

# Attachment Styles, Communication, and Commitment in Young Adults: A Correlational Study

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**Abstract-** This study examined the relationships among attachment styles, communication patterns, and commitment in young adults. Using a quantitative correlational design, data were collected from 374 Indian participants aged 18–25 years through snowball sampling. Participants completed the Adult Attachment Scale, Communication Pattern Questionnaire, and the Commitment Level subscale of the Investment Model Scale. Data were analysed using Spearman's rank-order correlation due to violations of normality. Results indicated a significant positive relationship between attachment and communication, and between attachment and commitment. However, no significant relationship was found between communication and commitment. The findings highlight the central role of attachment orientations in shaping both interpersonal communication and commitment levels among young adults. Implications for relationship counselling and future research are discussed.

**Keywords:** Attachment styles, Communication, Commitment, Young Adults

## I. INTRODUCTION

Attachment theory provides a foundational framework for understanding close interpersonal relationships across the lifespan. Originating from Bowlby's (1969) work, attachment theory posits that early caregiver–child interactions shape internal working models that guide expectations, emotions, and behaviours in later relationships. In adulthood, these attachment orientations influence intimacy, emotional regulation, communication styles, and relational commitment.

Communication is a core relational process through which individuals exchange information, express emotions, and negotiate needs. Effective communication fosters intimacy, trust, and relationship stability, whereas maladaptive patterns can lead to conflict and disengagement. Commitment, defined as the intention to maintain a relationship over time, reflects emotional investment and long-term orientation toward relational partners.

Despite extensive research on attachment, communication, and commitment independently, fewer studies have examined how these constructs interact simultaneously in young adult populations, particularly within the Indian cultural context. The present study addresses this gap by exploring the interrelationships among attachment styles, communication patterns, and commitment in young adults.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Previous research consistently demonstrates that secure attachment is associated with healthier relationship outcomes, including better communication and higher commitment (Feeney & Noller, 1990; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Secure individuals tend to engage in open and constructive communication, while anxious and avoidant individuals often display maladaptive patterns such as withdrawal, avoidance, or excessive reassurance seeking.

Studies examining communication as a mediating factor suggest that individuals with higher

interpersonal communication competence develop more satisfying and stable relationships (Anders & Tucker, 2000). Lim et al. (2021) found that communication skills positively predicted friendship quality, although attachment styles were stronger determinants of relational perceptions.

Commitment has been widely studied using Rusbult's Investment Model, which conceptualizes commitment as a function of satisfaction, investment size, and quality of alternatives (Rusbult et al., 1998). Research indicates that insecure attachment—particularly avoidance—is negatively associated with commitment, whereas secure attachment predicts stronger relational persistence (Chow & Tan, 2013; Öztekin, 2016).

Collectively, the literature suggests robust links between attachment and both communication and commitment. However, evidence regarding the direct association between communication and commitment remains mixed, warranting further empirical investigation.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

A quantitative, correlational research design was employed to examine relationships among attachment styles, communication patterns, and commitment.

#### 3.2 Participants

The sample comprised 374 young adults aged 18–25 years. All participants were Indian citizens. Snowball sampling was used to recruit participants via online platforms.

#### 3.3 Instruments

- Adult Attachment Scale (AAS): Developed by Collins (1996), measuring closeness, dependence, and anxiety (18 items;  $\alpha = .821$ ).
- Communication Pattern Questionnaire (CPQ): Developed by Christensen and Sullaway (1984), assessing communication strategies during conflict (7 items;  $\alpha = .790$ ).
- Commitment Level Scale (Investment Model Scale): Developed by Rusbult et al. (1998), measuring commitment level (11 items;  $\alpha = .533$ ).

#### 3.4 Procedure

Data was collected using Google Forms. Participants provided informed consent prior to participation. Responses were anonymized.

#### 3.5 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics and tests of normality were conducted. As normality assumptions were violated, Spearman's rank-order correlation was used to test the study hypotheses.

### IV. RESULTS

4.1 Table 01: Descriptive mean

	N – Sample Size	Mean scores
Attachment	374	51.53
Communication	374	51.63
Commitment	374	37.01

Table 1 revealed comparable mean scores for attachment ( $M = 51.53$ ) and communication ( $M = 51.63$ ), with a lower mean score for commitment ( $M = 37.01$ ). Normality tests indicated non-normal distributions for all variables.

Table 02: Correlation between Attachment and Communication

	N	Rho	p value
Attachment	374	1.000	0.000
Communication	374	0.222	

Table 2 depicts that the rho value for attachment is much greater than the communication and the p value of 0.00.

Table 03: Correlation between Attachment and Commitment

	N	Rho	p value
Attachment	374	1.000	0.004
Commitment	374	0.149	

Table 03 depicts that the rho value for attachment is much greater than the communication and the p value of 0.004

Table 04: Correlation between Communication and Commitment

	N	Rho	p value
Communication	374	0.222	0.012
Commitment	374	0.149	

Table 04 depicts that the rho value for communication is much greater than the commitment and the p value of 0.012.

Spearman correlation analysis showed:

- In Table 02; A significant positive relationship between attachment and communication ( $\rho = .222, p < .01$ ).
- In Table 03; A significant positive relationship between attachment and commitment ( $\rho = .149, p < .01$ ).
- In Table 04; No significant relationship between communication and commitment ( $\rho = .149, p > .01$ ).

## V. DISCUSSION

The present study sought to examine the interrelationships among attachment styles, communication patterns, and commitment in young adults, drawing on attachment theory and the Investment Model of commitment as guiding frameworks. The findings provide theoretical clarity by highlighting attachment as a central organizing construct that shapes both interpersonal communication and relational commitment.

Consistent with Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory, the significant relationship between attachment and communication underscores the role of internal working models in guiding relational behaviour. Individuals with more secure attachment orientations are likely to perceive others as responsive and trustworthy, which facilitates open, constructive, and emotionally regulated communication. In contrast, insecure attachment—particularly anxious and avoidant patterns—has been theorized to disrupt communication through hyperactivation (e.g.,

excessive reassurance seeking) or deactivation (e.g., withdrawal and avoidance) strategies (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). The current findings align with prior empirical evidence demonstrating that attachment security predicts higher interpersonal communication competence and healthier interaction patterns (Anders & Tucker, 2000; Jang et al., 2002).

The significant association between attachment and commitment further reinforces theoretical propositions from both attachment theory and Rusbult's Investment Model. Securely attached individuals are more likely to experience emotional safety, trust, and satisfaction within relationships, which strengthens their willingness to invest and remain committed over time. From an attachment perspective, commitment reflects the extent to which individuals feel confident in relational stability and partner availability. From an investment model perspective, attachment security may indirectly enhance commitment by increasing satisfaction and perceived investment while reducing the appeal of alternative relationships (Rusbult et al., 1998; Chow & Tan, 2013). The present findings therefore support integrative models suggesting that attachment orientations function as distal predictors of commitment-related processes.

Interestingly, the absence of a significant relationship between communication and commitment suggests that effective communication alone may not be sufficient to sustain commitment in young adult relationships. While communication is essential for managing conflict and maintaining relationship quality, commitment appears to be more deeply rooted

in emotional bonds and attachment-related security. This finding supports theoretical arguments that commitment is not solely a behavioural or interactional outcome, but a motivational and emotional state shaped by deeper relational schemas (Stanley et al., 2002). In early adulthood, relationships may be particularly influenced by uncertainty, identity exploration, and fluctuating relational goals, which could weaken the direct link between communication patterns and long-term commitment.

Taken together, these findings highlight attachment as a foundational mechanism through which communication behaviours and commitment orientations are organized. Communication appears to operate as a proximal relational process influenced by attachment, whereas commitment reflects a more global relational orientation grounded in emotional security and long-term expectations. This theoretical integration advances existing literature by clarifying why attachment consistently emerges as a stronger predictor of relationship outcomes than communication alone.

## VI. IMPLICATIONS

The findings have practical implications for relationship counselling and psychotherapy. Attachment-informed interventions may help improve communication patterns and strengthen commitment in young adult relationships. Additionally, promoting self-awareness of attachment styles can foster healthier relational choices.

## VII. LIMITATIONS

The study's generalizability is limited due to the use of non-probability sampling and a culturally specific sample. The reliance on self-report measures and relatively low reliability of the commitment scale are additional limitations.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the interconnected roles of attachment, communication, and commitment in young adult relationships. Attachment emerged as a key predictor of both communication and commitment, underscoring its importance in relational development. Future research should explore

longitudinal designs and culturally diverse samples to deepen understanding of these dynamics.

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