

ASSESSMENT OF CORRELATION BETWEEN ATTACHMENT STYLE AND ROMANTIC CONFLICT MANAGEMENT SKILLS AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

ABSTRACT

Understanding Attachment Styles and Romantic Conflict Management Skills is crucial for addressing relationship challenges like recurring conflicts and communication breakdowns due to unresolved attachment issues, which can cause emotional damage and deteriorate relationship quality 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 study found that attachment styles particularly avoidant attachment have a slightly high level while romantic conflict management skills show variations in subscales with compromise and avoidance tending toward higher levels. The Spearman's rank correlation coefficient showed a weakly positive connection, 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 suggests that institutions should offer workshops on communication, attachment styles, self-awareness, and conflict resolution to foster healthy student relationships and provide counselors with guidance. Future research should explore additional variables and use advanced sampling techniques.

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 and Getahun identified conflicts as causing stress, depression, grief, external opinion concerns, despair, and hopelessness [2]. These findings highlight the importance of romantic conflict management skills, which refer 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]. The study on married couples revealed that conflict styles significantly impact relationship quality, with extreme approaches being detrimental, and 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]. The study found that individuals with secure attachment styles tend to integrate different conflict styles more than those with preoccupied, dismissive, and fearful attachment styles [23].

Efficient conflict management skills are crucial in various settings like workplaces, communication education, and fostering a positive communication climate through effective verbal and nonverbal strategies. 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.

Constructive conflict management techniques like effective communication, active listening, and compromise can enhance relationship satisfaction and strengthen 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 heavily depend on effective conflict resolution methods. 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. Conflict management techniques like cooperation and accommodation can significantly impact relationship outcomes, with cooperation leading to increased satisfaction and accommodation resulting in lower satisfaction [26].

A strong sense of comfort in intimate relationships may indicate a high level of self-awareness towards 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 suggested that disagreements in love relationships can reveal underlying assumptions about an individual's comfort level 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]. Research on the use of romantic relationship disputes among Filipino youth and young adults is limited, despite numerous studies. 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 understand their influence on conflict resolution. This study focuses on college students in Davao Region, aiming to provide insights into the complexities of romantic relationships through quantitative data collection, 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.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Attachment Theory, initially formulated by John Bowlby [27] and further elaborated by Mary Ainsworth [28], functions as a foundational framework for examining the management of romantic conflicts. Central to this theory is the notion that early interactions with primary caregivers mold individuals' attachment styles, subsequently shaping their behaviors in relationships later in life. Through the analysis of attachment styles like secure, anxious, or avoidant, researchers can gain valuable insights into how individuals address conflicts within romantic relationships. In the case of individuals with secure attachment styles, they generally employ constructive conflict resolution techniques, such as open dialogue and compromise, resulting in more favorable relationship outcomes. Conversely, those with insecure attachment styles may display maladaptive behaviors in conflicts, such as excessive reliance, detachment, or hostility, which can impede effective conflict resolution and have adverse effects on relationship contentment and permanence. Another theory by Homans [29] guides this study, which is the Social Exchange Theory, it is the notion that social behavior is the outcome of an exchange process. This idea holds that people balance the possible advantages and disadvantages of their social connections. They will end or leave the connection when the risks become too great for them to bear. The goal of this trade is to reduce costs and increase benefits [30]. Integration of this theory provides a thorough framework for comprehending how people feel and navigate their romantic relationships. While attachment theory emphasizes the influence of early attachment experiences in individuals' internal working models and relationship behaviors, social exchange theory stresses the

rational decision-making people make to maximize benefits and minimize costs in relationships. These theories correlate as attachment styles, formed through early caregiving experiences, influence individuals's perceptions of rewards, costs, trust, and reciprocity in relationships. Securely attached individuals tend to engage in more trusting, reciprocal, and satisfying relationships, while insecurely attached individuals may struggle with trust, intimacy, and relationship satisfaction. Additionally, The Uncertainty Reduction Theory by Berger and Calabrese [31], which primarily focuses on communication between strangers, can also offer interesting insights when attachment styles in established relationships are considered. The theory highlights the desire to reduce uncertainty in interactions. It can be applied to explore how uncertainty is managed within romantic relationships based on attachment styles formed through early interactions. For instance, during conflict, many questions might be asked by individuals with anxious attachment styles in an attempt to reduce uncertainty. Conversely, withdrawal might be exhibited by those with avoidant styles, potentially increasing uncertainty within the relationship. This theory is relevant to university students coping with stress, as effective communication and understanding of attachment styles can help reduce uncertainty and improve psychological well-being.

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, there were 350 college students participated 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 [32], builds upon earlier conceptualizations of adult attachment styles [33]. 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 [34] 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 and resulted in an overall value of 0.84 using Cronbach's alpha.

The researchers also obtained permission from the authors to utilize the Romantic Partner Conflict Scale (RPCS). The questionnaire, created by Zacchilli et al. [35], 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 0.96.

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 employed a quantitative research and descriptive-predictive research design. Initially, the researchers gathered relevant literature from this study. The researchers used validated questionnaires from Punyanunt-Carter's study [34] and Zacchilli et al. [35], 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

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

Table 4 presents data on the levels of attachment styles among college students, categorized by subscale. The avoidant attachment style has the highest mean score ($\bar{x}=3.26$, $SD=0.941$), indicating that respondents, on average, exhibit tendencies associated with this attachment pattern more prominently than with other attachment styles. This finding is consistent with the study by Smith et al. [12], which identified avoidant attachment as the predominant style among African American college students. Zahra [36] also supported this observation, noting that individuals with low attachment security often display either anxious or avoidant attachment styles. Furthermore, the overall attachment style shows a slightly elevated mean score ($\bar{x}=3.41$, $SD=0.726$). This "slightly high" interpretation suggests that while respondents tend towards certain attachment patterns, these tendencies are not overwhelmingly dominant but fall within a moderate range. This indicates that individuals may exhibit traits associated with various attachment styles to some extent.

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

Table 5 summarizes the romantic conflict management skills of college students across various subscales. Compromise recorded the highest mean score ($\bar{x}=2.03$, $SD=0.79$), closely followed by Avoidance ($\bar{x}=2.41$, $SD=0.95$). These results suggest that compromise and avoidance are the most commonly employed strategies among college students for managing romantic conflicts. This aligns with the findings of Austraitė and Zardeckaitė-Matulaitienė [37], who reported that young adults frequently use avoidance and compromise to resolve relationship conflicts [38]. Additionally, the table details other 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 have a "moderate" interpretation, indicating that they are used to a lesser extent than compromise and avoidance. Notably, interactional reactivity ($\bar{x}=3.43$, $SD=0.94$) has a low interpretation, suggesting that emotional or defensive reactions are less common among college students during conflicts. The overall assessment of romantic conflict management skills yielded $\bar{x}=2.62$, indicating a moderate level of these skills among the respondents.

3.1 Correlation Analysis of 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

The table 6 which illustrates the association between attachment styles and conflict management skills among college students. The findings are statistically significant, as indicated by the p-value of <.001, and reveal a moderate positive correlation coefficient ($\rho=0.281$). This suggests that there is a moderate association between the attachment styles of college students and their romantic conflict management skills. Supporting this conclusion, Sutiyo [39] demonstrated the influence of attachment styles on conflict resolution strategies among adolescents, highlighting their significant role in shaping conflict resolution behaviors. Additionally, Yildiz [7] provided evidence of the predictive influence of attachment styles on various aspects of conflict resolution in close relationships, such as neglect and abandonment behaviors. In further alignment with these findings, Ayenew [40] explored couples' relationships, emphasizing the substantial impact of attachment styles, particularly anxious and avoidant attachment, on conflict resolution behaviors. These studies collectively reinforce the correlation between attachment styles and romantic conflict management skills, corroborating the results shown.

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

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

		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

To further explore the association between Attachment Styles and Romantic Conflict Management Skills, Table 7 presents the correlations among the respective subscales of these variables, as indicated by the correlation matrix. The findings suggest that secure attachment has positive correlations with dominance ($\rho=0.204$, $p=0.001$), separation ($\rho=0.117$, $p<0.05$), and interactional reactivity ($\rho=0.132$, $p<0.05$). This implies that individuals with secure attachment styles are more likely to take a dominant role in managing relationship conflicts, feel comfortable with independence within their relationships, and exhibit greater responsiveness to social cues from others. According to Wu and Yi [41], individuals engage in negotiations to establish dominant roles within relationships, which can result in either cooperative or selfish behaviors. Similarly, Otakum and James [42] found that people with secure attachment styles tend to adopt integrating and compromising conflict resolution strategies, emphasizing collaboration and flexibility rather than dominance. Additionally, Audita and Zulkaida [38] indicate that integrating, obliging, and compromising conflict resolution styles are positively associated with satisfaction in romantic relationships among young adults, whereas dominating approaches show a negative correlation with relationship contentment. Jayaseelan and George [43] assert that securely attached individuals demonstrate ease during periods of separation, due to their high confidence and trust in themselves and their partners to meet their basic needs. Conversely, Diamond [44] argues that individuals with secure attachment in adult relationships might struggle with physical separations, which can ultimately affect relationship satisfaction. These studies collectively highlight the nuanced ways in which secure attachment styles influence various aspects of romantic conflict management.

Regarding avoidant attachment, the results revealed a significant association with compromise, domination, and interactional reactivity, all with the same $p<.001$. This suggests that individuals with avoidant attachment styles are inclined to compromise in conflicts. However, when faced with negative emotions, these individuals may resort to dominance or exhibit emotional reactivity as a defense mechanism. González-Ortega et al. [18] stated that avoidantly attached individuals often prioritize their own safety over repairing relationships, leading to a lack of emotional support and empathy during difficult times. Instead of engaging in demand or aggression strategies, avoidant attachment is more closely linked to withdrawal strategies in conflict resolution [45]. Additionally, the results indicate 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 suggests that avoidantly attached individuals tend to avoid or withdraw from conflicts rather than actively engaging in resolution. Yildiz [7] affirmed that avoidant attachment can negatively impact conflict resolution because it leads individuals to shy away from emotional intimacy and vulnerability, hindering productive discussions and problem-solving in tense situations. Additionally, **avoidant individuals often struggle with conflict, hindering their ability to express their desires and emotions, hindering their honesty and problem-solving abilities.** Avoidant people may be more prone to repressing or ignoring their own needs and feelings, which may keep them from actively resolving conflicts [46]. Regarding 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 with anxious attachment styles may exhibit a range of behaviors during conflicts, including exerting control or power, yielding to their partner's demands, and displaying emotional reactivity or defensiveness.

Morel et al. [47] indicated that individuals with anxious attachment styles often experience higher levels of dissatisfaction in their relationships, as well as psychological distress and reduced commitment. This can be attributed to a lack of emotional awareness or clarity, which negatively impacts conflict resolution, especially after experiences of betrayal trauma [48]. This lack of clarity and heightened emotional response can hinder effective conflict management and ultimately affect relationship satisfaction. These findings highlight the complex behaviors associated with anxious attachment in romantic conflict management, emphasizing a tendency towards both controlling and submissive behaviors, coupled with high emotional reactivity, which can impede constructive conflict resolution and contribute to relationship dissatisfaction. Furthermore, research indicates that individuals with anxious attachment styles in romantic relationships often experience increased distress and anger during conflict resolution, whether in person or through technology [49], and may adopt forceful, avoiding, accommodating, or collaborative conflict resolution strategies due to heightened anxiety concerning abandonment and neglect [17]. Individuals like these often seek ongoing reassurance, hold onto abandonment fears, and exhibit ambivalence, all contributing to heightened sensitivity in conflicts and a propensity to overreact emotionally [50].

UNDER PEER REVIEW

3.3 Regression Analysis for Variables

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

Table 8 presents the outcomes of a regression analysis predicting the romantic conflict management skills of college students. The findings highlight two significant factors contributing to the diverse range of skills observed among students in managing romantic conflicts. Utilizing linear regression with correlation coefficients, the analysis was conducted with a significance test at $\alpha=0.05$ level. The considered subscales were avoidant ($p=0.016$), anxious ($p=0.027$), and secure ($p=0.854$), ranked based on their p -values from highest to lowest, respectively.

The results indicate that 7% of the variance is accounted for by the three predictors, $F(3, 346)=8.76$, $p<.001$. Specifically, a positive correlation is noted 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. Conversely, secure attachment ($\beta=-0.00$, $t=-0.184$, $p>0.001$) shows no significant relationship with the dependent variable. These findings suggest that individuals with higher levels of avoidant and anxious attachment tendencies are prone to employing various conflict resolution strategies in managing conflicts within romantic relationships, unlike those with a secure attachment style. Past research has shown that individuals with avoidant attachment tendencies often resort to avoidance tactics during disagreements, sidestepping or disregarding issues, and creating distance from their partner [46, 17]. This inclination arises from their tendency to downplay conflict, evade open discussion, and hesitate to engage in constructive communication, rather than actively addressing problems within their romantic relationships [14]. Ayenew [40] further notes that individuals with an avoidant attachment style struggle with conflict resolution due to their overreliance on themselves and reluctance to seek assistance from others, making it challenging for them to effectively resolve conflicts in relationships.

Furthermore, individuals exhibiting anxious attachment styles in romantic relationships often exhibit detrimental and evasive behaviors during conflicts, as evidenced by Hasim et al. [51] in their study on marital communication in Malaysia. This observation finds support in the works of González-Ortega [18] and Nobandegani [19], suggesting that those with an anxious attachment style may resort to dysfunctional conflict resolution strategies due to heightened distress and anger. Quickert & MacDonald [52] also note that individuals with anxious attachment styles commonly engage in negative conflict behaviors due to reduced mindfulness and increased rumination, impeding their ability to effectively address problems constructively. Additionally, Caglayan & Koruk [17] observe that individuals with an anxious attachment style often experience significant anxiety regarding abandonment and neglect in their romantic relationships. This heightened anxiety may manifest in behaviors such as neglecting their partner's needs, making excessive demands, heightened jealousy, and questioning their partner's affection if not adequately addressed. Nevertheless, their research indicates that by effectively managing this anxiety, individuals may adopt more positive conflict resolution techniques within their romantic relationships. Hence, it is suggested that those with an anxious attachment style may face difficulties in engaging in constructive conflict resolution and may struggle to regulate their behavior, or conversely, may exhibit a greater willingness to compromise with their partner due to their anxiety [17]. In contrast to these findings, the study conducted by du Plessis et al. [53] revealed contrasting results, emphasizing Secure attachment as a stronger predictor of conflict resolution behavior. This opposing viewpoint argues that individuals with secure attachment styles possess superior abilities to navigate conflicts within their interpersonal bonds constructively and efficiently, thereby exerting a more significant influence 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.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The study delves into the correlation between Attachment Styles (AS) and Romantic Conflict Management Skills (RCMS) among college students in the Davao Region. It identifies prevalent avoidant attachment tendencies among respondents, which often lead to distancing from relationships and a shift of focus towards other activities when intimacy becomes overwhelming. Such tendencies can significantly impact trust levels and overall quality of life. However, the study suggests that rather than completely avoiding relationships, promoting mindfulness and self-awareness regarding one's attachment style and its effects on relationships is advisable. Workshops focusing on communication skills can aid individuals in effectively expressing their needs and emotions, while relationship education can offer valuable insights into healthy relationship dynamics and fostering emotional closeness. A secure attachment, on the other hand, is associated with stability, consistency, and a reduction in anxiety and fear of rejection, facilitating personal growth and resilience within the relationship. Regarding conflict resolution strategies, the study found that compromise and avoidance were the two most commonly used by students. While compromise is seen as beneficial for fostering deeper understanding between partners and promoting collaboration, avoidance is discouraged as it can potentially exacerbate issues in the future. The Linear Regression Analysis conducted in the study indicates that avoidant and anxious attachment styles serve as significant predictors of Romantic Conflict Management Skills, despite exhibiting a weak positive association. This implies that individuals who tend to avoid intimacy or experience heightened anxiety in romantic relationships are more inclined to utilize specific conflict resolution strategies. In conclusion, the research underscores the importance of comprehending one's attachment patterns and cultivating constructive conflict-resolution skills to nurture and enhance relationships. By promoting transparent communication, active listening, and a willingness to compromise, individuals can navigate conflicts more effectively, ultimately strengthening their bond with their partners and enhancing relationship satisfaction.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study proposes that institutions can play a pivotal role in fostering healthy relationships among students by providing support services. These services might encompass classes or workshops on communication, attachment styles, self-awareness, conflict resolution, empathy, and other vital relationship skills. Furthermore, access to counselors or mental health professionals can offer guidance and assistance to young individuals navigating relationship challenges. Clubs and student organizations within schools can also contribute to the development of healthy relationships by establishing social support networks, cultivating communication and teamwork skills, promoting shared goals and values, exposing students to diverse perspectives, facilitating socialization opportunities, and encouraging healthy behaviors such as physical activity and mental health awareness. The findings of this study could serve as a template for future research, enriching both methodology and insights gained. Subsequent studies could explore additional variables influencing respondents' conflict management skills, such as emotional intelligence, cultural background, stress management, and communication skills. Moreover, researchers could investigate other attachment styles not examined in the current study. The insights gleaned from this research could serve as an educational resource for students and teenagers, aiding in their understanding and acquisition of conflict management skills and knowledge about various attachment styles. This understanding could foster deeper insights into different attachment styles, facilitating improved interpersonal connections and personal growth. Additionally, students could gain valuable insights into conflict management skills, resulting in stronger relationships, reduced stress levels, and enhanced personal and professional success.

Ethical Approval:

As per international standards or university standards written ethical approval has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

Consent

As per international standards or university standards, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

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