

Childhood Comfort Object Attachment as a Predictor of Spiritual Trust among Young Adults

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Abstract

Classic attachment theory has traditionally emphasized human caregiver-child relationships as the foundation for developing trust. However, children often form equally important bonds with non-living comfort objects that provide emotional security when caregivers are not around. This study fills this gap by examining whether secure and insecure attachment to childhood comfort objects predicts spiritual trust in adulthood, thereby extending classical attachment theory beyond human interaction and into transcendent domains. Using a quantitative cross-sectional design and multiple linear regression analysis, data were randomly collected from 156 college students enrolled in education programs at a state university in the Philippines. Results supported the study and hypothesis and revealed that secure attachment to comfort objects significantly predicts higher spiritual trust, whereas insecure attachment predicts lower trust ($p < .001$). These findings indicate that internalized experiences of comfort and reliability, even from non-responsive objects, become the enduring foundations for relational and spiritual trust. Secure attachment allows children to carry a sense of safety into adulthood, enabling trust in people and transcendent sources, while insecure attachment fosters fragility and uncertainty. This study contributes novelty to psychological theory by demonstrating that attachment processes operate symbolically and non-humanly, shaping resilience, and meaning throughout the lifespan. Caregivers and educators who play vital roles in the lives of children are encouraged to recognize the developmental importance of comfort objects, support secure attachment and create early experiences that foster spiritual trust and emotional stability. Future research may examine the long-term impact of non-human attachment on adult relational, psychological, and spiritual outcomes.

Keywords: Psychology, Psychospiritual development, comfort objects, spiritual trust, non-human attachment, secure and insecure attachment, Quantitative cross-sectional design, regression analysis, Philippines