

EXAMINING ATTACHMENT STYLES AND ROMANTIC CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SKILLS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

ABSTRACT

Examining Attachment Styles and Romantic Conflict Management Skills is crucial for addressing diverse relationship challenges, including recurrent conflicts and breakdowns in communication resulting from unresolved attachment issues. Additionally, harmful conflict patterns can result in emotional damage and deteriorate the quality of relationships over time. This study explores the relationship between Attachment Styles and Romantic Conflict Management Skills in university students, with 350 college respondents providing a diverse sample. The mean and standard deviation for each variable indicated that Attachment Styles exhibit a slightly high level, particularly in avoidant attachment, while Romantic Conflict Management Skills show variations in subscales, with compromise and avoidance tending towards higher levels. The examination of Spearman's rank correlation coefficient revealed a weakly positive connection ($p < 0.001$; $\rho = 0.281$) between the variables, thus rejecting the null hypothesis and highlighting the influence of Attachment Styles on Romantic Conflict Management Skills. Moreover, the linear regression analysis identified avoidant and anxious attachment as significant predictors of Romantic Conflict Management Skills, suggesting that these styles may play a role in determining how conflicts are resolved in relationships. These results improve our understanding of the relationship between college students' attachment styles and their ability to resolve romantic conflicts. The study recommends that institutions should provide workshops on communication, attachment styles, self-awareness, and conflict resolution to support healthy relationships among students, while also offering access to counselors for guidance. Future research should explore additional variables impacting conflict management skills and consider employing more sophisticated sampling techniques for a more accurate representation of findings.

Keywords: Attachment Styles, Romantic Conflict Management Skills, Regression Analysis, Avoidant, Attachment

1. INTRODUCTION

Conflicts in romantic relationships function as threads in a tapestry, and successfully handling them can foster growth and harmony between partners. Differences in actions, beliefs, or ideas among individuals or partners often lead to conflict [1]. Tasew & Getahun [2] noted the consequences of conflicts such as; stress, depression, grief, concerns about external opinions, despair, and hopelessness. These findings highlight the importance of romantic conflict management skills, which refers to the capacity to efficiently address and resolve disagreements between partners [3]. Various factors such as cultural values [4], personality traits [5], communication patterns [6], and attachment style can all potentially impact an individual's ability to handle conflicts effectively within close relationships [7]. Attachment style refers to an individual's approach to close relationships [8], which is influenced by their early bonds with primary caregivers [9], and can be categorized into secure and insecure types [10].

In romantic relationships, attachment styles play a pivotal role in shaping individuals' approaches to conflict management. This influence has been subjected to extensive investigation, particularly among

college students, with studies conducted by Bonache et al. [11], Smith et al. [12], and Bernal [13]. Based on the findings, Avoidant attachment has been associated with behaviors that can hinder effective conflict resolution, including minimizing conflict, avoiding open negotiation, and reluctance to engage in constructive communication [14]. Additionally, Callaci et al. [15] have noted that those avoidantly attached individuals tend to withdraw from conflict, inhibiting open communication and compromise.

Anxious attachment can also pose challenges in conflict resolution. While desiring closeness, people with anxious attachment styles often struggle to achieve it. This can lead them to adopt a mix of conflict resolution styles, ranging from forceful approaches to passive avoidance or compromising [16, 17]. Individuals with an anxious attachment style tend to exhibit higher levels of distress and anger, which subsequently leads to the adoption of dysfunctional conflict resolution strategies and reduced satisfaction within relationships [18, 19]. These styles can be less effective in reaching solutions that satisfy both parties.

In contrast, secure attachment fosters a healthy approach to conflict resolution. Studies like Mansilla [20] on Filipino adolescents demonstrate that individuals with secure orientations typically use positive problem-solving when dealing with conflicts in romantic relationships. Individuals who possess a secure attachment style demonstrate a higher propensity to engage in open communication, engage in constructive problem-solving, and reach compromises, thereby resulting in the establishment of more resilient connections [21]. Hee et al.'s [22] study on married couples found that not only do conflict styles significantly impact relationship quality, with extreme approaches being detrimental, but attachment behaviors also play a moderating role. Specifically, securely attached individuals demonstrate a greater inclination toward higher levels of relationship satisfaction, even when employing less constructive conflict styles [22]. Otakum et al. [23] further support this notion, finding that individuals with secure attachment styles exhibited a greater tendency to integrate different conflict styles compared to those with preoccupied, dismissive, and fearful attachment styles.

Being able to manage and resolve disagreements efficiently is a necessary skill for conflict management. These abilities are crucial in a variety of settings, such as workplaces, communication education, and oral and nonverbal strategies for fostering a positive communication climate. Emotional intelligence, family influences, and gender disparities are a few examples of variables that might affect conflict management abilities [24]. In the context of romantic relationships, conflicts can have both positive and negative effects on relationship dynamics and outcomes. Aggression, anger, and poor communication are characteristics of negative conflict, which can raise relationship unhappiness and increase the chance of a separation. Conflict can also serve as an opportunity for growth and resolution, as it allows partners to express their needs, concerns, and perspectives.

Effective communication, active listening, and compromise are examples of constructive conflict management techniques that may improve relationship satisfaction and fortify relationships. On the other hand, improperly managed disagreement has the potential to escalate and produce a toxic environment, which can cause emotional anguish and ruin relationships [25]. The survival and enhancement of love relationships rely extensively on the use of efficient methods for resolving conflicts. Constructive conflict resolution techniques including active listening, making compromises, and problem-solving are often used by couples who report higher levels of relationship satisfaction. Conversely, unfavorable conflict resolution techniques like criticism, avoidance, and defensiveness can cause relationship discontent and even break down. Relationship outcomes can be influenced by conflict management techniques like cooperation and accommodation; cooperation is linked to greater relationship satisfaction while accommodation is linked to lower relationship satisfaction [26].

Feeling at ease in intimate relationships could indicate a strong self-awareness concerning others. Nevertheless, certain individuals vary in their level of security in connection to significant others, particularly romantic partners. These variations in intimacy experiences are believed to become particularly apparent during challenging periods, such as when separated from partners [20]. One particularly stressful period in the relationship that may lead to a breakup is the experience of conflicts or disagreements with partners. Mansilla [20] showed that as the degree of four intimacy develops throughout adolescence, so do disputes with love partners. It should come as no surprise that love relationships have a greater effect than parents, siblings, and best friends. Thus, in late adolescence and early adulthood, romantic attachments become the closest relationships.

Attachment theorists proposed that having disagreements with love relationships may disclose underlying assumptions about each person's level of comfort with significant individuals in their lives. Romantic partners may inevitably become incompatible, which can cause some people to experience attachment anxiety or dread of losing their partner. Maintaining security in a romantic relationship, especially in the face of disagreements, may make it last longer. Additionally, they could find future disagreements easier to resolve and perceive them to be less unpleasant when they do arise [20]. Despite the number of studies, research on how Filipino youth and young adults are used to resolve romantic relationship disputes is quite limited. Furthermore, most studies dwell on examining a particular attachment dimension which also gives limited information on how other attachment styles affect the conflict resolution in a romantic relationship. This study aims to close this gap in the literature. This is realized through utilizing already-existing self-report surveys on attachment orientations and conflict resolution strategies.

This research study seeks to examine how students' attachment styles and romantic conflict management skills interrelate, aiming to gain a comprehensive understanding of their impact on conflict resolution. The scope of this study only covers college students enrolled in the university within the Davao Region. Through quantifying the collected data, the findings aim to offer valuable insights into the complexities of romantic relationships, potentially benefiting the wider population.

Furthermore, this study serves as a fundamental reference for future researchers in fields like psychology, social sciences, and behavioral psychology, laying a foundation for developing knowledge in resolving conflicts within romantic relationships.

1.1 Research Objectives

The study specifically determined the following:

1. To distinguish the level of attachment styles in terms of:
 - 1.1 Secure;
 - 1.2 Avoidant;
 - 1.3 Anxious/Ambivalent.
2. To find out the level of romantic conflict management skills in terms of:
 - 2.1 Compromise;
 - 2.2 Domination;
 - 2.3 Avoidance;
 - 2.4 Separation;
 - 2.5 Submission;
 - 2.6 Interactional Reactivity.
3. To identify whether there is an association between attachment styles and romantic conflict management skills in college students.
4. To recognize the particular domains in attachment styles that influence conflict management.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Respondents

The respondents in this study exclusively included college students enrolled at a University within the Davao region from all year levels across various departments during the school year 2023-2024. The researchers employed a purposive sampling method, which was selected to align with the study's specific objectives. The study's target population consisted of college students who were either currently in a relationship or had previous dating experience. Below is the demographic profile of the respondents.

Table 1. Demographic of Respondents (n=350)

PROFILE	f	%
SEX		
Male	150	42.9
Female	200	57.1
YEAR LEVEL		
2 nd	152	43.4
1 st	131	37.4
3 rd	48	13.7
4 th	19	5.4
DEPARTMENT		
DAS	75	21.4
DCJE	74	21.1
DTE	72	20.6
DBA	57	16.3
DTP	47	13.4
DAE	25	7.1
TOTAL	350	100.0

Out of the total student population of 3,868 at the university, 350 college students were chosen to participate in the study, with the option to either join or be excluded from the involvement of the study. Data collection depended on the respondents' choice, with all data being either disregarded or retained accordingly. Among the respondents, the majority were female ($n=200$, 57.1%) compared to male respondents ($n=150$, 42.9%). The distribution across year levels was as follows: Second Year students ($n=152$, 43.4%) with the largest number of respondents, followed by First Year students ($n=131$, 37.4%), Third Year students ($n=48$, 13.7%), and Fourth Year students ($n=19$, 5.4%), with the least number of respondents. Regarding departmental distribution, the highest number of respondents came from the Department of Arts and Sciences ($n=75$, 21.4%), followed by the Department of Criminal Justice Education ($n=74$, 21.1%), the Department of Technical Education ($n=72$, 20.6%), the Department of Business Administration ($n=57$, 16.3%), the Department of Technical Program ($n=47$, 13.4%), and finally the least number of respondents are from Department of Accounting Education ($n=25$, 7.1%).

2.2 Research Instruments

The instruments that were utilized in gathering data were questionnaires administered through a survey adapted from the Adult Attachment Questionnaire (AAQ) and the Romantic Partner Conflict Scale (RPCS) Questionnaire. The Adult Attachment Questionnaire (AAQ) which was developed by Collins and Read [27], builds upon earlier conceptualizations of adult attachment styles [28]. It is an 18-item questionnaire designed for individuals to self-report their attachment styles, specifically targeting three main styles: secure, anxious, and avoidant. The version that was used in this study was modified from Punyanunt-Carter's [29] which the researchers asked for permission to utilize in the study and included 22 Likert-type items. Respondents rated each item using a scale ranging from 1 (highly characteristic of me) to 7 (not characteristic of me at all), with three subscales: Secure, Avoidant, and Anxious/Ambivalent. Previous studies reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .80 for Secure, .79 for Avoidant, and .82 for Anxious/Ambivalent. Another study found coefficients of 0.72 for

Secure, 0.82 for Avoidant, and 0.85 for Anxious/Ambivalent. In addition, the researchers conducted pilot testing to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire to see if the instrument was suitable for the Philippine setting, particularly at the University within the Davao Region. The reliability of the Attachment Styles Scale questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha and resulted in an overall value of 0.843.

The researchers also obtained permission from the authors to utilize the Romantic Partner Conflict Scale (RPCS). The questionnaire, created by Zacchilli et al. [30], includes 39 Likert-type items. Respondents rated each item on a scale from 1 (Strongly agree) to 5 (Strongly disagree), covering six subscales: Compromise, Domination, Avoidance, Separation, Submission, and Interactional Reactivity. Previous studies reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .84 to .96 for the subscales. Similar to the AAQ, the researchers conducted pilot testing to assess the RPCS's validity and reliability for the Philippine setting. The RPCS questionnaire demonstrated validity and high reliability, evidenced by an overall Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.957.

Below are the interpretations used to evaluate the mean scores of Attachment Styles and Romantic Conflict Management Skills of college students. The mean interval is displayed in the first column, while its descriptive equivalent is shown in the second and last columns for qualitative variation.

Table 2. Attachment Styles Scale Mean Interpretation

Mean Range	Interpretation	Description
1.00 - 1.86	Describes me very well	Very High
1.87 - 2.72	Somewhat like me	Moderately High
2.73 - 3.58	A little bit like me	Slightly High
3.59 - 4.44	Neutral	Neither high nor low
4.45 - 5.30	Not quite like me	Slightly Low
5.31 - 6.16	Rarely like me	Moderately Low
6.17 - 7.02	Does not describe me at all	Very Low

Table 3. Romantic Conflict Management Skills Mean Interpretation

Mean Range	Interpretation	Description
1.00 - 1.80	Strongly Agree	Very High
1.81 - 2.60	Agree	High
2.61 - 3.40	Neither agree nor disagree	Moderate
2.61 - 3.40	Disagree	Low
4.21 - 5.00	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

2.3 Design and Procedure

This study is quantitative and employs a descriptive-predictive research design. Initially, the researchers gathered relevant literature from this study. The researchers used validated questionnaires from Punyanunt-Carter's study [29] and Zacchilli et al. [30], to measure the attachment styles and romantic conflict management skills among the students. The data collection involved both the traditional distribution of printed questionnaires and the utilization of modern technology through Google Forms, ensuring accessibility for respondents. Before administering questionnaires, permission letters for the study were sent by the researchers, including the adviser's signature and the dean's endorsement, and provided letters to respondents to ensure the ethical considerations of the research. Lastly, after accumulating the data, the researchers accurately systematized and analyzed the data using JAMOVI software, to conduct comprehensive analyses aligned with the study's primary objectives.

2.4 Statistical Treatment

In the statistical analysis of the data, various methods were utilized to understand the relationships between different variables. Descriptive measures were employed to analyze the mean and standard deviation of the student's responses. The Shapiro-Wilk test was employed to assess the adherence of the data to a normal distribution. The test results suggested that the data might not be normally distributed ($W=0.924$, $p=0.001$). Consequently, the researchers opted to use Spearman's rank correlation coefficient to examine the relationships between the variables. Linear regression analysis

was also utilized to determine the predictors with a statistically significant impact on the dependent variable.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Levels of Attachment Styles Among College Students

Table 4 shows the level of attachment styles among college students per subscale. The Avoidant attachment style ($\bar{x}=3.26$, $SD=0.941$) records the highest mean score, indicating that, on average, respondents display tendencies associated with this attachment pattern to a relatively greater extent compared to other attachment styles. Similar findings were yielded in a study by Smith et al. [12], which demonstrated that the primary attachment style prevalent among African American college students was an avoidant attachment, which was also supported by Zahra [31] who found that individuals with low attachment security may exhibit either anxious or avoidant attachment styles. Additionally, the overall attachment style reflects a slightly high interpretation ($\bar{x}=3.41$, $SD=0.726$). The interpretation of these findings as "slightly high" implies that while respondents lean towards certain attachment patterns, these tendencies are not overwhelmingly dominant. Instead, they fall within a moderate range, indicating that individuals may display traits associated with various attachment styles to some extent.

Table 4. Levels of Attachment Styles Among College Students

Subscales	\bar{x}	SD	Interpretation
Secure	3.48	0.724	Slightly High
Avoidant	3.26	0.941	Slightly High
Anxious/Ambivalent	3.44	1.022	Slightly High
Overall AS Mean	3.41	0.726	Slightly High

3.2 The Level of Romantic Conflict Management Skills Among College Students

Table 5 presents a summary of romantic conflict management skills among college students across various subscales. Compromise has the highest mean score of 2.03 and a standard deviation of 0.79. Similarly, Avoidance ($\bar{x}=2.41$, $SD=0.95$) follows closely. These two conflict management strategies have the highest mean scores, indicating that they are commonly utilized by college students when dealing with romantic conflicts. Both Compromise and Avoidance are interpreted as "high," suggesting their prevalence in the respondents' conflict resolution approaches. A study conducted by Austraitė&Zardeckaitė-Matulaitienė [32] disclosed that individuals in the stage of young adulthood utilize avoidance, and compromise [33] as strategies for resolving conflicts within their relationships, therefore supporting the findings of this study. Furthermore, the table details additional subscales: Dominance ($\bar{x}=2.91$, $SD=1.04$), Separation ($\bar{x}=2.85$, $SD=0.97$), and Submission ($\bar{x}=2.82$, $SD=0.88$). These subscales are described as having a "moderate" interpretation, indicating that they are employed to a lesser extent compared to Compromise and Avoidance. Remarkably, Interactional Reactivity ($\bar{x}=3.43$, $SD=0.94$) records a low interpretation, suggesting that emotional or defensive reactions during conflicts are less common among the surveyed college students. The overall assessment of romantic conflict management skills yields a mean score of 2.62, indicating a moderate interpretation. This suggests that while Compromise and Avoidance are prevalent strategies, there is variability in the utilization of other conflict management approaches among university students.

Table 5. Levels of Romantic Conflict Management Skills Among College Students

Subscales	\bar{x}	SD	Interpretation
Compromise	2.03	0.79	High
Domination	2.91	1.04	Moderate
Avoidance	2.41	0.95	High
Separation	2.85	0.97	Moderate
Submission	2.82	0.88	Moderate
Interactional Reactivity	3.43	0.94	Low

Overall RPCS Mean	2.62	0.58	Moderate
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3.3 Correlation Analysis of Attachment Styles and Romantic Conflict Management Skills

Table 6 shows the association between attachment styles and conflict management skills. The findings are significant, as indicated by the p-value ($< .001$), which is less than 0.001, with a moderate positive correlation coefficient of $\rho=0.281$. This suggests that college students' attachment styles are likely associated with romantic conflict management skills. Sutiyo [34] demonstrated the effect of attachment styles on conflict resolution strategies among adolescents, emphasizing their role in shaping conflict resolution behaviors. Moreover, Yildiz [7] provided additional evidence by highlighting the predictive influence of attachment styles on various elements of conflict resolution in close relationships, including neglect and abandonment behaviors. In line with previous research, Ayenew [35] delved into the realm of couples' relationships and highlighted the substantial role that attachment style, particularly anxious and avoidant attachment, plays in shaping conflict resolution behaviors. The referenced research studies provide evidence supporting the correlation between attachment styles and romantic conflict management skills.

Table 6. Relationship between Attachment Styles and Romantic Conflict Management Skills.

Independent variable	Overall Romantic Conflict Management Skills		
	ρ	p-value	remarks
Attachment Styles	0.281	<0.001	significant

3.4 Correlation Analysis of Attachment Styles and Romantic Conflict Management Skills per Subscales

To delve further into the association between Attachment Styles and Romantic Conflict Management Skills, the results presented in Table 7 illustrate the correlations among the respective subscales of the two variables, as indicated by the correlation matrix. The findings in the study indicate that Secure Attachment had a positive correlation between dominance ($\rho=.204$, $p=.001$), separation ($\rho=.117$, $p<.05$), and interactional reactivity ($\rho=0.132$, $p<0.05$). This suggests that individuals with secure attachment styles may be more likely to take a dominant role in handling relationship conflicts, exhibit comfort with independence alongside attachment, and have greater responsiveness to social cues from others. According to Wu and Yi [36], individuals engage in negotiations to determine dominant roles within relationships, which can result in either cooperative or selfish behaviors. In a study by Otakum and James [37], they found that people with secure attachment styles tend to adopt integrating and compromising conflict resolution strategies, emphasizing collaboration and flexibility rather than dominance in conflict resolution. Additionally, Audita and Zulkaida [33] indicate that integrating, obliging, and compromising conflict resolution styles are positively linked to levels of satisfaction in romantic relationships among young adults while dominating approaches show a negative correlation with relationship contentment. Jayaseelan and George [38] assert that securely attached individuals within interpersonal relationships demonstrate a sense of ease during periods of separation, due to their high confidence and trust in themselves and their partners to fulfill their basic needs. On the contrary, Diamond [39] asserts that individuals who exhibit secure attachment in adult relationships might encounter difficulties when faced with physical separations, ultimately affecting both relationship satisfaction.

Regarding Avoidant Attachment, results revealed high concentration when it comes to Compromise, Domination, and Interactional reactivity, having the same p-value ($<.001$). This suggests that individuals with avoidant attachment tend to compromise with their partner. However, if negative emotions arise from the conflict, avoidantly attached individuals may exhibit dominance or display emotional reactivity to protect themselves from negative emotions. González-Ortega et al. [18] stated that those who are avoidantly connected may put their safety above mending relationships, which can result in a lack of emotional support and empathy during difficult times. In contrast, instead of the demand or aggression strategy in conflict resolution, avoidant attachment is more closely linked to the withdrawal strategy [40]. It could also be seen from the results that avoidant attachment has a positive

correlation with avoidance ($\rho=.148$, $p=.006$), separation ($\rho=.140$, $p=.009$), and submission ($\rho=.122$, $p=.023$). This indicates that avoidantly attached individuals may avoid or withdraw from conflicts rather than actively engage in resolution. Yildiz [7] affirmed that avoidant attachment may have a detrimental influence on conflict resolution because it makes people more likely to turn away from emotional intimacy and vulnerability, which can obstruct productive discussion and problem-solving in heated situations. Additionally, avoidant people may find it difficult to communicate their wants and feelings when they are in conflict, which prevents them from being honest with others and from addressing problems. Avoidant people may be more prone to repressing or ignoring their own needs and feelings, which may keep them from actively resolving conflicts [41].

As for Anxious Attachment, the findings indicate a positive correlation with Domination ($\rho=.315$, $p<.001$), Submission ($\rho=.166$, $p=.002$), and Interactional Reactivity ($\rho=.225$, $p<.001$). This suggests that individuals experiencing anxiety and insecurity may tend to exert control or power, yield to their partner's demands, or display emotional reactivity or defensiveness in conflicts. Morel et al. [42] indicated that individuals displaying anxious attachment styles within romantic relationships may demonstrate increased levels of dissatisfaction in relationships, as well as psychological distress and reduced commitment. This could be attributed to a lack of emotional awareness or clarity, which in turn may impact conflict resolution in romantic relationships post-betrayal trauma experiences, ultimately influencing relationship contentment [43]. Furthermore, research suggests that individuals with anxious attachment styles in romantic relationships are prone to experiencing heightened distress and anger during conflict resolution, whether it occurs face-to-face or through computer-mediated means [44], and may adopt forceful, avoiding, accommodating, or collaborative conflict resolution strategies due to heightened anxiety concerning abandonment and neglect [17]. These individuals often seek continual reassurance, harbor fears of abandonment, and display ambivalence, factors that frequently result in increased sensitivity to conflict and a tendency to overreact emotionally in conflicts [45].

Table 7. Relationship between Attachment Styles and Romantic Conflict Management Skills per subscales

		SECURE	AVOIDANT	ANXIOUS/AMBIVALENT
COMPROMISE	Spearman's rho	0.078	0.179 ***	0.070
	p-value	0.145	< .001	0.188
DOMINATION	Spearman's rho	0.204 ***	0.201 ***	0.315 ***
	p-value	< .001	< .001	< .001
AVOIDANCE	Spearman's rho	0.030	0.148 **	0.055
	p-value	0.573	0.006	0.308
SEPARATION	Spearman's rho	0.117 *	0.140 **	0.094
	p-value	0.029	0.009	0.080
SUBMISSION	Spearman's rho	0.088	0.122 *	0.166 **
	p-value	0.101	0.023	0.002
INTERACTIONAL REACTIVITY	Spearman's rho	0.132 *	0.183 ***	0.225 ***
	p-value	0.013	< .001	< .001

3.5 Regression Analysis for Variables

Table 8 displays findings from a regression analysis predicting the romantic conflict management skills of college students. The results indicate that two important factors contribute to the diverse range of romantic conflict management skills observed among the students. Linear regression, incorporating correlation coefficients, was conducted with a significance test at the $\alpha=0.05$ level. The subscales considered were Avoidant ($p=0.016$), Anxious ($p=0.027$), and Secure ($p=0.854$), ranked from the highest to the lowest p-values, respectively.

Results suggest that 7% of the variance is determined by the three predictors, $F(3, 346)=8.76$, $p<.001$. Specifically, a positive correlation is observed between Avoidant ($\beta=0.10$, $t=2.428$, $p<.001$) and Anxious/Ambivalent ($\beta=.08$, $t=2.226$, $p<0.001$) attachment styles and Romantic conflict management skills. On the contrary, Secure attachment ($\beta=-0.00$, $t=-0.184$, $p>0.001$) is not significantly related to the dependent variable. These results imply that individuals demonstrating higher levels of Avoidant and Anxious attachment tendencies are inclined towards employing diverse conflict resolution strategies in handling conflicts within a romantic relationship, as opposed to those with a Secure attachment style. Prior research has demonstrated that Avoidantly attached individuals tend to utilize avoidance tactics during disagreements, often disregarding or evading issues and creating distance from their partner [41, 17]. This behavior stems from their tendency to minimize conflict, avoid open discussion, and hesitate to engage in constructive communication rather than actively solving problems within their romantic relationships [14]. Ayenew [35] further stated that individuals with an avoidant attachment style struggle with conflict resolution because they overly rely on themselves and avoid seeking help from others, making it harder for them to resolve conflicts effectively in relationships.

Moreover, individuals with anxious attachment styles in romantic relationships often display harmful and evasive behaviors during conflicts as indicated by Hasim et al. [46] in the study on marital communication in Malaysia. This finding is supported by González-Ortega [18] and Nobandegani [19], indicating that individuals with an anxious attachment style may resort to dysfunctional conflict resolution strategies due to heightened levels of distress and anger. Quickert & MacDonald [47] also stated that individuals with anxious attachment styles in romantic relationships commonly engage in negative conflict behaviors due to decreased mindfulness and increased rumination which hinders their ability to effectively resolve problems constructively. Additionally, Caglayan & Koruk [17] noted that individuals with an anxious attachment style often face significant anxiety related to abandonment and neglect within their romantic relationships. This heightened anxiety can result in actions such as ignoring their partner's needs, increased demands, heightened jealousy, and questioning their partner's affection if not properly dealt with. Nonetheless, their research also indicated that by effectively managing this anxiety, individuals may embrace more positive conflict resolution techniques within their romantic relationships. Therefore, it is suggested that those with an anxious attachment style may encounter challenges in engaging in constructive conflict resolution and may struggle to regulate their behavior, or conversely, may display a greater readiness to compromise with their partner as a result of their anxiety [17].

In comparison to the results mentioned, the study conducted by du Plessis et al. [48] showed contrasting outcomes, highlighting Secure attachment as a stronger predictor of conflict resolution behavior. This opposing perspective argues that individuals with Secure attachment styles possess superior abilities to navigate conflicts within their interpersonal bonds constructively and efficiently, thereby exerting a greater impact on their capacity to manage romantic conflicts.

These findings demonstrate that Avoidant and Anxious attachment styles can serve as indicators of Romantic conflict management skills. However, it is important to recognize the potential implications of this finding. Although Avoidant and Anxious attachments may have some advantages in handling Romantic conflicts, they may also struggle with maintaining intimate relationships because of their tendency to avoid emotional connections and their strong need for continual reassurance and validation from their partners.

Table 8. Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Students' Romantic Conflict Management Skills (n=350)

Predictor	Estimate (β)	SE	t	p
Intercept	2.03161	0.1535	13.234	<0.001
Secure	-0.00963	0.0523	-0.184	0.854
Avoidant	0.10137	0.0418	2.428	0.016
Anxious/Ambivalent	0.08328	0.0374	2.226	0.027

4. CONCLUSIONS

The research investigated the correlation between Attachment Styles (AS) and Romantic Conflict Management Skills (RCMS) in college students from the Davao Region. Findings indicated a prevalence of Avoidant attachment tendencies among respondents, suggesting that these individuals distance themselves from relationships and redirect their focus to other activities when they perceive intimacy as overwhelming. These individuals often avoid emotional closeness and intimacy in romantic relationships, impacting their ability to trust others and ultimately affecting their overall quality of life. However, it is important to note that the recommendation is not to avoid relationships altogether but rather to promote mindfulness and self-awareness to understand one's attachment style and its effects on relationships. It is suggested that communication skills workshops be conducted to assist individuals in effectively expressing their needs and emotions, while relationship education can offer valuable insights into healthy relationship dynamics and the importance of emotional closeness to overcome feelings of insecurity and avoidance. Developing a secure attachment can lead to a greater sense of stability and consistency in relationships, reducing feelings of anxiety and fear of rejection. This security enables individuals to engage in personal growth and resilience within the relationship. Regarding conflict management methods, two strategies - Compromise and Avoidance - were more commonly used by students when addressing romantic conflicts compared to other strategies. These results suggest that some students opt for solutions benefiting both parties, while others choose to evade the issue altogether. Despite Avoidance being a conflict resolution strategy, it is not advised for managing conflicts as it can potentially escalate issues in the future by failing to address the current problem. Conversely, compromise is highly encouraged as it fosters a deeper understanding between partners and promotes collaboration. It plays a vital role in maintaining a strong relationship by ensuring that both individuals feel valued and heard. Through open communication and active listening, compromise helps to resolve disagreements and establish trust. Ultimately, compromise is crucial for cultivating healthy and enduring relationships, thereby enhancing their strength and satisfaction. The Linear Regression Analysis has indicated Avoidant and Anxious attachment styles as significant predictors of Romantic Conflict Management Skills, despite a weak positive association between attachment styles and conflict management skills. This implies that individuals who display avoidance of intimacy or heightened anxiety in romantic relationships are likely to utilize specific strategies for handling conflicts. The results highlight the influence of Attachment Styles on how college students address and resolve romantic conflicts. However, individuals characterized by these attachment styles often resort to employing less efficient conflict resolution methods when dealing with conflicts in romantic relationships, potentially causing issues to escalate. Thus, it is recommended that individuals recognize their attachment pattern to comprehend how it affects their conflict management in relationships and strive towards developing more constructive conflict resolution skills to nurture and enhance their relationship with their partner. In conclusion, the research sheds light on the relationship between Attachment Styles (AS) and Romantic Conflict Management Skills (RCMS) among college students in the Davao Region. The prevalence of Avoidant attachment tendencies highlights the significance of encouraging mindfulness and self-awareness to grasp and manage attachment behaviors in relationships. While a few students may be inclined towards avoidance in conflict resolution, compromise is acknowledged as an important element for enhancing understanding and collaboration between partners. The results underscore the necessity for individuals to acknowledge their attachment styles and practice effective conflict resolution abilities to foster healthier and more gratifying relationships. Through promoting transparent communication, attentive listening, and a readiness to compromise, individuals can

navigate conflicts with greater efficiency, ultimately strengthening the connection with their partners and boosting relationship contentment.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results and the conclusions drawn previously, these are the recommendations derived: Primarily, **The institution** may play a significant role in promoting healthy relationships, not just externally but also in the internal relationships of the students, by offering support services. Initially, they can organize classes or workshops that cover topics like effective communication, attachment styles, self-awareness, conflict resolution, empathy, and other crucial relationship skills. Such programs equip students with the necessary tools to navigate relationships successfully. In addition, the institution can facilitate access to counselors or mental health professionals, such as the Guidance Services and Testing Center (GSTC), that can provide guidance and assistance to young individuals encountering difficulties in their relationships. These professionals create a safe environment for students to discuss their concerns, seek advice, and acquire coping strategies for addressing relationship challenges. **Clubs and student organizations** in schools help students develop healthy relationships by offering social support networks, developing communication and teamwork skills, encouraging shared goals and values, exposing students to a variety of viewpoints, providing opportunities for socialization, and promoting healthy behaviors like physical activity and mental health awareness. Clubs and student organizations in schools help students develop healthy relationships. All things considered, these clubs foster an atmosphere that encourages students to form good relationships not just with others but also with themselves. **Future researchers** can utilize the results of this study as a model for conducting similar research, enhancing both methodology and the insights gained. The results establish a foundational comprehension of the complexities surrounding various attachment styles and romantic conflict management skills across diverse contexts. Future studies may explore additional variables influencing respondents' conflict management skills, such as emotional intelligence, cultural background, stress management, and communication skills. In addition, future researchers could include other attachment styles that have not been examined in this study, which could also influence conflict management skills. Furthermore, this dataset can pinpoint existing research gaps, prompting subsequent investigations to refine methodologies. For instance, employing more sophisticated sampling techniques like stratified sampling—categorizing respondents based on age, and gender, particularly the LGBTQIA+ community, and cultural background—can yield more precise insights and facilitate a more accurate representation of findings. Ultimately, ongoing endeavors should prioritize fostering self-awareness and effective emotional regulation, especially among young individuals. Ensuring the precise and relevant dissemination of information remains crucial for advancing knowledge and cultivating healthier relationships in the years to come. Lastly, the findings of this research could act as an eye-opener for students and teenagers, aiding them in comprehending and acquiring knowledge in conflict management skills, along with understanding various attachment styles. This understanding could offer students profound insights into different attachment styles, offering a blueprint for self-awareness and fostering better interpersonal connections, thereby facilitating personal growth. Additionally, students could acquire valuable knowledge about conflict management skills, enhancing their capacity to address conflicts positively and effectively, resulting in stronger relationships, decreased stress levels, and heightened personal and professional success.

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