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# The Relationship Between Secure Attachment Style and Self-Disclosure in Late Adolescents

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between secure attachment style and self-disclosure among late adolescents. The findings indicate a significant yet weak correlation between the two variables. This suggests that higher levels of secure attachment tend to be associated with increased self-disclosure; however, the increase is not always proportional or strong enough to reach a high category. Conversely, low levels of secure attachment do not necessarily lead to low self-disclosure, as the relationship is not causal and may be influenced by other contributing factors. Overall, secure attachment style is related to self-disclosure levels, but the relationship is correlational and not a sole determinant of adolescents' openness.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Human development includes a series of significant psychosocial stages, one of which is the late adolescent phase. During this period, individuals undergo a crucial transition from childhood to adulthood, marked by identity exploration and the formation of more complex social relationships with family, peers, and society at large. In adolescence, there are two fundamental aspects that play a central role in shaping psychological well-being and the quality of interpersonal relationships, namely secure attachment and self-disclosure (Ramadhani, 2023).

According to Attachment Theory by John Bowlby (in Mumtaz & Naryoso, 2024), a child's sense of security develops from parental responsiveness, warmth, and emotional presence. Consistent and affectionate parenting fosters secure attachment, influencing children's behavior such as seeking proximity to parents when distressed and shaping early emotional bonds that later affect interactions with others. Children with secure attachment tend to display confidence, effective emotion regulation, and healthy interpersonal relationships (Nada, 2023). Secure attachment also supports adaptive emotional regulation

strategies like seeking support, problem-solving, and positive reappraisal, which contribute to coping effectiveness and goal attainment (Messina et al., 2024).

Secure attachment is closely linked to self-disclosure, defined as the selective and contextual sharing of personal information with others, often depicted metaphorically as a “window” (Muhammad et al., 2021). Self-disclosure plays a central role in communication and includes dimensions such as amount of information, valence, honesty, and relational closeness (Sejati, 2024). It is often examined within Erikson’s psychosocial stage of intimacy vs. isolation, typically occurring in early adulthood, but its foundation lies in the prior stage identity vs. role confusion during late adolescence (ages 17–19). Successful identity formation enables individuals to be emotionally open, making self-disclosure a key component for resolving developmental crises (Orenstein & Lewis, 2022). Supporting this view, adolescents with strong identity abilities tend to develop higher interpersonal intimacy in subsequent weeks, demonstrating a direct causal link (Wijaya & Setiawan, 2025).

In today’s evolving social dynamics, especially among late adolescents, digital communication has revealed patterns of poorly managed self-disclosure. Oversharing on social media such as the viral “things I’m ashamed to admit” trend on TikTok illustrates how adolescents use online spaces to express emotions and seek validation impulsively (The Guardian, 2024; The Star, 2023).

This phenomenon illustrates that healthy self-disclosure skills are essential not only for strengthening relationships but also as a coping mechanism that prevents more severe psychological impacts (Luo & Hancock, 2020). Limited self-disclosure ability can lead to misunderstandings and hinder the development of meaningful social relationships. Thus, the capacity to express oneself openly and healthily is crucial for building strong interpersonal bonds and for managing mental and emotional stress.

Within Indonesian families, attachment patterns and parenting practices play a central role in shaping adolescents’ social and emotional capacities. Secure attachment provides a strong foundation for the development of positive social skills such as empathy, emotional regulation, and healthy peer relationships (Papalia et al., 2021). Conversely, unmet emotional needs especially safety, affection, and closeness may result in ambivalent or hostile parent–child relationships. Negative attachment experiences foster anxiety, distrust, and vulnerability in later interpersonal relationships. Emotional neglect in childhood is significantly associated with low social trust and difficulty forming healthy emotional connections (Wilk et al., 2024). Therefore, early family-based attachment patterns form the foundation for adolescents’ adaptive social functioning, as families remain the primary environment shaping their development during the transition to adulthood (Khoiriah, 2022).

Recent studies show a strong link between secure attachment style and adolescents’ social and emotional functioning. Farrah, Nata, and Dwiyani (2023) found that late adolescent female TikTok users exhibit high levels of self-disclosure, particularly in determination and honesty. Similarly, Zhang, Li, and Zhao (2022) reported that attachment style significantly influences adolescent self-disclosure, with emotion regulation serving as a partial mediator. Ramadhani (2023) demonstrated that secure attachment in social media users is associated with adaptive coping strategies, which enhance healthy self-disclosure online.

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Thus, secure attachment and self-disclosure are closely interconnected in shaping healthy interpersonal relationships during late adolescence. This aligns with Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969; Ainsworth, 1978), which states that individuals with secure attachment possess safety, trust, and effective emotion regulation, enabling them to open up without fear of rejection. It is also consistent with Erikson's psychosocial theory (1968), where individuals aged 18–21 are in the identity formation and early intimacy phase, often using social media for self-expression. Secure attachment supports adaptive coping and meaningful self-disclosure, rather than oversharing, ultimately strengthening interpersonal relationships during the transition to early adulthood.

Building on this context, the present study aims to examine the relationship between secure attachment style and self-disclosure among late adolescents. The research focuses on individuals aged 18–21 typically 12th-grade students and early-semester university students (Lubis, Ningsih, Kusworo, & Sitompul, 2023; Rosyidah, 2024).

Despite their relevance, these studies have not explicitly investigated the relationship between secure attachment style and self-disclosure in late adolescence, particularly within the Indonesian cultural context. Most existing research focuses on the function of attachment in academics, while studies specifically linking secure attachment style and self-disclosure are still relatively limited. Therefore, further research is needed specifically to examine the role of secure attachment style in the development of self-disclosure in late adolescence in Indonesia.

## **2. METHOD**

### **Type of Research**

This research is a quantitative correlational study, a type of research that aims to statistically determine the relationship between two or more variables (Sugiyono, 2023, p. 37). Correlational research is used to determine the existence of a relationship, as well as the direction and strength of the relationship between the independent variable (secure attachment style) and the dependent variable (self-disclosure) in late adolescence. This study uses a non-experimental design, as the researcher does not administer any treatment to the subjects but simply observes the natural relationship that occurs between the two variables. The relationship between the variables will be analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment correlation technique, as the data generated is interval scaled and assumed to be normally distributed (Sugiyono, 2023, p. 265).

### **Sampling Technique**

The sampling technique used in this study was purposive sampling, a sampling technique based on specific considerations tailored to the objectives and characteristics of the study. This technique was chosen because the study focused on late adolescents aged 18 to 21 who are in the development phase of self-identity and interpersonal relationships, as explained in the previous theoretical and empirical framework. According to Sugiyono (2023), purposive sampling is a non-probabilistic technique in which researchers determine a sample based on the consideration that the selected participants are most knowledgeable and appropriate to the research problem. In this context, the selected participants were active

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college students or final-year high school students who met age criteria and had relational experiences relevant to the research variables. In addition to time and accessibility limitations, the use of purposive sampling was also considered because it allowed researchers to obtain more in-depth data from participants who truly align with the focus of this psychosocial study (Sugiyono, 2023, p. 129).

### **Research Setting and Equipment**

The research setting is Jakarta, with target participants being late adolescents residing in the Jakarta area. Data collection and data retrieval are conducted online through the distribution of questionnaires using devices owned by the researcher and participants. The researcher will distribute the questionnaire link to respondents directly through social media and communication groups. The questionnaires used consisted of the Attachment Style Questionnaire-Short Form (ASQ-SF) to measure attachment style, and the Self-Disclosure Scale (Wheless & Grotz, 1976). For data processing, the researchers used the Jamovi application version 2.7.11.

### **Data Processing and Analysis Techniques**

For the secure attachment style variable, assessment is based on scores on the Confidence dimension and low scores on the other insecure dimensions (Discomfort with Closeness, Relationships as Secondary, Need for Approval, and Preoccupation with Relationships). Therefore, participants who score high on Confidence and relatively low on the insecure dimension can be categorized as having a secure attachment style. For the self-disclosure variable, analysis was conducted both on a total scale and by dimension of the SDS to illustrate the frequency, depth, accuracy, intention, and positive and negative characteristics of participants' self-disclosure. In this study, data from the questionnaires were processed using Jamovi version 2.7.11. The dimensions were tested for reliability, categorization, normality using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, followed by Pearson correlation, and a difference test.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Research Participant Criteria**

Participants in this study were late adolescents, both male and female, aged 18 to 21. The second characteristic was that the subjects were active students. Furthermore, the subjects resided in Jakarta. The researcher did not limit the participants to school or university, so all students from any school or university were eligible to participate. This criterion was chosen because this age group is in the crucial phase of establishing healthy intimate relationships and a stable sense of identity, and participants were expected to have the ability to understand and answer the questionnaire.

Table 1. Participant Overview

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)

Female	87	51.2
Male	83	48.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
18 years old	41	24.1
19 years old	41	24.1
20 years old	54	31.8
21 years old	34	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
5th–6th Semester College Student	51	30.0
1st–2nd Semester College Student	42	24.7
3rd–4th Semester College Student	42	24.7
7th–8th Semester College Student	31	18.2
Worker	2	1.2
12th Grade High School Student	1	0.6
8th Grade Junior High School Student	1	0.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Domicile</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
North Jakarta	41	24.1
West Jakarta	37	21.8
Central Jakarta	31	18.2
East Jakarta	31	18.2
South Jakarta	30	17.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Closest Relationship</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Parents	83	48.8
Friends	29	17.1
Partner	29	17.1
Extended family (cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.)	15	8.8
Siblings	14	8.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Living Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Living with parents	87	51.2
Living alone (boarding house/apartment/own house)	62	36.5
Living with extended family	21	12.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Storytelling Preference</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Parents	63	37.1
Friends	46	27.1
Partner	40	23.5
Extended family (cousins, aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.)	11	6.5
Siblings	10	5.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>100</b>

Based on data from 170 participants, the largest age group was 20-year-olds (54 participants, 31.8%), followed by those aged 18 and 19 (41 participants each, 24.1%), with the smallest group being 21-year-olds (34 participants, 20.0%). In terms of education and activity status, most participants were 5th–6th semester university students (51 participants, 30.0%), followed by both 1st–2nd and 3rd–4th semester students (42 participants each,

24.7%), while the smallest groups were 12th-grade high school students and 8th-grade junior high students (1 participant each, 0.6%) as well as workers (2 participants, 1.2%). Most participants lived in North Jakarta (41 participants, 24.1%), followed by West Jakarta (37 participants, 21.8%), Central and East Jakarta (31 participants each, 18.2%), with the fewest residing in South Jakarta (30 participants, 17.6%). Regarding closest relationships, the majority reported parents as their closest figures (83 participants, 48.8%), followed by friends and romantic partners (29 participants each, 17.1%). Most participants lived with their parents (87 participants, 51.2%), while 62 (36.5%) lived independently and 21 (12.4%) lived with extended family. Finally, parents were also the most frequently chosen confidants (63 participants, 37.1%), followed by friends (46 participants, 27.1%) and romantic partners (40 participants, 23.5%), indicating that parents and friends remain the primary trusted sources for sharing personal experiences.

## Main Data Analysis

### Assumption Test

This study used the Shapiro-Wilk Test for normality because the number of participants was less than 200 ( $N = 170$ ). Data are considered normally distributed if the significance value ( $p$ ) is greater than 0.05. The results of the normality test indicate that for the secure attachment style variable (Total X1), the  $p$ -value is  $<.001$ , meaning  $p < 0.05$ . Thus, the secure attachment style variable is not normally distributed. For the self-disclosure variable (Total Y), the  $p$ -value is 0.661, meaning  $p > 0.05$ . Therefore, the self-disclosure variable is normally distributed. Although one of the variables is not normal, Pearson correlation analysis was still used because the large sample size ( $N = 170$ ) means that violations of normality do not significantly affect the robustness of the test.

Table 2. Results of the Normality Test for Secure Attachment Style and Self-Disclosure Variables

Variable	$p$	Description
Secure Attachment Style	$<.001$	Not Normal
Self-Disclosure	0.661	Normal

### Hypothesis Analysis

Hypothesis analysis was conducted to determine whether there is a relationship between secure attachment style and self-disclosure in late adolescence. This study used a medium-sized sample ( $N = 170$ ) and interval-scale data. Pearson correlation analysis was used to analyze the relationship between variables. The analysis showed a positive correlation between secure attachment style and self-disclosure. The correlation value obtained was  $r(170) = 0.151$ ,  $p = 0.050$  ( $<0.05$ ), making the relationship statistically significant. This finding indicates that the higher the participants' secure attachment style, the higher their level of self-disclosure. Although the correlation strength is categorized as weak (Privitera, 2015), the direction of the relationship still supports the research hypothesis, namely a positive relationship between the two variables.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation Test Results between Secure Attachment Style and Self-Disclosure

Variable	r	p	Description
Secure Attachment Style & Self-Disclosure	0.151	0.050	Significant, Weak Positive Correlation

### Additional Data Analysis

#### Self-Disclosure Difference Test Based on Closest Relationship

The researcher conducted additional analysis to determine whether there were differences in self-disclosure levels based on the closest relationship category. The difference test was conducted using the Kruskal-Wallis Test, which is appropriate for non-normal data and more than two groups. The test results showed a significant value of  $p = 0.290$ , meaning  $p > 0.05$ . Therefore, it can be concluded that there are no differences in self-disclosure based on the closest relationship. The above description can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of the Self-Disclosure Difference Test Based on Closest Relationship

Variable	p	Description
Self-Disclosure reviewed from the Closest Relationships	0.290	There is no difference

#### Self-Disclosure Difference Test Based on Residence Status

Researchers conducted additional analysis to determine whether there was a difference in self-disclosure based on residence status. With more than two groups, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used, and the results showed a significance value of  $p = 0.590$ , meaning  $p > 0.05$ , indicating no difference in self-disclosure based on residence status. The above explanation can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of Self-Disclosure Difference Test Based on Residence Status

Variable	p	Description
Self-Disclosure reviewed from the perspective of Residence Status	0.590	There is no difference

#### Self-Disclosure Difference Test Based on Storytelling Preference

The researcher conducted additional analysis to determine whether there were differences in self-disclosure based on storytelling preference. Given that the data were not normally distributed and consisted of more than two groups, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used. The test results showed a significance value of  $p = 0.274$ , meaning  $p > 0.05$ . Therefore, it can be concluded that there were no differences in self-disclosure based on storytelling preference. The above explanation can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6. Results of Self-Disclosure Difference Test Based on Storytelling Preference

Variable	p	Description
Self-Disclosure reviewed from the perspective of Storytelling Preferences	0.274	There is no difference

### Discussion

Research has found a positive relationship between secure attachment style and self-disclosure in late adolescence (Widyastuti & Hidayati, 2021). This means that individuals with higher levels of secure attachment tend to have a more healthy and adaptive tendency to self-disclosure. However, this relationship is not deterministic. High levels of secure

attachment do not necessarily guarantee very high levels of self-disclosure, nor do low levels of secure attachment necessarily mean low levels of self-disclosure. This suggests that secure attachment style plays an important role in influencing self-disclosure, but is not the sole determinant (Zhang et al., 2022; Maulidah et al., 2024).

Dimensions of secure attachment, particularly self-confidence, have been shown to play a significant role in facilitating self-disclosure (Feeney et al., 1994). Adolescents who feel worthy of love and trust others are more likely to express their thoughts and feelings honestly and openly. On the other hand, dimensions of self-disclosure such as amount, depth, honesty-accuracy, intention, and positiveness help explain the quality of self-disclosure (Wheless & Grotz, 1976; Farrah et al., 2023). Individuals with secure attachments tend to share information in a balanced and controlled manner, while still considering the relationship context and personal comfort, resulting in adaptive self-disclosure.

These findings confirm that secure attachment style plays a protective role in the development of social and psychological skills in late adolescence (Bowlby, 1969; Ainsworth, 1978). Secure attachments enable adolescents to manage negative emotions, build trust, and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships, ultimately facilitating self-disclosure. However, self-disclosure is influenced by other external and internal factors, so variations in self-disclosure levels can occur even with similar levels of secure attachment (Sagone et al., 2023; Ramadhani, 2023). This phenomenon also explains why some adolescents with high secure attachments may choose to share personal information more sparingly, while others are more open, depending on the needs and context of the relationship.

The implications of this research for the parenting and education of adolescents are the importance of building secure attachments through warm, consistent, and responsive communication (Santrock, 2003; Sagita & Saputri, 2024). Furthermore, self-disclosure skills need to be fostered through social-emotional development programs that emphasize emotion regulation, effective communication, and trust-building skills. Education regarding social media use is also necessary to ensure adolescents can express themselves healthily, without resorting to oversharing, which is risky for psychological well-being (Farrah et al., 2023; PUSIKNAS, 2024).

This study has several limitations. The sample was limited to late adolescents aged 18–21, so generalization to other age groups requires caution. Self-disclosure measurements are self-report methods, which can potentially introduce social bias or idealized responses (Lestari et al., 2021; Rahmawati, 2024). Furthermore, the correlational nature of this study precludes direct causal conclusions between secure attachment and self-disclosure. Nevertheless, the results provide empirical evidence of a positive relationship between secure attachment and self-disclosure, while also suggesting that other factors also influence late adolescents' levels of self-disclosure (Widyastuti & Hidayati, 2021; Zhang et al., 2022).

## 4. CONCLUSION

### Conclusion

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Based on the analysis of secure attachment style and self-disclosure in late adolescence, it can be concluded that there is a significant, but weak, relationship between the two variables. This indicates that as secure attachment increases, self-disclosure tends to increase, although the rate of increase is not always the same or reaches a very high level. Conversely, if the level of secure attachment style is low, this does not necessarily mean that the level of self-disclosure is also low, as the relationship between the two is not causal and can still be influenced by other factors. It can be said that secure attachment style is related to self-disclosure, but this relationship is correlational and is not the sole factor determining the level of self-disclosure.

## **Recommendations**

### **1. Recommendations Related to Theoretical Benefits**

Several theoretical suggestions for further research are: (a) this study can serve as a reference in the development of developmental psychology and social psychology, particularly regarding the relationship between secure attachment style and self-disclosure; (b) the researcher recommends conducting more specific research on the influence of secure attachment dimensions on self-disclosure dimensions in late adolescence; (c) The researcher also recommends research on the role of environmental factors, such as peer support or social media, on late adolescent self-disclosure; (d) further research can explore mediating or moderating mechanisms, such as emotional regulation or trust in parents, in the relationship between secure attachment and self-disclosure; and (e) the researcher suggests further development or validation of self-disclosure and attachment style measurement tools that are appropriate to the characteristics of Indonesian adolescents.

### **2. Suggestions Related to Practical Benefits**

Practical suggestions that can be provided include: (a) parents are expected to improve warm, responsive, and consistent communication with their children, so that adolescents feel safe to express themselves in a healthy manner; (b) educators and counselors can develop learning programs or workshops that focus on communication skills, emotional regulation, and self-disclosure in adolescents; (c) college students or late adolescents are advised to use social media wisely when sharing personal information to maintain healthy self-disclosure and prevent oversharing; (d) universities or educational institutions can hold seminars or activities that discuss the development of interpersonal skills, emotional management, and healthy digital media use. and (e) environmental support, both from family and peers, needs to be provided so that late adolescents can build safe, healthy and adaptive interpersonal relationships, thereby improving their overall psychological well-being.

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