

Romantic Attachment Styles amongst Emerging Adults in Osogbo Metropolis, Nigeria: The Roles of Family Communication Patterns and Parental Warmth

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ABSTRACT

Establishing stable romantic relationships is one of the major developmental tasks of emerging adults. Several ways exist in which people act when they are in a relationship or trying to establish stable relations with friends and significant others. These actions can be linked to their attachment styles, which are internal working models that have substantial influence on the success of their partnerships or relationships. Attachment is a deep, loving bond we have with special people in our life that causes us to feel joy when we connect with them and are reassured by their proximity in times of stress and it is developed from family environment and relationship with caregiver in childhood. Romantic attachment which is informed by childhood attachment consists of two dimensions: avoidance of intimacy, which is a general belief that others are unreliable and untrustworthy, and anxiety where concerns about abandonment, or general views that others could leave anytime, hence, believing that one is not loved, is the case. A romantic attachment that is characterized by low feelings of avoidance and anxiety is secure. A secure attachment style could promote more intimacy and emotional availability. In Nigeria, especially in Osogbo, insecure attachment style has been observed to affect a lot of romantic relationships, including marital relationships and not just relationships, but the personalities. Individuals feel anxious and unsure about the love of their partners. Hitherto, not many studies have investigated the effects of family communication patterns and parental warmth on romantic attachment styles amongst emerging adults in Nigeria. This study therefore examined the dynamics of the relationships of these variables among corps members in Osogbo Metropolis, of Osun State. Using purposive and convenient sampling technique, 383 respondents including 237 females and 146 males responded to the questionnaire. Hierarchical Regression, One-way ANOVA, and Independent T-test statistics were used to analyse the hypotheses generated. Results revealed that; Family communication patterns- conformity orientation predicted romantic attachment-related anxiety ($\beta = .20$, $p < .01$) while conversational orientations predicted romantic attachment avoidance ($\beta = -.43$, $p < .01$). Perceived Parental Warmth was significantly and negatively related to romantic attachment avoidance [$r(381) = -.25$, $p < .01$]. Gender and marital status predicted romantic attachment anxiety [$t(381) = 2.41$, $p < .05$], ($\beta = -.14$, $p < .05$). Males and single emerging adults were more prone to romantic attachment-related anxiety and romantic attachment avoidance.

Keywords: Family communication patterns, parental warmth, romantic attachment, emerging adults.

INTRODUCTION

One of the developmental tasks of emerging adults is establishing stable relationships such as friendships and romantic relationships. Establishing romantic relationships is one of the drives of emerging adults as they try to fit into the society. The term "Emerging Adulthood" is used to describe a period of development spanning from age 18 to 29, this is a phase experienced by most people in their twenties. The term "emerging adulthood" was initially defined by Arnett (2000), who referred to this stage as "a stage of psychosocial development". As we try to develop stable relationships people tend to act in peculiar ways. These actions are linked to their attachment styles. These attachment styles have significant influence on the duration, satisfaction, and overall success of the relationship.

An attachment is often characterized as an emotional relationship in which a person desires closeness to the attachment object and utilizes this link as a haven during times of distress and as a secure platform from which to explore the world. Most babies build their earliest bonds with their principal caretakers (Colin 1996; Szepeswol & Simpson, 2019). According to Bowlby, the attachment behavior of an infant is controlled by an inborn motivational system, the attachment behavioral system, which is designed by natural selection to ensure safety and survival (Maestre-Lorén et al., 2021). Hazan and Shaver (1987) observed that adult romantic relationships are characterized by patterns identical to infant-caregiver relationships. They discovered that when an adult's spouse is close, available, and attentive, they feel safer and more comfortable. In such cases, the partner might serve as a "safe haven" from which to explore the surroundings (or participate in creative initiatives for pleasure or business). When a person is worried, ill, or endangered, the spouse serves as a source of safety, comfort, and protection (Hazan & Shaver, 1990). Specifically, Hazan and Shaver (1987) argued that the major patterns of attachment described by Ainsworth (secure, anxious-ambivalent, and anxious-avoidant) were conceptually like the "love styles" observed among adults (Szepeswol & Simpson, 2019).

When individuals reach adulthood, they tend to structure their attachment behaviour around peers rather than their parents. It has been shown in research that as a relationship progresses, people are more likely to utilize their romantic partners as attachment figures, especially in partnerships lasting two years or longer (Hazan and Shaver 1987; Fraley, 2019).

Bartholomew (1990) (Maduakor et al., 2022) suggested that adult attachment was best described as varying along two dimensions; attachment-related anxiety and attachment-related avoidance. This reflects on individuals' perceptions of themselves, others, and relationships. Attachment-related anxiety refers to an adult's concern about whether their partner truly loves them. This indicates low self-worth and those who have a strong fear of their partner rejecting or abandoning them have a high score on this dimension (Fraley et al., 2015; Maduakor et al., 2022). Attachment-related avoidance relates to an adult's ability to be opened to others, as well as their trust and sense of being able to rely on others it represents individuals' high self-reliance. Those who score high on attachment-related avoidance are reluctant to open-up, possibly fear that their feeling of autonomy would be harmed because of their dependency. Individuals with secure attachment patterns score low on both attachment-related anxiety and avoidance (Fraley et al., 2015; Maduakor et al., 2022).

There is a popular belief that there are no individuals in this world, only family fragments. This concept represents the reality that our family relationships and experiences impact the trajectory of our lives and are carried with us for the rest of our lives (Segrin & Flora, 2018). Everyone that walks the face of the earth belongs to a family. Communication is the key needed for any relationship to function optimally. Communication is simply the means to express and relay information, but how communication can be used to do this differs and takes many forms. From actual verbal communication to sign language, this all allows individuals and communities to come together and share ideas, emotions, and sentiments. The power and importance of family communication in a family setting are something that should not be underestimated (Dyess, 2017).

Family Communication Patterns Theory (FCPT) is a general theory of family communication that focuses on parent-child communication and is concerned with establishing a shared social reality. It identifies basic processes of coming to a shared agreement that impacts not only concurrent communication behaviours but long-term information processing, psychosocial, and behavioural outcomes as well (Braithwaite et al., 2017). FCPT argues that family members develop relational schemas (i.e., mental representations of the self, others, and relationships) from recurrent and consistent family interactions, and these schemas direct individuals to manage personal and social interactions and relationships (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002; Young & Schrod, 2016). FCPT describes family communication along two dimensions, namely, conversation orientation: this is the extent to which families create an environment for all family members to participate in unrestrained interaction about a wide array of topics. Families that are high on this dimension, freely and spontaneously interact with each other without any limitations about time spent in discussing and areas discussed. Conformity orientation: this is the extent to which family communication enforces a climate of homogeneity of attitudes, values, and beliefs. Families on the high extreme of this dimension are characterized by interactions that emphasize a uniformity of beliefs and attitudes. Their interactions typically focus on harmony, avoidance of conflict, and the interdependence of family members (Jiao, 2021; Horstman et al., 2018; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002; Young & Schrod, 2016).

The interaction between parents and their children, as well as how these children were raised, has long been linked to the development of love relationships. Although most people create close love relationships in their early adult years, research reveals that the development of romantic intimacy features and qualities begins in childhood. The level and kind of attachment that children have with their mothers and fathers have been demonstrated to predict the quality of attachment that a child will have in romantic relationships as an adult (Mikulincer, 2006; Jiao, 2021). Warmth is an important aspect of parenting that leads to a child's well-being and can have a consequential effect on an adult romantic relationship (Pinquart, 2017). Warmth is expressed to the child through parenting behaviours including affection, comfort, care, nurturance, and support. Parental warmth is regarded to be the polar opposite of parental rejection (the lack or withdrawal of parental affection) and is an indicator of parents' love and acceptance of their children (Rohner, 2004; Rohner et al., 2012). Clinical and developmental psychologist, Diana Baumrind, defined parental warmth as the extent to which parents use nurturance, affection, involvement, and support in their child-rearing process (Baumrind, 1978). Therefore, this study seeks to understand romantic attachment in the context of family communication patterns and parental warmth.

Statement of the Problem

Relationships are anchors on which people rely in good and bad times. The relationship can be with a friend, family member, significant other, and so on. It becomes unsatisfying if one can't rely on a relationship that should be a safe haven or attain intimacy. In romantic relationships, partners who have an insecure attachment, be it avoidant or anxious, find it very difficult to be happy because they can't express themselves as they want to, or they are most anxious and uncertain of their partner's love for them. This avoidant form of attachment could lead to the partner avoiding confrontations or conflicts which are bound to happen in every romantic relationship. It has been observed that many emerging adults today especially females complain of not being able to properly solve conflicts with their romantic partner because they find them to be invulnerable or insensitive. Avoidant partners prefer to resolve conflicts with gifts, acts of service and physical touch rather than communicating about the problem and hence solve it with proper dialogue. This pattern of attachment is very burdensome and tiring. Another form of insecure attachment which is "anxious" also poses a huge problem in marriage, especially if one of the spouses has a secure attachment. This partner becomes tired of the continuous anxiety displayed by the insecure partner and the demand for reassurance of love, or the partner understands the situation and tries to work out the insecurities with the other partner.

The problem with an insecure style of attachment is that individuals often struggle to have meaningful romantic relationships with others as adults. Given the foregoing, this study seeks to examine the effects of family communication patterns, parental warmth, and some sociodemographic variables on emerging adults' (corps members) romantic relationships in Osogbo metropolis, Osun state. The results of this research will help to determine if indeed the independent variables (family communication patterns and parental warmth) are predictors of insecure attachment and if they are, the information can be used to educate couples on the risk of using a particular pattern of communication in the family and the effect of depriving a child of warmth (responsiveness, support). The result of this study will also increase the chances of marital stability and reduce divorce.

Conceptual Framework

The diagram below represents the conceptual framework of the variables. It informs how the variables (independent and dependent) in this study interact with each other and it aids in a better understanding of the variables.

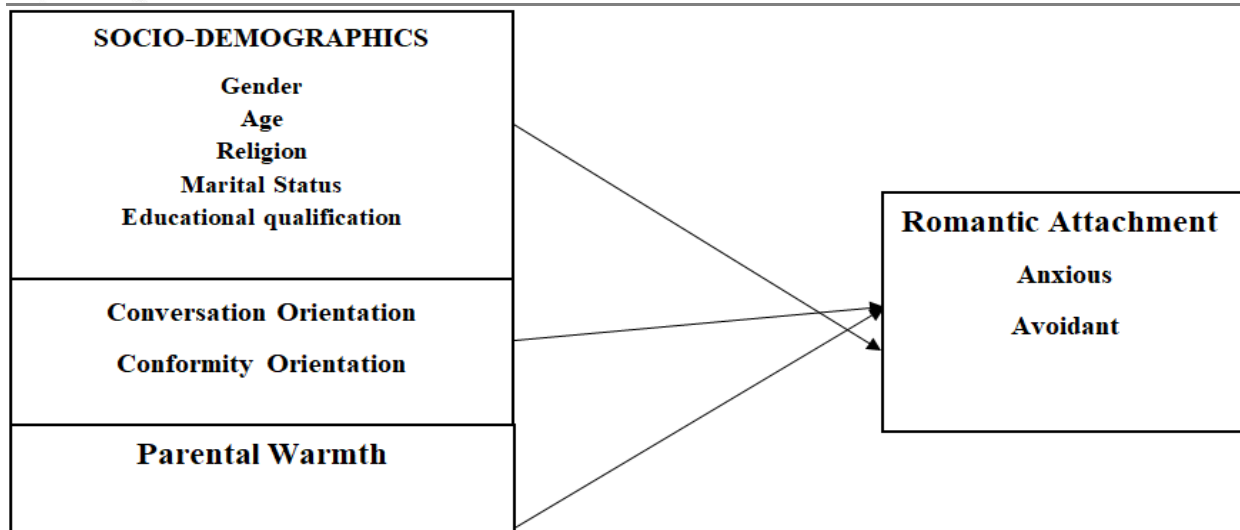


Figure 1: Conceptual framework showing the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

Figure 1 is the hypothesized relationship between socio-demographics, family communication patterns, and parental warmth with romantic attachment. According to this framework, there are two key psychological constructs and demographic variables that are hypothesized to predict the romantic attachment of emerging adults, which is the dependent variable in this study. The possible effects of all the variables on romantic attachment are therefore examined.

In view of the foregoing, the following hypotheses were generated:

Hypotheses

1. Family communication patterns (conversational orientation and conformity orientation) will significantly predict romantic attachment-related anxiety among the emerging adults (corps members) in Osogbo Metropolis, Osun State.
2. Parental warmth will significantly predict romantic attachment-related anxiety among emerging adults (corps members) in Osogbo Metropolis, Osun State.
3. Socio-demographic variables (gender, age, religion, marital status, educational qualification, and family structure) will significantly predict romantic attachment-related anxiety among emerging adults in Osogbo Metropolis, Osun State.
4. Family communication patterns (conversational orientation and conformity orientation) will significantly predict romantic attachment-related avoidance among the emerging adults (corps members) in Osogbo Metropolis, Osun State.
5. Parental warmth will significantly predict romantic attachment-related avoidance among emerging adults (corps members) in Osogbo Metropolis, Osun State.
6. Socio-demographic variables (gender, age, religion, marital status, educational qualification, and family structure) will significantly predict romantic attachment-related avoidance among emerging adults in Osogbo Metropolis, Osun State.

METHOD

Design

A cross-sectional and an ex-facto survey design was used in this study. The dependent variable is romantic attachment style, while the independent variables are family communication patterns and parental warmth.

Setting/Participants

The study was carried in Osogbo Metropolis, the state capital of Osun State, Nigeria. Two local governments make up Osogbo Metropolis: Olorunda and Osogbo Local Governments. The study took place in these two local government areas across Osogbo Metropolis Osun state. The NYSC (National Youth Service Corps) locations are housed in each local government area headquarters. It is at these headquarters participants were randomly selected. The researcher approached the participants during their weekly Community Development Service meeting. Since the exact population of corps members posted to Osun state are not easily accessible, the population was estimated and Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula for unknown populations was used to determine the sample size of this population. Convenient sampling technique was then employed in selecting 400 respondents from both local governments, out of which three hundred and eighty-three questionnaires were viable for analysis: male=116 (38.1%) and female= 237(61.9%) between 18 – 29 years (mean =25.7; SD =2.3).

Instruments

Data were gathered through a well-structured questionnaire for the emerging adults (corps members). The questionnaire comprised of three sections (Section A-D).

Sections A of the questionnaire comprised demographic variables- age, gender, religion, marital status, family structure, and educational qualifications.

Section B: Family communication Pattern was measured using Family Communication Pattern Scale, developed by Gupta and Geetika (2019). It consisted of 25 items. The instrument is rated on 5-point Likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree 2= Disagree 3= Undecided 4= Agree 5= Strongly Agree). It's divided into two subscales, including conversational orientation (item 1 -19), and conformity orientation (item 19-25). Sample items include, "My parents encourage me to challenge their opinions on any platform" – conversational orientation, "My parents make the final decision" – conformity orientation". The Cronbach's Alphas obtained in this study for the subscales are .92 (conversational orientation), .71 (conformity orientation). The interpretation was such that scores above and below the mean imply being high or low on either of the two orientation dimensions.

Section C: Parental Warmth was measured using items from perceived parental behavior Scale by Henry and Peterson (1995). It is rated on a four-point response pattern ranging from 1- Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Agree and 4-Strongly Agree. The perceived parental behavior scale yields a reliability coefficient of .73 equal length Spearman-Brown of .65 and Guttman Split-half of .65. The item includes; my parent seems to approve of me and the things I do etc. For this present study, the scale yields a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of .82.

Section D: The Experience in Close Relationship-Revised questionnaire by Fraley, R. C. et al (2000) is a 36-item scale that measures adult attachment. The ECR-R measures individuals on two subscales of attachment with avoidance and anxiety. In general, avoidant individuals find discomfort with intimacy and seek independence, whereas anxious individuals tend to fear rejection and abandonment. ECR-R Scale is measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1- Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3- Somewhat Disagree 4- Undecided 5- Somewhat Agree 6- Agree 7- Strongly Agree. The two subscales are anxiety attachment is, items 1 -18, and avoidance attachment, items 19- 36. Sample items include, "My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away."- anxiety attachment, "It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need."- avoidance attachment. For this present study the romantic attachment related anxiety subscale yields a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of .82 while the romantic attachment related avoidance subscale yields a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of .79.

Procedure

An identification and request letter were obtained from the researcher's institutions and addressed to the selected LGA to obtain approval for the distribution of the research questionnaires at the secretariat during the corps members' Community Development Service (CDS). In each location, the local government inspector (LGI) was informed of the intent and purpose of the research. Approval of the research process among corps members was

also sort from the LGI. The corps members were approached during their meeting in their CDS groups in the secretariat. Permission to carry out the research was also gotten from president of each of the CDS groups. Adequate rapport was created with the participants, the intent of the research was explained and there was an assurance of confidentiality. The questionnaires were filled entirely by the participants and the researcher waited to retrieve them back at the same instance. A total of 400 copies of the instrument were administered, 395 were retrieved and 383 were valid. This amount to a 95.75% response rate.

Data Analysis

To determine the extent and direction of relationships among the study variables, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis was used. The hypotheses were tested using hierarchical regression analysis, gender and family structure aspects of the socio-demographic factor were tested independently using independent t-test and one-way ANOVA respectively. All analyses were conducted with SPSS IBM 23.0v.

RESULTS

Table 1 Correlation Matrix showing the Relationships among Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Gender	1									
2. Age	-.08	1								
3. Religion	.05	-.08	1							
4. Marital Status	.26**	.17**	.11*	1						
5. Educational Qualification	-.03	-.07	.01	.04	1					
6. Conversational Orientation (FCP)	-.02	.10	-.07	-.06	-.03	1				
7. Conformity (FCP)	-.13*	.05	-.05	-.09	.01	.23**	1			
8. Parental Warmth	-.00	.20**	-.11*	-.00	-.10*	.60**	.05	1		
9. Attachment Related Anxiety (RA)	-.12*	-.03	-.01	-.16**	.03	.04	.21**	.04	1	
10. Attachment Related Avoidance (RA)	-.01	-.10	.08	-.08	-.01	-.41**	-.01	-.25**	.22**	1
Mean	-	25.69	-	-	-	56.81	16.01	9.19	54.98	63.84
SD	-	2.28	-	-	-	13.33	4.01	2.39	15.74	18.09

Note: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < .05$, $N = 383$, Gender: Male-1, Female-2; Religion: Christianity-1, Islam-2; Marital Status: Single-1, Married-2; Educational Qualification: First Degree/HND-1, Master Degree-2.

Table 1 indicated that gender and marital status have significant relationships with romantic attachment-related anxiety [$r(381) = -.12, p < .05$]; [$r(381) = -.16, p < .01$] respectively. The socio-demographic variables did not have significant relationship with romantic attachment-related avoidance. Table 1 above also indicated that family communication patterns: conformity orientation has a significant relationship with romantic attachment-

related anxiety [$r(381) = .21, p < .01$] while conversational orientation was not significant. It was also seen that a negative significant relationship occurred between conversational orientation and romantic attachment-related avoidance [$r(381) = -.41, p < .01$], such that increase in conversational orientation will lead to decrease in romantic attachment-related avoidance.

Furthermore, parental warmth was found to have a negative relationship with romantic attachment-related avoidance [$r(381) = -.25, p < .01$] such that increase in parental warmth will lead to decrease in romantic attachment-related avoidance. Religion and educational qualification had significant relationships with parental warmth [$r(381) = -.11, p < .05$]; [$r(381) = -.10, p < .01$] respectively, while parental warmth had a significant relationship with conversational orientation [$r(381) = .60, p < .01$].

Table 2 Hierarchical Regression showing Prediction of socio-demographic, family communication patterns, and parental warmth on Attachment Related Anxiety (RA) Amongst Emerging Adults (Corps Members) in Osogbo Metropolis, Osun State.

Variables	β	T	R	R ²	ΔR^2	df	F	p	ΔF
<i>Step 1</i>			.19	.03	-	5, 377	2.68	< .05	-
Gender	-.09	-1.64							
Age	-.01	-.09							
Religion	.01	.20							
Marital Status	-.14	-2.59*							
Educational Qualification	.04	.74							
<i>Step2</i>			.27	.07	.04	7, 375	4.15	< .01	7.60**
Gender	-.07	-1.25							
Age	-.01	-.25							
Religion	.02	.31							
Marital Status	-.13	-2.40*							
Educational Qualification	.03	.69							
Conversational Orientation (FCP)	-.01	-.14							
Conformity (FCP)	.20	3.83**							
<i>Step 3</i>			.27	.07	.00	8, 374	3.75	< .01	.97
Gender	-.07	-1.26							
Age	-.02	-.41							
Religion	.02	.39							
Marital Status	-.13	-2.41*							

Educational Qualification	.04	.77							
Conversational Orientation (FCP)	-.05	-.70							
Conformity (FCP)	.20	3.92**							
Parental Warmth	.06	.98							

Note: ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, $N = 383$

In the first step of the hierarchical analysis, marital status is the only socio-demographic factor that predicted romantic attachment-related anxiety ($\beta = -.14$, $p < .05$). which implies that married people experienced low anxiety in their marital relationships while single people experienced a high level of anxiety in their romantic relationships. This partially confirms hypothesis three.

From Table 2 above, step 2 showed that conformity orientation of the family communication pattern predicted romantic attachment-related anxiety ($\beta = .20$, $p < .01$) while the conversational orientation did not. As conformity orientation increases, romantic attachment-related avoidance also increases. This implies that protective family, in which obedience and acceptance of hierarchy are primary, with less value placed on communicating about reasons, norms, or motives in decisions, have a high tendency of making the children attach anxiously to their partners or significant others when they become adults. The result confirmed hypothesis 1. In the third step, romantic attachment-related anxiety was regressed on parental warmth which was found not to predict it: ($\beta = .06$, $p < .01$). Hence, hypothesis 2 was rejected.

Table 3 Hierarchical Regression showing Prediction of socio-demographic, family communication patterns, and parental warmth on Attachment Related Avoidance (RA) Amongst Emerging Adults (Corps Members) in Osogbo Metropolis, Osun State.

Variables	β	T	R	R ²	ΔR^2	df	F	p	ΔF
<i>Step 1</i>			.14	.02	-	5, 377	1.57	> .05	-
Gender	-.01	-.11							
Age	-.08	-1.51							
Religion	.08	1.57							
Marital Status	-.07	-1.36							
Educational Qualification	-.01	-.26							
<i>Step 2</i>			.44	.19	.17	7, 375	12.82	< .01	40.15**
Gender	.01	.16							
Age	-.04	-.84							
Religion	.06	1.26							
Marital Status	-.10	-1.98*							
Educational Qualification	-.02	-.51							
Conversational Orientation (FCP)	-.43	-8.96**							

Conformity (FCP)	.09	1.76							
Step 3			.44	.19	.00	8,374	11.22	< .01	.17
Gender	.01	.15							
Age	-.04	-.89							
Religion	.06	1.29							
Marital Status	-.10	-1.98*							
Educational Qualification	-.02	-.47							
Conversational Orientation (FCP)	-.45	-7.39**							
Conformity (FCP)	.09	1.80							
Parental Warmth	.03	.41							

Note: ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, $N = 383$

Table 3 reveals that in the first step of the analysis, the socio-demographic variables were not significant. However, in the second step of the model when the family communication patterns were introduced, marital status became significant ($\beta = -.10$, $p < .05$) indicating that the single emerging adults experienced romantic attachment-related avoidance. Conversational orientation (FCP) predicted romantic attachment-related avoidance ($\beta = -.43$, $p < .01$). This negative relationship implies that as conversational orientation increases, romantic attachment-related avoidance decreases. This open dialogue among family members in conversations reduces the tendency for children to be avoidant in their romantic attachment as adults. These results partially confirm hypothesis 6 and confirmed hypothesis 4. In step 3, parental warmth was found not to predict romantic attachment-related avoidance. Hence, hypothesis 5 was rejected.

Table 4 Summary of One-Way ANOVA showing the Influence of Family Structure on Romantic Attachment Style Amongst Emerging Adults (Corps Members) in Osogbo Metropolis, Osun State.

Dependent Variable	Source	SS	Df	MS	F	p
Attachment Related Anxiety (RA)	Between Groups	1136.41	3	378.80	1.54	> .05
	Within Groups	93521.50	379	246.76		
	Total	94657.91	382			
Attachment Related Avoidance (RA)	Between Groups	2435.88	3	811.96	2.51	> .05
	Within Groups	122584.08	379	323.44		
	Total	125019.96	382			

The ANOVA summary revealed that family structure had no significant influence on neither of the romantic attachment dimensions: anxiety-related [$F(3,379) = 1.54$, $p > .05$]; attachment-related avoidance [$F(3,379) = 2.51$, $p > .05$].

Table 5 Summary of Independent T-test showing the Influence of Gender on Romantic Attachment Style Amongst Emerging Adults (Corps Members) in Osogbo Metropolis, Osun State.

Dependent Variable	Sex	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Attachment Related Anxiety (RA)	Male	146	57.44	15.44	381	2.41	< .05
	Female	237	53.47	15.77			
Attachment Related Avoidance (RA)	Male	146	64.15	16.67	381	.27	> .05
	Female	237	63.65	18.95			

Based on literature, an independent t-test analysis was conducted for gender differences in romantic attachment relationships. Table 5 above indicated that gender differences in romantic attachment-related anxiety [$t(381) = 2.41, p < .05$] with mean values: male ($M=57.44, SD= 15.44$) significantly differ from and higher than their female counterparts ($M=53.47, SD= 15.77$). However, there was no gender differences in romantic attachment-related avoidance.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated family communication patterns and parental warmth as predictors of romantic attachment among emerging adults (corps members) in Osogbo metropolis, Osun state. The results in this study indicated that family communication patterns (conversational orientation and conformity orientation) predicted romantic attachment-related anxiety amongst emerging adults. Independently, conversational orientation did not predict romantic attachment-related anxiety. Consistently with previous studies (Hesse et al., 2016; Jiao, 2021; Rangarajan, 2008), the prediction that was found in this study were in the expected direction. i.e., conversational orientation did not predict, while conformity orientation predicted romantic attachment-related anxiety. This could be since emerging adults that grew up in a conversational oriented family were exposed to a more positive outlook towards relationships causing them to be more grounded and stable, exhibiting higher self-worth and a low to non-existent fear of abandonment. Those who grew up in an environment where expression of their thoughts and emotions was not encouraged, have now become accustomed to follow rules even when they don't agree with it. Growing up in such environment could lead the child to always want to do the needful to get accepted into the family, this in turn could roll over into romantic relationships, they become anxious and uncertain about whether they can truly count on their partners to be available and supportive when needed. They become excessively clingy and needy for attention and wants constant reassurance that they are loved. Moreso, Akintola (2025) concluded from her study that Nigerians generally are highly religious, a culture which could make authoritarian parenting style or conformity family communication pattern appear less harmful, but then, have their disadvantages. Doctrine such as "honouring your parents", and "children, obey your parents in the Lord" is promoted. The research of Rangarajan, 2008 also shows the link between conformity orientation and attachment insecurity. It reveals that family communication environment that emphasizes hierarchy, cohesion, uniformity of beliefs, and obedience to parents and adults inhibited the development of secure attachment orientations in both family and romantic contexts. Emerging adults from these families are more likely to endorse low self-worth, stay vigilant about losing their relationship, while at the same time lack trust in others and do not express exactly how they feel inside (Hesse et al., 2016).

It was hypothesised that parental warmth would predict romantic attachment-related anxiety among emerging adults, but this was rejected. Though limited research has been done to link parental warmth to romantic attachment, nevertheless, romantic attachment-related anxiety research by Millings et al., (2012) showed that an increase in both avoidance and anxiety was associated with lower levels of responsive caregiving. That is, when parents were less responsive towards their children, they had a higher tendency to be either avoidant or anxious in their romantic attachment. Also, Haverfield & Theiss (2016) observed that parental responsiveness was positively associated with adolescent emotion regulation and negatively associated with adolescent impulsivity. Parental warmth or responsiveness did not predict romantic attachment-related anxiety. Drawing from Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (which views a child's development as a complex system of

relationships that is affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment, from immediate settings of family and school to broad cultural values, laws, and customs) the parents are vital parts of a child's developmental process but as the child grows into an adolescent they begin to slowly detach from their parents and move towards their peers. They now worry more about how they are perceived and received by their peers. A large part of their emotional support comes from this group of people. According to longitudinal research on parental warmth in childhood predicting coping and well-being in adulthood, that was conducted by Karena et al., (2018), they found that higher levels of perceived parental warmth in childhood predicted the use of more problem-focused coping strategies during adulthood and parental warmth did not significantly predict emotion-focused coping strategies. As seen through literature, parental warmth is very important as it leads to long-term effects on the psychological well-being of a child across adulthood, but it is not an effect that is strong enough to predict the adolescent attachment style.

Hypothesis three about significant prediction of attachment related anxiety by sociodemographic variables was partially confirmed. Only marital status was significant, negatively predicting romantic attachment related anxiety. This implies that single emerging adults showed higher attachment related anxiety while the married showed lower attachment related anxiety. This result is consistent with the findings of Chopik et al., (2019), who observed from their study that being in a relationship predicted lower levels of anxiety and avoidance across adulthood. The degree to which an individual will exhibit anxious tendencies such as problems trusting others, excessive worry that people will abandon them etc. tends to reduce when they engage in a relationship and as they stay longer with their partner. A further gender analysis based on literature was done which confirmed significant prediction of romantic attachment related anxiety. It revealed that male emerging adults were higher on anxiety and attachment related avoidance than their female counterparts. This finding was not consistent with past literature that observed that males showed higher avoidance and lower anxiety than females (Del Giudice, 2011). Although Del Giudice, (2011) highlighted that gender differences vary across geographic regions.

It was also hypothesised that family communication patterns would predict romantic attachment-related avoidance of emerging adults, this was accepted. Although independently, conformity orientation did not predict romantic attachment-related avoidance, a negative association was observed between conversation orientation and attachment-related avoidance. According to Guerrero and Jones (2005) research on differences in conversational skill as a function of attachment style, the findings from their studies showed that self-reported romantic related attachment avoidance negatively correlated with expressiveness and other conversational orientation. This supports the findings of this study which says that conversational orientation has a negative prediction with romantic related avoidance.

The hypothesis that parental warmth would predict romantic attachment-related avoidance among emerging adults, was rejected. Although it did not predict romantic attachment-related avoidance, it, however, had a negative significant relationship with it. Haverfield & Theiss (2016) stated that the ways that parents engage with their children during interaction can shape a child's emotional and behavioural competence. Responsive parental communication enhances children's resilience by encouraging appropriate emotion regulation. Parents who demonstrate responsive communication patterns encourage children to self-regulate and be independent (Baumrind, 1971 as cited in Haverfield & Theiss, 2016).

Socio-demographic factors did not predict romantic attachment-related avoidance of emerging adults except for marital status which led to partial confirmation of the hypothesis. This implies that single emerging adults showed higher attachment related avoidance while the married folks showed lower attachment related avoidance. This result is consistent with the findings of Chopik et al., (2019) they observed that attachment avoidance decreased in a linear trajectory across the lifespan. Being in a relationship predicted lower levels of anxiety and avoidance across adulthood. This could be due to focus on career-and-care crunch that starts in late emerging adulthood for some as they approach established adulthood. Also, the support on the part of a spouse who is emotionally secured could have helped the avoidant partner to be more emotionally stable and available.

CONCLUSION

Results of this study support the notion that family communication environments are associated with communication behaviours in romantic adult relationships and related to insecure adult attachment. Findings

from this study is consistent with the research of Hazer and Shaver (1987) who conceptualized attachment to a romantic process. The way parents communicate with their children has implications to the way they will relate with others in their environment and with their future partners. Based on the findings of this study conversational orientation predicted only romantic attachment avoidance while conformity orientation predicted only romantic attachment anxiety. Either way a family communication environment that is extreme on either conversation or conformity orientation will trigger the development of unsecured attachment which has implications for attachment in emerging adulthood and adulthood. Parental warmth did not predict romantic attachment, but it was seen to have a relationship with romantic attachment avoidance, parents who demonstrate responsive communication patterns encourage children to self-regulate and be independent. Gender and marital status were also observed to predict romantic attachment anxiety. Males and single emerging adults were more prone to romantic attachment-related anxiety and romantic attachment-avoidance, hence the consideration for gender should be taken into cognizance.

Limitation of the Study

A longitudinal study would help to better understand the implication of family communication on romantic attachment amongst emerging adult and adults.

Consent

As per international standard or university standard, participants' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author.

Competing Interests

There are no competing interests.

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