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## EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTACHMENT STYLE AND THE TENDENCY FOR INTERPERSONAL VICTIMHOOD IN CROSS-CULTURAL SAMPLE

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### Abstract

The research investigates how attachment styles and tendency for Interpersonal victimhood (TIV) scales are related across different cultural groups, including Bulgarians, Asians, and Caucasians (living in USA and United Kingdom). The aim is to understand how cultural contexts affect the connection between attachment styles and interpersonal values, focusing on the need for recognition, lack of empathy, and rumination. In the Bulgarian group, they found a significant correlation between the need for recognition and an anxious attachment style, as well as a correlation between avoidance attachment style and lack of empathy. Surprisingly, the Asian group showed the opposite correlation, where lack of empathy was linked to an anxious attachment style, possibly due to the cultural emphasis on social harmony and collective values. On the other hand, the Caucasian group had a correlation between lack of empathy and anxious attachment, which could indicate the influence of individualistic cultural beliefs. Across all groups, there was a consistent correlation with rumination, suggesting that certain attachment styles and interpersonal values might universally make people more prone to rumination, which is associated with various psychological disorders. These findings highlight the complex relationship between cultural context, attachment styles, interpersonal victimhood. This suggests that cultural norms emphasizing relationships and community might influence these correlations.

**Keywords:** tendency for interpersonal victimhood (TIV), attachment style, developmental psychology, cynicism

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Tendency for interpersonal victimhood (TIV) is a relatively new concept within the realm of cognitive psychological research, which pertains to a persistent belief of being victimized within interpersonal relationships. This phenomenon is underpinned by four essential dimensions, namely moral superiority, a deficiency in empathy, obsessive thinking, and the desire for acknowledgement. This aspect is associated with feelings of entitlement and self-righteousness (Gabay et al., 2020). There are four dimensions of TIV. **Moral Elitism** can be defined as an individual's consistent belief in their moral superiority over others. **Lack**

**of empathy** in the context of CTIV does not stem from an incapacity to comprehend differing viewpoints, but rather from a refusal to engage in empathetic behavior because of perceived unfair treatment. This aspect can be particularly troublesome as it has the potential to devalue the humanity of others and exacerbate conflicts (Gabay et al., 2020). **Rumination** refers to the excessive fixation on specific instances of perceived offenses and unfair treatment, thereby perpetuating and intensifying feelings of being victimized. This form of rumination has the potential to harm one's mental well-being, as it is frequently linked to manifestations of depression and anxiety (Branscombe, Wohl, Owen, Allison, & N'gbala, 2003). The concept of **Need for Recognition** refers to the longing for others to acknowledge one's suffering. This longing can drive individuals to constantly seek validation, and if this validation is not received, it can give rise to emotions of resentment and social isolation (Gabay et al., 2020).

From the other hand, attachment theory, which was first developed by John Bowlby during the 1950s and 1960s, argues that early interactions with primary caregivers have a lasting impact on an individual's attitudes and actions in relationships throughout their lifespan. Initially centered on the bond between infants and their caregivers, this theory has been expanded to encompass adult relationships, primarily through the contributions of Mary Ainsworth and subsequent scholars. Individuals with secure attachment exhibit a sense of ease in establishing both emotional intimacy and personal autonomy. These individuals possess the ability to foster enduring and robust relationships, owing to their comfort in seeking closeness with others and being relied upon, as well as reciprocating this reliance. Individuals with an **anxious attachment** style commonly experience apprehension regarding abandonment and may display clinginess or neediness. They actively pursue elevated levels of intimacy, approval, and responsiveness from their partners and tend to develop an excessive reliance on them. Individuals with **avoidant attachment** tend to keep a certain emotional distance from their partners. They prioritize their autonomy and frequently view themselves as self-reliant, deliberately evading establishing profound emotional bonds. The emergence of **disorganized attachment** is frequently associated with caregivers who exhibit alarming, fearful, disoriented, or unresolved trauma or bereavement. These caregiver behaviors can generate a contradictory circumstance for the child, wherein the individual intended to offer shelter and stability also becomes a cause of apprehension and perplexity.

TIV has been the subject of various studies. This construct has been associated with perceptions of victimhood in both interpersonal and intergroup relationships. Individuals who exhibit higher scores on TIV dimensions demonstrate more significant prejudices in their understanding, recollection, and explanations of interpersonal offenses. They tend to remember such transgressions more vividly, perceive them as being more severe, anticipate a greater potential for harm from others, and detect more harm in situations that are ambiguous. Furthermore, they display a reduced inclination to forgive these transgressions. The authors draw a parallel between these findings and similar observations in intergroup relations concerning collective violence, positing that comparable cognitive processes are at play. (Gabay et al., 2020). Additionally, there is a correlation between the inclination towards experiencing victimhood in interpersonal relationships and the perception of racism as either structural or interpersonal. Individuals tend to readily acknowledge instances of interpersonal racism and exhibit a significant degree of competitive victimhood when confronted with perceived instances of antiwhite structural racism (Fourie & Moore-Berg, 2022). This study found that feelings of victimhood are not limited to actual victims or those who support the losing side in elections. These feelings can be found across different political ideologies and demographics. The study also showed that victimhood is separate from other psychological factors like narcissism and system justification. Additionally, the study found that political messaging can influence supporters to feel like victims, which can impact their attitudes and behavior (Armaly and Enders, 2021). Something more, the intersection of criminal accusations, victimization, and mental disorders has been explored, emphasizing the importance of correcting public misconceptions, and addressing discrimination against individuals with mental disorders (Casiano et al., 2020). Additionally, the social psychology of collective victimhood has been a subject of study, focusing on how individuals respond to collective victimhood and its implications for relations between different groups (Noor et al., 2017).

The extent of research on the relationship between attachment style and TIV remains limited. However, there exists a significant body of literature that suggests a connection between attachment and relationships. For instance, there is an established strong correlation between avoidance, self-perceived insecure attachment, and interpersonal difficulties (Li et al., 2020; Haggerty et al., 2008). Wei and Ku (2007) identified self-defeating patterns as a mediating factor between attachment and distress. Furthermore, Evraire et al. (2014) demonstrated a positive association between attachment anxiety and excessive reassurance seeking. It is evident that there exists a distinct correlation between attachment style and the inclination towards interpersonal victimhood. Research has indicated that individuals with anxious attachment styles exhibit heightened negative emotional states, excessive worrying, and sensitivity towards interpersonal interactions, which may contribute to feelings of paranoia and a propensity for becoming a victim in interpersonal situations (Lavin et al., 2019). Furthermore, it has been observed that specific interpersonal difficulties serve

as mediators in the association between attachment style and behaviors related to suicide, thereby suggesting a connection between attachment styles and susceptibility to adverse interpersonal encounters (Stepp et al., 2008). Moreover, there is compelling evidence to suggest that insecure attachment styles are positively linked to interpersonal problems, thus implying a possible relationship between attachment insecurity and the inclination towards interpersonal victimhood (Li et al., 2020). Furthermore, existing literature reveals that attachment styles play a significant role in shaping individuals' perceptions of social support. Specifically, individuals with secure attachment styles tend to exhibit adaptive regulation of negative affect and possess a positive self-image, thereby potentially fostering resilience in the face of mental health problems, including psychosis (Korver-Nieberg et al., 2015). Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that attachment styles may moderate the association between alexithymia and interpersonal problems, underscoring the impact of attachment styles on individuals' interpersonal experiences (Besharat & Shahidi, 2013). Moreover, studies have shown that attachment styles are linked to self-disclosure, a crucial factor in determining the outcomes of interpersonal relationships, thus highlighting the potential influence of attachment styles on individuals' interactions with others (Mikulincer & Nachshon, 1991). In conclusion, the evidence extracted from the chosen sources corroborates the link between attachment style and the inclination towards interpersonal victimhood. The presence of anxious and insecure attachment styles consistently corresponds with heightened levels of negative emotions, anxiety, and difficulties in interpersonal relationships. These factors can potentially render individuals more susceptible to negative interpersonal encounters and foster a proclivity for becoming victims in such scenarios. While some studies have not been able to establish a direct causal relationship between attachment and specific psychological outcomes, the collective evidence indicates that attachment significantly influences interpersonal dynamics and psychological adaptation, potentially impacting TIV. While these studies have not been able to establish a direct causal relationship between attachment and specific psychological outcomes, the collective evidence indicates that attachment significantly influences interpersonal dynamics and psychological adaptation, potentially impacting TIV. In other words, the direct relationship between interpersonal victimization and attachment has not been explored in the fields of developmental and cognitive psychology. This raises the possibility that the present study could add to the existing knowledge with the premise of another possible perception about interpersonal relationships, which is related to formed attachment.

## **2. METHOD**

The research was conducted online in the period March-May 2023. Two questionnaires were used adult attachment questionnaire (AAQ) (Simpson, J. A., Rholes, S. W., & Phillips, D., 1996) and Tendency for interpersonal victimhood (TIV) Scale (Gabay, R., Hameiri, B., Rubel-Lifschitz, T., & Nadler, A., 2020). A SurveyMonkey platform was used as the distribution through a sponsored post on social networks with controlled access to individuals of different age groups, different genders, different ethnicities in Bulgaria, USA, United Kingdom, and China. For Bulgarians the questionnaires were translated into Bulgarian after a professional, double translation procedure was used. A weakness of the study is that the questionnaire for the Asian sample was also administered in English, thus only including English-speaking Asians. The reliability of the scales for each population has been tested separately and is high.

The hypothesis that guided the study was that a relationship would be found between the attachment scales and the TIV scale.

The second hypothesis which leads the research is that Bulgarians will be with higher rates for scales in TIV. The expectation is led because of the phenomena of self-discrimination. Self-discrimination in social psychological aspect is the tendency to overestimate personal qualities and underestimate the qualities of others which are part from your ethnicity. This leads to passivity towards the group and the perception that others are hostile towards you. A feature typical of Bulgarians (Manolov, 2019).

After receiving the results on the attachment scale, the subjects were divided into four categories according to the type of attachment. The distribution is as follows:

- Anxious style – anxiety scale +2SD with avoidance scale within the mean.
- Avoidant style - Avoidance scale +2SD on anxiety scale within the mean.
- Disorganized style - avoidance scale and anxiety scale +2SD.
- Secure Style – Avoidance and Anxiety scales within the mean +/- 2SD.

The questionnaires reach a much larger number of Bulgarians, which is attributed to the nationality of the researcher.

There's a normal distribution of three samples.

### 3. RESULTS

The sample distribution is presented in table 1.

Table 1: sample distribution

		Ethnicity			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Asian	70	17.9	17.9	17.9
	Caucasian	116	29.6	29.7	47.6
	Bulgarian	205	52.4	52.4	100.0
	Total	391	100.0	100.0	

The sample consists of 17.9% of respondents who indicated belonging to an Asian ethnicity, 29.6% of persons who indicated Caucasian and 52.4% of persons who indicated that they are Bulgarian.

Table two presents the Cronbach's alpha coefficients regarding the reliability of the scales. All scales have good reliability.

Table 2: Reliability of scales

	Reliability Statistics		
	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Need for recognition	0.858	0.859	6
Moral elitism	0.800	0.797	6
Lack of empathy	0.793	0.793	6
Rumination	0.864	0.864	4
Anxiety	0.699	0.699	9
Avoidance	0.769	0.769	8

ANOVA Analysis was performed to track differences in relation to ethnicity. Results are presented at table 3 and figure 1.

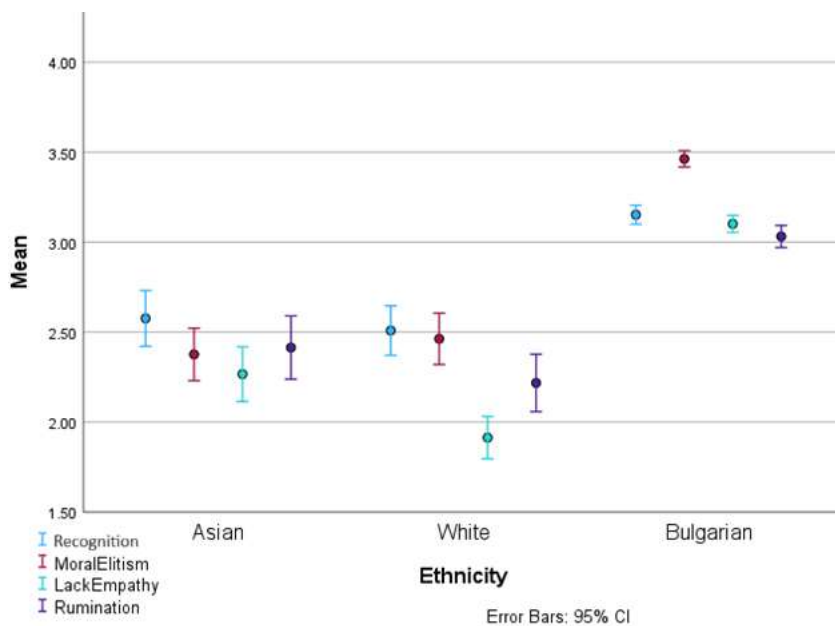
Table 3: ANOVA analysis to compare ethnicities and TIV scales.

**Multiple Comparisons**

LSD

Dependent Variable			Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Need for recognition	Bulgarian	Asian	.57595*	0.13866	0.000	0.3040	0.8479
		Caucasian	.64352*	0.10896	0.000	0.4298	0.8572
Moral Elitism	Bulgarian	Asian	1.08617*	0.12084	0.000	0.8492	1.3232
		Caucasian	.99972*	0.09496	0.000	0.8135	1.1859
Lack of Empathy	Bulgarian	Asian	.83452*	0.12470	0.000	0.5900	1.0791
		Caucasian	1.18740*	0.09799	0.000	0.9952	1.3796
Rumination	Bulgarian	Asian	.61710*	0.16132	0.000	0.3007	0.9335
		Caucasian	.81371*	0.12677	0.000	0.5651	1.0623

Figure 1: Cross-cultural distribution of TIV scales:



Among the Bulgarians, there is a statistically significant difference on all scales. The values of moral elitism and lack of empathy differ to the greatest extent. There are no statistically significant differences in scales between Asians and Caucasian. The results confirm the hypothesis of higher values regarding the TIV scales

in Bulgarians.

The same procedure was used in the attachment questionnaire and the results are presented in table 4.

Table 4: ANOVA analysis of ethnicities and attachment scales

**Multiple Comparisons**

LSD

Dependent Variable			Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Anxiety	Bulgarian	Asian	-.52842*	0.08928	0.000	-0.7035	-0.3533
		Caucasian	-.53101*	0.07014	0.000	-0.6686	-0.3935
Avoidance	Bulgarian	Asian	.20472*	0.09568	0.033	0.0171	0.3924
		Caucasian	.20855*	0.07517	0.006	0.0611	0.3560

As can be seen from the analysis, on the anxiety scale, there are higher scores for Asians and Caucasian respondents. On the avoidance scale, there is a statistically significant difference between Bulgarians and Caucasian, with avoidance being higher in the Bulgarian sample. The difference between Bulgarian and Asian respondents is not with statistical significance.

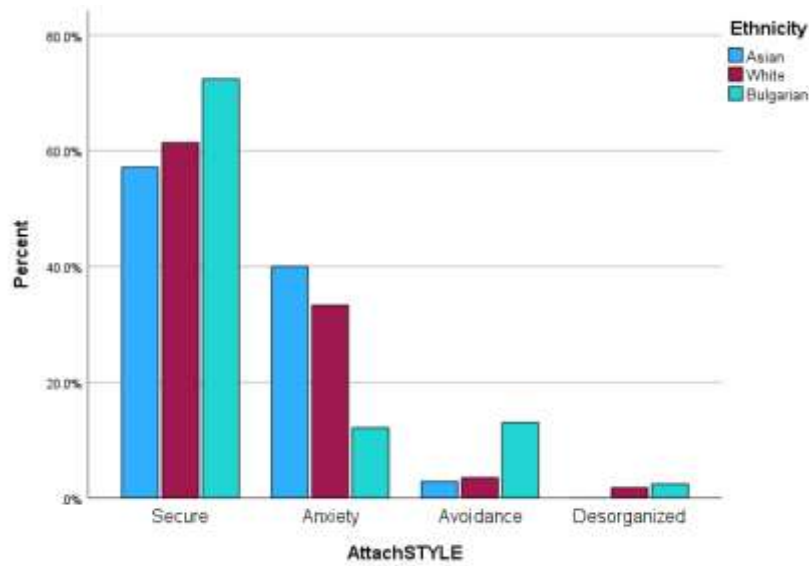
The concrete attachment style and cross-cultural differences are presented in table 5 and figure 2.

Table 5: Cross-table with different attachment styles across cultures.

**Ethnicity \* Attach STYLE Crosstabulation**

			AttachSTYLE				Total
			Secure	Anxiety	Avoidance	Desorganized	
Ethnicity	Asian	Count	40	28	2	0	70
		% within Ethnicity	57.1%	40.0%	2.9%	0.0%	100.0%
	Caucasian	Count	70	38	4	2	114
		% within Ethnicity	61.4%	33.3%	3.5%	1.8%	100.0%
	Bulgarian	Count	1394	234	251	47	1926
		% within Ethnicity	72.4%	12.1%	13.0%	2.4%	100.0%
Total		Count	1504	300	257	49	2110
		% within Ethnicity	71.3%	14.2%	12.2%	2.3%	100.0%

Figure 2: Distribution of attachment styles:



Evidently, the Bulgarians have a secure attachment to the highest degree. Lowest value of secure attachment in Asians. On the other hand, they have the highest degree of anxiety.

Avoidant, on the other hand, is most typical among Bulgarians and lower among others. Anglo-Saxons and Bulgarians form the disorganized attachment. Avoidant attachment was expected because of self-discrimination and the higher values in cynicism in Bulgarian sample which Manolov (2023) presents.

The high value of secure attachment among Bulgarians can be explained from the point of view of slower processes of metamorphosis in single-parent families, binuclear families, which are more typical of Western societies.

Given the insufficiently large sample to examine gender and age characteristics, a partial correlation was made, limiting the effects of gender and age. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Partial correlation coefficients between TIV and Attachment scales

				Correlations			
Ethnicity				Recognition	MoralElitism	LackEmpathy	Rumination
Asian	Age & Sex	Anxiety	Correlation	0.190	-0.146	0.193	0.285
			Sig.(2-tailed)	0.121	0.235	0.114	0.019
			df	66	66	66	66
		Avoidance	Correlation	0.131	0.206	0.196	0.297
			Sig. (2-tailed)	0.285	0.092	0.109	0.014
			df	66	66	66	66
Caucasian	Age	Anxiety	Correlation	0.124	0.320	0.351	0.355

	& Sex		Sig.(2-tailed)	0.189	0.001	0.000	0.000
			df	112	112	112	112
		Avoidance	Correlation	0.225	0.268	0.221	0.381
			Sig. (2-tailed)	0.016	0.004	0.018	0.000
			df	112	112	112	112
Bulgarian	Age & Sex	Anxiety	Correlation	0.342	0.336	0.265	0.359
			Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
			df	1792	1792	1792	1792
		Avoidance	Correlation	0.229	0.256	0.299	0.308
			Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
			df	1792	1792	1792	1792

An interesting result is that there is no relationship between attachment and TIV scales in Asians. The inverse correlation between anxiety and moral elitism is even striking. The likely reason for this is a collectivist society in which moral elitism is not a value pursuit, but rather the well-being of the group, which does not imply high values of moral elitism. Rumination in all three ethnicities was most strongly correlated with both scales of attachment (in Asians the correlation was not statistically significant). Lack of empathy was more strongly associated with scale anxiety in Caucasians. The need for recognition, on the other hand, is typical for Bulgarians, which is not the case for other ethnic groups (for both attachment scales, the results are statistically significant). Lack of empathy is associated with the avoidant attachment scale in Bulgarians.

The last analysis is related to type attachment and scales in TIV about three ethnicity groups. The results were made with ANOVA analysis, and they are presented in table 7.

Table 7: ANOVA Analysis for type attachment and TIV Scales.

Multiple Comparisons								
LSD								
Ethnicity				Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Asian	Recognition	Anxiety	Secure	.39524	0.14561	0.008	0.1046	0.6859
			Avoidance	1.51190	0.43251	0.001	0.6486	2.3752
	Rumination	Anxiety	Secure	-1.11667	0.42817	0.011	-1.9713	-0.2620
			Avoidance	.43929	0.16540	0.010	0.1091	0.7694
		Avoidance	Secure	1.71429	0.49131	0.001	0.7336	2.6949
			Avoidance	-1.27500	0.48637	0.011	-2.2458	-0.3042
Caucasian	Lack Empathy	Secure	Anxiety	-.35940	0.12675	0.005	-0.6106	-0.1082



	Rumination	Secure	Anxiety	-.48214*	0.17062	0.006	-0.8203	-0.1440
Bulgarian	Recognition	Secure	Anxiety	-.72219*	0.08338	0.000	-0.8857	-0.5587
			Avoidance	-.53681*	0.08273	0.000	-0.6991	-0.3746
			Disorganized	-.88334*	0.17794	0.000	-1.2323	-0.5344
	Moral Elitism	Secure	Anxiety	-.63636*	0.07241	0.000	-0.7784	-0.4943
			Avoidance	-.47618*	0.07184	0.000	-0.6171	-0.3353
			Disorganized	-.78451*	0.15452	0.000	-1.0876	-0.4814
	Lack Empathy	Secure	Anxiety	-.48519*	0.07597	0.000	-0.6342	-0.3362
			Avoidance	-.59159*	0.07538	0.000	-0.7394	-0.4437
			Disorganized	-.54537*	0.16213	0.001	-0.8634	-0.2274
	Rumination	Secure	Anxiety	-.92070*	0.09580	0.000	-1.1086	-0.7328
			Avoidance	-.73810*	0.09505	0.000	-0.9245	-0.5517
			Disorganized	-1.49395*	0.20445	0.000	-1.8949	-1.0930
		Disorganized	Anxiety	.57325*	0.21993	0.009	0.1419	1.0046
			Avoidance	.75584*	0.21961	0.001	0.3251	1.1866

Apparently, in Asians, there was a statistically significant difference between anxious and avoidant attachment on the need for recognition scale, the need for recognition being more important in the anxious attachment style. The need for recognition is also more necessary in the secure attachment style. The result is logical from the point of view of the individual's withdrawal from others, which is typical of avoidant attachment. In rumination, values follow the same logic. In Caucasians, anxiety again showed a relationship with lack of empathy, with it, along with rumination, being higher in anxious attachment.

Bulgarians have a higher value on all scales for insecure attachment styles. As with disorganized attachment, the values are highest.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

Interpersonal values can exert considerable influence on an individual's perception (TIV Scales), which are related to attachment style and conduct within relationships. These influences of attachment styles are not only contingent upon interpersonal values but are also influenced by cultural and environmental factors. Both attachment styles and interpersonal values are subject to the influence of larger cultural and environmental aspects. The prevailing cultural norms regarding relationships and the dichotomy between individualism and collectivism can significantly mold an individual's attachment style and their interpersonal values. The progression of attachment styles and interpersonal values is a gradual process, influenced by an individual's personal encounters and connections. Initial experiences with caregivers hold great significance in molding attachment styles, which subsequently impact the development of interpersonal values. To conclude, the correlation between attachment styles and the TIV should be intricate and reciprocal. Comprehending this dynamic is essential in domains such as developmental and social psychology, as it offers insights into how early relational experiences shape an individual's interpersonal value system. This understanding holds relevance for therapeutic approaches, as it aids in addressing concerns related to attachment and interpersonal relationships.

The data shows that the Bulgarians exhibit the highest scores on all TIV scales, while there is no significant difference between the other two ethnic groups. The predominant trait among Bulgarians is moral elitism, which is linked to their cultural inclination towards moral perfectionism. However, this form of moral superiority is not characterized by sublime morality, but rather by a sense of pettiness that serves to overvalue oneself within the group and potentially reflects the individualistic dynamics of asserting one's distinctiveness from others. Notably, moral standards are applied differently to oneself compared to others, indicating a tendency towards self-discrimination (Dobrev, D., Manolov, M., 2021). Given that attachment is expected to be relatively stable within the population, there is minimal variation across ethnicities. The anxiety scale shows slightly lower values for Bulgarians, which can be attributed to their frugal, cautious

nature and aversion to emotional experiences. Bulgarians strive to comprehend and anticipate every surprise, adopting a practical approach that does not hinder their willingness to take risks. This explains the slightly higher scores on the avoidance scale for Bulgarians. Conversely, Asians exhibit considerably higher scores in the avoidant attachment style and lower prevalence in the secure attachment domain. Caucasians also display higher scores in the anxious attachment style, while both Asians and Caucasians have lower levels of avoidant attachment style.

Regarding the correlations observed with ethnicity, the results show an interesting relationship. There is no relationship between attachment and TIV scales in Asians. The inverse correlation between anxiety and moral elitism is important. The likely reason for this is a collectivist society in which moral elitism is not a value pursuit, but rather the well-being of the group, which does not imply high values of moral elitism. Rumination in all three ethnicities was most strongly correlated with both scales of attachment (in Asians the correlation was not statistically significant). Lack of empathy was more strongly associated with scale anxiety in Caucasians. The need for recognition, on the other hand, is typical for Bulgarians, which is not the case for other ethnic groups (for both attachment scales, the results are statistically significant). Lack of empathy is associated with the avoidant attachment scale in Bulgarians. Individuals who exhibit high levels of attachment anxiety often experience a preoccupation with their own fears and insecurities. As a result, their ability to effectively acknowledge and respond to the emotional states of others may be hindered. Their preoccupation with concerns about the relationship can create difficulties in attending to their partner's needs and emotions. Individuals with high attachment anxiety experience an exaggerated activation of their attachment system, resulting in intensified emotional reactions and challenges in emotional regulation. This excessive activation can impede the cognitive processes necessary for empathy, as the individual may become overwhelmed by their own emotional responses. From a developmental perspective, individuals who were raised by inconsistent or unresponsive caregivers may not have had sufficient opportunities to effectively learn and imitate empathic behavior. Consequently, they may encounter challenges in comprehending and connecting with the emotions of others in their later years. Individuals with attachment anxiety often experience a heightened level of anxiety, which in turn leads to a greater focus on oneself. This heightened self-focus can pose difficulties in accurately perceiving and appropriately responding to the emotional states of others, consequently resulting in a perceived deficiency in empathy. Within interpersonal relationships, individuals with a propensity for high attachment anxiety frequently display behaviors characterized by neediness or excessive demands, which can impede the smooth flow of interactions and hinder empathetic exchanges. Consequently, the partner of an anxiously attached individual may interpret this behavior as a deficiency in empathy, although it primarily stems from the individual's inherent challenges in effectively regulating their own emotional state. From the other hand need of recognition which is related with Bulgarians anxiety scale can be explained with that, anxiety refers to an individual's tendency to feel insecure and fearful in close relationships, often resulting from a lack of trust and a constant need for reassurance. Seeking validation, on the other hand, involves the persistent pursuit of external approval and recognition to alleviate one's insecurities and validate one's self-worth. Individuals who exhibit high levels of attachment anxiety tend to frequently seek reassurance and validation within their relationships. This inclination is in accordance with a strong desire for acknowledgement, as they heavily rely on external validation to establish a sense of security within their relationships. Consequently, this attachment anxiety significantly influences their interpersonal behaviors. The correlation between attachment anxiety and a strong desire for acknowledgment can result in individuals engaging in behaviors that are focused on either securing or attaining recognition, including but not limited to seeking approval, excessively accommodating others, or displaying elevated sensitivity towards criticism. This reciprocal relationship between anxiety and the need for recognition creates a feedback loop. The requirement for acknowledgment may heighten the anxiety of attachment if the person perceives that their requirement is not being sufficiently fulfilled. On the other hand, elevated levels of attachment anxiety can amplify the reliance on external validation and acknowledgment. Cultural environment influence attachment styles and the significance attributed to acknowledgment. Cynicism is typical of Bulgarian culture. This, in turn, leads to the denial of the other and his underestimation. This in turn leads to the individual need for recognition since the individual is ultimately another to the other. Attachment anxiety and the desire for acknowledgement have the potential to impact an individual's perception of themselves and their level of self-esteem. Those with elevated levels of attachment anxiety may heavily rely on external validation and the opinions of others to determine their own self-worth, thereby heightening their need for recognition. But scale levels are high because of passivity and lack of recognition in social environments. The other interesting result about Bulgarians is the relation between lack empathy with avoidance in Bulgarians can be explained with the association between avoidant attachment and a deficiency in empathy stems from the protective tactics employed by individuals with avoidant attachment to manage their relationships and emotions. These tactics often involve maintaining emotional distance, which can hinder the capacity to empathize with others. The same explanation can be used in the explanation of Rumination, which is part of both avoidance and anxiety scales.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The research emphasizes an intricate web of links among attachment styles, predisposition for interpersonal values, and cultural backgrounds within Bulgarian, Asian, and Caucasian populations. This emphasizes the significance of taking cultural context into account when comprehending psychological processes.

An inverse relationship was observed between the lack of empathy and anxious attachment style in the Asian group. This can be attributed to the cultural emphasis on collective values and social harmony in Asian societies, where individuals with anxious attachment styles may suppress empathy to avoid conflicts and maintain group cohesion.

The Bulgarian group exhibited a significant correlation between the need for recognition and an anxious attachment style, indicating a desire for approval and validation. Additionally, there was a correlation between avoidance attachment style and a lack of empathy, suggesting emotional distancing and reduced empathetic responses, possibly influenced by cultural norms of self-reliance and emotional restraint.

In the Caucasian group, a correlation was found between the lack of empathy and anxiety in attachment styles. This reflects the Western cultural norms that prioritize individualism and personal achievement, potentially causing a conflict between personal anxieties and the ability to engage empathetically with others.

A notable finding across all groups was the correlation between all scales and rumination. This suggests a universal psychological process in which individuals with certain attachment styles and interpersonal values are more prone to rumination, regardless of their cultural background. The findings of this study have important implications for the field of psychology, particularly in relation to attachment theory and interpersonal values in different cultural settings.

In summary, this research enhances our comprehension of the interplay between cultural elements and psychological mechanisms, specifically in relation to attachment styles and interpersonal values. It underscores the breadth and intricacy encompassed within these areas, advocating for a psychological research and practice approach that accounts for cultural nuances.

These findings underscore the importance of incorporating cultural factors into psychological research and therapeutic approaches. The conclusion highlights the necessity of conducting additional research to delve deeper into these connections and comprehend their consequences for the field of cross-cultural psychology and therapeutic interventions.

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