



Maladaptive Personality Traits and Suicidal Risk in Adolescents

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Abstract

Introduction: Adolescence is a developmental window with high affective vulnerability and intense reorganization of self-regulation mechanisms. Attachment theory (Bowlby; Ainsworth) postulates that early relational representations shape the response to stress and self-image (1; 2), influencing the development of emotional intelligence (3; 4). In the analyzed thesis, attachment style was considered a central predictor of emotional maturity and affective regulation. In the contemporary literature on suicidal ideation and behavior, several explanatory models converge on two axes: emotional dysregulation/negative affect and relational disruption/perceived burden + disconnection. Among these, we mention: Interpersonal Theory of Suicide (5), Three-Step Theory (3ST) (6), Integrated Motivation-al-Volitional (IMV) model (7), and neuro-psychosocial perspectives (8; 9; 10). These theoretical frameworks provide a solid context for integrating the attachment questionnaire (11), Friedmann scale, PID-5 (12), and Suicidality Index data from the present study.

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Study Design and Procedure

Study Design and Research Procedure

Type of study. The project has two complementary components:

- (I) Observational, cross sectional (constatative) study on a sample of N = 250 adolescents (16–18 years), focused on the relationships between attachment (RSQ styles), emotional maturity (Friedmann), maladaptive personality traits PID-5 (13; 14), and specific indicators (e.g., suicidal tendency).
- (II) Formative experiment with a test–retest comparative design and a control group, aimed at increasing self regulation skills and relational security. Groups: GE = 12 adolescents with insecure attachment, GC = 12 comparable adolescents (GE = experimental group; GC = control group); duration ≈ 5 months, with one session/week.

Period and setting. Administration took place in the 2023–2024 academic year, individually and confidentially, with participant anonymity ensured.

Participants and Sampling (Observational Component)

- Socio demographic dimensions: gender, family type, area of residence.
- Distributions retained for analysis:
- Family Type: two parent families 64% (160/250); single parent 27.2% (68/250); foster care/placement 8.8% (22/250).
- Area of Residence: rural 59.5% vs. urban 40.5% ($\approx +19$ percentage points in favor of rural).
- Exclusion Criteria: intellectual disability/mental retardation and other psychiatric disorders confirmed by a specialist physician.
- Ethics: informed consent from the adolescent and the parent/guardian (noted in the Appendix); principle of information and consent in accordance with Decision No. 4/2013 of the Romanian College of Psychologists; confidentiality and the right to withdraw at any time.

Instruments (both components)

- Friedmann – Emotional Maturity Scale (indicator of affective balance/maturity).
- PID-5 – Maladaptive personality traits.
- RSQ – Relationship Scales Questionnaire (styles: secure; preoccupied/anxious; dismissing avoidant; fearful avoidant/disorganized).
- The suicidality index was used exclusively as a barometer indicator (sentinel item) – not as an independent scale – and was interpreted in correlation with emotional maturity (Friedmann) and attachment (RSQ).

Data Collection Procedure (Observational Component)

- Information and obtaining consent (adolescent + parent), presentation of the purpose and benefits, guarantee of confidentiality.
- Individual administration, under standardized conditions, of the test battery (order used in the chapter: Friedmann, RSQ, PID 5).
- Verification of inclusion/exclusion criteria; ensuring the option of individual counseling

regarding results.

Intervention Design (formative component)

- Session structure: two parts per meeting — Part I: group program (≈ 40 min); Part II: with parents present (≈ 20 min), with emphasis on the paternal figure (activation relationship), co-regulation, emotional validation, role plays/psychodrama, CBT techniques for reappraisal and problem solving.
- Assessments: pre test (GE & GC) → program implementation (GE) → post test (GE & GC) using the same battery; test–retest and between group comparisons.

Data Analysis

- Descriptive: means, standard deviations, frequencies/percentages.
- Inferential (non normal data): Mann–Whitney U, Kruskal–Wallis + rank based post hoc tests; Spearman's ρ for correlations; multiple regression (predictors: total attachment to mother/father/friends; outcomes: EI dimensions, especially emotion regulation); for the formative component: Wilcoxon (within GE/GC) and GE vs. GC comparisons (test–retest).
- Software: analyses performed in SPSS.
- Significance threshold: $p < 0.05$.

Operational Summary (Brief)

- Observational: $N = 250$; individual administration; ethics and confidentiality; standardized battery; nonparametric/correlational/regression analyses.
- Formative: comparative design GE ($n = 12$) vs. GC ($n = 12$), 5 months, 1 session/week; pre/post with the same battery; test–retest and between group analyses; session structure 40' (adolescents) + 20' (with parents).

Research Hypotheses

H1: Dysfunctional personality traits (PID-5) and low self-esteem are associated with insecure attachment and lower emotional maturity.

H 2: exp. A formative program reduces the Suicidality Index and PID-5 traits among adolescents with insecure attachment.

The Results Obtained in the Experiment Research and their Interpretation

The analysis of the results shows that almost half (46.4%) have below-average scores (≤ 17) on the Friedmann Emotional Maturity Scale; category distribution: 29.6% “tending toward imbalance” (16–17), 8.8% “mild immaturity” (14–15), 8% “adolescent-type reactions” (12–13); 0% “perfectly mature” (>25). This profile suggests affective fragility and a potential co-occurrence of maladaptive traits.

The distribution across the five PID-5 domains indicates intermediate levels ($\sim 50\%$) overall; the highest values occur in Antagonism (54.7%) and Psychoticism (53.3%), followed by Disinhibition ($\sim 50.7\%$), while Anhedonia/Negative Affect and Detachment are around $\sim 49.7\%$. This suggests a moderate presence of maladaptive traits in the total group.

PID-5 correlations \leftrightarrow emotional intelligence / emotional maturity. In the cross-sectional sample, PID-5 traits are negatively correlated with dimensions of the Friedmann score.

- Anhedonia with the Friedmann score: $r = -0.339$, $p < 0.01$;
- Disinhibition with the Friedmann score: $r = -0.305$, $p < 0.01$;
- Psychoticism with the Friedmann score: $r = -0.354$, $p < 0.01$.
- These patterns converge towards the idea that maladaptive traits are associated with poorer affective self-regulation.

The suicidal index (single item regarding suicidal ideation, derived from the Friedmann scale — used as an was related to attachment indicators: RSQ – avoidant-fearful style (disorganized) $\rightarrow \rho = 0.241$, $p < 0.001$ (positive correlation with suicidal ideation). Perception of parental abandonment/alienation (IPPA-A) $\rightarrow \rho = 0.233$, $p < 0.001$ (positive correlation). These magnitudes ($\rho \approx 0.23$ – 0.24) fall into the small–moderate range and support the hypothesis of affective vulnerability related to relational insecurity (especially the avoidant-fearful profile) in the emergence of suicidal cognitions.

Although the study does not explicitly report a matrix of correlations between the suicidality index and

the PID-5 domains, the patterns already documented (PID-5 \leftrightarrow decreases in Friedmann; suicidality index \leftrightarrow relational insecurity) outline a plausible hypothesis: Anhedonia/Negative Affect, Detachment, Disinhibition and Psychoticism should be positively associated with the presence of suicidal ideation (e.g. through affective vulnerability, social withdrawal, impulsivity and cognitive distortions). This is coherent with the networks of relationships already observed in the study.

The Results Obtained in the Formative Research and their Interpretation

Intra-GE (Wilcoxon): Friedmann: emotional maturity \uparrow ($Z = -2.663$, $p = 0.008$) and strong Suicidality Index \downarrow ($Z = -3.500$, $p < 0.001$).

PID-5 (post, GE vs GC): significant decreases in GE compared to GC in all 5 domains (e.g.: detachment $U = 8.5$, $p < 0.001$; psychoticism $U = 1.5$, $Z = -4.245$, $p < 0.001$).

Clinical note on the Suicidality Index (barometer indicator). Although the difference between GE and GC at post does not always reach significance (trend in favor of GE), the intra-GE decrease is marked, suggesting that improved self-regulation is the mechanism by which suicidal risk decreases (clinically validated by Friedmann) [1-14].

Conclusions and Discussions

(1) Secure attachment is associated with increased emotional maturity; relational alienation predicts dysregulation. (2) PID-5 traits with internalizing (anhedonia/detachment) and externalizing (disinhibition) valence are anchored in insecure attachment patterns, co-evolving with low emotional maturity. (4) Psychological intervention produced convergent effects: the level of emotional maturity increases, the Suicidality Index decreases, the maladaptive personality traits decrease. Together, these confirm and support the formative hypothesis.

Data support that securing relationships and developing emotional skills reduce affective vulnerability and the Suicide Index in adolescents. The Suicide Index, used as a sentinel indicator-barometer, sensitively captures the clinical response of self-regulation training programs and deserves to be maintained as an outcome

marker, with rigorous reporting and combination with other indices.

Conflict of Interest

There are no interests that could improperly influence the conduct of the research, the interpretation of the results, or the writing of the study. The research used established psychometric instruments (Friedmann, RSQ, ASSI, PID-5) on a sample of 250 adolescents, as described in the study.

Ethical Approval

absence of a positive opinion from the ethics committee

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