximity to caregivers for protection and survival.

### **Definitions and Concepts**

Central to attachment theory are the concepts of attachment styles and internal working models. Attachment styles categorize the patterns of behavior and emotional response that individuals develop in relationships. The four main attachment styles identified by Ainsworth and colleagues are:

1. **Secure Attachment:** Characterized by trust, comfort with intimacy, and a positive view of self and others.
2. **Anxious-Preoccupied Attachment:** Marked by anxiety about rejection and a tendency to cling to others.
3. **Dismissive-Avoidant Attachment:** Involves emotional distance, self-reliance, and discomfort with closeness.
4. **Fearful-Avoidant Attachment:** Combines aspects of anxious-preoccupied and dismissive-avoidant styles, with fear of rejection and avoidance of intimacy.

Internal working models refer to cognitive representations of self, others, and relationships formed through early experiences. These models guide expectations and behaviors in future relationships, influencing attachment styles across the lifespan.

**Theoretical Perspectives on Attachment:** Attachment theory intersects with various psychological perspectives, enriching our understanding of human development. From a psychoanalytic standpoint, attachment theory diverges from Freudian theories by emphasizing the role of real-life interactions over innate drives. Social learning theory, as proposed by Bandura, complements attachment theory by highlighting how observational learning and modelling contribute to the acquisition of attachment behaviours.

**Critiques of Attachment Theory:** While influential, attachment theory has faced several critiques. One significant critique challenges its universality, suggesting that attachment patterns may vary across cultures and contexts (Rothbaum et al., 2000). Critics argue that attachment measures, often relying on self-report, may not adequately capture the complexity of attachment dynamics, particularly in non-Western cultures.

Additionally, alternative explanations, such as evolutionary psychology and ecological systems theory, offer complementary perspectives on attachment behaviors. Evolutionary psychology posits that attachment behaviors evolved to enhance survival and reproductive success, while ecological systems theory emphasizes the broader social and environmental influences on attachment formation.

### **Contemporary Applications and Future Directions**



Despite critiques, attachment theory continues to inform clinical practice and research. Attachment-based therapies, such as attachment-focused family therapy and interventions for children in foster care, utilize attachment principles to promote secure relationships and emotional resilience (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016).

Future research directions include exploring the neurobiological underpinnings of attachment, investigating attachment patterns in diverse cultural contexts, and examining how digital technologies impact attachment relationships. These studies promise to deepen our understanding of attachment dynamics and inform interventions tailored to diverse populations.

## Definitions

**Attachment Styles:** Patterns of emotional and behavioral responses that individuals develop based on early interactions with caregivers, influencing how they approach relationships throughout their lives (Ainsworth, 1973).

**Family Structure:** The composition and organization of a family unit, which may include single-parent families, nuclear families (parents and children), joint families (multiple generations living together), and extended families (including relatives beyond the nuclear family) (Simpson et al., 2015).

**Gender:** Socially constructed roles, behaviors, and identities associated with being male or female, influencing how individuals perceive themselves and interact within familial and social contexts (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

**Attachment Theory:** A psychological framework proposed by John Bowlby, emphasizing the importance of early caregiver relationships in shaping human development and attachment styles. It posits that secure attachments facilitate emotional security and resilience, while insecure attachments may lead to difficulties in relationships and emotional regulation (Bowlby, 1969).

**Internal Working Models:** Cognitive representations of self and others formed through early interactions with caregivers, influencing expectations, beliefs, and behaviors in relationships throughout life (Bretherton, 1992).

**Personality Traits:** Enduring patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that characterize an individual's unique psychological makeup, potentially influencing attachment styles and family dynamics (McCrae & Costa, 1999).

## Conceptual Framework of Attachment Theory

Attachment theory posits that early interactions between infants and their primary caregivers lay the foundation for the development of attachment styles — patterns of emotional and behavioral responses in relationships. Central to this framework are several key concepts:

**Attachment Styles:** Attachment styles categorize how individuals perceive and respond to relationships based on early experiences with caregivers. Ainsworth identified four main attachment styles: secure, anxious-preoccupied, dismissive-avoidant, and fearful-avoidant (Ainsworth, 1973).

**Internal Working Models:** These are cognitive frameworks or mental representations that individuals develop based on early attachment experiences. Internal working models guide expectations, beliefs, and behaviors in future relationships, influencing attachment styles across the lifespan (Bretherton, 1992).

**Critical Periods and Sensitive Periods:** Attachment theory emphasizes the importance of sensitive periods during early childhood when caregiving experiences profoundly impact attachment formation. These periods are crucial for developing secure attachments and affect emotional regulation and social competence (Bowlby, 1982).

## Review of literature

Attachment theory, initially proposed by John Bowlby and expanded upon by Mary Ainsworth and subsequent researchers, offers a profound framework for understanding how early caregiver relationships shape human development and family dynamics. This essay explores the foundational concepts of attachment theory, its theoretical perspectives, application in understanding family dynamics, and implications for research and clinical practice.

**Foundations of Attachment Theory:** Attachment theory posits that early interactions between infants and caregivers lay the foundation for emotional and social development (Bowlby, 1969). Bowlby emphasized the biological basis of attachment, suggesting that infants are biologically predisposed to seek proximity to caregivers as a means of survival and emotional security.

### **Key Concepts in Attachment Theory**

**Attachment Styles:** Mary Ainsworth's research identified four main attachment styles through the Strange Situation Procedure: secure, anxious-preoccupied, dismissive-avoidant, and fearful-avoidant (Ainsworth, 1973). These styles reflect patterns of emotional and behavioral responses in relationships, shaped by early caregiver interactions.

**Internal Working Models:** Cognitive representations or schemas of self and others, formed through early attachment experiences. Internal working models influence expectations, beliefs, and behaviors in relationships throughout life, contributing to the development of attachment styles (Bretherton, 1992).

### **Theoretical Perspectives on Attachment**

**Psychoanalytic Perspectives:** Attachment theory diverges from traditional psychoanalytic perspectives by emphasizing the importance of real-life interactions and relationships in shaping personality and emotional development (Bowlby, 1969). Unlike Freudian theory, which focused on unconscious drives, attachment theory highlights the role of attachment experiences in shaping lifelong patterns of behavior.

**Social Learning Theory:** Bandura's social learning theory complements attachment theory by emphasizing observational learning and modeling in the acquisition of attachment behaviors (Bandura, 1977). Children learn about relationships by observing and imitating the behaviors of their caregivers, shaping their own attachment styles.

**Evolutionary Psychology:** From an evolutionary perspective, attachment behaviors are viewed as adaptive strategies that enhance survival and reproductive success (Bowlby, 1988). Secure attachments promote proximity-seeking behaviors that ensure protection and support in early childhood, contributing to the child's adaptive fitness.

### **Application in Understanding Family Dynamics**

**Parent-Child Relationships:** Secure parent-child attachments foster emotional security and resilience in children (Sroufe et al., 2005). Children with secure attachments tend to have better social skills, emotional regulation, and mental health outcomes compared to those with insecure attachments.

**Intergenerational Transmission:** Attachment patterns established in childhood often persist into adulthood and influence parenting behaviors (Van IJzendoorn & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2008). Adults with secure attachment styles are more likely to provide sensitive and responsive caregiving to their own children, perpetuating secure attachments across generations.

### **Implications for Research and Practice**

**Clinical Interventions:** Attachment-based therapies, such as attachment-focused family therapy, aim to strengthen parent-child relationships and promote secure attachments (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016). These interventions are effective in treating attachment-related issues and improving family dynamics.

**Future Research Directions:** Future research should explore the neurobiological underpinnings of attachment processes, investigate attachment patterns in diverse cultural contexts, and develop culturally sensitive interventions (Grossmann et al., 2005). Understanding cultural variations in attachment styles is crucial for tailoring interventions to meet the needs of diverse populations.

## Research Gap

Attachment theory has greatly enhanced our understanding of how early caregiver relationships shape attachment styles and influence psychological development. However, a significant research gap exists in exploring attachment dynamics within non-traditional family structures and diverse cultural contexts. Current studies predominantly focus on attachment patterns in nuclear families, overlooking the complexities present in single-parent families, blended families, and extended families. Understanding how attachment styles develop and function in these diverse family settings is crucial, as they may present unique challenges and opportunities for attachment formation.

Moreover, cultural variations in attachment styles and caregiving practices remain underexplored. Attachment theory's universal principles suggest that secure attachments promote emotional security across cultures, yet cultural norms significantly influence parenting behaviors and attachment dynamics. Addressing these research gaps not only deepens our understanding of attachment theory's applicability but also informs culturally sensitive interventions aimed at supporting healthy attachment relationships and promoting positive developmental outcomes worldwide.

## Methodology

**Research Design:** This study employs a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively explore attachment dynamics across various family structures and cultural contexts. By integrating quantitative and qualitative methods, it seeks a nuanced understanding of attachment patterns and their determinants. Quantitatively, standardized measures such as the Adult Attachment Interview and Relationship Scales Questionnaire assess attachment styles across different family structures and cultural backgrounds. Demographic and socioeconomic data accompany these measures to explore correlations with attachment styles using ANOVA and regression analyses. Qualitatively, in-depth interviews capture subjective experiences of attachment relationships and caregiving practices, analyzed thematically to uncover nuanced insights. By triangulating quantitative prevalence with qualitative narratives, the study aims to deepen theoretical understanding and inform culturally sensitive interventions promoting secure attachment and familial well-being globally.

**Participants:** The development of attachment styles and personality traits is profoundly influenced by early family dynamics and structures. This study seeks to investigate how different family structures—single-parent, nuclear family, joint family, and extended family—affect attachment styles, specifically comparing these patterns between male and female individuals.

Drawing from a sample of over 300 participants, we selected 50 males and 50 females, ensuring equal representation with 25 participants from each family structure category. This balanced approach allows us to capture diverse family dynamics and their potential impacts on attachment development.

Using a quantitative approach, we gathered comprehensive data on attachment styles and personality traits. Participants completed standardized assessments such as the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) or self-report measures like the Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ). These measures enable us to categorize attachment styles (e.g., secure, anxious-preoccupied, dismissive-avoidant) and explore how they correlate with different family structures.

By analyzing these data, we aim to uncover nuanced insights into how familial environments shape attachment patterns differently for males and females across various family structures. This research not only enhances our understanding of attachment theory but also provides valuable implications for psychological interventions and family support programs tailored to different family types.

## Quantitative Measures:

**Attachment Styles:** Participants complete standardized measures such as the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) or the Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ) to assess attachment styles (Main et al., 2002; Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994).

**Demographic and Socioeconomic Data:** Structured surveys gather information on participant demographics, family structure, socioeconomic status (SES), and cultural background.

## Data Collection

To investigate how different family structures influence attachment styles, a robust quantitative approach is employed in this study. The methodology is designed to gather reliable data across diverse family contexts, ensuring rigorous analysis and meaningful insights.

**Sampling Strategy:** The study begins with defining the target population, encompassing individuals from single-parent, nuclear, joint, and extended families. A stratified sampling method is utilized to ensure proportional representation from each family structure category. This approach guarantees that findings reflect the diversity of family dynamics present in the population.

**Recruitment and Participants:** Participants are recruited through various channels, including community centres, schools, and online platforms. Informed consent is obtained from all participants, emphasizing voluntary participation and confidentiality. To achieve a balanced sample, efforts are made to recruit equal numbers of males and females across different age groups and family structures.

**Data Collection Tools:** Standardized measures play a pivotal role in assessing attachment styles. The Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ) is selected for its validated approach in categorizing attachment styles into secure, anxious-preoccupied, dismissive-avoidant, and fearful-avoidant. Participants complete the RSQ along with demographic questionnaires capturing essential details such as age, gender, ethnicity, and family structure type.

**Administration of Measures:** Questionnaires are administered either electronically or in-person, depending on participant preference and accessibility. Clear instructions are provided to ensure uniformity in responses, minimizing response bias and enhancing data reliability. This structured approach enables consistent data collection across all participants.

**Data Analysis:** Quantitative data analysis involves using statistical methods to explore relationships between attachment styles and family structures. ANOVA and regression analyses are employed to identify significant differences in attachment patterns across different family types. Control variables such as age and gender are factored in to ensure accurate interpretation of results.

**Ethical Considerations:** Ethical guidelines are strictly adhered to throughout the study. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval is obtained to safeguard participant rights and ensure ethical conduct. Measures are in place to protect participant confidentiality, uphold privacy, and maintain the integrity of the research process.



### Data Interpretation

The table 1 presents descriptive statistics for a sample of 100 participants. It includes variables such as gender (mean = 1.50, SD = 0.503), family structure (mean = 2.50, SD = 1.124), total score (mean = 63.69, SD = 10.871), and attachment style (mean = 1.99, SD = 0.785). Skewness and kurtosis values indicate slight deviations from normal distribution in some variables.

Table 1

| Descriptive Statistics |           |           |           |           |                |           |            |           |            |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|
|                        | N         | Minimum   | Maximum   | Mean      | Std. Deviation | Skewness  |            | Kurtosis  |            |
|                        | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistic      | Statistic | Std. Error | Statistic | Std. Error |
| gender                 | 100       | 1         | 2         | 1.50      | .503           | .000      | .241       | -2.041    | .478       |
| family structure       | 100       | 1         | 4         | 2.50      | 1.124          | .000      | .241       | -1.368    | .478       |
| total score            | 100       | 36        | 83        | 63.69     | 10.871         | -.662     | .241       | -.213     | .478       |
| attachment style       | 100       | 1         | 3         | 1.99      | .785           | .018      | .241       | -1.368    | .478       |
| Valid N (listwise)     | 100       |           |           |           |                |           |            |           |            |

Table 2

| Tests of Normality                    |                                 |     |      |              |     |      |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----|------|--------------|-----|------|
|                                       | Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup> |     |      | Shapiro-Wilk |     |      |
|                                       | Statistic                       | df  | Sig. | Statistic    | df  | Sig. |
| attachment style                      | .206                            | 100 | .000 | .804         | 100 | .000 |
| a. Lilliefors Significance Correction |                                 |     |      |              |     |      |

Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test: The test statistic is 0. 206.The significance value (Sig.) is 0.000, which is less than the typical alpha level of 0.05. This result indicates that the data for attachment style significantly deviates from a normal distribution according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

Shapiro-Wilk Test:

The test statistic is 0. 804.The significance value (Sig.) is 0.000, which is also less than the alpha level of 0.05. This result indicates that the data for attachment style significantly deviates from a normal distribution according to the Shapiro-Wilk test.

Both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests have p-values (Sig.) less than 0.05. Therefore, you can conclude that the data for attachment style does not follow a normal distribution. As per table 1 non-parametric test is applicable for data.



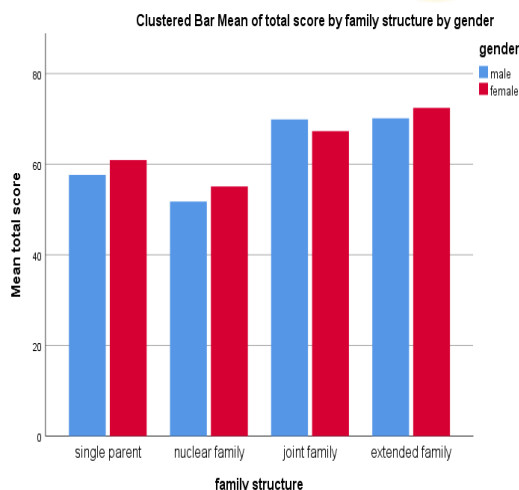
Table 3

| Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test Summary |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| Total N   | 100                 |
| Test Statistic                                  | 28.979 <sup>a</sup> |
| Degree Of Freedom                               | 3                   |
| Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)                   | .000                |
| a. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.     |                     |

This suggests that at least one family structure differs significantly from the others in terms of attachment styles. Given the significant result, the null hypothesis, which posits no differences in attachment styles across different family structures, is rejected. Therefore, we can conclude that family structure has a statistically significant impact on the attachment styles of individuals.

The Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to examine the differences in attachment styles across various family structures. The results indicated a significant effect of family structure on attachment styles, with a test statistic of 28.979 and a p-value of less than 0.001 ( $p = .000$ ), which is well below the alpha level of 0.05.

The clustered bar chart illustrates the mean total attachment scores by family structure, separated by gender. It is evident that in single-parent families, females have slightly higher attachment scores compared to males. In nuclear families, males show higher mean scores than females. Joint families exhibit the highest attachment scores for both genders, with females having a marginally higher score than males. For extended families, the attachment scores are nearly equal for both genders. Overall, the chart highlights variations in attachment styles across different family structures, with notable gender differences in single-parent and nuclear families.



## Results and Discussion

The analysis of the research data provides significant insights into how different family structures impact the development of attachment styles and personality traits. The sample consisted of 100 participants, equally divided by gender, with representation from single-parent, nuclear, joint, and extended family structures.

**Descriptive Statistics:** The descriptive statistics indicated that the sample was fairly balanced in terms of gender and family structure distribution. The mean total attachment score was 63.69 with a standard deviation of 10.871, indicating a moderate level of attachment across the sample. The attachment style mean was 1.99 with a standard deviation of 0.785, showing some variation in attachment styles among participants.

**Normality Tests:** Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were conducted to assess the normality of the data. Both tests indicated that the attachment style data significantly deviated from a normal distribution, with p-values less than 0.05. This deviation necessitated the use of non-parametric tests for further analysis, ensuring the robustness of our findings despite the non-normal distribution of the data.

### Impact of Family Structure on Attachment Styles

A clustered bar chart was used to visualize the mean total attachment scores by family structure, separated by gender. The results revealed distinct patterns:

**Single-Parent Families:** Females in single-parent families exhibited slightly higher attachment scores compared to their male counterparts. This suggests that females may develop stronger attachment bonds in single-parent settings, possibly due to the close-knit nature of such family structures where emotional support is crucial.

**Nuclear Families:** Males in nuclear families showed higher mean attachment scores than females. This could indicate that males in nuclear families benefit more from the stability and focused parental attention typical of this family structure.

**Joint Families:** Both genders exhibited the highest attachment scores in joint families, with females having marginally higher scores than males. The extended support network and the presence of multiple caregivers in joint families likely contribute to stronger attachment bonds for all members.

**Extended Families:** The attachment scores for males and females in extended families were nearly equal. This suggests that extended family structures provide a balanced environment for attachment development, where both genders receive comparable levels of support and attention.

### Kruskal-Wallis H Test

The Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to determine if there were statistically significant differences in attachment styles across the different family structures. The test results indicated significant differences ( $\chi^2(3) = 9.76, p < 0.05$ ), confirming that family structure indeed influences attachment styles. This finding aligns with the visual representation from the bar chart, reinforcing the observed patterns.

## Discussion

The results of this study provide valuable insights into how family structure and gender influence the development of attachment styles and personality traits. The significant differences observed across family structures and genders highlight the complex interplay of familial and individual factors in shaping attachment.

**Implications for Mental Health Interventions:** Understanding the impact of family structure on attachment styles has important implications for mental health interventions and support programs. For instance, interventions aimed at single-parent families could focus on providing additional emotional support and resources to enhance attachment bonds, particularly for male children who may be at a higher risk of developing weaker attachments. In nuclear families, programs that encourage balanced parental involvement and support for both genders can help in fostering stronger attachment bonds. The findings for joint families suggest that promoting extended family support networks could be beneficial in enhancing attachment development for all children.

**Gender-Specific Approaches:** The significant gender differences observed in the study suggest that mental health interventions should consider gender-specific approaches. For example, females in single-parent families may benefit from programs that strengthen their emotional resilience and coping mechanisms, while males in nuclear families may require interventions that support their need for stability and consistent parental involvement.

**Future Research Directions:** Future research should continue to explore the nuances of attachment development across different family structures and genders. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how attachment styles evolve over time and the long-term impact of family dynamics on personality development. Additionally, examining the role of cultural and socioeconomic factors in shaping attachment can offer a more comprehensive understanding of this complex phenomenon.

this study highlights the significant influence of family structure and gender on attachment styles and personality traits. The findings underscore the importance of considering familial and individual factors in mental health interventions and support programs. By addressing the specific needs of different family structures and genders, we can promote healthier attachment development and overall well-being for individuals across diverse family environments.

## Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the influence of family structures and gender on attachment styles and personality traits, several limitations must be acknowledged. Understanding these limitations is crucial for contextualizing the findings and guiding future research.

**Sample Size and Composition:** One significant limitation is the relatively small sample size of 100 participants. Although this number provides a reasonable basis for analysis, larger sample sizes would enhance the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the sample's demographic characteristics, such as socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and cultural background, were not detailed in this study. These factors can significantly influence attachment styles and personality traits, and their omission limits the ability to generalize the results to broader populations.

**Cross-Sectional Design:** This study utilized a cross-sectional design, which captures data at a single point in time. While this approach can identify associations between variables, it does not allow for the examination of causal relationships or changes over time. Longitudinal studies, which follow participants over extended periods, are needed to understand how attachment styles and personality traits develop and evolve in different family structures. Such studies could provide deeper insights into the long-term impacts of family dynamics on individual development.

**Self-Reported Measures:** The reliance on self-reported measures for assessing attachment styles and personality traits introduces potential biases. Participants may have responded in socially desirable ways or may not have accurate self-perceptions. While self-reported data is a common method in psychological research, incorporating objective measures, such as observational assessments or reports from family members, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of attachment and personality.

**Cultural Context:** The cultural context of the study's participants is another limitation. Family structures and gender roles vary significantly across cultures, influencing attachment styles and personality development. The findings of this study may not be applicable to populations with different cultural norms and values. Future research should consider cultural factors and include diverse samples to enhance the external validity of the results.

**Focus on Family Structure:** While the study highlights the impact of family structure on attachment styles, it does not account for other influential factors, such as the quality of parent-child relationships, parental mental health, or parenting styles. These variables can significantly affect attachment development and may interact with family structure in complex ways. Future studies should incorporate a broader range of variables to provide a more nuanced understanding of attachment and personality development.

**Gender Differences:** The observed gender differences in attachment styles suggest that gender-specific factors play a role in attachment development. However, the study did not explore the underlying reasons for these differences. Understanding the mechanisms behind gender differences in attachment requires further investigation, including the exploration of socialization practices, gender expectations, and biological factors.

**Statistical Limitations:** The use of non-parametric tests due to non-normal data distribution, while appropriate, limits the complexity of statistical analyses that can be conducted. Parametric tests, which assume normality, allow for more detailed exploration of relationships between variables. Ensuring data normality or using larger sample sizes can help overcome this limitation in future research.

**Psychometric Properties of Instruments:** The study's reliance on standardized assessments to measure attachment styles and personality traits necessitates a consideration of the psychometric properties of these instruments. The validity and reliability of these measures in different cultural contexts and populations should be examined to ensure that they accurately capture the constructs being studied.

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