

# RELATIONSHIP EXPERIENCES AND PARENTING ATTITUDES

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### Literature Review

Attachment representations one develops as a child typically remain relatively stable into adulthood (Waters et al., 2018). Waters et al. (2018) even makes the claim that the attachment one has with their parents as a child influences their behavior in later relationships. Although there is a lot of research available about how one's attachment style as a child influences other relationships, there is a lack of research available on the relationship between one's attachment style and one's subsequent parenting attitudes. Hembacher and Frank (2020) developed a questionnaire that measures attitudes of parents who have young children. The present research explores whether there is a relationship between attachment style and parenting attitudes.

### Hypotheses

1. Participants with a secure attachment will have higher scores on the "Affection and Attachment" scale and "Rules and Respect" scale than participants with an insecure attachment style.
2. Participants with an insecure attachment style and score high on the "Affection and Attachment" section of the parenting attitudes questions will have had a strong role model outside of the parenting relationship.
3. Participants who score low on the parenting attitudes subscales will have an insecure attachment and will not have reported a strong role model outside of the parenting relationship.
4. Participants who score low on the parenting attitude subscales will have an insecure attachment and will not be involved in a religion.

### Procedures and Methods

After the proposal was approved by the Lindenwood IRB on November 18, 2022, an online survey consisting of 46 items was distributed on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Reddit. Questions about attachment were adapted from Iwanga et al. (2020) "Attachment Style Questionnaire." A person's attachment style was defined as the scale they scored highest on. Questions about parenting attitudes were adapted from Hembacher & Frank (2020) "The Early Parenting Attitudes Questionnaire." An individual was defined as being high in warmth or rules if they scored 24-32 on either of these scales. An individual was defined as being low in warmth or rules if they scored between a 0-16 on either of these scales. A total of 177 surveys were completed, but 13 could not be used because they tied on attachment scales, so they could not be categorized by attachment, and one could not be used because the individual was younger than 18, leaving 163 responses.

Figure 1: T-test Mean

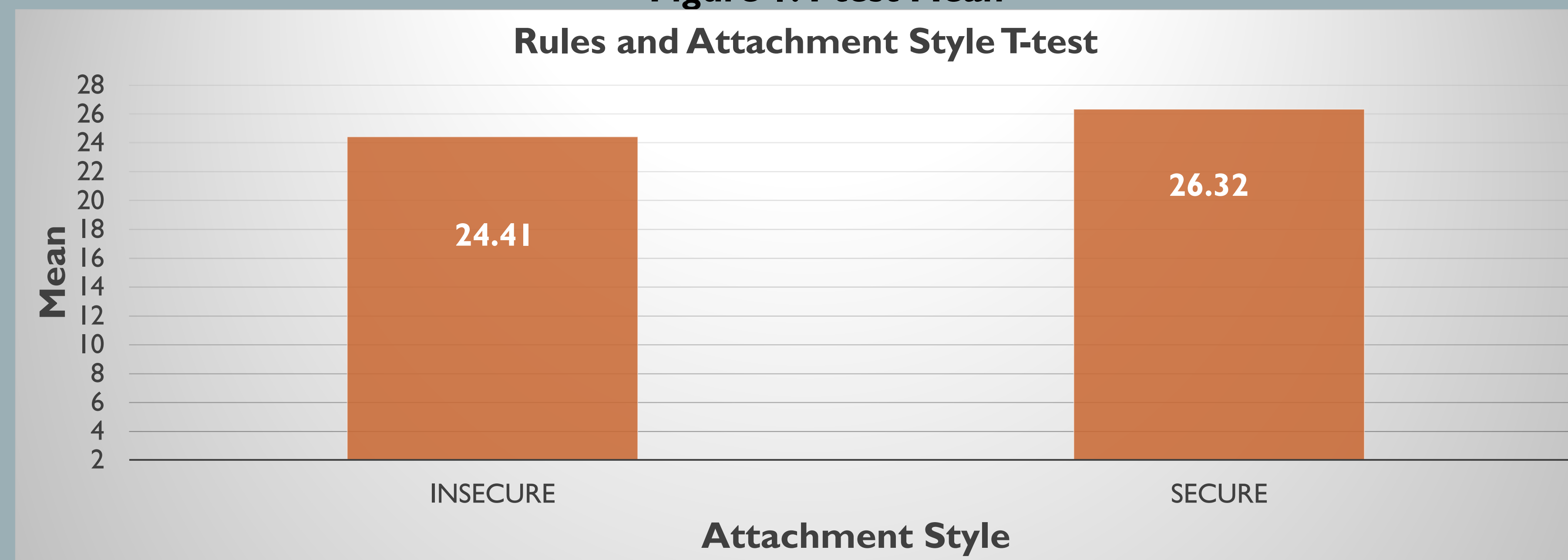
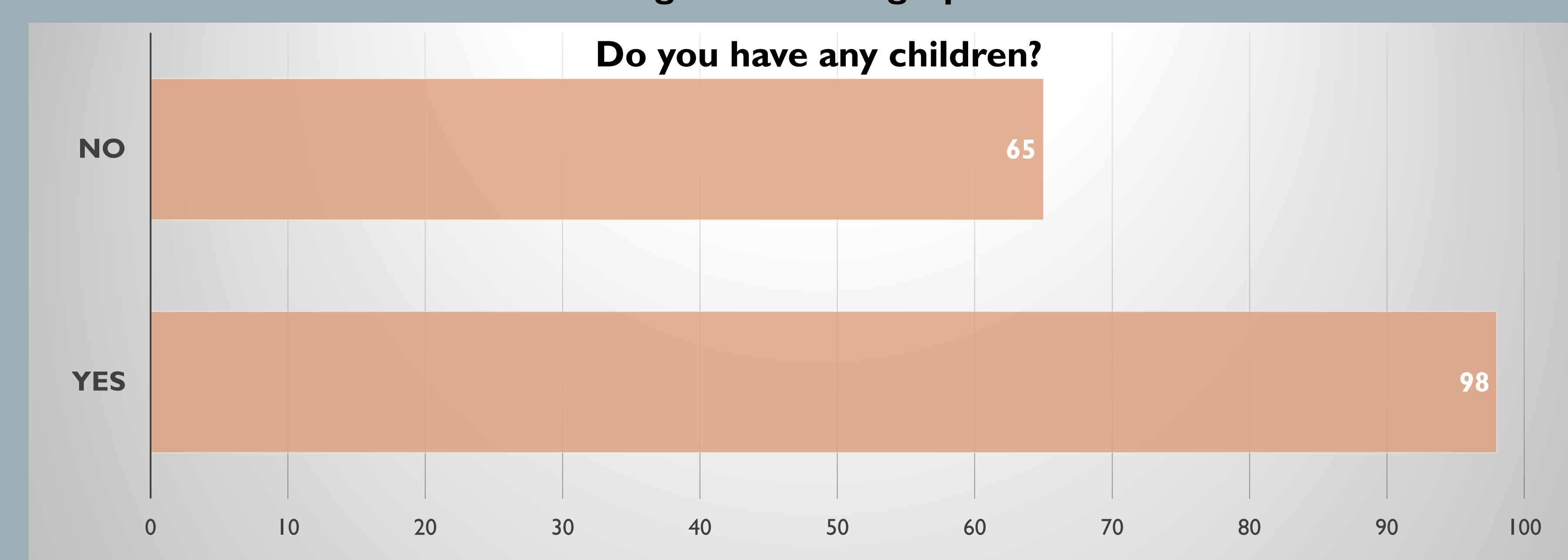


Figure 2: Demographics



### References

- Hembacher, E., & Frank, M. C. (2020). The early parenting attitudes questionnaire: measuring intuitive theories of parenting and child development. *Collabra Psychology* 6(1): 16. <https://doi.org/10.1525/collabra.190>
- Iwanaga, K., Blake, J., Yaghmaian, R., Umucu, E., Chan, F., Brooks, J. M., Rahimi, M., & Tansey, T. N. (2020). Attachment style questionnaire--short-form [database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/t75708-000>
- Waters, T. E. A., Ruiz, S. K., Raby, K. L., Martin, J., & Roisman G. I. (2018). Adult attachment representations and the quality of romantic and parent-child relationships: an examination of the contributions of coherence of discourse and secure base script knowledge. *Developmental Psychology* 54(12), 2371-2381. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/dev0000607>

### Results

#### Attachment Style and Parenting Attitudes

There was not a significant difference between insecurely attached individuals (M=28.84, SD= 2.22) and securely attached individuals (M=29.12, SD= 2.42) on the warmth subscale of the parenting attitudes questionnaire,  $t(162) = -0.69, p = .49$ .

There was a significant difference between insecurely attached individuals (M=24.41, SD=4.14) and securely attached individuals (M=26.32, SD=3.78) on the rules subscale of the parenting attitudes questionnaire,  $t(162) = -2.83, p = .0070$ .

#### Role Model

Out of the 49 insecurely attached people, 48 of them scored high on warmth. Of those 48, 22 reported a strong role model outside of the parenting relationship, or 45.83%.

No one scored low on the warmth subscale. Only 4 people scored low on the rules subscale. Out of the 4 people who scored low on the rules subscale, 3 of them had an insecure attachment and 2 of them reported a strong role model. Therefore, 1/3 of those insecurely attached and who scored low on the subscale did not have a strong role model.

#### Religion

Of the 4 people who scored low on the rules subscale, 3 of them had an insecure attachment, and all four of them reported being "agnostic/ atheist/ secular" in their religious affiliation.

### Limitations and Future Considerations

Almost every individual scored high on the warmth measure of the parenting attitudes section of the survey. This could be due to social desirability or the questions not being an accurate measure of attitudes about warmth. In the future, a different measure for warmth could be used to see if any different results were yielded. In addition, there was an extreme disparity between the number of men and women who took the survey. Only 14 men completed the survey, while 149 women did. A more equal number of men and women would have been desirable. In the future, it would also be interesting to look at if there was a difference in parenting attitudes for those who have children and those who do not.