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# INFLUENCE OF ATTACHMENT STYLES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADOLESCENTS FROM ANAMBRA STATE NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*This study was on the influence of attachment styles on the development of adolescents from Anambra State Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The area of the study was Anambra State Nigeria. The population of the study includes all the senior secondary year one students (SSI) in public schools in Anambra State during the 2024/2025 academic year totaling 38, 476 students. The sample size consisted of 3000 students drawn through multistage sample techniques and stratified based on gender and location in ratio of 1600 females and 1400 males. The questionnaire was a researcher development Profoma made up of four clusters to determine the influence of attachment styles on the development of adolescents from Anambra State. The reliability of the instrument was established through split half method and the results obtained were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha that yielded a reliability co0efficient (X) of 0.74. The instrument was administered through the help of nine research assistants who were briefed to facilitate the research. Ten questionnaires were returned unfilled reducing the gender sample size ratio to 1557 females to 1333 males. The data collected were analyzed using aggregate scores to answer research questions one. Check list was used to collect data for research question two and the analysis was done using pie chart. Concerning the check list, the items appeared in a yes or No format and the adolescences were asked to affirm those influences they received from their models. Average mean and standard deviation scores were used for research questions three and four. The findings revealed among others that about 27% of the adolescents indicated no attachment influence, 40% indicated fairly high attachment influences while about 32% among them revealed high attachment influences. The study further revealed that a greater percentage among them experiences disorganized attachment that leads to negative behaviors, psychopathology and mal-adjustment while only 162$^{0}$ of the chart revealed their influence as secured. The following recommendations among others were proffered, Parents are to monitor the friendship circles of their children, More counselors are needed in rural schools to cushion the gap.*

**KEYWORDS: Influence, Attachment Styles, Development, Parents, Adolescents, Friendship Circles.**

## INTRODUCTION

Socialization is the bedrock of acculturation received by every growing child. Okudo, Okwunalu and Nwankwo (2023) noted that proper socialization will accomplish acculturation and among other things in the life of any young child. This view was

collaborated by Mellisa et al (2016), Kumuyi (2016) and Lesmin and parker (2018). These noted that proper socialization enables acculturation. Literature has defined socialization as a process whereby a child is acquainted or familiarized with the norms, values and skills prevalent in the society. It is usually achieved through certain formal agents that have contacts with the adolescents. Such formal agents include, the parents, peers, adult members of the society, the mass media, school etc. the extent to which the acculturation is achieved depends on the degree or quality of attachment existing between the growing child and attachment figure (Model)

Attachment according to Worthy L.D et al (2020) is defined as a situation where the child used the primary care giver as a secure base from which to explore and when necessary as a haven of safety to secure comfort. Fraly, Rosmain eta al (2013( Rajesh (2023), Okudo, Obumse and Nwudu (2024) all collaborated this view stating that attachment refers to deep and enduring emotional bond that connects one person to another across time and space. It is an emotional bond between a child and the person who provides most of the care.

Generally, there are four different ways attachment could happen. These different ways are known as attachment styles. Okudo, Obumse, and Nwudu (2024) noted them to include the following, namely, secure style, avoidant style, resistant and disorganized patterns. Apart from the secure style that leads to positive behavior, the other three attachment styles, namely, avoidant, resistant and disorganized styles are known to lead to negative behaviors. Literature is in consensus affirming that disorganized styles of attachment have been associated with significant psychopathology and maladjustment among attaches. (Diane Benoit, 2023). Supporting this view further, Okudo, Obumse and Nwudu (2024) remarked that children experiencing disorganized or negative attachments are prone to stress, emotional problems, display of oppositional, hostile and aggressive behaviors and coercive styles of interactions. Furthermore, they maintained that attachment figure is one of the most emotional outcomes. In other words, stating that attachment figures could also impact positively on a child.

Based on the above, Ijzendoorn van Marinus (2022) stated that secure and healthy attachment are foundations that allow young growing children to explore the world to experience healthy adjustments, however once wrong models are experienced, deviations sets in, thereby affirming that attachment can lead an adolescence to either a positive or negative degree with respect to development.

Okudo, Okwunalu and Okafor (2023) view child development to involve biological, psychological and emotional changes that occur in human beings between birth and the conclusion of adolescence. This view was shared by Sarker (2017) who sees development as involving series of adaptations that enable social, emotional, cognitive and physical maturity in adolescence. It is a critical phase when the young child seeks to be autonomous and to emulate adult roles. They seek to extricate themselves from the overwhelming influence of parents. These influences as mentioned earlier are seen in their various domain of development such as physical, social, cognitive, psychological etc. however, in struggling to detach themselves from the traditional and primary proof of acculturation, the adolescents tend to fill the gap through different attachment figures that serve as models to them.

The term adolescents refers to the transition phase between childhood and adult hood, (Santruck, 2018; Okudo and Obumse, 2022) Stehlik, 2018; Mathieson & Benergee, 2011). Because it is a transition stage, it is a critical stage characterized by role crises, search for identity, quest for autonomy, changes in the body and ability to think abstractly. Ezebube and Emeka, 2019, Mallika and Radha, 2015). These inadvertently affects the entire disposition and approach of the adolescents to their environment and life situation to the extent that they seek for influences to enable the accomplishment of the set goal hence the reason for attachment. Furthermore it is also important to state that the quality of attachment received by an adolescent is greatly influenced by gender and location Okudo, Obumse and Nwudu stated that location and gender are strong influence in the outcome of socialization process and one of the avenues the above could occur is through attachment styles.

**Problem of the Study**

Literatures are topical indicating that value depletion, moral corrosion, unethical impunity etc characterized the perception of reality by the present day adolescents. According to Ifeakor and Akujieze (2018) Njoku (2015). The society of our time is replete with deviant behaviors and other poor achievements manifested grossly through examination mal-practices, forgery, sorting, disrespect for elders, cultism, truancy etc. these have been traced to several influences impacting on these adolescents development one among such influence is the model (attachments) that serve as reference point to them. Some of these models (attachment) figures tend to negative behaviors these children copy consequently the end up ma-adjusted, deviant and unstable. It is based on the above that the researcher sets out to determine how attachment styles influences the development of the adolescents from Anambra State of Nigeria.

**Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to determine the influence of attachment styles on the development of adolescents from Anambra State.

The study specifically sought to determine the following:

1. The general levels of attachments of adolescents from Anambra State
2. The styles of attachment prevalent among adolescents from Anambra State.
3. To determine the influence of gender on attachment styles of adolescents from Anambra State.
4. To determine the influence of location on the attachment styles of adolescents from Anambra State.

**Research Questions**

1. What are the general levels of attachments among adolescents from Anambra State?
2. What are the attachment styles prevalent among adolescents from Anambra State?
3. What is the influence of gender on the attachment styles of adolescents from Anambra State?
4. What is the influence of location on the attachment styles of adolescents from Anambra State?

**Method**

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The area of the study was Anambra State Nigeria. The population of the study includes all the senior secondary year one students (SSI) in public schools in Anambra State during the 2024/2025 academic year totaling 38, 476

students. The sample size consisted of 3000 students drawn through multistage sample techniques and stratified based on gender and location in ratio of 1600 females and 1400 males. The questionnaire was a researcher development Profoma made up of four clusters to determine the influence of attachment styles on the development of adolescents from Anambra State. The reliability of the instrument was established through split half method and the results obtained were analyzed using Cronbach's alpha that yielded a reliability co0efficient (X) of 0.74. The instrument was administered through the help of nine research assistants who were briefed to facilitate the research. Ten questionnaires were returned unfilled reducing the gender sample size ratio to 1557 females to 1333 males. The data collected were analyzed using aggregate scores to answer research questions one. Check list was used to collect data for research question two and the analysis was done using pie chart. Concerning the check list, the items appeared in a yes or No format and the adolescences were asked to affirm those influences they received from their models. Average mean and standard deviation scores were used for research questions three and four.

Concerning the analysis of research question one using aggregate scores, the maximum obtainable score from the items measuring the general attachment levels of the adolescent is an aggregate score of 60 points. The aggregate scores were further grouped into a range of (5) five interval scale to obtain 12 aggregate interval scales.
Ranges of scores from the first to the fourth on the interval scales were considered as very poor attachment, fifth and sixth as poor attachment,. Seventh and eight as fairly high attachment nine and tenth as high attachment while 11 and 12 as very high attachment.

**Results**
The data collected were analyzed and summaries presented in a table form to highlight the major findings

Research question one: What are the general levels of attachments among adolescents **from** Anambra State

**Table 1: Aggregate scores on adolescents rating of their levels of academic behaviors**

| Aggregate Scores at Interval Range | Points at Interval Scale | No of Students | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0 – 5 | 1 | - | VP |
| 6 – 10 | 2 | - | VP |
| 11 – 15 | 3 | - | VP |
| 16 – 20 | 4 | 360 | VP |
| 21 – 25 | 5 | 230 | P |
| 26 – 30 | 6 | 239 | P |
| 31 – 35 | 7 | 524 | FH |
| 36 – 40 | 8 | 687 | FH |
| 41 – 45 | 9 | 230 | H |
| 46 – 50 | 10 | 270 | H |
| 51 – 55 | 11 | 210 | VH |
| 56 – 60 | 12 | 240 | VH |

n = 2990

VP = Very Poor
P = poor
FH = Fairly high
H = high
VH = very high

The table one above revealed the adolescents rating of their levels of attachment generally. Interestingly the table indicated no scores for interval scales, 1,2,and 3 but showed that interval scale (4) has 260 students, 239 students scored at the interval scale (5), 236 scored on interval scale (6), 524 at interval scale (7), 687 at interval scale (8), 230 and 270 at interval scale (9) and 10 respectively whole 210 and 240 students scored their attachment at the (11 and 12) points respectively on the interval scales. The table further revealed that 360 students indicated very poor attachment, 469 indicated poor attachment, 1211 showed fairly high attachment, 500 indicated high attachment while 450 showed very high attachment.

**Research question two:** What are the attachment styles prevalent among adolescents from Anambra State Nigeria

**Table Two:** A pie chart on different attachment styles prevalent among tertiary students from Anambra State.

| S/N | ITEMS |
|---|---|
| 1. | Support you to freely express your emotions |
| 2. | Makes you feel secure |
| 3. | Responds to distress |
| 4. | Receives comfort from care giver |
| 5. | Makes you happy |
| 6. | Experiences stress from attachment |
| 7. | Ridicules you |
| 8. | Ignores you |
| 9. | Gets annoyed at you |
| 10. | Coerce you into certain behaviors |
| 11. | Makes you exhibit hostile behavior |
| 12. | Displays oppositional behaviors |
| 13. | Insensitive to your needs |
| 14. | Makes you worry about his needs |

n = 2990

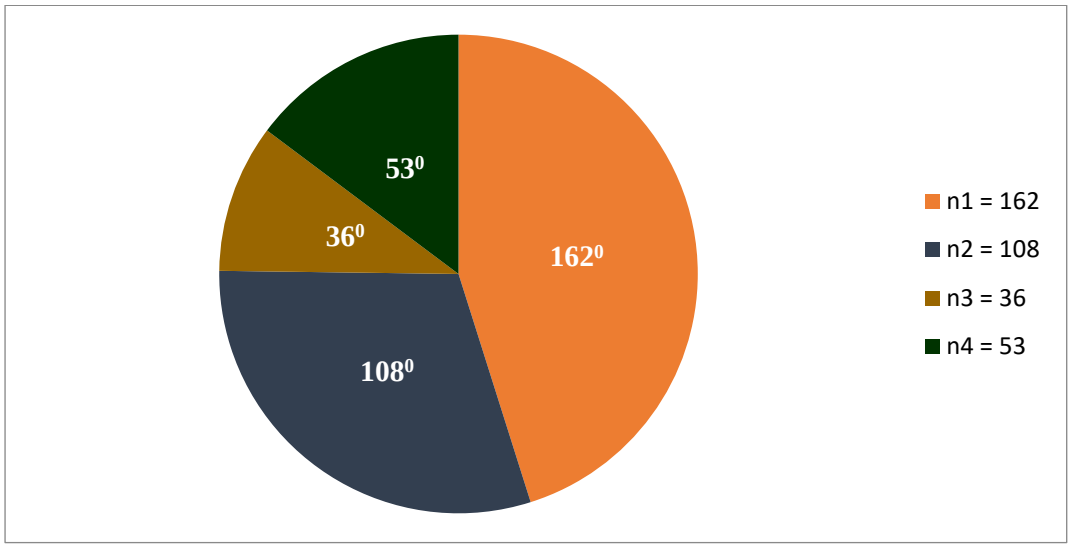
N1 = Secure
N2 = Avoidant
N3 = Resistant
N4 = Disorganized

$$N1 = \frac{1346}{2990} \times 360 = \frac{484{,}560}{2990} = 162^0$$

$$N2 = \frac{897}{2990} \times 360 = \frac{322{,}920}{2990} = 108^0$$

$$N3 = \frac{448}{2990} \times 360 = \frac{161{,}280}{2990} = 53^0$$

$$N4 = \frac{299}{2990} \times 360 = \frac{107{,}640}{2990} = 36^0$$




The table two above is a pie chart showing the adolescents rating of their styles of attachments. Interestingly about 1346 students constituting about $162^0$ of the chart rated their attachment styles to be secured, 897 of the sample size constituting about $108^0$ rated their attachment as avoidant, 448 students making up $53^0$ of the chart views their attachment as resistant while 299 students among the sample size constituting $36^0$ of the chart rated their attachment as disorganized.

**Research Question Three**: What is the influence of gender on the attachment styles of adolescents for Anambra State, Nigeria.

Table Three: Average means and standards deviation scores table of influence of gender on the attachment – styles of adolescents from Anambra State.

| **Source of Variable** | **N** | $\bar{x}$ | **SD** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Males | 1333 | 2.95 | 0.67 |
| Females | 1557 | 2.98 | 0.71 |

n = 2990

The Table above revealed the adolescents rating of the influence of gender on their attachment styles. The table revealed that male adolescents had an average mean score of 2.95 and standard deviation scores of 0.67 while female adolescents rated theirs as 2.98 and 0.71 for average mean scores and standard deviation respectively.

**Research Question Four**: What is the influence of location on the attachment styles of adolescents for Anambra State, Nigeria.

Table Four: Average means and standards deviation mean scores table of influence of location on the attachment – styles.

| Source of Variable | N | $\bar{x}$ | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| Urban | 1789 | 3.02 | 0.7 |
| Rural | 1201 | 2.74 | 0.67 |

n = 2990

The Table four above revealed the adolescents rating of the influence of location on their attachment styles. The table revealed that the urban adolescents (1789) rated their average influence as 3.02 with a standard deviation of 0.72 while the rural adolescents (1201) rated theirs as 2.74 and 0.67 for average mean scores and standard deviation scores respectively.

**Discussion of Findings**

The study investigated the influences of attachment styles on the development of adolescents from Anambra State. The findings of the study were discussed in line with the specific purpose of the study which sought to determine the general levels of attachment of the adolescents, the prevalent attachment styles among the adolescents and the influence of gender and location on the attachment styles of the adolescents.

Concerning the general levels of attachment of the adolescents as was indicated by table one, it was discovered that the adolescents in rating their general levels of attachment revealed that about 360 students constituting 12% of the sample size indicated their attachment to be very poor, about 469 students consisting about 15.7% of the sample size indicated poor attachment, 1211 students representing 40.50% showed fairly high attachment, 500 students making up about 16.7% indicated good attachment level while 450 students representing 15% showed very high attachment. The findings further revealed that about 27.70% of adolescents from Anambra State had poor or no attachment, 40.50% indicated fairly high attachment while 31.70% indicated very high or attachment influence.

On the styles of attachment prevalent among the adolescents from Anambra, the table two, disclosed through pie charts revealed that secure attachment occupied 162% degree while avoidant, resistant and disorganized attachment styles occupied $108^0$, $53^0$ and $36^0$ respectively. A major proportion ($162^0$) view their attachment styles as secured, by affirmed item variables such as, supports you to freely express your emotions, makes you feel secure responds to distress, makes you happy etc. These according worthy L. O. et al (2020); Rajesh (2023) Okudo, Obumse and Nwudu (2023), Daine Benoit (2023) stated that attachment figures especially when they impact positive values in the life of the attachment are important predictors of child's later life development. Ijzendoon van Marius (2020) stated that secure attachments are healthy foundations that allow growing children experience healthy adjustment and development.

On the other hand, avoidant, resistant and disorganized pattern of attachment occupied $108^0$, $53^0$ and $36^0$ respectively. These rated their styles of attachment using items variables such as, experiencing stress from the attachment, ridicules you, ignores you, makes you exhibit coercive and oppositional behaviors etc. the above cited features are negative values and according to Diane Benoit (2023); Okudo, Obumse and Nwudu (2024), children experiencing

such kinds of negative attachment are often tilted to psychopathology and other forms of negative influences consequently laying wrong foundations for development.

With respect to the influence of gender on the attachment styles of the adolescents addressed by table three which revealed an average mean score (x) of 2.95 for 1333 males and 2.98 for 1557 females at 0.67 and 0.7 average standard deviation, it could be inferred that the attachment scores of both male and female adolescent from Anambra state is high although with a value of (0.03) difference between the males and females consequently the females could be said to have higher attachment than the males.

Finally the influence of location on the attachment styles of the adolescents was disclosed by table four. It revealed that urban adolescents (1789) rated their attachment average scores as 3.02 and a standard deviation of 0.72 while rural adolescents (1201) placed theirs at 2.74 and a standard deviation score of 0.67 thus conceding to a wide gap of (0.28) difference between.

**Conclusion**

The study determined the influence of attachment styles on the development of the adolescents from Anambra State Nigeria. The findings revealed that about 27% of the adolescents indicated no attachment influence, 40% indicated fairly high attachment influences while about 32% among them revealed high attachment influences. The study further revealed that a greater percentage among them experiences disorganized attachment that leads to negative behaviors, psychopathology and mal-adjustment while only $162^0$ of the chart revealed their influence as secured. Apart from the above, the study also revealed that location and gender had strong attachment influences on the development of the adolescents.

**Recommendation**s

1. Parents are to monitor the friendship circles of their children.
2. More counselors are heeded in rural schools to cushion the gap.

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