


Please cite the Published Version

Hadley, Robin A , Newby, Chloe and Barry, John (2024) Anxious attachment as a predictor of adult childlessness. In: 5th International Conference on Psychology, Counselling and Education 2023, 31 August 2023 - 1 September 2023, Cebu City, Philippines.

Publisher: Psychreg Ltd

Version: Published Version

Downloaded from: <https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/634100/>

Usage rights:  [Creative Commons: Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

Additional Information: This is a published conference abstract of a presentation at 5th International Conference on Psychology, Counselling and Education 2023

Enquiries:

If you have questions about this document, contact openresearch@mmu.ac.uk. Please include the URL of the record in e-space. If you believe that your, or a third party's rights have been compromised through this document please see our Take Down policy (available from <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/library/using-the-library/policies-and-guidelines>)

Anxious attachment as a predictor of adult childlessness

Robin A. Hadley, Chloe Newby, & John Barry
Independent Researcher (United Kingdom)

Correspondence: rahadley7.8@gmail.com

Copyright. 2024. Psychreg Journal of Psychology
Published by Psychreg Ltd
ISSN: 2515-138X



The aim of this study was to test the hypothesis that childhood attachment predicts whether a person will have children later in life. Being a parent is considered a high-value status and an intrinsic part of the human life cycle. However, childlessness has increased substantially in recent decades in developed parts of the world. It is possible that insecure childhood attachment has contributed to this phenomenon, but this hypothesis has been relatively little explored. This study is a cross-sectional survey of 394 men and women aged over 50 years old, stratified by geographical UK region, from an online research panel, and analysed using hierarchical logistic regression. Validated measures of childhood attachment and other psychological and demographic factors were used. The main finding was that, independent of the impact of other variables (age, sex, education level, marital status, life stress, health-related quality of life, mental positivity, and avoidant attachment style), people who were childless were significantly more likely to have developed an anxious attachment to their primary caregiver in childhood. This study highlights the importance of healthy bonding in childhood and is the first to demonstrate the significance of anxious childhood attachment as a predictor of producing children in one's lifetime.

Keywords: ageing; anxious attachment; childlessness; parenthood; social psychology