PARENTAL ATTACHMENT AS A CORRELATE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS' ACADEMIC AND EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENTS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated parental attachment as a correlate of primary school pupils' academic and emotional adjustments in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study while two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. A correlational research design was adopted for the study.The population of the study consisted of all the 37,190 primary five pupils in the 21 LGEAs in Anambra State. The sample size comprises 400 primary five pupils using the multi-stage sampling technique. Data for this study was collected by means of structured questionnaire. The first instrument was adopted and it is titled The Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) developed by Parker, Tupling and Brown (1979) and the second instrument titled Questionnaire on Primary School Pupils' Adjustment" (QPSPA) was developed by the researcher. The PBI has been shown to have satisfactory construct and convergent validity and to be independent of mood effects (Parker, 1983). QPSPA was validated through face and content validity. In the original study of Parker, Tupling and Brown (1979), the PBI possessed good internal consistency and re-test reliability. The three clusters of QPSPA was subjected to test of internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha method, and reliability values of 0.77, 0.78 and 0.81 were obtained. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer research questions while linear regression was used to test null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. The findings revealed that there is a strong positive relationship between parental attachment and primary school pupils' academic and emotional adjustment in Anambra State. Based on the findings, it was recommended amongst others that primary schools in Anambra State should actively encourage and facilitate parental involvement in their children's education. This can include regular parent-teacher meetings, workshops on

effective parenting strategies, and providing resources for parents to support their children's learning at home.

***Keywords**: Parenting, Parent Attachment, Academic Adjustment, Emotional Adjustment*

Introduction

The interplay between primary education and parenting is crucial for the holistic development of children. Parenting involves the practices, behaviors, and strategies parents use to nurture, educate, and support their children. Parenting is the process of raising and nurturing children from infancy through adulthood, with the goal of supporting their physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development. It involves more than just providing basic needs like food, shelter, and clothing. It also includes guidance, discipline, love, and opportunities for growth. An effective parenting encompasses emotional support, discipline, involvement, and fostering a conducive learning environment. Effective parenting is crucial during the primary school years, a period characterized by significant developmental changes (Omoteso, Oyetoro and Banjoko, 2020). Parents play a significant role in shaping the development of their children, especially during their formative years in primary school. Parenting, particularly in the context of primary school pupils, encompasses the practices, behaviours, and strategies that parents employ to raise and support their children (Omoteso, Oyetoro and Banjoko, 2020). Securely attached parents provide a safe environment for their children to explore, support their emotional needs, and navigate challenging situations.

Attachment is basically seen as a form of long-term or short-term interpersonal relationship that exists between human beings. Attachment is a form of secure relationship that goes on between the children and their caregivers. According to Ohaka and Kemjika (2019), attachment is a bond formed between one person or animal and another, a bond that endures over time. The behavioural hallmark of attachment is the desire to gain and maintain proximity to the object of attachment, which can range from close physical contact to other situations. To the researcher, attachment refers to the emotional bond that forms between a child and their parents or primary caregiver. This bond plays a crucial role in the child's social, emotional and cognitive development. Attached children display visible signs of attachment, such as warm greetings, stretching out arms, and active contact when picked up. The primary objects of attachment are the objects that calm and protect the child from fear during strange events or unfamiliar situations. Attachment often forms naturally through closeness with each other, but it can develop naturally over time. Children who develop a strong need to remain near their parents are more likely to survive physically and psychologically (Rehman and Younus, 2016).

Parental attachment has to do with the secure relationship that exists between the children and their parents. The parent could be the mother, father or both parents. Parental attachment has to do with the philosophy that determines the bodily closeness as well the touches that spring up in course of raising the child (Nnamani, Idoko, Onuigbo and Eze, 2020). According to Ebimoboere and Udochi (2021) parental attachment is the aspect of the parent-child relationship that focuses

on the emotional bond and the sense of security it provides to the child. It involves consistent caregiving behaviors that meet the child's emotional and physical needs, fostering a secure attachment. This bond is foundational for the child's sense of security, shaping their ability to explore the world, form relationships, and develop emotionally and socially. Operationally, parental attachment refers to the emotional bond that forms between a parent and child, which significantly impacts the child's development across various domains. Parental attachment is a crucial aspect of a child's development. It involves sensitivity, responsiveness, consistency, emotional support, and positive interactions (Nnamani et al., 2020). Sensitivity and responsiveness help parents recognize and respond appropriately to their child's needs, fostering a secure attachment. consistency and reliability provide a predictable environment, fostering trust and confidence in caregivers. Emotional support, including physical closeness, comforting words, and empathy, helps children develop emotional regulation skills. Positive interactions, such as play, shared activities, and verbal communication, strengthen the attachment bond, promoting mutual enjoyment and reinforcing the emotional connection between parent and child (Ehibudu and Obikoya, 2017).

The types of parental attachment as reviewed by Ebimoboere and Udochi (2021) and Gates and Jersild (2020) are secure attachment, insecure-avoidant attachment, insecure resistant (ambivalent) attachment; and disorganized attachment. Secure Attachment is characterized by children feeling safe and confident in their caregiver's availability and responsiveness. These children explore their environment freely when the caregiver is present but seek comfort from the caregiver when distressed (Gates and Jersild, 2020). According to Bin-Bin (2017) insecure-avoidant attachment are set of children who tend to avoid or ignore their caregiver, showing little emotion when the caregiver departs or returns. This style often develops when caregivers are consistently unresponsive or dismissive. Bin-Bin further addressed that insecure-resistant (ambivalent) attachment children are often anxious and clingy, showing intense distress when separated from the caregiver and ambivalence when the caregiver returns. This can result from inconsistent caregiving. Disorganized attachment is a style that is marked by lack of clear attachment behaviour. Children may exhibit a mix of avoidant and resistant behaviors, often stemming from frightening or erratic caregiving (Ebimoboere and Udochi, 2021). It is important to note that when children have a strong bond with their parents, they are more likely to feel secure, supported, and loved, which contributes to their overall well-being and success in school. This explains how important pupils need to adjust when it comes to parental attachment because adjustment encompasses adapting to new circumstances, regulating emotions, and interacting effectively with others.

The concept of adjustment is essential for understanding how people cope with life changes and challenges (Lazarus, 2016). In the opinion of Santrock (2016) adjustment is the degree to which extent one can cope with the academic and social demands of the school environment. It includes adapting to the school setting, meeting academic requirements, and developing satisfactory relationships with peers and teachers. Contextually, adjustment is the process by which individuals achieve a state of balance between their needs and the demands of their environment. Primary school pupils' adjustment therefore refers to the process by which students navigate and adapt to the various academic, emotional, and social demands of their school environment (Segal, Glenn and Robinson, 2019). Operationally, it involves a combination of skills, behaviours, and

attitudes that enable pupils to effectively cope with challenges, interact positively with others, and achieve academic success. In the school context, adjustment is pivotal for pupils to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally (Ebimoboere and Udochi, 2021). Just as people adjust socially, emotionally, or psychologically, pupils must adjust academically.

Academic adjustment refers to pupils' ability to meet academic demands, including performance, engagement, and motivation. Successful academic adjustment is indicated by good grades, positive attitudes towards school, and active participation in learning activities (Eccles and Roeser, 2019). Dotterer and Wehrspann (2016) explained that academic adjustment refers to a student's ability to meet academic expectations and requirements in their educational setting. Dotterer and Wehrspann (2016) stressed further that it involves regular attendance, effective time management, understanding the curriculum, achieving academic goals, seeking help when needed, and developing a positive attitude towards learning and motivation to succeed academically. When students are emotionally adjusted (calm, resilient, confident), they can handle academic pressures like tests, deadlines, and competition more effectively.

Emotional adjustment involves the regulation of emotions and the development of coping mechanisms to manage stress and challenges. Indicators of good emotional adjustment include low levels of anxiety and depression, high self-esteem, and the ability to cope with setbacks (Ahn& Lee, 2016). Emotional adjustment is a student's ability to recognize, understand, and regulate their emotions in response to stressors. It involves self-awareness, effective coping strategies, resilience, self-esteem, and seeking support from trusted adults or peers. Key aspects include self-expression, resilience, confidence, and navigating social interactions and academic pressures with confidence (Webster and Reld, 2018). Children with secure attachments typically experience higher academic motivation and engagement. Securely attached children view their parents as a reliable source of support, which fosters a positive attitude toward learning and school (Dearing, McCartney& Taylor, 2017). They are more likely to persist in challenging tasks and exhibit higher levels of curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. Secure attachment enhances children’s ability to regulate their emotions and behaviors, making them more resilient to academic stress. This emotional stability allows them to concentrate better, engage in class activities, and develop effective study habits (Cassidy, Stern, Mikulincer, Martin, & Shaver, 2018). According to Thompson (2019), children with secure attachments are more likely to develop positive social skills, such as empathy, cooperation, and effective communication.

In the context of primary education, the quality of parental attachment can significantly influence pupils' academic, emotional, and social adjustments. Anambra State, Nigeria, with its unique cultural and socio-economic dynamics, provides a compelling backdrop for examining these correlations. It is therefore against this background that this study seeks to determine parental attachment as correlates of primary school pupils’ academic and emotional adjustments in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

The reality is that many primary school pupils in Anambra State do not have the level of parental attachment necessary for optimal academic, emotional, and social adjustments. Factors such as parental work commitments, economic constraints, and lack of education on the importance of parental involvement may hinder parents from actively participating in their children's schooling and emotional development. This lack of parental attachment can have detrimental effects on primary school pupils, leading to academic underachievement, emotional instability, and poor social skills. Without a secure attachment to their parents, children may struggle to form healthy relationships, regulate their emotions, and excel academically.

The researchers observed that many primary school pupils in Anambra State struggle with academic engagement and performance. The lack of secure parental attachment may contribute to difficulties in maintaining motivation, concentration, and perseverance in school tasks. Without the emotional support and encouragement from parents, children may find it challenging to develop effective study habits and a positive attitude toward learning, leading to lower academic achievement. More so, it is observed that many children in Anambra State experience difficulties in forming and maintaining positive peer relationships. Insecure attachment can impair the development of social skills such as empathy, cooperation, and effective communication. Children who do not receive adequate emotional support from their parents may struggle with social integration, leading to issues such as peer rejection, bullying, and social isolation. Therefore, there is a pressing need to investigate the correlation between parental attachment and primary school pupils' academic, emotional, and social adjustments in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the parental attachment as correlates of primary school pupils' academic, emotional and social adjustment in Anambra Sate. Specifically, the study set to determine:

1. The relationship between parental attachment and primary school pupils' academic adjustment in Anambra State
2. The relationship between parental attachment and primary school pupils' emotional adjustment in Anambra State

Research Questions

1. The relationship between parental attachment and pupils' academic adjustment in Anambra State?
2. The relationship between parental attachment and pupils' emotional adjustment in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between parental attachment and pupils' academic adjustment in Anambra State

2. There is no significant relationship between parental attachment and pupils' emotional adjustment in Anambra State

Theoretical Underpinnings

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory, proposed by British psychologist John Bowlby in the mid-20th century, is a prominent developmental theory that focuses on the importance of early interactions between infants and their caregivers in shaping the individual's socio-emotional development. The theory suggests that the quality of these early attachment relationships influences the individual's social and emotional relationships throughout their lifespan.

In its original form, attachment theory is based on several key principles. The first and most fundamental concept is the idea of the attachment bond between the infant and their primary caregiver, usually the mother. Bowlby believed that this bond serves as a secure base from which the infant can explore and interact with the world around them. The quality of this attachment bond is determined by the caregiver's responsiveness and sensitivity to the infant's needs and cues. Bowlby identified four main attachment styles that infants may develop based on their experiences with their caregivers: secure attachment, insecure-avoidant attachment, insecure-resistant attachment, and disorganized attachment. A secure attachment style is characterized by a child who feels secure in the presence of their caregiver and is able to use them as a source of comfort and support. In contrast, insecure attachment styles are associated with difficulties in seeking comfort and maintaining a sense of security in the caregiver's presence.

One of the strengths of attachment theory is its emphasis on the importance of early relationships in shaping human development. Research has consistently shown that secure attachments are associated with positive outcomes in areas such as emotional regulation, social relationships, and academic achievement. The theory has also been influential in informing parenting practices and interventions aimed at improving attachment relationships between children and their caregivers.

In relation to this study, attachment theory posits that a secure attachment bond with caregivers fosters a child's sense of security, self-regulation, and exploration. In the context of the study, primary school pupils who have secure attachments to their parents may be more likely to display positive academic adjustment, such as higher levels of motivation, engagement in learning, and academic achievement. The study may find that children with secure attachments are more confident in their abilities, seek help when needed, and have better concentration in school, leading to improved academic performance. More so, children with secure attachment to their parents are more likely to develop a strong sense of self-worth, emotional resilience, and positive coping strategies. The study may find that primary school pupils with secure attachments exhibit lower levels of emotional distress, anxiety, and behavioral issues, as they feel emotionally supported and safe in their relationships with their parents.

Methodology

Research Design: A correlational research design was adopted for the study.

Population of the Study: The population of the study consisted of all the 37,190 primary five pupils in the 21 LGEAs in Anambra State

Sample and Sampling Techniques: The sample size comprises 400 primary five pupils. The multi-stage sampling technique was used to derive the sample size.

Instrument for Data Collection: Data for this study was collected by means of structured questionnaire. The first instrument was adopted and it is titled The Parental Bonding Instrument (PBI) developed by Parker, Tupling and Brown (1979) and the second instrument titled Questionnaire on Primary School Pupils' Adjustment" (QPSPA) was developed by the researcher. The Parental Bonding Instrument (Parker, Tupling, & Brown, 1979) consists of two scales termed 'care' and 'overprotection' or 'control', measure fundamental parental styles as perceived by the child. There are 25 item questions, including 12 'care' items and 13 'overprotection' items. PBS was rated on a scale of 0 = very like; 1 = moderately like; 2 = moderately unlike; 3 = very unlike. The second instrument titled QPSPA was developed by the researcher. The instrument is sub-divided into three clusters in line with the research questions. The instrument was structured on a 4-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) with nominal values 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively.

Validation of the Instrument: The PBI has been shown to have satisfactory construct and convergent validity and to be independent of mood effects (Parker, 1983). The second instrument titled Questionnaire on Primary School Pupils' Adjustment" (QPSPA) was validated through face and content validity by three experts.

Reliability of the Instrument: In the original study of Parker, Tupling and Brown (1979), the PBI possessed good internal consistency and re-test reliability. The three clusters of QPSPA was subjected to test of internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha method, and reliability values of 0.77, 0.78 and 0.81 were obtained

Method of Data Analysis: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was used to answer research questions 1 and 2while linear regression was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. In interpreting the values of the null hypotheses, when p-value is less than or equal to 0.05 ($p \leq 0.05$), the null hypothesis was rejected and when p-value is greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$), the null hypothesis was not rejected. All analysis was done with the application of a computer software programme: Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.

Results and Discussions

Table 1: Pearson r on the relationship between parental attachment and pupils' academic adjustment in Anambra State

Sources of variance	N	Parental attachment (r)	Acad. Adjustment (r)	Remark
Parental attachment	400	1.00	0.66	
				Strong positive relationship
Academic adjustment	400	0.66	1.00	

Table 1 shows that there is a strong positive relationship of 0.66 existing between parental attachment and pupils' academic adjustment in Anambra State.

Table 2: Pearson r on the relationship between parental attachment and pupils' emotional adjustment in Anambra State

Sources of variance	N	Parental attachment (r)	Emotional Adjustment (r)	Remark
Parental attachment	400	1.00	0.73	
				Strong positive relationship
emotional adjustment	400	0.73	1.00	

Table 2 shows that there is a strong positive relationship of 0.73 existing between parental attachment and pupils' emotional adjustment in Anambra State.

Table 3: Linear regression on parental attachment and pupils' academic adjustment in Anambra State

				Std. Error	Change Statistics				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.661[a]	.437	.414	12.63073	.000	14.061	1	398	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), academic adjustment

Table 3 shows that the adjusted r^2 value of 41.4% of the variance in pupils' academic adjustment can be explained by parental attachment. More so, at 0.05 alpha level, $t(1, 398) = 14.061$, $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is significant relationship between parental attachment and pupils' academic adjustment in Anambra State.

Table 4: Linear regression on parental attachment and pupils' emotional adjustment in Anambra State

				Std. Error		Change Statistics			
		R	Adjusted	of the	R Square	F			Sig. F
Model	R	Square	R Square	Estimate	Change	Change	df1	df2	Change
1	.731[a]	.534	.521	12.60478	.005	9.502	1	398	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), emotional adjustment

Table 4 shows that the adjusted r^2 value of 52.1% of the variance in pupils' emotional adjustment can be explained by parental attachment. More so, at 0.05 alpha level, $t(1, 398) = 9.502$, $p<0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between parental attachment and pupils' emotional adjustment in Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

The finding in research question one revealed that there was a strong positive relationship between parental attachment and pupils' academic adjustment in Anambra State. This finding agreed with that of Obi, Nneka and Chukwudike (2020) that parents contributes positivelyon their children academic achievement in secondary schools. This finding also agreed with that of Oyo-Ita and Bassey (2017) that parent-child communication and parental involvement in school activities significantly influenced students' academic achievement in biology.On the other hand, this finding opposed the finding of Majimbo (2017) that there was a weak positive correlation between academic performance and secure attachment style and a negative correlation between academic performance and insecure attachment style. The difference between both findings could be as a result of geographical change. The corresponding hypothesis also revealed that there was a significant relationship between parental attachment and pupils' academic adjustment in Anambra State. This finding supported the finding of Majimbo (2017) that there is a significant influence between secure attachment style and academic performance of students in High Cost private schools.

The finding in research question two revealed that there was a strong positive relationship between parental attachment and pupils' emotional adjustment in Anambra State. This finding was in line with the finding of Oparaugo et al., (2023) that parent-child relationship influences the creativity and psychological adjustment ofsecondary school students. Also, the study of Nnamani et al., (2020) highlighted that there is a positive relationship between parental attachment and emotional adjustment of primary school pupils' school achievement.The corresponding hypothesis

revealed that there was a significant relationship between parental attachment and pupils' emotional adjustment in Anambra State. This finding was in line with the study of Ohaka and Kemjika (2019) that parental attachment and emotional competence have a positive significant high relationship with psychological well-being of the students in Rivers State.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that there is a strong positive relationship between parental attachment and pupils' academic adjustment and emotional adjustment in Anambra State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Primary schools in Anambra State should actively encourage and facilitate parental involvement in their children's education. This can include regular parent-teacher meetings, workshops on effective parenting strategies, and providing resources for parents to support their children's learning at home.
2. Implementing parenting education programs that focus on the importance of emotional attachment and its impact on children's emotional adjustment. These programs can cover topics such as building strong parent-child relationships, effective communication, and strategies for fostering emotional resilience.
3. Primary schools in Anambra State should create a supportive and nurturing environment that addresses both academic and emotional needs of pupils. This includes implementing programs such as emotional literacy education, peer support groups, and providing access to school counselors who can offer emotional support and guidance.

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