

Typology of Korean Adolescents' Child-Parent Attachment: Impact on Overall Happiness

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify latent profiles of child-parent attachment among Korean children and examine their relation to overall happiness. Understanding attachment during childhood is crucial, as it forms the foundation for emotional development and significantly influences well-being. Secure attachment is widely recognized as a protective factor that promotes resilience, while insecure attachment can lead to emotional difficulties and lower life satisfaction. The 12th-year data from The Panel Study on Korean Children, a nationally collected longitudinal dataset on children's development, was utilized. Responses from 1,362 children were analyzed, using six indicators for profile identification: attachment to both mother and father, with three subfactors—communication, alienation, and trust—applied to each parent separately. Following profile identification, an investigation was conducted to determine whether each profile differed regarding children's overall happiness in various areas, including academics, appearance, family relationships, friendships, school life, and daily life. Mplus Version 8 was used for the analysis. Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) revealed five distinct profiles: two securely attached groups, two insecurely attached groups (one of which was insecure specifically with fathers), and one alienated group. These profiles were compared based on children's happiness across the aforementioned domains. Securely attached children reported the highest levels of happiness across all factors, while children with insecure attachment, particularly to fathers, exhibited lower levels of happiness. This study underscores the critical role that secure parental attachment plays in fostering children's overall well-being and highlights the importance of addressing attachment issues early to support children's long-term emotional health.

Keywords: Attachment, Latent profile analysis, Happiness, Parent-child attachment, Korean children

1. Introduction

This study aimed to discover the latent profiles of parental attachment perceived by adolescents and examine how each profile differs in their overall happiness. This is based on the understanding that adolescence is a period of transition, shifting attention from oneself to the outer world, and attachment is a factor believed to significantly influence this transition to the external world. Attachment does not form overnight; it is a biologically rooted system that forms a bond with the primary caregiver, typically the mother, to ensure survival (Moretti & Peled, 2004). The formation of this bond, or attachment, starts from the moment of birth and is a child's very first experience of a relationship (Benoit, 2004). The quality of this attachment can profoundly influence a child's self-view, relationships, and worldview (Moretti & Peled, 2004). A secure attachment occurs when a caregiver consistently responds to a child's needs with warmth and sensitivity, fostering a sense of trust and safety. Children with secure attachment tend

to feel confident in exploring the world, knowing they can return to their caregiver for comfort when needed. In contrast, insecure attachment arises when caregivers are inconsistent, neglectful, or unresponsive to the child's emotional needs. This can lead children to feel uncertain or anxious about their relationships, causing them to struggle with trust and emotional regulation.

Therefore, it can be assumed that children who have formed a secure attachment with their parents are better equipped to handle the challenges of adolescence, such as academic pressures and evolving peer relationships. Conversely, children with insecure attachment may struggle more to meet external expectations, potentially leading to confusion and decreased overall well-being. Thus, by identifying the typology of the adolescents' perceived attachment to their parents, researchers can better discern how foundational relationships influence broader psychological outcomes in adolescents. Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) was selected for this study because it identifies distinct subgroups of adolescents based on their perceived parental attachment, without predefined categories. It allows for the examination of how these attachment profiles relate to adolescents' overall happiness across various domains like academics and relationships. Given the multidimensional nature of attachment and the variability in adolescent experiences, LPA provides a data-driven way to explore how different attachment types impact well-being.

To investigate adolescent well-being during this period of change, this study focused on examining their overall happiness through various factors such as academics, appearance, family and peer relationships, school life, and daily life experiences. During adolescence, children experience numerous physical and psychological changes. They also experience a perceptual shift from being focused on themselves to the outside world. Hence, puberty can also be called a period of change. As change accompanies instability, adolescence can be associated with depression, impulsiveness, and rebellion. Therefore, this study focused on examining the overall happiness of adolescents as they increase their interaction with the outer world and grow into adults. Adolescents' overall happiness can be studied through these variables: academics, looks, family relationships, friend relationships, school lives, and daily lives.

Adolescents experience physical changes and consequently become more conscious about their appearance. They are exposed to the beauty standards of the outside world through social media and begin to perceive the importance of appearance more profoundly. Additionally, Koreans perceive the importance of education very highly, and the heavy emphasis on academics intensifies during adolescence.

Unlike childhood, which is centered around family relationships, adolescence increasingly emphasizes peer relationships. In other words, the importance of family relationships decreases while the significance of peer relationships amplifies. Thus, it is important to examine whether adolescents are happy with their family and friend relationships, especially as their relationship dynamics go through significant changes. Moreover, in an attempt to study adolescents' happiness from a broader perspective, this study decided to examine the happiness they feel in their school lives and daily lives.

1.1 Literature Review

The literature on attachment focused on parent-child attachments by examining psychological variables associated with attachments, relationship variables, or both. In investigation of attachments, research focused on parent-child attachment (Benoit, 2004; Choi & Yeon, 2022; Jang & Um, 2009; Moretti & Peled, 2004; Nickerson & Nagle, 2005; Schneider et al., 2001; Therriault et al., 2021) while other research focused on mother-child attachment only (Choi & Yeon, 2022; Jeong & Choi, 2013). Similar to our research that divided attachment into three sub-categories of communication, alienation, and trust, other studies have also used the same categorization: communication and alienation (Aloia & Claire, 2019).

Only a few researchers used LPA to study attachment (Armour et al., 2011; Flykt et al., 2021; Shin, 2022), which is presumably because attachment is already classified into four different categories: secure, anxious, avoidant, and disorganized. However, with the interest in how individuals may perceive the sub-categories of attachment differently, LPA was used to identify different profiles of attachment's three sub-categories.

Attachment is the first psychological bond an individual forms with a primary caregiver; researchers have continuously questioned and studied if the formation and experience of this bonding may influence the psychology and relationship of children as they grow up. Therefore, a number of studies have investigated attachment and

psychological variables together. The results state that attachment is significantly correlated with mental health (Flykt et al., 2021; Shin, 2022), identity (Choi & Yeon, 2022), resilience (Choi & Yeon, 2022), depression (Armour et al., 2011), anxiety (Armour et al., 2011), and self-esteem (Aloia & Claire, 2019; Gu & Kang, 2020; Park et al., 2018; Shin, 2022). Others researched how attachment plays a significant role in parental (Choi & Yeon, 2022), romantic (Hong & Doh, 2002), and peer relationships (Gu & Kang, 2020).

As previous research has focused on psychological variables related to attachment, this research hypothesized that attachment variables may be correlated with children's overall happiness. It was presumed that children of early adolescence will likely be psychologically influenced by their academic environment, overall relationships with people, and perception of their appearances.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Data and Participants

The data used in the research is the 12th-year data from the Panel Study on Korean Children (PSKC) conducted by a national research institute called the Korea Institute of Child Care and Education (KICCE). The PSKC is a specialized research that provides the public with national longitudinal scientific and explanatory data to understand the growth and development of children. This data helps illustrate growth in both children's and parents' behaviors. The data was collected annually from children born between April and July of 2008, indicating that the children from the 12th-year data are 12 years old. This research used 1,362 children (51.73% Male, 48.27% Female) who had both parents present.

2.2 Measures

The profile identification of child-parent attachment was completed by investigating mother-child attachment and father-child attachment using attachment's three sub-scales: communication, alienation, and trust.

The data specified for child-parent attachment was collected through Tablet Assisted Personal Interview (TAPI), a data collection method where interviewers use a tablet device to record responses in real-time. This approach improves data accuracy and efficiency by minimizing manual entry errors and allowing for immediate digital data storage. The study used a total of 12 identical inquiries per parent, which were sub-grouped into three categories, with the first six inquiries regarding Communication, the following three for Alienation, and the last three for Trust. Questions 7, 8, 9, and 11 were reverse-coded. These questionnaires were reverse-coded so that high scores indicate secure attachment (better communication, not feeling alienated, and having trust). Participants were asked whether they agreed with each statement based on a 5-point Likert scale, which ranged from (1) Never, (2) Seldom, (3) Sometimes, (4) Often, and (5) Always. The items were as follows:

1. My parent respects my feelings.
2. I tell my parent about my problems and troubles.
3. My parent encourages me to talk about my difficulties.
4. When we discuss things, my parent considers my point of view.
5. When I am angry about something, my parent tries to be understanding.
6. If my parent knows something is bothering me, he/she asks me about it.
7. I get upset a lot more than my parent knows about.
8. My parent has his/her own problems, so I don't bother him/her with mine.
9. My parent doesn't understand what I'm going through these days.
10. My parent accepts me as I am.
11. I feel angry with my parent.
12. I can count on my parent when I need to get something off my chest.

* Items 7, 8, 9, and 11 are reverse coded.

This research investigated the overall happiness of the profiles typified by using subscales of attachment. The

following specified overall happiness was collected using the Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews method. Overall Happiness of a child was measured by the four-point Likert Scale: (1) Not happy at all (2) Not really happy (3) Slightly happy (4) Extremely happy. Along with the scales, additional pictures of facial expressions were presented to help children better understand the 4-point scale. Inquiries included the child's impression of their academics, looks, family, friends, school, and daily life. The items were as follows:

1. What do you think of schoolwork?
2. What do you think about your appearance?
3. What are your thoughts about your family?
4. What are your thoughts on your friends?
5. What do you think about the school you attend?
6. What do you think about your daily life?

2.3 Data Analysis.

This research employed Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) to identify distinct attachment profiles among children based on their observed attachment behaviors toward their parents. LPA is a person-centered approach that classifies individuals into latent groups or profiles based on similarities in their response patterns.

While identifying different profiles, the research used several fit statistics, including the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), adjusted Bayesian Information Criterion (A-BIC), Lo-Mendell-Rubin likelihood ratio test (LMR), bootstrap likelihood ratio test (BLRT), and entropy. The AIC, BIC, and A-BIC are measures of model fit, with lower values indicating a better-fitting model as the number of latent profiles increases. Each criterion penalizes model complexity differently, with AIC being less conservative than BIC and A-BIC, which generally provide more stringent penalties for models with additional parameters. Entropy, which ranges from 0 to 1, measures the clarity of classification, with values greater than 0.80 indicating well-defined and reliable profile distinctions (Jung & Wickrama, 2008). A higher entropy suggests that individuals are more definitively assigned to a specific profile rather than being classified with ambiguity. The LMR, A-LMR, and BLRT are used to compare models with different numbers of profiles, and significance in these tests suggests that the model with k profiles fits better than a model with $k-1$ profiles. A significant p -value (< 0.05) in these tests suggests that the model with k profiles fits the data better, while a non-significant p -value suggests that adding more profiles does not improve the model fit meaningfully. Additionally, profiles must not only be statistically valid but conceptually meaningful, and groups comprising less than 5% of the sample may be considered too small or spurious (Berlin, Williams, & Parra, 2014).

The analyses were run using Mplus Version 8, following the automatic three-step procedure for LPA (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2014). Once the model with the best fit was selected, the automatic three-step procedure in Mplus Version 8 was used to account for classification uncertainty. First, the best-fitting profile solution was determined based on the fit indices mentioned above. Then, considering classification errors, the predicted probabilities of profile membership were calculated to assign individuals to their most likely profiles. This process helps ensure that participants are correctly classified into the appropriate profile while accounting for the uncertainty inherent in the model. Finally, the R3STEP procedure, which applies multinomial logistic regression, was used to examine how various antecedents (predictors) relate to profile membership. Specifically, this method was used to evaluate whether an increase in certain antecedents predicted the likelihood of a child being classified into one profile over another. The regression coefficients from R3STEP indicate the direction and magnitude of these associations, providing insights into the factors influencing profile membership (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2014). By utilizing these methods, the study was able to identify conceptually meaningful attachment profiles among the children.

3. Results

Table 1 shows the correlation between the six attachment variables. Children's attachment to their parents can be ordered from highest to lowest: mother trust ($M = 4.19$), father trust ($M = 4.00$), mother communication ($M = 3.94$),

father communication ($M = 3.52$), mother alienation ($M = 3.45$), and father alienation ($M = 3.34$), where M represents the mean score. The variable “alienation” was reverse-coded so that having high values meant children didn’t feel alienated, and having low values meant that children felt alienated. Most attachment variables had strong correlations, with the strongest correlation being .60 ($p < .001$) between mother trust and mother communication. However, mother alienation with father communication and father alienation with mother communication showed no correlation. In all three sub-variables of attachment (communication, alienation, and trust), children demonstrated a more secure attachment with their mothers than fathers.

Table 2 shows the fit indices of latent profiles using children’s perception toward their attachment, including father and mother’s communication, alienation, and trust. It is a better fit if AIC, BIC, and A-BIC become smaller. The values decreased as the number of profiles increased, indicating that a higher number of profiles was more significant. To have the ideal profile, the entropy should be higher than .80, and the LRT p-value and BLRT p-value should be significant. Therefore, considering the statistical support of fit indices and interpretability of profiles, five profiles were chosen as the final model.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations Among Indicators (N = 1,362)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Father Communication	-					
2. Mother Communication	.58***	-				
3. Father Alienation	.11***	.05	-			
4. Mother Alienation	.01	.10***	.47***	-		
5. Father Trust	.57***	.42***	.29***	.18***	-	
6. Mother Trust	.33***	.60***	.19***	.30***	.54***	-
<i>M</i>	3.52	3.94	3.34	3.45	4.00	4.19
<i>SD</i>	.79	.74	.76	.76	.78	.71

*** $p < .001$.

Table 2. Fit Indices of Latent Profile Analysis

<i>k</i>	<i>df</i>	AIC	BIC	A-BIC	Entropy	LRT <i>p</i>	BLRT <i>p</i>
2	19	17119.005	17218.122	17157.767	.785	<.001	<.001
3	26	16818.749	16954.384	16871.792	.764	<.001	<.001
4	33	16527.203	16699.355	16594.528	.788	<.001	<.001
5	40	16269.379	16478.048	16350.984	.805	.004	<.001
6	47	16160.698	16405.883	16256.584	.763	.259	<.001

Notes. *k* = Number of profiles. *df* = degree of freedom. AIC = Akaike’s information criterion. BIC = Bayesian information criterion. A-BIC = Adjusted Bayesian information criterion. LRT = Lo-Mendell-Rubin adjusted likelihood ratio test. BLRT = bootstrapped likelihood ratio tests compared with a (*k*-1) class model. The model selected is in bold.

Table 3. Characteristics of the Five Latent Profiles of Children’s Attachment to their Parents

	Profile 1 (15.50%) <i>Insecurely Attached</i>	Profile 2 (8.42%) <i>Alienated</i>	Profile 3 (38.58%) <i>Highly Securely Attached</i>	Profile 4 (32.29%) <i>Securely Attached</i>	Profile 5 (5.249%) <i>Insecurely Attached to Father</i>
	<i>M (SE)</i>	<i>M (SE)</i>	<i>M (SE)</i>	<i>M (SE)</i>	<i>M (SE)</i>
Father Communication	2.78 (.07)	3.90 (.13)	4.09 (.06)	3.26 (.05)	2.50 (.13)
Mother Communication	2.93 (.09)	4.17 (.10)	4.51 (.04)	3.64 (.07)	4.17 (.19)
Father Alienation	3.20 (.07)	2.50 (.11)	3.58 (.04)	3.45 (.04)	2.69 (.15)
Mother Alienation	3.24 (.06)	2.34 (.14)	3.72 (.04)	3.48 (.05)	3.61 (.11)
Father Trust	3.16 (.07)	3.57 (.09)	4.62 (.03)	3.98 (.08)	2.69 (.12)
Mother Trust	3.16 (.10)	3.58 (.09)	4.75 (.02)	4.14 (.08)	4.45 (.11)

Table 3 demonstrates the statistical characteristics of the five profiles. Profile 1 (15.50%) consists of children who generally have insecure attachments with both their mother and father. The children have the lowest communication level out of all the profiles, especially with their father ($M = 2.78$) than their mother ($M = 2.93$). Compared to other profiles, children in this profile had the lowest trust level with their mothers ($M = 3.16$) and had the second lowest trust level with their fathers ($M = 3.16$). For alienation, the children in this profile felt somewhat alienated from their father ($M = 3.20$) and their mother ($M = 3.24$). Hence, profile 1 was named the *Insecurely Attached* group.

Profile 2 (8.42%), the second smallest profile, consists of children who feel the most alienated out of all profiles, especially from their mother ($M = 2.34$) than their father ($M = 2.50$). However, they had the second highest father ($M = 3.90$) and mother ($M = 4.17$) communication. Furthermore, the children had a moderate trust level with their father ($M = 3.57$) and the second lowest trust with their mother ($M = 3.58$). As the children in this profile strongly felt alienated from their parents, profile 2 was named the *Alienated* group.

The largest profile (38.58%), profile 3, had the highest attachment levels in all variables. The children had the highest father communication ($M = 4.09$), mother communication ($M = 4.51$), father alienation ($M = 3.58$), mother alienation ($M = 3.72$), father trust ($M = 4.62$), and mother trust level ($M = 4.75$). Therefore, this group was named the *Highly Securely Attached* group.

Profile 4 (32.29%), being the second-largest profile, consisted of children with moderate levels of attachment. The group consisted of children with the third-best communication with their father ($M = 3.26$), fourth-best with their mother ($M = 3.64$), felt the second-least alienation by their father ($M = 3.45$), and third-least by their mother ($M = 3.48$). Furthermore, their level of trust in their father was the second-highest ($M = 3.98$) and third-highest in their mother. Considering children from the *Highly Securely Attached* group which consisted of children with the highest attachment levels to their parents, children from Profile 4 have comparatively lower attachment levels than the *Highly Securely Attached* group. However, as Profile 4 has moderate children's communication, alienation, and trust levels with their parents, with all values being around the mid or high 3s, with 3 standing for over average, the profile was named the *Securely Attached* group.

Profile 5 (5.249%) is the smallest profile that has a significantly lower attachment with fathers than mothers. In comparison to their mothers' communication level ($M = 4.17$), the children felt excessively low communication with their fathers ($M = 2.50$). Similarly, the children's alienation level with mothers ($M = 3.61$) had a significant difference with their alienation with their fathers ($M = 2.69$). Children likely felt a high trust level with their mothers ($M = 4.45$) and a low trust level with their fathers ($M = 2.69$). As this profile stands out with a striking difference between children's attachment to their mother and father, it was named *Insecurely Attached to Father* group.

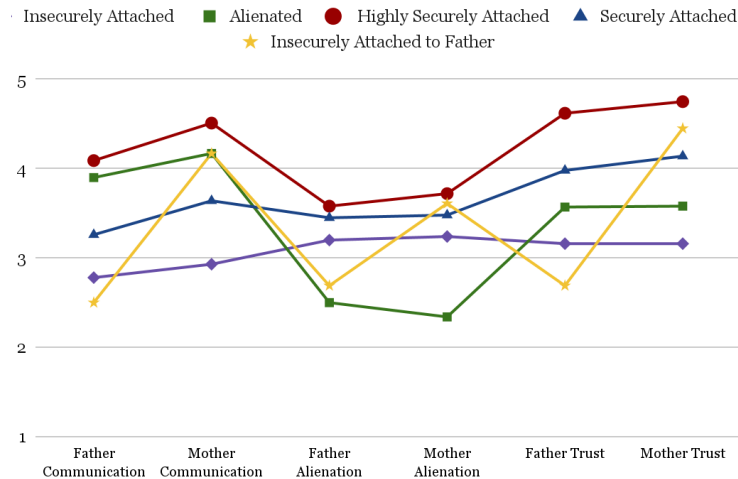


Figure 1. Characteristics of the five latent profiles of child-parent attachment

Table 4. Children's Overall Happiness Across the Five Types of Attachment to Parents

	Profile 1 <i>Insecurely Attached</i> M (SE)	Profile 2 <i>Alienated</i> M (SE)	Profile 3 <i>Highly Securely Attached</i> M (SE)	Profile 4 <i>Securely Attached</i> M (SE)	Profile 5 <i>Insecurely Attached to Father</i> M (SE)
Academics	2.35(.06) _a	2.68(.09) _{ab}	3.00(.03) _c	2.76(.04) _{ab}	2.47(.13) _a
Looks	2.77(.06) _a	2.96(.08) _{ab}	3.28(.03) _c	3.01(.04) _{ab}	2.63(.13) _a
Family	3.16(.07) _a	3.24(.20) _a	3.90(.01) _c	3.75(.04) _b	3.27(.12) _a
Friends	3.38(.06) _a	3.29(.08) _a	3.68(.03) _c	3.59(.03) _b	2.99(.21) _a
School life	2.96(.06) _a	3.09(.09) _{ab}	3.42(.03) _c	3.26(.04) _{ab}	2.71(.14) _a
Daily life	2.90(.05) _a	3.16(.08) _{ab}	3.51(.03) _c	3.28(.03) _{ab}	2.95(.11) _a

Note. The subscript letters are the results of applying constraints to parameters per potential profile in the Mplus program and testing whether the values of each variable differed by type using the model test command. The analyses followed the automatic three-step procedure for LPA. DU3STEP was used.

Table 4 shows the differences in levels of children's overall happiness based on each identified profile.

The variable *Academics* shows how much students are satisfied with their academic achievements, and *Looks* shows the level of satisfaction of children's perception of their physical looks. The *Insecurely Attached* and *Insecurely Attached to Father* groups demonstrated the lowest level of satisfaction in their *Academics* and *Looks*. The *Alienated* group showed better academic and look satisfaction than the *Insecurely Attached* group but was not statistically different from the *Insecurely Attached to Father* group. Similarly, the *Securely Attached* group had higher academic and look satisfaction than the *Insecurely Attached to Father* group but was not statistically different from the *Alienated* group. Lastly, the *Highly Securely Attached* group exhibited the best academic and look satisfaction levels, having statistically significantly larger numbers when compared to all other profiles.

The variable *Family* shows the level of happiness children perceive from their relationships with their parents. The *Insecurely Attached*, *Alienated*, and *Insecurely Attached to Father* groups all demonstrated the lowest level of happiness in family relationships. The *Securely Attached* group statistically showed a greater number than the previous groups, but had lower satisfaction in their relationship with their parents than the *Highly Securely Attached* group.

The *Insecurely Attached*, *Alienated*, and *Insecurely Attached to Father* groups had the lowest happiness level in their friend relationships. The *Securely Attached* group had the second highest satisfaction. The *Highly Securely Attached* group outstayed in their friend relationship, having the highest satisfaction.

The *Insecurely Attached* and *Insecurely Attached to Father* groups illustrated the lowest contentment level in their school life. The *Alienated* group had better contentment in school life than the *Insecurely Attached to Father* group; however, they had statistically the same level of contentment as the *Insecurely Attached* group. Similarly, the *Securely Attached* group was not statistically different from the *Alienated* group but had a difference from the *Insecurely Attached* group. Lastly, the *Highly Securely Attached* group exhibited the highest level of school-life satisfaction.

The *Insecurely Attached* and *Insecurely Attached to Father* groups demonstrated the lowest level of daily life satisfaction. The *Alienated* group had better contentment in daily life than the *Insecurely Attached* group, but they had the statistically same level as the *Insecurely Attached to Father* group. The *Securely Attached* group showed a higher level of daily life satisfaction than the *Insecurely Attached to Father* group but had the same level as the *Alienated* group. The *Highly Securely Attached* group had outstanding satisfaction in their daily life, having a statistically significant level than the other profile groups.

The *Highly Securely Attached* group demonstrated statistically the highest levels of overall happiness, emphasizing the importance of secure child-parent attachment on children's happiness. Furthermore, in the *Alienated* group, the family and friend variables had the lowest levels of happiness, indicating that feeling alienated by their parents negatively affects children's experiences with their families and friends. Similarly, the *Securely Attached* group had higher levels of happiness in family and friends variables than happiness in academics, looks, school life, and daily life, supporting the idea that having a moderate attachment level with parents helps improve children's perceptions of their interpersonal relationships. Lastly, the *Insecurely Attached* and *Insecurely Attached to Father* groups demonstrated the lowest level of happiness in each of the six variables, which shows that insecure attachment leads to low overall happiness. Overall, the differences in happiness among profiles all support the idea that children with secure attachments to parents form positive relationships outside the family circle and have positive perceptions of personal image, academics, and life.

4. Discussion

This study highlights the profound impact of child-parent attachment on adolescents' overall happiness. The results demonstrate that adolescents with secure attachments to their parents exhibit significantly higher levels of satisfaction and happiness in various aspects of their lives, including academics, physical appearance, family and friend relationships, school life, and daily activities. Notably, the *Highly Securely Attached* group reported the highest levels of happiness across all parameters, underscoring the positive influence of strong and healthy parent-child bonds. Conversely, adolescents in the *Insecurely Attached* and *Insecurely Attached to Father* groups showed lower levels of satisfaction and happiness in these same areas. These findings are particularly critical as they highlight the negative consequences of weak or strained child-parent relationships.

These findings underscore the importance of nurturing secure attachments between parents and children during adolescence, a crucial developmental stage. By fostering healthy, open, and trusting relationships with their children, parents can significantly enhance their children's ability to cope with the challenges of adolescence, leading to improved well-being and happiness. The study also suggests that interventions aimed at strengthening parent-child relationships could be highly beneficial in promoting adolescents' mental health and overall life satisfaction.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Limitations of the Study & Recommendations for Future Research

This study focused on parent-child relationships when investigating children's attachment. Future research can aim to broaden the focus to other possible attachment figures such as grandparents, relatives, close acquaintances, teachers, and mentors. These figures can play a crucial role in a child's development, especially in cases where they are the primary caregivers. Understanding the impact of implying such alternative figures would provide a comprehensive view of adolescents' attachment and overall happiness levels.

Moreover, future studies should investigate whether the findings from this research, based on Korean children, apply internationally. Cultural and societal differences can significantly influence parenting styles, child development, and concepts of happiness. International research will help determine if the observed correlations are universally applicable or culturally specific.

Finally, the methodological choice of using Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) focuses more on categorizing attachment styles rather than understanding the underlying reasons for these styles. Qualitative methods could offer a deeper exploration into the reasons and contexts behind these attachment patterns, providing a more comprehensive understanding. Future research should take a qualitative approach through interviews, focus groups, and case studies. With this approach, researchers could gain a richer, more detailed understanding of the personal experiences and perceptions that underlie the statistical findings of this research.

5.2 Implications of the Research

Despite these limitations, this research provides empirical validation of attachment theory's principles, demonstrating how early relationships with primary caregivers significantly influence an individual's social and emotional development in the context of social psychology. The findings reinforce the theory's assertion that the quality of these early attachments is a critical predictor of psychological outcomes in adolescence and beyond.

By linking attachment styles with tangible measures of happiness and satisfaction in adolescents, the study not only validates key tenets of social psychology but also offers practical implications for enhancing adolescent well-being. It suggests that interventions aimed at strengthening parent-child relationships could be highly beneficial for both individual families and society at large by promoting healthier psychological development during a critical period of growth.

Overall, this research significantly contributes to the field of social psychology by providing concrete evidence of the long-term implications of child-parent attachment. It emphasizes the need for heightened awareness and proactive efforts to foster secure attachments during childhood and adolescence, leading to improved mental health and well-being in the broader population. These insights are invaluable for parents, educators, and mental health professionals, offering a clear direction for fostering more positive and supportive relationships for adolescents during this critical phase of their lives.

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