

ASSOCIATION AMONG ATTACHMENT STYLES AND PERSONALITY TRAITS: A Systematic Review



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RESUMEN:

El objetivo principal del presente estudio fue examinar la evidencia sobre la relación entre los estilos de apego y las dimensiones del Modelo de los Cinco Factores de la personalidad, basándose en artículos revisados por pares desde el año 2000 hasta el 2024. Se llevó a cabo una revisión sistemática utilizando el método PRISMA. Los resultados mostraron que el estilo de apego seguro estaba positivamente asociado con la extraversión y negativamente asociado con el neuroticismo (con tamaños de efecto de medios a grandes), mientras que el neuroticismo estaba positivamente relacionado con el estilo de apego inseguro. La amabilidad, la responsabilidad y la apertura también estaban relacionadas con el apego seguro. Estudios previos sobre las dimensiones del temperamento en niños no encontraron asociaciones significativas con los estilos de apego, o las asociaciones eran pequeñas. El número de estudios que utilizan el Modelo de los Cinco Factores es escaso, incluso al considerar poblaciones adolescentes y adultas. Los cinco estudios seleccionados midieron los rasgos de personalidad con diferentes cuestionarios o escalas de calificación del Modelo de los Cinco Factores. También se utilizaron diversas medidas de apego. Los estudios revisados incluyeron tanto a participantes niños como adultos. Cervera-Solís et al. (2022) propusieron que el estilo de apego podría influir en la manifestación de los rasgos de personalidad. Sin embargo, los resultados de los estudios revisados no nos permiten establecer si es el estilo de apego el que posteriormente afecta la manifestación de la personalidad, como se ha propuesto. Por lo tanto, aunque los estilos de apego y los rasgos de personalidad parecen estar relacionados, la dirección de esta influencia no es concluyente. La naturaleza de la asociación entre los estilos de apego y los rasgos de personalidad podría aclararse utilizando otras metodologías, como diseños longitudinales y experimentales. No obstante, basándonos en nuestros hallazgos, concluimos que el estilo de apego primario relacionado con los rasgos de personalidad es el apego seguro.

Palabras clave: estilos de apego, rasgos de personalidad, modelo de los Cinco Factores, revisión sistemática.

ABSTRACT:

The main aim of the present study was to examine the evidence on the relationship between attachment styles and the dimensions of the Five-Factor Model of personality based on peer-reviewed articles from 2000 to 2024. A systematic review was conducted using the PRISMA method. The results showed that secure attachment style was positively associated with extraversion and negatively associated with neuroticism (with medium to large effect sizes), while neuroticism was positively related to insecure attachment style. Agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness were also related to secure attachment. Previous studies on temperament dimensions in children did not find significant associations with attachment styles, or the associations were small. The number of studies using the Five-Factor Model is scarce, even when considering adolescent and adult populations. The five selected studies measured personality traits with different Five-Factor Model questionnaires or rating scales. Various attachment measures were also used. The reviewed studies included both child and adult participants. Cervera-Solís et al. (2022) proposed that attachment style could influence the manifestation of personality traits. However, the results of the reviewed studies do not allow us to establish whether it is the attachment style that subsequently affects the manifestation of personality, as has been proposed. Therefore, although attachment styles and personality traits seem to be related, the direction of this influence is not conclusive. The nature of the association between attachment styles and personality traits may be clarified by using other methodologies, such as longitudinal and experimental designs. Nonetheless, based on our findings, we concluded that the primary attachment style related to personality traits is secure attachment.

Keywords: attachment styles, personality traits, Five-Factor Model, systematic review.

INTRODUCTION

Bowlby defined attachment as the bond or relationship that is naturally created between the infant and the attachment figure (Oliva, 2004). Following this theory, much research has attempted to associate attachment styles with infant temperament development. The research indicated that they were not associated, or that the relationship was very weak (Groh et al., 2017). However, only a few studies have examined the association between attachment styles and personality traits. The Five-Factor Model (FFM) is one of the most widely accepted models of personality. The five broad traits are neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (McCrae, 2018).

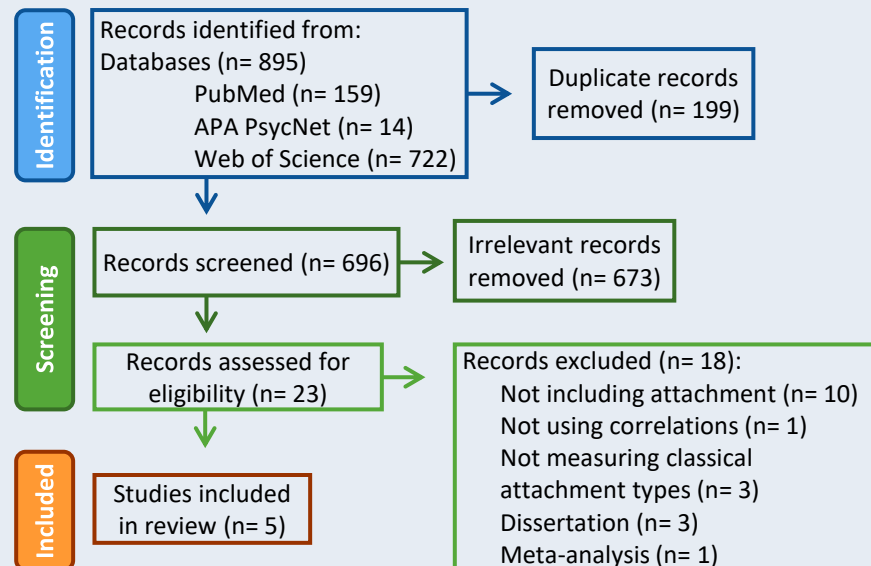
The **main aim** of the present study was to examine the empirical evidence on the relationship between attachment styles and the FFM from peer-reviewed articles.

We **hypothesized** that there would be no associations between attachment styles and FFM dimensions, or that any associations would be very small.

METHOD






PRISMA (Page et al., 2021; see Figure 1). The search was run on **01 March 2024** (2000 - 2024).

Figure 1. Flow of Articles Selected for Systematic Review.



RESULTS

Table 1: Characteristics of Included Studies and Summary of Key Finding

Study	Personality measure	Attachment measure	Sample size	Age	Gender (% female)	Country	r (personality trait - attachment style)
Liu et al. (2023)	NEO-FFI	RQ	10191	Range 18 - 60+	7487 (73.5%)		.30 (N - avoid.) .34 (E - secure)
Fransson et al. (2013)	FFM rating (mother and teachers) and BFMM	SAT and AAI	66	8.6 months 21 years	34 (51.5%)		.42 (E - secure) .25 (O - secure) .39 (E - secure)
Hagekull & Bohlin (2003)	FFM rating (mother and teachers)	Strange Situation - security scale (video)	85	9 months	43 (50.6%)		-.23 (N - secure) .35 (E - secure) .23 (O - secure)
Barel et al. (2020)	TIPI	RQ	1871	29 years	1151 (61.6%)		-.16 (N - secure) .33 (E - secure) .31 (A - secure) .16 (C - secure)
Cervera-Solís et al. (2022)	NEO-PI-R	AAQ	87 (Pts.)	35 years	69 (79.3%)		Not presented (N -> insecure ; E, A and C -> secure).

Note. NEO-FFI = NEO Five-Factor Inventory; FFM = Five-Factor Model; BFMM = Big Five Mini-Markers; TIPI = Ten Item Personality Measure; NEO-PI-R = NEO Personality Inventory Revised. RQ = Relationship Questionnaire; SAT = "Seattle version" of Separation Anxiety Test; AAI = Adult Attachment Interview; AAQ = Adult Attachment Questionnaire. N = Neuroticism; E = Extraversion; O = Openness; A = Agreeableness; C = Conscientiousness.

DISCUSSION

- ❖ The secure attachment style is the most frequently mentioned and is repeatedly associated with extraversion.
- ❖ Neuroticism is negatively related to secure attachment and positively associated with insecure attachment.
- ❖ Cervera-Solís et al. (2022) proposed that attachment style would influence the manifestation of personality traits.

According to our findings, we **concluded** that the main attachment style related to personality traits is secure attachment

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