



## Parental Bonding: A Significant Link to Social Interaction Anxiety and Psychological Well-being among Adolescents

Kanwal Shahbaz<sup>1\*</sup>, Sana Amjad<sup>2</sup>, Sidra Azhar<sup>3</sup>, Annum Khan<sup>4</sup>, Ayesha Mujeeb<sup>3</sup>, Ayla Khan<sup>5</sup>, Muhammad Muneeb Shahid<sup>6</sup>, Saba Zer Naz Hafsa<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Psychology, Riphah International University, Faisalabad Campus, PAKISTAN.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Fauji Foundation Hospital, Islamabad, PAKISTAN.

<sup>3</sup> Centre for Counselling & Career Advisory, National University of Sciences & Technology, ISB PAKISTAN.

<sup>4</sup> Department of Psychology, Islamic International University, Islamabad, PAKISTAN.

<sup>5</sup> Department of Psychology, The University of Haripur, PAKISTAN.

<sup>6</sup> Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Bahria University, Islamabad, PAKISTAN.

<sup>7</sup> Department of Applied Psychology, Riphah International University, Almizan Campus, Islamabad, PAKISTAN.

\*Corresponding Author (Email: [psykanwal@gmail.com](mailto:psykanwal@gmail.com))

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Psychological distress.

### Abstract

This study focuses on the association of parental bonding on social interaction and psychological well-being among adolescents. The quantitative data were collected from 600 adolescents. The reliable instruments included Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI), Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS), and Psychological Wellbeing Scale (PWB). The results revealed that there is a positive significant relationship between parental bonding and psychological well-being and a negative relationship between parental bonding and social interaction anxiety. Moreover, the linear regression shows that parental bonding with mother explained  $R^2$  6% and that of father explained only 2%. The findings highlight the significance of quality parental bonding with children for a mentally, physically, and globally healthy and participating child.

**Disciplinary:** Psychology & Social Anxiety, Family Study.

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# 1 Introduction

The parent-child bond is essential for the healthy development of the child. Parent's interaction with children affects their social interaction, if parents spend most of the time away from their children, it can lead to the child's awkwardness in interactions. The quality of the relationship between parent and child affects the mental health of the child. Early bonding with parents creates an internal working model that is later on used as a guide for future relationships and experiences. This study examined the relationship between parental bonding, social interaction, and psychological well-being in adults [1].

## 1.1 Parental Bonding

Parental bonding helps to understand the parent-child relationship, which plays a vital role in the growth of mind and self. A previous study by the University of Iowa stated that a close relationship with any one of the parents has behavioral, emotional benefits and helps children to have less trouble, aggression, or experience other emotional and social problems. They found that children need to have a secure attachment with only one parent to have the advantages of stable emotions and behavior. The attachment with the father has the same advantages and benefit as it would have been with the mother. In a child's life, the first two years are really important during which the secure relationship should be formed with one of the parents and this period is essential so at least one parent should contribute to it. The study was conducted on 102 infants [15 months old] with a parent and then followed up with 86 of them, until they were 8 years old [2].

## 1.2 Social Interaction

Social interaction is the trading of ideas, feelings, and emotions between and among people. Social structures and societies are dependent on social interaction. It gives rise to guidelines, foundations, and frameworks for living. Social interaction demonstrates the progressions of societal conditions in people's life. It can be a reciprocal relationship among people or an effect on the occasion, conduct, or brain of the people; these conditions relate the general population among themselves and convert them into social groups. Social interaction can be direct, physical, or symbolic (involves the use of symbols and language). It can occur individual to individual, in and out of groups or between cultures [1].

Social interactions incorporate an endless number of behaviors that it is commonly separated into the exchange, competition, conflict, cooperation, and accommodation.

## 1.3 Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well-being is a positive mental state. It alludes to the degree to which individuals experience positive feelings and sentiments of bliss. Psychological wellbeing can be defined as Hedonic wellbeing [refers to personal experiences happiness when constructive effect and fulfillment with existence are both elevated] and Eudaimonic wellbeing [refers to the deliberate part of Psychological well-being. Eudaimonic wellbeing has six streams i.e. self-acceptance, environmental mastery, positive relationships, personal growth, purpose in life, and autonomy [3].

Psychological well-being takes an essential portion in character and formative speculations both hypothetically and for all intents and purposes. Mental prosperity, which shows clinical examinations that will help counsels to make their thoughts achieve their points, tells about the points and implications identifying with psychological counseling. The idea of emotional prosperity usually refers to a person’s pleasure throughout everyday life, such as joy; psychological happiness focuses on self-advancement and impediments in this feeling life realizes. Broad examination of mental prosperity includes an individual's association with life points; if he knows about his capacities; the standard of his associations with others; and the feelings related to his own life [4].

### 1.4 Parental Bonding, Psychological Well Being & Social Interaction

A secure relationship with a parent can assist a child as young as three years old form relationships with peers as the child is usually a more positive and flexible and quicker response to the partner. Moreover, University of Illinois [UI] researchers consider that parental relationship with children helps to connect with difficult peers as they will have confidence in asserting their wants. A child who has encountered a safe connection association with guardians is expected to come into another companion association with uplifting desires. The study showed that a youngster’s intensity of connection security, their accomplice's inclination to lose control, and how well the kids knew one another [prior versus later visits] joined to figure a youngster's conduct [5].

Some mechanisms in parental bonding may affect the psychological well-being and social interaction in young adults. This study will be significant in exploring the association between parental bonding, psychological well-being, and social interaction. It will give the understanding that how parental bonding will contribute to mental health among students.

## 2 Conceptual Framework of the Study

This study identifies the link of parental bonding with social interaction and psychological wellbeing among adolescents (framework Figure 1), based on the hypotheses

1. There will be a positive relationship between parental bonding and Psychological well being
2. There will be a negative relationship between parental bonding and social interaction anxiety among adolescents.
3. There will be significant differences due to child gender in parental bonding.
4. The parental bonding with mother and father is a positive predictor of Psychological well-being.

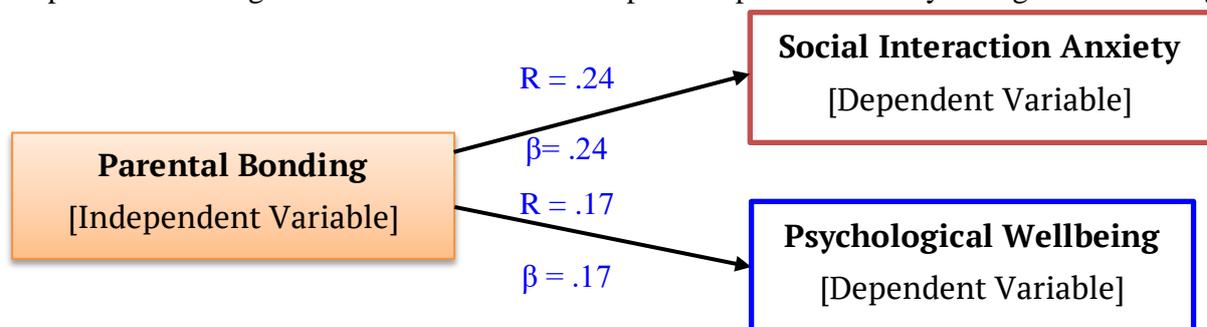


Figure 1: The effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

## 3 Conceptual Definition

### 3.1 Parental Bonding

The relationship between a parent and a child assumes a significant job in the healthy development of the child. The unsettling influences in parental bonding are connected with the advancement of mental issues further down the road. Parental bonding is key for the child to look up to and deal with the challenging scenarios of the world [6].

### 3.2 Social Interaction Anxiety

Communication between two or more people is known as social interaction and hesitation in social interaction that may cause anxiety is called social interaction anxiety. It helps to explain the social roles, statuses, and exchange [7].

### 3.3 Psychological Well-Being

Psychological Well-Being is characterized by a person's satisfaction, essentialness, serenity, good faith, contribution, mindfulness, self-acknowledgment, self-esteem, ability, advancement, reason, hugeness, compatibility, and association [8].

## 4 Research Design and Methodology

In the current research cross-sectional research design was used.

### 4.1 Sample

The sample was collected using a convenient sampling technique, from different schools, colleges, and universities of the locale; the age ranged from 18 to 23 years, which includes 324 males and 276 females [N=600]. The education level included from Matric/OA-Levels to Masters.

### 4.2 Measures

#### 4.2.1 Parental Bonding Instrument

The Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) asks respondents to remember how their parents acted throughout their first 16 years of life. The questionnaire has two parts (One part is about mother's attitudes and the other is about father's attitudes) of 25 items each item on the scale has a 4-point Likert scale rating method from 'very like' to 'very unlike'. There are no cutoff scores [6].

#### 4.2.2 Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS)

The Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS) was developed by Mattick and Clarke (1998) and used to measure the distress that accumulates during talking and meeting with people. The SIAS is a twenty-item measure on which respondents rate their encounters in social circumstances related to social anxiety and social phobia DSM-IV criteria, evaluated on a 5-point scale from 0 (not in the slightest degree normal for me) to 4 (extremely normal for me). An all-out score of 60 is a cutoff of at least 34 characteristics of social phobia and at least 43 demonstratives of social anxiety (summed up irrational fears crosswise over different social circumstances with evasion and disability). Note that on items 5, 9, and 11 scoring is reversed [a 0 = 4, a 1 = 3] to assess for response validity [7].

### 4.2.3 Psychological Wellbeing (PWB)

It was developed by Ryff (2008) measuring six parts of wellbeing and happiness through 42 items: autonomy ( 1, 13, 24, 35, 41, 10, and 21), environmental mastery ( 3, 15, 26, 36, 42, 12, and 23), personal growth ( 5, 17, 28, 37, 2, 14, and 25), positive relations with others ( 7, 18, 30, 38, 4, 16, and 27), purpose in life ( 9, 20, 32, 39, 6, 29, and 33), and self-acceptance ( 11, 22, 34, 40, 8, 19, and 31). The items ( 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 13, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 29, 31, 35, 36, 37, 38, and 40) were scored reversed.

### 4.3 Procedure

The research has two parts. In the first part, the participants were selected using a convenient sampling technique. The sample selected for this research included students from the schools, colleges, and universities of the locale. The consent was taken from the participants for data collection. The participants can leave the research at any time if feel uncomfortable. In the second part, the questionnaires were distributed, each participant was given a unique code. Then the participants filled out the Parental Bonding Inventory, Social Interaction Anxiety Scale, and Psychological Well-Being Scale. Participants took 10-20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. All the ethical concerns like confidentiality, privacy, self-respect, and use of the research data were carefully discussed with the subjects.

### 4.4 Data Analysis Tool

The data was analyzed using SPSS-XIII, to investigate the effect of parental bonding on social interaction and psychological well-being.

## 5 Results

To investigate the effect of parental bonding on psychological well-being and social interaction the quantitative data were analyzed through SPSS-XXIII. Table 1 indicates the total sample [N=600] depicts the demographic explanation of 600 adolescents.

**Table 1: Detail of Demographic Information for Main Study [N=600]**

Variable	Categories	F	%	Variable	Categories	F	%
Gender	Males	324	54	Mother's Occupation	Working	96	16
	Females	276	46		Non-Working	504	84
Age	18 yrs	18	3	No. of Siblings	Only	18	3
	19 yrs	66	11		2	90	15
	20 yrs	90	15		3	168	28
	21 yrs	180	30		4	114	19
	22 yrs	138	23		5	126	21
	23 yrs	108	18		6	60	10
Education	Matric	18	3		7	24	4
	Intermediate	576	96	Only	18	3	
	Graduate	6	1	First	102	17	
Occupation	Employed	30	5	Birth Order	Middle	264	44
	Unemployed	570	95		Last	216	36
Religion	Muslim	594	99		Marital Status	Single	588
	Non-Muslim	6	1	Married		12	2
Father	Deceased	36	6	Family System	Nuclear	366	61
	Alive	564	94		Joint	234	39
Father's Occupation	Government	72	12	Socio-Economic System	Lower	6	1
	Private	426	71		Middle	564	94
	None	102	17		Upper	30	5
Mother	Decease	6	1				
	Alive	594	99				

Table 2 indicates the alpha reliability of the three scales and their subscales. The reliability analysis deems satisfactory. Similarly, the skewness and kurtosis are within range i.e.  $\pm 2$ .

**Table 2:** Descriptive statistics of Social Interaction, Psychological Wellbeing and Parental Bonding [N=600]

Variables	Mean	SD	$\alpha$	Range		Skewness	Kurtosis
				Potential	Actual		
SIAS	31.34	13.69	.87	120-1380	6-69	.32	-.18
PW	85.24	11.51	.60	108-518	61-116	.34	-.19
PBM	42.03	5.83	.62	125-625	19-57	.43	1.76
PBF	39.88	6.00	.70	75-375	23-52	.39	-.03

SIAS= Social Interaction Anxiety Scale; PW=Psychological Wellbeing; PBM=Parental Bonding with Mother; PBF=Parental Bonding with Father;  $\alpha$ =Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient

**Table 3:** Relationship between Social Interaction Anxiety Scale, Psychological Well-being Scale, and Parental Bonding Scale [N=600]

Variables	1	2	3	4	M	SD
SIAS	-	-.322**	-.039	-.074	31.34	13.69
PW		-	.248**	.170*	85.24	11.51
PBM			-	.312**	42.03	5.83
PBF				-	39.88	6.00

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 3 shows that Social Interaction Anxiety Scale is negatively correlated with Psychological Well-Being Scale [ $p < .01$ ] and poor parental bonding. Psychological Well-being is positively correlated with Parental bonding with mother scale [ $p < .01$ ] and Parental bonding with father scale [ $p < .05$ ]. Table 4 indicates no gender differences between parental bonding with father and mother i.e. in parental bonding the presence of both parents equally contributes to a child's social interaction and psychological well-being. Table 5 shows the predicting role of parental bonding with mothers on psychological wellbeing. The Parental Bonding with Mother is the predictor of Psychological Wellbeing [ $\beta = .24$ ,  $p < .001$ ] which is explaining the variance of 6% [ $R^2 = .06$ ]. It also shows that  $R = .24^a$  and  $F = 12.92$ .

**Table 4:** Gender differences in Social Interaction, Psychological Wellbeing and Parental bonding [N=600]

Variable	Male-child		Female-child		$t(df)$	$p$	95% CI		Cohen's $d$
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			LL	UL	
SIAS	31.02	13.69	31.70	13.75	-.34(598)	.72	-4.51	3.16	0.04
PW	85.19	11.73	85.29	11.30	-.06(598)	.95	-3.32	3.12	0.00
PBM	41.79	5.84	42.30	5.84	-.61(598)	.54	-2.14	1.12	0.08
PBF	39.79	5.99	39.97	6.04	-.21(598)	.83	-1.86	1.50	0.03

\* $p < 0.05$  \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; Male = 108; Female = 92; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit;  $df$  = degree of freedom.

**Table 5:** Parental Bonding with Mother as a predictor of Psychological Well being [N=600]

DV	IV	B	S.E	$\beta$	R	$R^2$	F
PW	[Constant]	64.72	5.76		.24 <sup>a</sup>	.06	12.92
	PBM	.48	.13	.24			

$p < .001$ ; S.E= Standard Error;  $\beta$ = Beta

Table 6 shows the predicting role of parental bonding with the father on psychological wellbeing. Analysis showed that Parental Bonding with Father is the predictor of Psychological

well-being [ $\beta = .17, p < .05$ ] which is explaining the variance of 2% [ $R^2 = 0.02$ ]. It also shows that  $R = .17^a, R^2 = .02$  and  $F = 5.88$ .

**Table 6: Predictor of Psychological Wellbeing in Parental Bonding with Father [N=600]**

DV	IV	B	S.E	B	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F
PW	[Constant]	72.25	5.41	.17	.17 <sup>a</sup>	.02	5.88
	PBF	.32	.13				

$p < .05$ ; PW= Psychological Well-being; S.E= Standard Error;  $\beta$ = Beta

## 6 Discussion

The current research is aimed to investigate parental bonding as a link to social interaction anxiety and psychological well-being among adolescents. In this section, the results would be discussed in light of previous literature and theory. Adolescents are the age group encountering maximum emotional deregulation, weak support system, and issues related to mistrust, which affects the social circle and can give rise to multiple types of anxieties. Due to this challenge, the current research was designed to provide empirical evidence to highlight the significance of parent's training in the time when their children are in the adolescent phase [10].

The first hypothesis of the study stated a significant positive relationship between parental bonding and psychological well-being, which is supported. The first bond that a child develops is with the parents and if that bond is strong the psychological health of all five occupations will be strong. The theory on parental bonding illustrates that for optimum psychological well-being, parental bonding requires carefulness [11].

Similarly, the second hypothesis stated that parental bonding has a negative relationship with social interaction anxiety i.e. the good the parental bonding is the better the social interaction and lower would be the social interaction anxiety; the hypothesis is supported. The social interaction theory highly emphasizes the modes of social interactions and experiences with the parents. A child with good experiences will settle better in a social setup than others [12, 13].

The third hypothesis is not supported as parental bonding is not affected by the gender of the child and remains the same for both genders, but overall the parental bonding is not impacted due to the differential needs. The parent-child bond remains significant and of the same quality for both genders [1, 17, 18].

The fourth hypothesis of the study stated that parental bonding with father and mother is a positive predictor of psychological well-being. The regression analysis also showed that parental bonding with mother explained higher variation [ $R^2 = 6\%$ ] than parental bonding with father [ $R^2 = 2\%$ ]. The research named the mother-child bond as a "special bond" due to superior maternal instincts. The biologists also claim that the antenatal bonding and release of oxytocin (the bonding hormone) is the reason for higher variation in bonding [14-16].

## 7 Conclusion

From the hypotheses and findings, a high-quality parental bond is required for psychological well-being and rich social interaction and vice versa. Similarly, social interaction anxiety has a negative relationship with psychological well-being and parental bonding. The gender of the child

does not affect the parental bonding hence the gender differences remained non-significant, although the needs of a different gender are different, while the parental bonding will remain independent of it. On the other hand, the parental bonding with mother has shown more variation than father which is an interesting finding that highlights the importance of women mental health too i.e. if the mothers' mental health would be strong only then she would be able to nourish and produce a strong child [19, 20].

This study has its implication in child psychology, family therapy, and parents training. In a culture like Pakistan the family needs to understand the significance of early childhood experiences, parent-child significant trustful bond as it is the under the root of other bonds and accordingly, necessary space should be given to the parent-child relationship for growth at large.

## 8 Availability of Data And Material

Data can be made available by contacting the corresponding authors.

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**Kanwal Shahbaz** is a Career Counsellor, Psychologist, a social scientist, and a Lecturer. She is a licensed CBT practitioner by Mills Psychology Canada. Her research interests include Behavior & Neuroscience, and Career desensitization.



**Sana Amjad** is among one of the leading Speech and Language Pathologists working in a Fauji Foundation Hospital, Islamabad. Her interests include the Amalgamation of Technology in Speech Development.



**Sidra Azhar** holds a Master's Degree in Applied Psychology, an Advanced Diploma in Career Counseling & Education and She is an M-Phil- Clinical Psychology student. Her research interests include Career Desensitization and Women Mental Health.



**Annum Khan** is a qualified Clinical Psychologist and a PhD scholar in developing an intervention for children with Autism. She is a certified NLP from National Federation for Neuro-Linguistic Programming [NFNLP], & Hypnotherapist from National Guild of Hypnotists (NGH), USA. Her training includes Focusing, Eye Movement Desensitization, and Reprocessing (EMDR), Psychological First Aid, Mindfulness & Reikhi, CBT, Gestalt, Family, Narrative Exposure therapy, Eidetic therapy and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA).



**Ayesha Mujeeb** is a certified master trainer and has conducted numerous trainings and of trainers on various issues. Her interest includes Counselling, Child Sexual Abuse, Domestic Violence, Child Protection, Adolescent Reproductive Health, Women And Child Rights, Gender, Communication Skills, Stress And Anger Management, Life Skills, Self-Awareness, Behaviour Change Modification, Facilitation Skills and Psycho-Social Intervention.



**Ayla Khan** is one of the renowned mental health researchers. She is a career counselor and a Lecturer. Her research interest includes Mental Health Issues With Children and Women Especially Pregnant Women.



**Muneeb Shahid** is CEO at Career consultants. He also delivers lectures of Hadith Sciences, Islamic Civilization and Translation. His interests include Linking Theory with Practice, Data Analysis and Interpretation.



**Saba Zer Naz Hafsa** is a PhD Scholar and a Lecturer. Her interests include Pragmatic Work on Depression, Burnout and Spiritual Intelligence, Health & Psychology.