

Abstract – Meagan Sabo and Moriah Rader

Attachment lies at the core of human experience; it shapes initial formation of a person's identity and sets the foundation for future relationships. Due to its central role in the development of a person, this study seeks to investigate the effects of negative forms of parental attachment in relation to shame-proneness, alexithymia, and depression. Despite the substantial amount of evidence confirming the destructive effects of shame, there is a lack of research on shame-proneness in relation to psychopathology, such as depression. In response to the literature suggesting the value of further exploration into the condition of alexithymia, this study differentiates between the three facets of alexithymia: difficulty identifying feelings, difficulty describing feelings, and externally oriented thinking. This study analyzes each of these facets individually with the aim of determining the presence of any correlations with the other constructs in this model. This analysis was conducted on a sample of 957 participants whose responses were gathered via Mechanical Turk. Contrary to previous research, the findings indicated no significant correlations between mother attachment anxiety and depression. The results did reveal a correlation between father attachment anxiety and depression when participants also experienced shame-proneness and difficulty identifying feelings. In response to these findings, further investigations into alexithymia and paternal attachment styles may elucidate the present findings. Additionally, future studies should exercise caution when measuring and collecting data on shame-proneness and alexithymia via self-report questionnaires due to the potential accompanying self-report bias.