

## Emotion and Adjustment Outcomes in Domestic Infant Adoptees

Matthew Comeau Lyle

*University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

Dr. Harold Grotevant

*University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

Despite much research in the area of domestic infant adoption, there remains no reliable way to easily differentiate between those who become psychologically stable adolescents and those who experience psychological problems. The purpose of the study was to see whether positive and negative emotional expression is linked to problem behaviors and attachment quality in a sample of domestic infant adoptees, and therefore indicative of potential psychological disturbance. The available research suggests a correlation between positive emotional expression and utilization of effective, approach coping and negative emotion use and the employment of less effective, avoidant coping. This research seeks to see if this correlation is identified in an analysis of interviews conducted on adolescent aged domestic infant adoptees from the Minnesota-Texas Adoption Research Project (MTARP). Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) software was applied to these interviews, and the indicators of positive and negative emotional expression were compared with adoptees' problem behaviors on the Youth Self Report (YSR) and Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) and measures of parental attachment on the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA). Pearson correlations revealed that positive emotional use was weakly correlated (.18) with attachment to father on the IPPA. Negative emotional use was correlated with problem behaviors on the YSR ( $r = .48$ ), attachment to mother ( $r = -.34$ ) and attachment to father ( $r = -.30$ ) on the

IPPA. Results suggest that negative emotional use may be more important than positive in predicting problem behaviors and attachment in adolescence.

Contact Information:

Matthew Lyle:  
myle@student.umass.edu  
781-558-7038