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THE BDSM COMMUNITY

Childhood Maltreatment and Parental Attachment in the BDSM Community

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Abstract:

The present research is designed in an attempt to address sexual activities engaged in during adulthood regarding 4 categories of childhood maltreatment (CM) including emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect (physical and emotional) along with parental attachment styles. The main focus of the study is to establish a relationship between the aforementioned, subtypes of maltreatment and attachment styles, and BDSM/Sadomasochistic activities. Building on a demographic questionnaire, the Adverse Childhood Experiences International Questionnaire (ACE-IQ), the Adult Scale of Parental Attachment- Short Form (ASPA-SF), and the Sadomasochism Checklist (SMCL), 113 young adults and adults from the Lebanese/Syrian BDSM community were asked anonymously and voluntarily to participate in the study. Participants were provided with a Microsoft form link to the research survey in which they were subjected to detailed and thorough informed consent before the beginning of the survey. This study discovered a connection between BDSM behaviors and adverse traumatic events, which were largely determined by childhood sexual abuse and emotional deprivation. It was as well found that individuals who engage in submissive conduct are more likely to have vulnerable insecure attachment styles.

Keywords: *childhood maltreatment, BDSM, sadomasochism, attachment styles*

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Introduction:

BDSM is a comprehensive acronym of bondage and discipline, dominance and submission, sadism and masochism that attempts to describe consensual physical, psychological, and sexual practices through which power dynamics are established (Connolly, 2006; Neef et al., 2019; Botta et al., 2019). During such practices, partners tend to enforce physical constraints, disciplines, responsibilities and implement or engage in fantasies of supremacy and control. Consenting partners enjoy inducing or feeling extreme physical sensations (Brink, Coppens, Huys & Morrens, 2020). Distinct positions and roles are normally identified. These include a dominant individual who exerts power over their partner, a submissive partner who surrenders control to a dominant, and/ or a switch conveying the likelihood to be versatile performing as dominant and submissive following different scenes or with diverse acquaintances (Bezreh, Weinberg, & Edgar, 2012; Wismeijer & Assen, 2013; Botta et al., 2019). Typically, recognized roles are consistent over time resembling one's personality. As a better illustration, Herbert & Weaver (2014) claimed that as opposed to submissiveness, domination is correlated with a need to rule, neuroticism, and self-esteem.

BDSM often brings up significant controversy (Bezreh, Weinberg, & Edgar, 2012; Weierstall et al., 2016; Botta et al., 2019) due to it being misconceived as strictly painful resembling a broad array of sexual offenses (Beres, 2007; Wismeijer & Assen, 2013). This evident deviance stems from the early psychoanalytic work of Freud (1938, 1953), and Krafft-Ebing (1965) who described sadomasochism as a predictor of underlying psychopathology. Precisely, according to Freud, sadism resembles a self-sufficient and inflated violent aspect of an individual's sexual impulse that is manifested by pure displacement. Masochism, he concluded, was merely a continuation of sadism directed at one's being, of which the last-mentioned initially assumed the

position of the sexual object (Freud,1938 p. 569-570). Likewise, Kraft-Ebing often described masochism as an odd manifestation of the paranormal sexual life in which the person afflicted is dominated by the notion of being entirely and unquestioningly subject to the will of the other involved (Krafft-Ebing,1965).

Within the same context, the association between BDSM and pathology can be as well tracked back to the previous representation of sexual sadism and sexual masochism as paraphilic disorders in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 1952, 1968, 1980, 1987). Classifying the aforementioned as diagnoses have been to a certain extent significant if we are to consider their clinical predominance especially among the criminal population. In other words, having such diagnoses paves the way towards precise treatment plans and potential crime elimination (Krueger 2009, 2010). Despite that, sexual sadism and sexual masochism diagnoses have been criticized for pathologizing and demeaning those who participate in non-traditional sexual activities (Wright, 2006). This in return has urged towards the establishment of a more systematic approach differentiating between possible pathological sadism and masochism and non-perverted sexuality (Krueger 2009, 2010). After multiple investigations on the importance of modifying the classification (Krueger, 2009, 2010), the latest edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) was altered to distinguish between deviant and pathological sexual behavior. The previously used terms under the paraphilic disorders were changed into sexual sadism disorder and sexual masochism disorder. As such, individuals with a sadomasochistic interest are only diagnosed with a paraphilic disorder if an individual is

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distressed or causes others' psychological distress by their desires (DSM-5, 2013). Following that, a crucial point was made emphasizing the possible normality of diverse BDSM activities.

Multiple studies on consensual BDSM offer diverse information as to the nature of BDSM/Sadomasochistic tendencies (Nordling, Sandnabba & Santtila, 2000; Connolly, 2006; Coppen et al., 2019; Neef et al., 2019; Benhamou, 2020). The intriguing violent nature of BDSM has driven some researchers to investigate its relationship with childhood maltreatment. To put it differently, considering the definition of childhood maltreatment (CM) as “an act of commission (abuse) or omission (neglect) by a parent or a caregiver that results in harm, potential for harm, or threat of harm to a child” (Leeb, 2008; Gilbert et al., 2009), several studies have been conducted investigating its commonality with BDSM. Scholars tend to define BDSM desires as dysfunctional coping strategies arising from adverse childhood experiences. This notion can be better explained in terms of Freud's concept of “repetition compulsion” (Freud, 1905). In simpler terminologies, a previously abused child tends to fall into a vicious repetitive cycle of abuse demonstrated by placing oneself or others in comparable circumstances.

A relationship between early childhood abuse and masochistic activities has been established in a study conducted by Békés, Perry, & Robertson (2017). Precisely, such a relationship was further emphasized by Frias et al. (2017) who demonstrated that submissive women diagnosed with borderline personality disorder had prominent childhood sexual abuse proportions. This has been in line with earlier research whereby considerable rates of self-reported sexual abuse were prevalent among BDSM club members with sexually abused women having more submission fantasies in comparison with the general population (Briere, Smiljanich, & Henschel, 1994; Nordling, Sandnabba & Santtila, 2000). Such drawn conclusions can be thoroughly explained by

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the fact that previously abused individuals are more likely to develop pronounced helplessness and apprehension towards uncontrollable punishment and aggression (Reich, 1933; Loewenstein, 1957; Novick & Novick, 2004; Békés, Perry, & Robertson, 2017). Thus, upon reiterating prior physical and sexual traumas, masochists endeavor to escape their stated vulnerabilities by voluntarily embracing in gentler and controllable sufferings (Gabbard, 2012). Similarly, in terms of sadism, previously abused sadists tend to mirror behavior that they were subjected to onto others (Levy, 2000) in an attempt to gain control over prior trauma (Lindemann, 2011). Some research, however, speculated contradictory results refuting a substantial relationship between childhood sexual abuse and adults' engagement in BDSM (Richters et al., 2008). BDSM, according to Brink, Copen, Huys & Morrens (2020), was rather related to physical abuse during adulthood. Despite all that have been mentioned, a general number of research restricted their samples to solely include women abuse victims (Frias et al. 2017) creating in return a problematic selection bias. It is also essential to note that a minimal amount of research thoroughly differentiated between subcategories of childhood maltreatment as its relationship with BDSM requires further amplification.

Early dynamics of attachment styles were found as a significant predictor in terms of one's interpersonal and sexual interactions (Wismeijer & Assen, 2013). Specifically, parental attachment style which is a prominent factor activated in early life stages by parents 'guardians' behavior (Bowlby, 1990) may impact the engagement in BDSM activities. Bowlby often assumed that such an attachment mechanism is initially developed as children establish close ties with their guardians, especially in dangerous threatening circumstances. The latter was later refined by Ainsworth et al. (1978) who considered the attachment system to be an ongoing

process providing children with perceived security and laying out the ground for exploration. In a simpler manner, the extent to which a child has confidence in their attachment figures predicts the quality and consistency of early parental attachment styles (Collins, 1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Literature tends to acknowledge childhood-related attachment mechanisms with four main categories: Secure, Anxious, Avoidant, and Disorganized (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Other recent studies suggested an associated yet more adult's oriented parental attachment encompassing their visual recollection of childhood relationships with parental figures. It included a 5- category model consisting of the following branches: Safe, Dependent, Parentified, Fearful, and Distant (Michael & Snow, 2005).

Early research shows that secure attachment is highly correlated with pleasurable sexual behavior (Hazan et al., 1994) with a high probability of allowing full control of partner during sexual intercourse (Impett, Gordon, & Strachman, 2008). Along these lines, individuals with an avoidant attachment style were more likely to engage in casual sex in comparison with those with an anxious attachment style adopting more inappropriate yet consensual sexual patterns (Gentzler & Kerns, 2004). In terms of BDSM, while Wismeijer & Assen (2013) disapproved of any attribution between BDSM and unhealthy attachment styles, Botta et al. (2017) identified submissive individuals as having attachment anxiety. This was further validated in a study conducted by Brink, Coppen, Huys & Morrens (2020) that emphasized the association between anxious-avoidant attachment styles and submissiveness. The aforementioned studies, however, offer opposing investigations regarding dominancy, with one demonstrating its association with attachment avoidance (Botta et al., 2017) and another with secure attachment (Brink, Coppen, Huys & Morrens, 2020). Although these pieces of literature are attempting to lay the groundwork to discovering a new realm of BDSM, most attempted to recruit participants from specifically

known BDSM sets that may not adequately represent the general population (Neef et al., 2019). Indeed, the aforementioned has subjected data and results to generalization and selection bias.

Finally, childhood maltreatment has the potential to affect one's attachment styles. Childhood maltreatment within its 4 categories (physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect) results in developing insecure attachment (Mickelson, Kessler & Shaver, 1997; Tyler et al., 2006; Riggs, 2010; Sloman & Taylor, 2015). Delving into specifics, in a study conducted by Erozkan (2016), it has been found to yield fearful, preoccupied, and dismissing attachment styles. Conversely, the same study negatively associated secure attachment styles to the above-mentioned adverse experiences. Such patterns of attachment, in return, impair one's emotional control and fosters destructive perceptions and thoughts. This interferes with an individual's ability to form interpersonal relations during adulthood affecting their essence of sexual relationships (Riggs, 2010; Stirling & Amaya-Jackson, 2008). Upon examining such an association, it is important to keep in mind that a considerable amount of research fails to adequately differentiate between subtypes of maltreatment endorsed by parental figures, and maltreatment perpetrated by other sources that may differently influence maltreatment (Sloman & Taylor, 2015).

Despite multiple attempts to uncover the nature of consensual BDSM, the present studies remain vague and to a certain extent misleading. Nonetheless, as acts of childhood abuse and neglect persist to be a universal problem, impacting nearly half of all children of different cultures (Hillis et al 2016) and with the rise in BDSM publicity, research relating to both is still inadequate. Therefore, the study at hand will serve as a research-based elaboration in the area.

Violence against youth has been a prevalent issue across the Arab World (El-Ghossain et al., 2019) with a significant number of maltreatments reported in Lebanon (Himaya, 2018, 2019). In line manner, the research at hand targets the Lebanese BDSM population to offer a better understanding of the relationship between specific BDSM roles (sadoomasochism) and the 4 types of childhood maltreatment. Furthermore, considering the relations between parental attachment styles with both childhood maltreatment and sexual activities (Wismeijer & Assen, 2013; Brink et al., 2020) with minimal research encompassing adult's viewpoint, it is only essential to delve into their association with BDSM. To sum up, the study aims at understanding the relationship between CM and BDSM, CM and attachment styles, and attachment styles and BDSM.

This study attempts to test the following hypotheses:

H1: Childhood sexual abuse predicts one's engagement in BDSM submissive sexual behavior.

H2: Childhood emotional abuse and neglect predict one's engagement in submissive sexual behavior.

H3: Childhood physical abuse predicts one's engagement in BDSM dominant behavior.

H4: Distant attachment styles, fearful, and dependent increase the likelihood of engaging in submissive sexual behavior.

H5: Mother parentified attachment increases the likelihood of engaging in dominant sexual behavior.

H6: Secure parental attachment predicts dominant sexual behavior.

H7: Father parentified attachment increases the likelihood of engaging in submissive sexual behavior.

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Methods:*Participants:*

A total of 165 participants were randomly and voluntarily recruited to participate in the study. Out of the 165, 52 participants were excluded for having incomplete results or failing to fulfill the BDSM criteria leading to a total of 113 participants aged between 18 and 65. Overall, 107 of the population were Lebanese with only 6 Syrian participants.

Participants were recruited and approached randomly via online platforms (LinkedIn, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter) in which a Microsoft form link was provided granting access to the study's survey. Informed consent was provided before starting with the survey as participants were given the right to either accept or refuse to contribute based on the terms and conditions provided ([Appendix A](#)). The survey as well gave the participants the right to withdraw at any time. There was no attempt to de-identify data whereby the participants remained anonymous from the beginning of the data collection process onwards.

Measures:

- *Adverse Childhood Experiences International Questionnaire (ACE-IQ):*

Adverse childhood experiences international questionnaire, ACE-IQ is a 43-item scale developed following the model of adverse childhood experiences (WHO, 2009). Excluding the demographics section, section A (0), ACE-IQ includes 6 diverse sections (WHO, 2009). The 6 sections, section B (1), section C (2,3), section D (4,5), section E (6), section F (7), and section G (8) included 38-items eliciting information before the age of 18 on marriage, relationship with Parents/Guardians, family environment, peer violence, witnessing community violence, and

exposure to war/collective violence respectively. The aforementioned included yes or no response forms, 5-Likert response formats with (1) being never and (5) being always, and a 4-Likert response format ranging from (1) never to (4) many times. Several psychometric analyses were performed in different regions that yielded good internal consistency of the total scale with a Cronbach's alpha $\geq .8$ (Kazeem, 2015; Ho, Chan, Chien, Bressington, & Karatzias, 2019).

- *The Adult Scale of Parental Attachment-Short Form (ASPA-SF):*

The Adult Scale of Parental Attachment-Short Form (ASPA-SF) is a 40-item self-report measure that serves as a short-form version of the 84-item Adult Scale of Parental Attachment (ASPA; Snow et al., 2005). The construction of the ASPA-SF included the development of 20-items for each mother and father, with Likert-type response choices. The Likert-type response choices included: 1) never, 2) seldom, 3) sometimes, 4) frequently, and 5) constantly. Out of the 40-items, the ASPA-SF was built up in an attempt to better assess the adults' relationship with both mother and father figures during early childhood years according to the following patterns of relating: Safe, Dependent, Parentified, Fearful and Distant. In a psychometric analysis conducted by Michael & Snow (2019), acceptable to good levels of internal consistency reliability were specified (i.e., $\geq .7$) with all of the subscales except for Mother-Parentified (.68) and Father-Dependent (.69).

- *The Sadomasochism Checklist (SMCL):*

The Sadomasochism Checklist is a 24-item checklist that aims to assess a comprehensive array of different types of sadomasochistic practices (soft play, domination/submission, beating, toys,

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breath, and bodily fluids). Each item was portrayed in 2 separate subscales, one representing the SMCL dominance scale and another the SMCL submission scale. Upon responding, an individual is asked to indicate their prior experiences (not at all “0”, masturbation fantasy “1”, and tried out “2”) along with rating their pleasure gain associated with each item. Accordingly, in a study conducted by Weierstall & Giebel (2006), the two aforementioned subscales were analyzed separately yielding good to excellent psychometric properties. As for the SMCL submission scale, Cronbach’s alpha was .96. All items had substantial corrected item-total correlation ($M=.47$, $SD=.10$, $p < 0.1$). Nonetheless, it is essential to note, that only one item, clawing(sub.), showed poor and questionable factors loadings with a coefficient below .5. In terms of pleasure gain, a higher pleasure gain was associated with higher levels of masturbation fantasies and real-life experiences (Mean Spearman correlation coefficient = .61, $SD = .11$; all $ps < .001$). On the other hand, the reliability of the 24-items SMCL domination scale of Cronbach’s alpha = .89 was sufficient and all items had significant ($p < .01$) corrected item-total correlations ($M=.47$, $SD=.10$). Similar to the submission scale, only one item, feces (dom.), had ambiguous factor loadings. Regarding the domination scale pleasure gain, like the submission scale a higher pleasure gain was reported within individuals who score higher levels of masturbation fantasies and real-life experiences (Mean Spearman correlation coefficient = .55, $SD = .21$; all $ps < .001$).

Procedure:

This study attempts to examine and better understand the BDSM community in relation to childhood maltreatment and parental attachment styles. It specifically aims to study the relationship between the aforementioned and the degree to which an individual engages in

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BDSM activities. Accordingly, the study takes the form of a cross-sectional study as the variables were investigated at the same time. Prior to the start of data collection, the study at hand was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the Lebanese American University ([Appendix A](#)).

An e-survey was managed and administered via Microsoft forms in which participants were given access to the survey via a link shared through diverse online platforms. As such, participants were randomly recruited to eliminate the possibility of any selection bias. After consenting to participate, participants were subjected to demographic questions within the ACE-IQ measure including sex, age, education levels, occupation, and marital and economic statuses. The adverse childhood experiences of each participant were assessed using the same questionnaire ([Appendix B](#)). Afterward, to assess the participants' attachment styles they were asked to fill questions within the 40-items adults' scale of parental attachment style ([Appendix C](#)). Following that, participants' sadomasochistic interests were evaluated through the sadomasochism checklist ([Appendix D](#)).

Participants who did not fit the criteria of the BDSM community were automatically eliminated afterward sticking to the direct aim of the study at hand. Finally, the data of the present study was assessed using SPSS statistical strategies including Pearson correlations and linear regression.

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Results:

Out of the 113 participants, 94.7% of the population were Lebanese with only 5.3% Syrian participants. Precisely, 39.8% (N=45) were men, 58.4% (N=66) females, and 1.8% (N=2) who identified themselves as non-binary. Out of these, 77% (N=87) were aged between 18-24, 21.2 % (N=24) between 25-39, and 1.8 % (N=2) between 40-65. It is as well prominent to note that, 64.6 % (N=75) of the participants were single, 31% (N=35) were in a relationship 4.4% (N=5) were married.

The participants' ACE scores were calculated based upon 2 different scoring methods. The first encompasses a binary scoring that focuses solely on whether an individual has generally encountered adverse childhood experiences or not with No coded "0" and Yes coded "1". The second included a more detailed type of scoring that attempted to investigate the frequency of faced adverse experiences in which Yes "1" resembled a high frequency and No "0" resembled a minimal one. Both yielded a score over 13. As such, as seen in Table 1, the overall binary scores of participants ($\mu = 6.3009$, $SD = 2.47446$) were greater than their ACE frequency scores ($\mu = 4.0177$, $SD = 2.72876$). Nonetheless, women had higher scores on both tests ([ACE-Binary Score]: $\mu = 6.4091$, $SD = .32530$; [ACE-Frequency Score]: $\mu = 4.1364$, $SD = .34741$) in comparison to those of men ([ACE-Binary Score]: $\mu = 6.0444$, $SD = .32869$; [ACE-Frequency Score]: $\mu = 3.7778$, $SD = .39169$) (See tables 1.2 and 1.3).

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Table 1*Means and Standard Deviations of ACE Binary and ACE Frequency Total Scores*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ACE BINARY TOTAL	113	1.00	12.00	6.3009	2.47446
ACE.Frequency.Total Score	113	.00	12.00	4.0177	2.72876

Table 1.2*Descriptive Statistics for ACE Binary Total Scores*

		Gender/Sex	Statistic	Std. Error
ACE Binary Total	Man	Mean	6.0444	.32869
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.3820
			Upper Bound	6.7069
		Median	6.0000	
		Variance	4.862	
		Std. Deviation	2.20491	
	Woman	Mean	6.4091	.32530
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	5.7594
			Upper Bound	7.0588
		Median	6.0000	
		Variance	6.984	
		Std. Deviation	2.64271	

Table 1.3*Descriptive Statistics for ACE Frequency Total Scores*

		Gender/Sex	Statistic	Std. Error
ACE.Frequency Total Scores	Man	Mean	3.7778	.39169
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	2.9884
			Upper Bound	4.5672
		Median	4.0000	
		Variance	6.904	

	Std. Deviation	2.62755	
Woman	Mean	4.1364	.34741
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.4425
		Upper Bound	4.8302
	Median	3.0000	
	Variance	7.966	
	Std. Deviation	2.82236	

Precisely, as shown in Table 2, whereas 63.7 % (N= 72) of the participants experienced physical abuse at least once, only 15% (N= 17) have had frequent physical abuse incidents. In terms of emotional abuse, 85% (N= 96) of the participants were emotional abuse at least once (N= 96) with only 38.1% (N= 43) having recurrent experiences. Sexual abuse, however, was only acknowledged in accordance with whether it has been previously experienced as 37.2% (N= 42) of the participants reported having been sexually abused during childhood. Here, it is essential to note, that as seen in Table 3, the percentage of women reporting sexual abuse outweighed (76.2%) that of men (21.4%). Additionally, as for neglect, it has been recorded that participant 54.9 % (N= 62) of participants reported having been continuously exposed to experiences endorsing emotional neglect. On the other hand, as seen as well in Table 2, an almost negligible number of participants with a percentage of 3.5 (N= 4) reported having been physically neglected many times in comparison to 18.6 % (N= 21) who reported experiencing the aforementioned at least one.

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Table 2

Number and percentage of participants who have encountered childhood abuse within its diverse types at least once and many times.

		N	%
Physical Abuse_ At Least Once	No	41	36.3%
	Yes	72	63.7%
Physical Abuse_ Many Times	No	96	85.0%
	Yes	17	15.0%
Emotional Abuse_ At Least Once	No	17	15.0%
	Yes	96	85.0%
Emotional Abuse_ Many Times	No	70	61.9%
	Yes	43	38.1%
Encountered Childhood Sexual Abuse	No	71	62.8%
	Yes	42	37.2%
High emotional Neglect	No	51	45.1%
	Yes	62	54.9%
Physical Neglect_ At Least Once	No	92	81.4%
	Yes	21	18.6%
High Physical Neglect	No	109	96.5%
	Yes	4	3.5%

Table 3

Gender-Based percentages of participants who encountered sexual abuse.

		Encountered Childhood Sexual Abuse			
		No		Yes	
		N	%	N	%
Gender/Sex	Man	36	50.7%	9	21.4%
	Woman	34	47.9%	32	76.2%
	Non-Binary	1	1.4%	1	2.4%

When it comes to attachment styles, each participant had 10 different scores over 20 corresponding to each type of attachment style. Starting off, with mother attachments (Table 4), participants scoring results yielded the following: secure attachment ($\mu=11.7699$, $SD=4.44010$), dependent attachment ($\mu=9.7257$, $SD=3.38655$), fearful attachment ($\mu=8.9204$, $SD=3.64285$), parentified attachment ($\mu=12.3186$, $SD=4.08889$), and distant attachment ($\mu=10.2655$, $SD=4.14905$).

As for father attachment styles (Table 5), following were the mean scores established: secure attachment ($\mu=9.2212$, $SD=4.01055$), dependent attachment ($\mu=9.3451$, $SD=3.69790$), fearful attachment ($\mu=9.0177$, $SD=4.14467$), parentified attachment ($\mu=10.7168$, $SD=4.23520$), and distant attachment ($\mu=10.5310$, $SD=4.64464$).

Furthermore, in terms of father attachment styles (Table 6), it has been recorded that 27.4% (N=31) had a secure attachment 23% (N=26) had a dependent attachment styles, 25.7% (N=29) had a fearful attachment, 38.9% (N=44) had a parentified style, and 38.9% (N=44) had a distant attachment style, Additionally, as for mother attachment styles (Table 7) 52.2% (N=59) had a secure attachment, 26.5% (N=30) had a dependent attachment, 25.7% (N=29) had a fearful attachment, 55.8% (N=63) had a parentified attachment, and 38.9% (N=44) had a distant attachment.

Regarding participants' scores on the sadomasochism checklist, each participant had 2 separate scores over 48 whereby each question was over 2. The results yielded a mean of 10.7168 with an SD of 9.25383 for submissive activities and a mean of 9.8673 with an SD of 9.26736 for dominant activities (See Table 8).

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Table 4

Descriptive Statistics including means and standard deviation of the 5 distant mother attachment styles

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
MS	113	11.7699	4.44010
MD	113	9.7257	3.38655
MF	113	8.9204	3.64285
MP	113	12.3186	4.08889
MA	113	10.2655	4.14905
Valid N (listwise)	113		

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics including means and standard deviation of the 5 distant mother attachment styles

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
FS	113	9.2212	4.01055
FD	113	9.3451	3.69790
FF	113	9.0177	4.14467
FP	113	10.7168	4.23520
FA	113	10.5310	4.64464
Valid N (listwise)	113		

Table 6

Number and percentage of participants who developed/not developed certain father related attachment styles

		Count	Column N %
Father Secure	Not Developed	82	72.6%
	Developed	31	27.4%
Father Dependent	Not Developed	87	77.0%
	Developed	26	23.0%
Father Fearful	Not Developed	84	74.3%
	Developed	29	25.7%
Father Parentified	Not Developed	69	61.1%

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	Developed	44	38.9%
Father Distant	Not Developed	69	61.1%
	Developed	44	38.9%

Table 7

Number and percentage of participants who developed/not developed certain mother related attachment styles

		Count	Column N %
Mother Secure	Not Developed	54	47.8%
	Developed	59	52.2%
Mother Dependent	Not Developed	83	73.5%
	Developed	30	26.5%
Mother Fearful	Not Developed	84	74.3%
	Developed	29	25.7%
Mother Parentified	Not Developed	50	44.2%
	Developed	63	55.8%
Mother Distant	Not Developed	69	61.1%
	Developed	44	38.9%

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics including means and standard deviation of the total scores on submissiveness and dominance.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Submissive	113	10.7168	9.25383
Dominant	113	9.8673	9.26736
Valid N (listwise)	113		

Pearson correlations were done to test for the correlation between subtypes of childhood maltreatment (physical abuse “PA”, emotional abuse “EA”, sexual abuse “SA”, emotional neglect “EN”, and physical neglect “PN”) and adults’ attachment styles including secure, dependent, fearful, parentified, and distant attachments for each of mother and father. Adequate

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normality tests were conducted to guarantee that the assumptions of normality were not disrupted.

Starting off, with correlations related to the mother attachment styles (Table 9), the results showed a significant negative correlation between mother secure (MS) attachment and each of physical abuse ($r = -.321$; $p = .001 < 0.01$), emotional abuse ($r = -.275$ $p = .003 < 0.01$), emotional neglect ($r = -0.433$; $p = .000 < 0.01$), and physical neglect ($r = -.210$; $p = .025 < 0.05$) as it showed no significant correlation with sexual abuse ($r = -.082$; $p = .389 > 0.05$). Mother fearful (MF) attachment was significantly and positively correlated with emotional abuse ($r = .273$; $p = .003 < 0.01$), sexual abuse ($r = .212$; $p = .024 < 0.05$), emotional neglect ($r = .328$; $p = .000 < 0.01$), and physical neglect ($r = .309$; $p = .001 < 0.01$) whereas no significant correlation was established with physical abuse ($r = .015$; $p = .872 > 0.05$). On the other hand, mother distant (MA) attachment, was positively correlated with each of physical abuse ($r = .201$; $p = .033 < 0.05$), emotional abuse ($r = .421$, $p = .000 < 0.01$), sexual abuse ($r = .220$; $p = .019 < 0.05$), and emotional neglect ($r = .452$, $p = .000 < 0.01$) and physical neglect ($r = .267$; $p = .004 < 0.01$). Proceeding forward, there was a significant negative correlation between mother dependent (MD) attachment and physical abuse ($r = -.206$; $p = .029 < 0.05$) while no significant correlation was found with emotional abuse ($r = .0000$; $p = .999 > 0.05$), sexual abuse ($r = .093$; $p = .329 > 0.05$), emotional neglect ($r = -.096$; $p = .312 > 0.05$), and physical neglect ($r = -.054$; $p = .568 > 0.05$). Finally, mother parentified (MP) attachment style was negatively and significantly correlated with emotional neglect ($r = -.209$; $p = .026 < 0.05$) with no significant correlation with physical abuse ($r = -.150$; $p = .113 > 0.05$), emotional abuse ($r = -.097$; $p = .308 > 0.05$), sexual abuse ($r = .092$; $p = .332 > 0.05$), and physical neglect ($r = -.069$; $p = .469 > 0.05$).

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Table 9*Pearson correlations between mother attachment styles and childhood maltreatment.*

		MS	MD	MF	MP	MA
PA	Pearson Correlation	-.321**	-.206*	.015	-.150	.201*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.029	.872	.113	.033
	N	113	113	113	113	113
EA	Pearson Correlation	-.275**	.000	.273**	-.097	.421**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.999	.003	.308	<.001
	N	113	113	113	113	113
SA	Pearson Correlation	-.082	.093	.212*	.092	.220*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.389	.329	.024	.332	.019
	N	113	113	113	113	113
EN	Pearson Correlation	-.433**	-.096	.328**	-.209*	.452**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.312	<.001	.026	<.001
	N	113	113	113	113	113
PN	Pearson Correlation	-.210*	-.054	.309**	-.069	.267**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.025	.568	<.001	.469	.004
	N	113	113	113	113	113

As for adults' attachment styles related to the father (Table 10), father secure (FS) attachment was found to be only significantly and negatively correlated with emotional abuse ($r = -.213$; $p = .024 < 0.05$) and emotional neglect ($r = -.227$; $p = .015 < 0.05$), with no significant correlations detected with physical abuse ($r = -.042$; $p = .655 > 0.05$), sexual abuse ($r = -.073$; $p = .444 > 0.05$), and physical neglect ($r = -.178$; $p = .060 > 0.05$). Sexual abuse ($r = .250$; $p = .008 < 0.01$), emotional abuse ($r = .242$; $p = .010 < 0.01$), emotional neglect ($r = .186$; $p = .049 < 0.05$), and physical neglect ($r = .229$; $p = .015 < 0.05$). has been found to be positively and significantly correlated with father fearful (FF) attachment styles with an insignificant correlation with physical abuse ($r = .123$; $p = .193 > 0.05$), In addition, father distant (FA) attachment style was found to be significantly correlated with all subtypes including physical abuse ($r = .214$; $p = .023$

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<0.05), emotional abuse ($r = .441$; $p = .000 < 0.01$), sexual abuse ($r = .248$; $p = .008 < 0.01$), and emotional neglect ($r = .406$; $p = .000 < 0.01$) and physical neglect ($r = .305$; $p = .001 < 0.01$).

Conversely, father dependent (FD) styles were not significantly correlated with any of the childhood maltreatment subtypes (r “PA” = $-.073$, p “PA” = $.440 > 0.05$; r “EA” = $-.017$, p “EA” = $.860 > 0.05$; r “SA” = $.127$, p “SA” = $.181 > 0.05$; r “EN” = $-.041$, p “EN” = $.666 > 0.05$; r “PN” = $-.097$, p “PN” = $.306 > 0.05$). A similar insignificant correlation has been concluded for father parentified (FP) as physical abuse ($r = -0.38$; $p = .689 > 0.05$), emotional abuse ($r = -.059$; $p = .5372 > 0.05$), sexual abuse ($r = .128$; $p = .177 > 0.05$), emotional neglect ($r = -.172$; $p = .068 > 0.05$) and physical neglect ($r = -.089$; $p = .347 > 0.05$) yielded no significant correlation with FA.

Following that a simple linear regression was calculated in an attempt to predict participants’ engagement in BDSM activities based upon their levels of childhood maltreatment. Primary tests were carried out to ensure that the assumptions of normality and linearity were not violated.

Beginning with sexual abuse, the degree to which an individual has been sexually abused did not explain a significant association with dominant sexual behavior ($F(1,111) = .051$, $p = .821 > 0.05$, $R^2 = .000$, R^2 adjusted = -0.009). Conversely, a significant regression equation was found with submissive behavior ($F(1, 111) = 5.841$, $p = .017 < 0.05$), with an R^2 of $.050$. Participants predicted engagement in submissive sexual behavior is equal to $6.125 + .0859$ (SA). The regression coefficient ($B = .859$) indicated that an increase in one’s experienced sexual abuse, corresponded to an increase in sexual submissive behavior by $.0859$ (Table 11).

Table 10

Pearson correlations between father attachment styles and childhood maltreatment.

		FS	FD	FF	FP	FA
PA	Pearson Correlation	-.042	-.073	.123	-.038	.214*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.655	.440	.193	.689	.023
	N	113	113	113	113	113
EA	Pearson Correlation	-.213*	-.017	.242**	-.059	.441**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.024	.860	.010	.537	<.001
	N	113	113	113	113	113
SA	Pearson Correlation	-.073	.127	.250**	.128	.248**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.444	.181	.008	.177	.008
	N	113	113	113	113	113
EN	Pearson Correlation	-.227*	-.041	.186*	-.172	.406**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	.666	.049	.068	<.001
	N	113	113	113	113	113
PN	Pearson Correlation	-.178	-.097	.229*	-.042	.305**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.060	.306	.015	.655	.001
	N	113	113	113	113	113

Table 11

Linear regression results between sexual abuse and submissive behavior.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.224 ^a	.050	.041	9.06011

a. Predictors: (Constant), SA

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	479.437	1	479.437	5.841	.017 ^b
	Residual	9111.501	111	82.086		
	Total	9590.938	112			

a. Dependent Variable: Submissive

b. Predictors: (Constant), SA

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	6.125	2.083		2.941	.004
	SA	.859	.355	.224	2.417	.017

a. Dependent Variable: Submissive

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As for predicting participants engagement in BDSM activities in accordance with their levels of childhood emotional neglect, the linear regression results showed a significant association between EN and the variance in submissive sexual behavior ($F(1,111) = 6.878, p = .010 < 0.05, R^2 = .058, R^2 \text{ adjusted} = .050$). The regression coefficient ($B = 1.191$) showed that an increase in emotional neglect predicts an increase in one's engagement in submissive sexual behavior by 1.191 (Table 12). On the other hand, the level of emotional neglect did not explain a significant difference in one's dominant sexual behavior ($F(1,111) = .363, p = .548 > 0.05, R^2 = .003, R^2 \text{ adjusted} = -.006$).

It is as well essential to note that physical abuse, emotional abuse, and physical neglect didn't significantly predict a difference in one's engagement in **submissive behavior** ([PA]: $F(1,111) = .915; p = .341 > 0.05, R^2 = .008, R^2 \text{ adjusted} = -.001$; [EA]: $F(1,111) = .249, p = .619 > 0.05, R^2 = .002, R^2 \text{ adjusted} = -.007$); [PN]: $F(1,111) = 3.029, p = .085 > 0.05, R^2 = .027, R^2 \text{ adjusted} = .018$), **nor dominant behavior** ([PA]: $F(1,111) = .030, p = .864 > 0.05, R^2 = .000, R^2 \text{ adjusted} = -.009$; [EA]: $F(1,111) = .238, p = .626 > 0.05, R^2 = .002, R^2 \text{ adjusted} = -.007$; [PN]: $F(1,111) = .339, p = .562 > 0.05, R^2 = .003, R^2 \text{ adjusted} = -.006$).

Proceeding forward towards adults' attachment styles as predictors of BDSM activities, the variance in submissive sexual activities was not predicted by neither secure mother attachment ($F(1,111) = .000, p = .994 > 0.05, R^2 = .000, R^2 \text{ adjusted} = -.009$), dependent mother attachment ($F(1,111) = .013, p = .909 > 0.05, R^2 = .000, R^2 \text{ adjusted} = -.009$), nor fearful mother attachment ($F(1,111) = 2.631, p = .108 > 0.05, R^2 = .023, R^2 \text{ adjusted} = .014$). Within the same context, the same conclusion can be drawn when it comes to predicting the change in dominant sexual behavior as its association with mother secure attachment ($F(1,111) = .676, p = .413 > 0.05, R^2 = .006, R^2 \text{ adjusted} = -.003$), mother dependent ($F(1,111) = 3.276, p = .073 > 0.05, R^2 =$

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.029, R^2 adjusted = .020), and mother fearful ($F(1,111) = 1.170$, $p = .282 > 0.05$, $R^2 = .010$, R^2 adjusted = .002) was not applicable nor significant. In addition, having a parentified attachment style with the mother has not been found as a significant predictor of the change in engaging submissive sexual behavior ($F(1,111) = 3.707$; $p = .057 > 0.05$, $R^2 = .032$, R^2 adjusted = .024). Despite that, it was found that developing a parentified attachment style with the mother significantly predicted the degree to which an individual engages in dominant sexual behavior ($F(1,111) = 4.562$; $p = .035 < 0.05$, $R^2 = .039$, R^2 adjusted = .031) as the increase in one's parentified attachment corresponded to a decrease in dominant sexual behavior with a regression coefficient $B = -.450$ (Table 13). Conversely, the degree to which an individual has developed a distant attachment style to the mother did not explain a significant association with dominant sexual behavior ($F(1,111) = .121$, $p = .7291 > 0.05$, $R^2 = .001$, R^2 adjusted = -0.008). However, developing a distant attachment with the mother was found to significantly predict submissive sexual behavior ($F(1, 111) = 5.551$, $p = .020 < 0.05$), with an R^2 of .048 and R^2 adjusted = .039 (Table 14). Participants predicted engagement in submissive sexual behavior is equal to $5.720 + .487$ (MA). The regression coefficient ($B = .487$) indicated that an increase in one's degree of developing a distant attachment to the mother, corresponded to an increase in sexual submissive behavior by .487.

Table 12

Linear regression results between emotional neglect and submissive behavior.

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.242 ^a	.058	.050	9.02017

a. Predictors: (Constant), EN

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ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	559.588	1	559.588	6.878	.010 ^b
	Residual	9031.350	111	81.364		
	Total	9590.938	112			

a. Dependent Variable: Submissive
b. Predictors: (Constant), EN

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.391	2.919		1.162	.248
	EN	1.191	.454	.242	2.623	.010

a. Dependent Variable: Submissive

Table 13

Linear regression results between mother parentified attachment styles and dominant behavior.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.199 ^a	.039	.031	9.12343

a. Predictors: (Constant), MP

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	379.712	1	379.712	4.562	.035 ^b
	Residual	9239.297	111	83.237		
	Total	9619.009	112			

a. Dependent Variable: Dominant
b. Predictors: (Constant), MP

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	15.414	2.735		5.635	<.001
	MP	-.450	.211	-.199	-2.136	.035

a. Dependent Variable: Dominant

Table 14

Linear regression results between mother distant attachment styles and submissive behavior.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.218 ^a	.048	.039	9.07135

a. Predictors: (Constant), MA

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	456.825	1	456.825	5.551	.020 ^b
	Residual	9134.113	111	82.289		
	Total	9590.938	112			

a. Dependent Variable: Submissive

b. Predictors: (Constant), MA

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.720	2.286		2.502	.014
	MA	.487	.207	.218	2.356	.020

a. Dependent Variable: Submissive

Moving on to adults' attachment style to their father as predictors of BDSM activities, the shift in submissive sexual activities was not significantly explained by the degree to which a person establishes a dependent relationship with his or her father ($F(1,111) = .854, p = .357 > 0.05, R^2 = .008, R^2 \text{ adjusted} = -.001$), the extent of developing a fearful attachment with the father ($F(1,111) = 3.622, p = .060 > 0.05, R^2 = .032, R^2 \text{ adjusted} = .023$), nor the level of establishing a distant attachment ($F(1,111) = 3.537, p = .063 > 0.05, R^2 = .031, R^2 \text{ adjusted} = .022$). Also, the variance in dominant sexual behavior was not significantly predicted by the degree to which an individual develops any kind of adults' attachment style to the father including secure father attachment ($F(1,111) = .384, p = .537 > 0.05, R^2 = .003, R^2 \text{ adjusted} = -.006$), a dependent father attachment ($F(1,111) = .000, p = .977 > 0.05, R^2 = .000, R^2 \text{ adjusted} = -.009$), a fearful father attachment ($F(1,111) = .219, p = .641 > 0.05, R^2 = .002, R^2 \text{ adjusted} = -.007$), parentified attachment ($F(1,111) =$

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.567, $p=.453>0.05$, $R^2=.005$, R^2 adjusted= $-.004$), and distant father attachment ($F(1,111) = .640$, $p=.425>0.05$, $R^2=.006$, R^2 adjusted= $-.003$). Nevertheless, establishing a secure attachment with the father significantly explained the change in submissive sexual behavior ($F(1,111) = 7.052$, $p=.009<0.01$, $R^2=.060$, R^2 adjusted= $.051$) with a regression coefficient $B = -0.564$. This indicated that the increase in the degree of secure attachment with the father led to the decrease in engaging in submissive sexual behavior by 0.564 (Table 15). Similarly, the increase in the degree of developing a parentified attachment with the father corresponded to a decrease in submissive sexual behavior (Table 16) by 0.466 ($F(1,111) = 5.3$, $p=.023>0.05$, $R^2=.046$, R^2 adjusted= $.037$).

Table 15

Linear regression results between father secure attachment styles and submissive behavior.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.244 ^a	.060	.051	9.01351

a. Predictors: (Constant), FS

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	572.918	1	572.918	7.052	.009 ^b
	Residual	9018.020	111	81.243		
	Total	9590.938	112			

a. Dependent Variable: Submissive

b. Predictors: (Constant), FS

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	15.917	2.134		7.459	<.001
	FS	-.564	.212	-.244	-2.656	.009

a. Dependent Variable: Submissive

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Table 16

Linear regression results between father parentified attachment styles and submissive behavior.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.213 ^a	.046	.037	9.08114

a. Predictors: (Constant), FP

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	437.089	1	437.089	5.300	.023 ^b
	Residual	9153.849	111	82.467		
	Total	9590.938	112			

a. Dependent Variable: Submissive

b. Predictors: (Constant), FP

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	15.716	2.333		6.735	<.001
	FP	-.466	.203	-.213	-2.302	.023

a. Dependent Variable: Submissive

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Discussion

The study at hand looks into the extent to which BDSM sadomasochistic interests and activities are related to childhood developmental dynamics. It considerably focused on the effects of childhood adverse experiences and parental attachment styles. Along these lines, the study validated the association between sexual masochism (submissiveness) and sexual abuse. Yet, it should be noted that the vast majority of our sample (62.8%) didn't report experiencing frequent childhood sexual abuse placing the upcoming explanation at a high risk of generalizability. This said the study's findings were marginally in favor of hypothesis 1. With a higher number of women reporting childhood sexual abuse, it was clarified that encountering such an adverse experience places the individual at a higher probability to surrender control during sexual activities. This is in accordance with previous research whereby higher rates of sexual abuse were prevalent among masochistic women (Frias et al. 2017). The aforementioned relationship can be explained by Van del Kolk's theory (1989) who proposed that individuals with related traumatic experiences chase after similar sexual behavior in an attempt to moderate enduring stimulations and ease associated anxiety. In other words, masochism has been considered as an adaptive coping mechanism manifested by the integration of degrading embarrassment and guilt into pleasurable sexual arousals (Abrams & Stefan, 2012).

As predicted by hypothesis 2, our findings suggested that the more an individual faces adverse experiences endorsing emotional neglect, the more they are prone to engage in submissive sexual behavior. Such a relationship has been already acknowledged by Berber Çelik & Odacı (2012) who discovered a positive significant correlation between submissive behavior and emotional neglect. From the previous finding, it can be said that emotionally neglected children develop a sense of helplessness as they become preoccupied with depressive

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dysfunctional thoughts (Cullerton-Sen et al., 2008) resulting in probable introversion (Berber Çelik & Odacı, 2012). It is, therefore, predictable that neglected children may invariably cultivate submissive behavior as a self-protective mechanism during adulthood (Gilbert et al., 2003; Kaya et al., 2004). Despite that, the second half of hypothesis 2 has not been approved as there was no sufficient relationship between emotional abuse and any of the BDSM activities (neither submissive nor dominant). Furthermore, hypothesis 3 related to physical abuse and dominant behavior has been rejected by our results as no association between the two was found. It's possible that this outcome has been affected by the broad-based physical abuse questions present within the survey. This has been evident as more than half of the participants reported being at least once physically abused with only 15% percent reporting frequent abuse. Still, this has been equivalent to the results manifested in the study conducted by Brink et al. (2020) whereby BDSM activities were influenced by adulthood physical abuse rather than childhood.

As for attachment styles, developing a mother distant attachment, a father parentified attachment, and a father secure attachment predicted the degree to which an individual engages in submissive behavior. However, the results were not identical as they yielded opposing conclusions. While developing a distant relationship with the mother led to an increase in engaging in submissive sexual behavior (validating a part of hypothesis 4), developing both secure and parentified attachment with the father led to a decrease in such an engagement. On the other hand, mother parentified attachment was said to decrease the probability of engaging in dominant sexual behavior. In terms of the relationship between father secure attachment and submissive behavior, such findings are to a certain extent explained by previous findings that instead associated such an attachment to dominant behavior (Brink et al., 2020). However, our findings, at the same time, do not validate hypothesis 6 regarding a significant association

between father security and dominant behavior. This may be the case due to the considerably low number of participants who developed a secure attachment with their father in the first place (27.4%; N=31). As for parentified father attachment, unlike what has been suspected (Hypothesis 7) it has been associated with a drop in submissive behavior. This can be explained by the fact that generally parentified individuals are more likely to uphold feelings of superiority as they feel highly satisfied upon offering what they perceive others need (Michael & Snow, 2019). However, further research should delve into more details regarding such a proposition as our findings regarding parentification were not aligned. This is due to the validation of hypothesis 5 as mother parentified attachment yielded less engagement in dominant behavior.

Alternatively, the research at hand validates findings of previous research suggesting that childhood maltreatment within its 4 subtypes consequently leads to insecure parental attachment styles (Riggs, 2010; Sloman & Taylor, 2015; Erozkhan, 2016). In particular, mother fearful, mother distant, father fearful, and father distant attachment styles were positively correlated with sexual abuse, emotional abuse, emotional neglect, and physical neglect. Conversely, as stated by secure attachments with both mothers and fathers were negatively correlated with the majority of childhood adverse experiences.

Taking the latter into consideration, our findings can as well suggest that developing a mother distant relationship may act as a mediator between sexual abuse and engaging in submissive sexual behavior. This is said whereby, as sexual abuse predicts submissive behavior, it has been found to be positively correlated with mother distant attachment which, in return, predicts submissive behavior as well. The aforementioned can be better explained by the fact that experiencing childhood trauma including sexual abuse increases the likelihood of developing a distant relationship with caregivers (Erozkhan, 2016). Correspondingly, the degree to which a

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child develops the latter might act as a precursor to submissive sexual behavior. In a similar manner, father secure and father parentified attachments leading to the decrease in submissive behavior may be traced back to their negative correlation with emotional neglect. Comparably, this negative correlation sheds light on the fact that if one predicts the increase in submissive behavior, it is only foreseeable that the other leads to the decrease in the degree of such sexual behavior. However, for further validations, such a hypothesis should be better acknowledged and tested in upcoming research.

Despite the study's contribution to the BDSM literature, several limitations are to be acknowledged. The nature of the survey as a self-administered instrument increases the likelihood of bias results. Considering the degree to which BDSM communities are fighting against stigmatization, it is probable that individuals within the community forged their answers in an attempt to eliminate false accusations. Another limitation is that despite having a reasonable explanation for the small sample number, considering the global pandemic and the stigma around the topic, it was with no doubt minor in comparison to the actual BDSM practitioners in Lebanon. Nevertheless, the study solely included BDSM members who were active on social media platforms and do not essentially represent all individuals interested in BDSM over Lebanon. Within the same context, this research did not attempt to differentiate between fantasies and actual engagement in BDSM as they were considered as one provoking possible generalization. Future research should thus attempt to look deeper into the differences associated between BDSM interests (fantasies) and actual BDSM commitments.

To sum up, this research yielded an association between BDSM activities and adverse traumatic experiences primarily determined by sexual abuse and emotional neglect prevalent during childhood. It also shows that individuals engaging in submissive behavior were more

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likely to have insecure attachment styles in comparison to those with secure attachments. The topic of BDSM and its link to personality, attachment styles, and traumas is far from done as it still needs more representation and willingness from people and researchers alike.

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Appendix A:*Consent to participate in a Survey/Questionnaire**CHILDHOOD MALTREATMENT AND PARENTAL ATTACHMENT IN THE BDSM
COMMUNITY*

I would like to invite you to participate in a research project by completing the following survey. I am a senior psychology student at the Lebanese American University and am completing this research project as part of my bachelor's degree requirement. This survey aims to examine and better understand the BDSM community in relation to childhood maltreatment and parental attachment styles.

This survey contains questions about childhood traumas and sexuality. We recommend that if you feel any kind of distress while completing the questions, you should seek advice from health/counseling services or contact the researcher. The information you provide will be used to enhance my understanding of the BDSM community to further improve the quality of the conducted research. You will not directly benefit from participation in this study. The study will involve 100-150 participants. Completing the survey will take 15 to 20 minutes of your time.

By continuing with the survey, you agree with the following statements:

- 1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project.*
- 2. I understand that my answers will not be released to anyone and my identity will remain anonymous. My name will not be written on the questionnaire nor be kept in any other records.*
- 3. **When the results of the study are reported, I will not be identified by name or any other information that could be used to infer my identity.** Only researchers will have access to view any data collected during this research however data cannot be linked to me.*
- 4. I understand that I may withdraw from this research any time I wish and that I have the right to skip any question I don't want to answer.*
- 5. I understand that my refusal to participate will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which I otherwise am entitled.*
- 6. I have been informed that the research abides by all commonly acknowledged ethical codes and that the research project has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the Lebanese American University*
- 7. I understand that if I have any additional questions, I can ask the research team listed below.*
- 8. I have read and understood all statements on this form.*
- 9. I voluntarily agree to take part in this research project by completing the following survey.*

If you have any questions, you may contact:

<i>Name (PI)</i>	<i>Phone number</i>	<i>Email address</i>
<i>Sally El Kaaki</i>	<i>76-813034</i>	<i>Sally.elkaaki@lau.edu</i>
<i>Dr. Rudy Abi Habib</i>	<i>70-970329</i>	<i>Rudy.abihabib@lau.edu.lb</i>

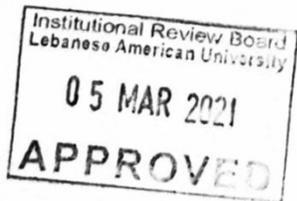
COMMUNITY

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, or you want to talk to someone outside the research, please contact the:

*Institutional Review Board Office,
Lebanese American University
3rd Floor, Dorm A, Byblos Campus
Tel: 00 961 1 786456 ext. (2546)
irb@lau.edu.lb*

This study has been reviewed and approved by the LAU IRB:

LAU.SAS.RH6.5/Mar/2021



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Appendix B:

0		DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	
0.1 [C1]	Sex (<i>Record Male / Female as observed</i>)	Male	Female
0.2 [C2]	What is your date of birth?	Day [][] Month [][] Year [][][][]	Unknown (<i>Go to Q.C3</i>)
0.3 [C3]	How old are you?	[][]	
0.4 [C4]	What is your [<i>insert relevant ethnic group / racial group / cultural group / others</i>] background?	[<i>Locally defined</i>]	[<i>Locally defined</i>]
		[<i>Locally defined</i>]	Refused
0.5 [C5]	What is the highest level of education you have completed?	No formal schooling	Less than primary school
		Primary school completed	Secondary/High school completed
		College/University completed	Post graduate degree
		Refused	
0.6 [C6]	Which of the following best describes your <u>main</u> work status over the last 12 months?	Government employee	Non-government employee
		Self-employed	Non-paid
		Student	Homemaker
		Retired	Unemployed (able to work)
		Unemployed (unable to work)	Refused
0.7 [C7]	What is your civic status?	Married (<i>Go to Q.M2</i>)	Living as couple
		Divorced or separated	Single
		Widowed (<i>Go to Q.M2</i>)	Other
		Refused	
1		MARRIAGE	
1.1 [M1]	Have you ever been married?	Yes	No (<i>Go to Q.M5</i>)
		Refused	
1.2 [M2]	At what age were you first married?	Age [][]	Refused
1.3 [M3]	At the time of your first marriage did you yourself choose your husband/wife?	Yes (<i>Go to Q.M5</i>)	No
		Don't know / Not sure	Refused
1.4 [M4]	At the time of your first marriage if you did <u>not</u> choose your husband/wife yourself, did you give your consent to the choice?	Yes	No
		Refused	
1.5 [M5]	If you are a mother or father what was your age when your first child was born?	Age [][]	Not applicable
		Refused	

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2		RELATIONSHIP WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS	
When you were growing up, during the first 18 years of your life . . .			
2.1 [P1]	Did your parents/guardians understand your problems and worries?	Always	
		Most of the time	
		Sometimes	
		Rarely	
		Never	
		Refused	
2.2 [P2]	Did your parents/guardians really know what you were doing with your free time when you were not at school or work?	Always	
		Most of the time	
		Sometimes	
		Rarely	
		Never	
		Refused	
3			
3.1 [P3]	How often did your parents/guardians not give you enough food even when they could easily have done so?	Many times	
		A few times	
		Once	
		Never	
		Refused	
3.2 [P4]	Were your parents/guardians too drunk or intoxicated by drugs to take care of you?	Many times	
		A few times	
		Once	
		Never	
		Refused	
3.3 [P5]	How often did your parents/guardians not send you to school even when it was available?	Many times	
		A few times	
		Once	
		Never	
		Refused	
4		FAMILY ENVIRONMENT	
When you were growing up, during the first 18 years of your life . . .			
4.1 [F1]	Did you live with a household member who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or misused street or prescription drugs?	Yes	
		No	
		Refused	
4.2 [F2]	Did you live with a household member who was depressed, mentally ill or suicidal?	Yes	
		No	
		Refused	
4.3 [F3]	Did you live with a household member who was ever sent to jail or prison?	Yes	
		No	
		Refused	
4.4 [F4]	Were your parents ever separated or divorced?	Yes	
		No	
		Not applicable	
		Refused	
4.5 [F5]	Did your mother, father or guardian die?	Yes	
		No	
		Don't know / Not sure	
		Refused	
<p>These next questions are about certain things you may actually have heard or seen IN YOUR HOME. These are things that may have been done to another household member but not necessarily to you.</p>			

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When you were growing up, during the first 18 years of your life . . .		
4.6 [F6]	Did you see or hear a parent or household member in your home being yelled at, screamed at, sworn at, insulted or humiliated?	Many times
		A few times
		Once
		Never
		Refused
4.7 [F7]	Did you see or hear a parent or household member in your home being slapped, kicked, punched or beaten up?	Many times
		A few times
		Once
		Never
		Refused
4.8 [F8]	Did you see or hear a parent or household member in your home being hit or cut with an object, such as a stick (or cane), bottle, club, knife, whip etc.?	Many times
		A few times
		Once
		Never
		Refused
These next questions are about certain things YOU may have experienced.		
When you were growing up, during the first 18 years of your life . . .		
5		
5.1 [A1]	Did a parent, guardian or other household member yell, scream or swear at you, insult or humiliate you?	Many times
		A few times
		Once
		Never
		Refused
5.2 [A2]	Did a parent, guardian or other household member threaten to, or actually, abandon you or throw you out of the house?	Many times
		A few times
		Once
		Never
		Refused
5.3 [A3]	Did a parent, guardian or other household member spank, slap, kick, punch or beat you up?	Many times
		A few times
		Once
		Never
		Refused
5.4 [A4]	Did a parent, guardian or other household member hit or cut you with an object, such as a stick (or cane), bottle, club, knife, whip etc?	Many times
		A few times
		Once
		Never
		Refused
5.5 [A5]	Did someone touch or fondle you in a sexual way when you did not want them to?	Many times
		A few times
		Once
		Never
		Refused
5.6 [A6]	Did someone make you touch their body in a sexual way when you did not want them to?	Many times
		A few times
		Once
		Never
		Refused
5.7 [A7]	Did someone attempt oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you when you did not want them to?	Many times
		A few times
		Once

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		Never
		Refused
5.8 [A8]	Did someone actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you when you did not want them to?	Many times
		A few times
		Once
		Never
		Refused
6	PEER VIOLENCE	
	<p>These next questions are about BEING BULLIED when you were growing up. Bullying is when a young person or group of young people say or do bad and unpleasant things to another young person. It is also bullying when a young person is teased a lot in an unpleasant way or when a young person is left out of things on purpose. It is not bullying when two young people of about the same strength or power argue or fight or when teasing is done in a friendly and fun way.</p> <p>When you were growing up, during the first 18 years of your life . . .</p>	
6.1 [V1]	How often were you bullied?	Many times
		A few times
		Once
		Never (Go to Q. V3)
		Refused
6.2 [V2]	How were you bullied most often?	I was hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around, or locked indoors
		I was made fun of because of my race, nationality or colour
		I was made fun of because of my religion
		I was made fun of with sexual jokes, comments, or gestures
		I was left out of activities on purpose or completely ignored
		I was made fun of because of how my body or face looked
		I was bullied in some other way
		Refused
	<p>This next question is about PHYSICAL FIGHTS. A physical fight occurs when two young people of about the same strength or power choose to fight each other.</p> <p>When you were growing up, during the first 18 years of your life . . .</p>	
6.3 [V3]	How often were you in a physical fight?	Many times
		A few times
		Once
		Never
		Refused
7	WITNESSING COMMUNITY VIOLENCE	
	<p>These next questions are about how often, when you were a child, YOU may have seen or heard certain things in your NEIGHBOURHOOD OR COMMUNITY (not in your home or on TV, movies, or the radio).</p> <p>When you were growing up, during the first 18 years of your life . . .</p>	
7.1 [V4]	Did you see or hear someone being beaten up in real life?	Many times
		A few times
		Once
		Never
		Refused
7.2	Did you see or hear someone being stabbed	Many times

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[V5]	or shot in real life?	A few times
		Once
		Never
		Refused
7.3 [V6]	Did you see or hear someone being threatened with a knife or gun in real life?	Many times
		A few times
		Once
		Never
		Refused
8	EXPOSURE TO WAR/COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE	
	These questions are about whether YOU did or did not experience any of the following events when you were a child. The events are all to do with collective violence, including wars, terrorism, political or ethnic conflicts, genocide, repression, disappearances, torture and organized violent crime such as banditry and gang warfare.	
	When you were growing up, during the first 18 years of your life . . .	
8.1 [V7]	Were you forced to go and live in another place due to any of these events?	Many times
		A few times
		Once
		Never
		Refused
8.2 [V8]	Did you experience the deliberate destruction of your home due to any of these events?	Many times
		A few times
		Once
		Never
		Refused
8.3 [V9]	Were you beaten up by soldiers, police, militia, or gangs?	Many times
		A few times
		Once
		Never
		Refused
8.4 [V10]	Was a family member or friend killed or beaten up by soldiers, police, militia, or gangs?	Many times
		A few times
		Once
		Never
		Refused

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Appendix C:

- 40-item ASPA-SF(20-items about Mother caregivers)

ASPA-SF item#	ASPA item#	ASPA scale	Item
1	1	Safe	I had my mother with me when I was upset.
2	5	Fearful	I resented my mother spending time away from me.
3	42	Dependent	I was helpless without my mother.
4	36	Distant	I felt there was something wrong with me because I was distant from my mother.
5	23	Parentified	I put my mother's needs before my own.
6	6	Fearful	I felt abandoned when my mother was away for a few days.
7	13	Safe	I turned to my mother for many things including comfort and reassurance.
8	16	Distant	I wish there was less anger in my relationship with my mother.
9	25	Parentified	I enjoyed taking care of my mother.
10	17	Fearful	I got frustrated when my mother left me alone.
11	41	Dependent	I was never certain about what I should do until I talked to my mother.
12	21	Distant	I often felt angry with my mother without knowing why.
13	14	Safe	I talked things over with my mother.
14	24	Parentified	It was hard for me to get on with my work if my mother had a problem.
15	30	Dependent	I felt it was best to depend on my mother.
16	7	Fearful	I had a terrible fear that my relationship with my mother would end.
17	29	Parentified	It made me feel important to be able to do things for my mother.
18	40	Dependent	I needed my mother to take care of me.
19	31	Distant	I wanted to get close to my mother, but I kept pulling back.
20	33	Safe	I usually discussed my problems and concerns with my mother.

- 40-item ASPA-SF(20-items about Father caregivers)

ASPA-SF Item#	ASPA Item#	ASPA scale	Item
21	55	Safe	I turned to my father for many things including comfort and reassurance.
22	48	Fearful	I felt abandoned when my father was away for a few days.
23	65	Parentified	I put my father's needs before my own.
24	53	Distant	I worried my father would let me down.
25	79	Dependent	I often felt too dependent on my father.
26	47	Fearful	I resented my father spending time away from me.
27	76	Safe	It was easy for me to be affectionate with my father.
28	58	Distant	I wish there was less anger in my relationship with my father.
29	70	Parentified	I sacrificed my own needs for the benefit of my father.
30	72	Dependent	I felt it was best to depend on my father.
31	59	Fearful	I got frustrated when my father left me alone.
32	66	Parentified	It was hard for me to get on with my work if my father had a problem.
33	56	Safe	I talked things over with my father.
34	63	Distant	I often felt angry with my father without knowing why.
35	82	Dependent	I needed my father to take care of me.
36	49	Fearful	I had a terrible fear that my relationship with my father would end.
37	75	Safe	I usually discussed my problems and concerns with my father.
38	67	Parentified	I enjoyed taking care of my father.
39	78	Distant	I felt there was something wrong with me because I was distant from my father.
40	83	Dependent	I was never certain about what I should do until I talked to my father.

