

Attachment Style and Disordered Eating among Young Adults

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Background

- The ability to form attachments in close relationships influences wellness
- Previous research indicates higher anxious and avoidant attachment is associated with unhealthy eating
- The current study examined whether disordered eating behaviors among young adults relates to avoidant and anxious attachment

Method

Participants

- 574 young adults ($M_{age} = 21.6$; 69% women)
- 59% identified as Non-Hispanic White, 18% identified as Non-Hispanic Black, and 9% identified as Latinx

Procedure

- Participants were recruited from a Mid-South university and Amazon Mechanical Turk
- Participants completed questionnaires using Qualtrics

Measures

Experiences in Close Relationships - Revised Questionnaire

- Assessed anxious and avoidant adult attachment styles

Eating Disorders Examination Questionnaire (EDE-Q)

- Assessed disordered eating behaviors such as restraint, eating concern, shape concern, and weight concern

Data Analysis

- Two multiple linear regression analyses were used to examine associations between disordered eating behaviors (i.e. restraint, eating concern, shape concern, and weight concern) and anxious and avoidant attachment styles

Results

- The first model was significant, $F(4, 530) = 24.81$; $p < .001$, $Adj R^2 = 15\%$, with lower restraint ($\beta = -.17, p < .01$), higher eating concern ($\beta = .24, p < .001$), and more shape concern ($\beta = .36, t(3) = 3.19, p < .01$) associated with anxious attachment style
- The second model was significant, $F(4, 541) = 7.49$; $p < .001$, $Adj R^2 = 5\%$ with higher eating concern ($\beta = .26, t(3) = 4.29, p < .001$), associated with avoidant attachment style

Conclusions

- Findings suggest varying aspects of disordered eating behaviors are associated with avoidant and anxious attachment styles
- Prevention programs should consider targeting anxious and avoidant attachment styles in the development of treatments for disordered eating

Varying aspects of disordered eating behaviors are associated with avoidant and anxious attachment styles

Table 1: Model 1 Anxious Attachment Style

Predictors	β	B	Std. Err	t value	p value
Intercept		2.487	.097	25.772	.000
Restraint	-.171	-.174	.060	-2.893	.004
Eating Concern	.243	.341	.083	4.118	$p < .001$
Shape Concern	.357	.318	.100	3.189	.002
Weight Concern	-.054	-.051	.15	-.487	.626

Figure 1: Strength of the subscales on Anxious Attachment Style

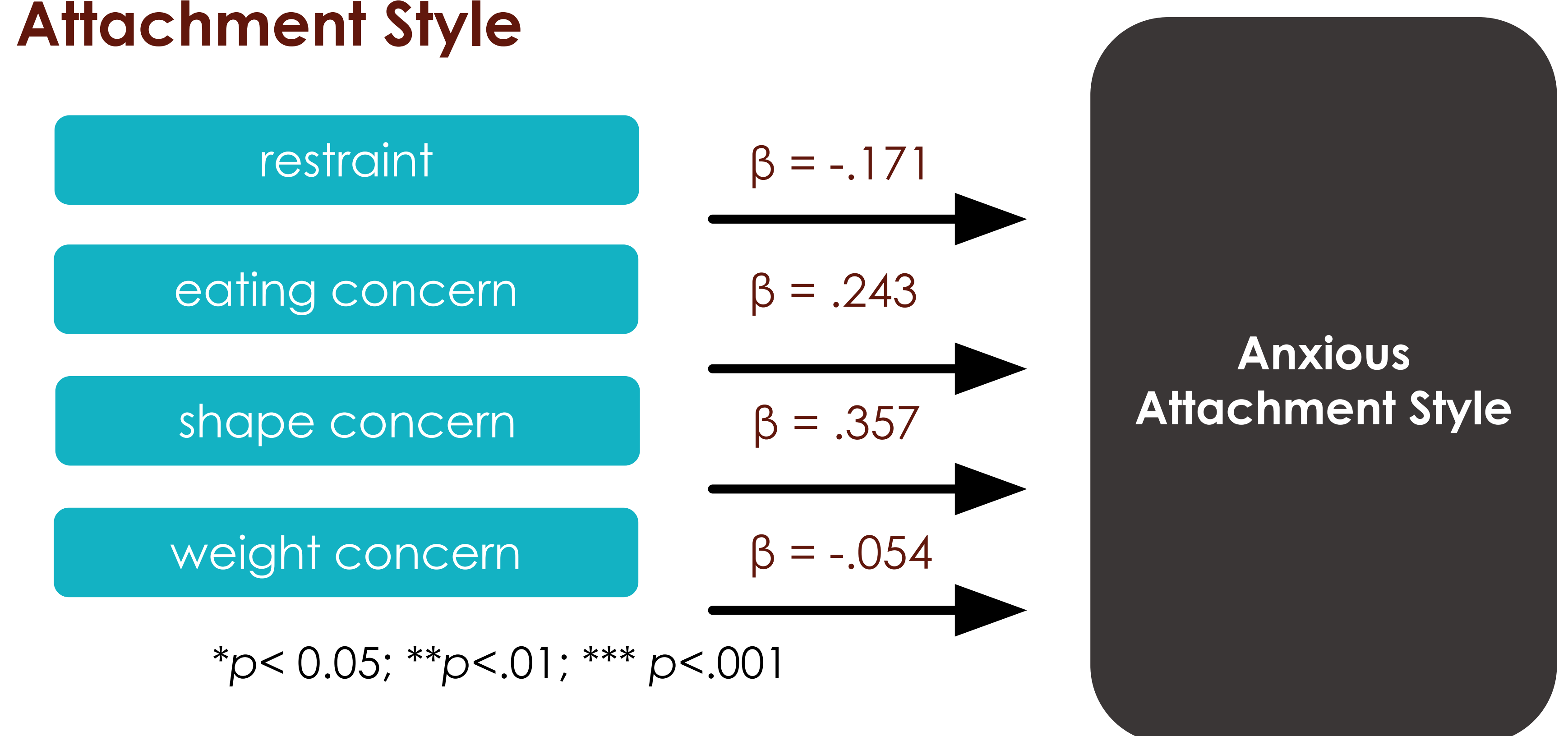
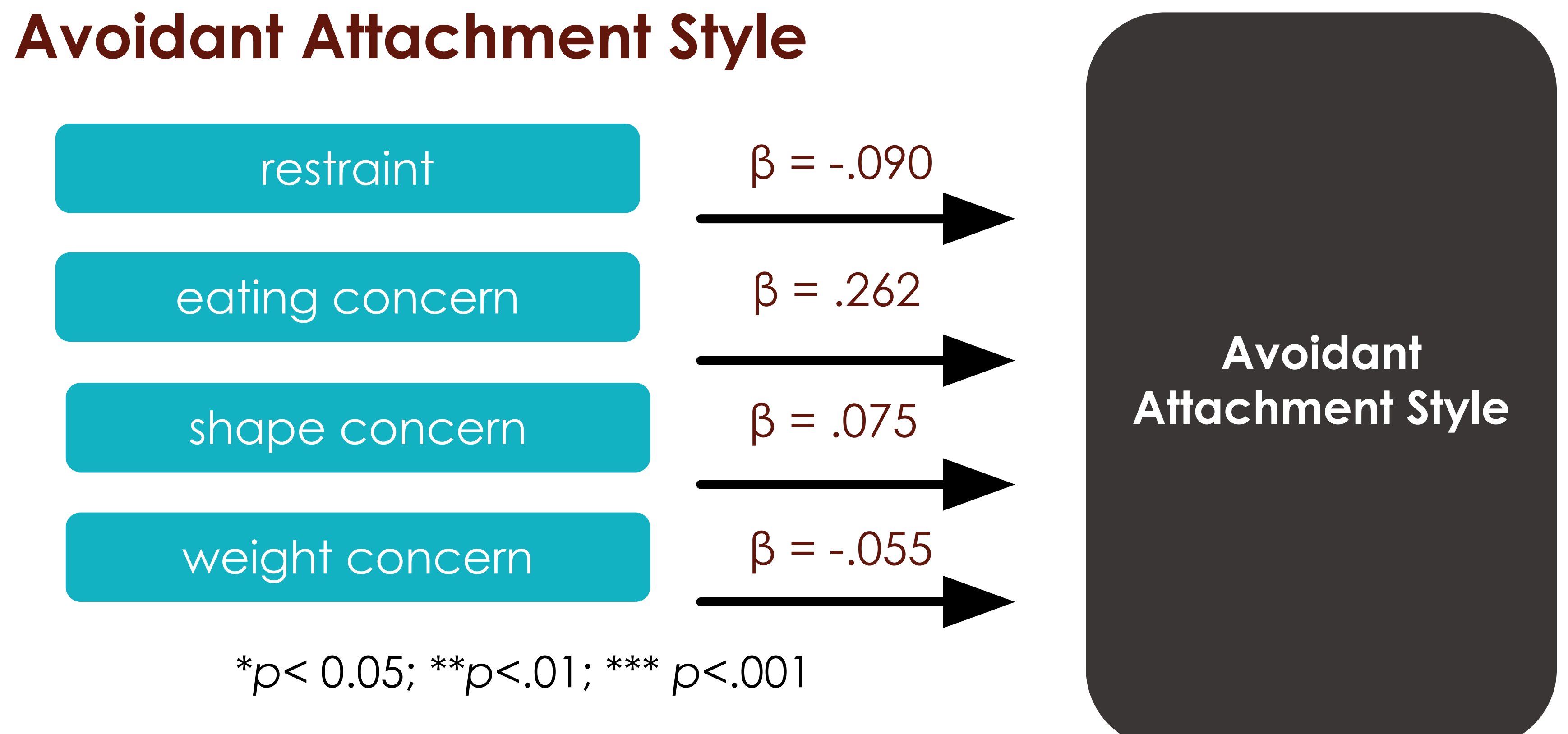


Table 2: Model 2 Avoidant Attachment Style

Predictors	β	B	Std. Err	t value	p value
Intercept		2.886	.088	32.746	.000
Restraint	-.090	-.078	.053	-1.471	.142
Eating Concern	.262	.324	.076	4.287	$p < .001$
Shape Concern	.075	.059	.091	.647	.518
Weight Concern	-.055	-.045	.096	-.466	.641

Figure 2: Strength of the subscales on Avoidant Attachment Style



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