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DETERMINANTS OF QUALITY ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP AMONG EMERGING ADULTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Romantic relationships undoubtedly play a major role in the lives of most young adults since it is the building blocks for a healthy adult marriage. However, attachment style formed in early life through interaction with caregivers and significant others and the individual's personality composition provide a spring board for quality romantic relationship in readiness for marriage. The present study using descriptive survey research design, investigated the predictive influence of personality traits, attachment styles, age and gender on quality romantic relationship among emerging adults in tertiary institutions in Oyo state. The sample comprised male and female young adults (N=450) aged between 18- 25years old who responded to three standardized self report questionnaires. Three research questions were raised and answered in the -study. Results indicated that there was significant correlations among the independent variables with correlation coefficients ranging from $r=.286$ to $r=.861$ with quality romantic relationship. Multivariate regression analyses indicated that the contribution of the independent variable was significant [$F_{(9,441)} = 2.37$; $p < .05$] which jointly accounted for about 92.2% variation in the prediction of quality romantic relationship. Conscientiousness made the most significant contribution ($\beta = 1.096$; $t = 31.483$; $p < 0.05$) to the prediction while neuroticism ($\beta = .003$; $t = .128$; $p > 0.05$) and gender ($\beta = .004$; $t = .007$; $p > 0.05$) had insignificant relative contribution. The study provides empirical evidence to suggest that psychological factors, like age and gender have a role to play in quality romantic relationship among emerging adults.

Keywords: Age, Attachment styles, Emerging adults, Gender, Personality traits, Romantic relationships quality

Introduction

Romantic relationship is a significant source of preoccupation and ponderings, as well as a major cause of strong emotional bonding

among adolescence. It is regarded as the hallmark and a pivotal developmental task, which plays a major role in the lives of

emerging young adults. In developmental perspective, however, romantic relationships are embedded in fundamental human motivations which form and maintain close relationships and exist in a meaningful progression of relational forms across the life course. Studies on social development in the transition from adolescence to adulthood reiterates the importance of earlier relationships with parents and peers in constructing the social landscape on which adult romantic relationships is established (Dalton, Frick-Hornbury & Kitzman, 2006; Giordano 2003; Giordano, Longmore & Manning 2001). However, there is increased independence from family and association with peers as the adolescent progresses into adulthood and though relationships with parents are maintained, new relationships are formed different from the initial cross-gender affiliations to dyadic partnerships. Although it is evident that many emerging adults have difficulties in forming, building and maintaining quality romantic relationship, a great number of them make several attempts and are often frustrated and suffer depression at the little or no effect the effort is yielding.

Dyadic partnerships such that exists in romantic relationships is marked by an amalgam of love, passion, and actual or anticipated sexual activity. In fact, Conger, Cui and Lorenz (2010) stated that romantic relationships, particularly during emerging adulthood, is a quest to build a relationship that is stable, satisfying and in which intimate closeness with partners is achieved. Emerging adulthood has been defined as a specific stage of life between the ages of 18 and 25. They are neither adolescents nor adults with full responsibility for themselves and for others where they evaluate possible romantic relationships, estimate world views, seek and prepare for future careers

(Arnett, 2000, 2004). At this stage of development, romantic relationships are voluntary and symmetrical. This is in contrast to the kinship or legal bonds that commonly circumscribe care-giving relationship. It also involves dependency which is reciprocal between the partners, unlike the more asymmetrical dependency of child on caregiver. The reciprocal dependency of romantic partners is explained to be both greater and more extensive than the reliance of friends.

This romantic bonding is important because it contributes to relational development and foretells the quality of intimate relationships in adulthood. Consequently, it gives young people a sense of identity and serves as a source of social status and not only does it shape the experience, it also presages marital union in adulthood. It is described as the learning context and training ground for future romantic and marital relationships. Young, Furman and Laursen (2010) emphasized that the establishment of romantic relationship and close social connection enhance successful functioning, psychological and emotional well-being and life satisfaction. The inability to develop or maintain successful romantic relationships is associated with emotional and physical distress. Thus, romantic experiences are, therefore, the initial steps of a journey towards a mature relationship that is expected to characterise the adult years (Connolly & McIsaac, 2009).

Over time, attachment theory has been a useful theory for conceptualising romantic relationships. Romantic adult partners serve similar attachment functions and satisfy the same needs as primary caregivers do in infancy and the knowledge that an attachment figure is available and responsive provides a strong and pervasive

feeling of security. Although several studies have focused on the individual differences in romantic attachment; and an accumulating body of evidence suggests that most activities are designed to promote and support healthy marriages in adults, yet not many studies are focused on addressing the challenges of emerging adults at building quality romantic relationship. Therefore, this study proposes to examine the extent to which the attachment style, personality and gender will determine quality romantic relationship among emerging adults as they prepare for marriage.

The influence of personality on romantic relationships cannot be overemphasized because the partners' personality is shaped by their interactions with each other and the way romantic partners see each other is a fundamental source of an intimate, healthy and satisfying relationship. Research has shown interrelatedness between general personality traits and many types of behaviours. Even literature reveals unambiguously that there is a reliable association between self-reported personality traits and relationship quality and satisfaction (Watson, Hubbard, & Wiese, 2000; Robins, Caspi, & Moffitt, 2000, 2002).

Personality refers to the particular combination of emotional, attitudinal and behavioural response patterns of individuals. Caspi, Roberts & Shiner (2005) stated that personality shapes how individuals experience, interpret, and respond to the developmental tasks they face across the life course. More specifically, personality continues to be an important predictor of relationships in adulthood and there is no doubt that enduring, stable personality traits influence how people approach and view their relationships and impact the quality of their relationships. It is, therefore, essential to assess and understand the role of

personality within romantic relationships.

The Big Five Factors also called the Five Factors Model (FFM) (Costa & McCrae, 1997) after extensive review have been developed and validated as a widely accepted personality model. The Big Five Personality Traits is a five broad domains or dimensions of personality used to describe human personality. These are neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experiences, agreeableness and conscientiousness.

In this taxonomy, Neuroticism refers to the tendency of an individual to experience unpleasant emotions easily, such as anger, anxiety, depression, or vulnerability. It also refers to the degree of emotional stability and impulse control, and is sometimes referred to by its low pole-emotional stability. Highly neurotic individuals (i.e., individuals high on negative emotionality) are anxious, moody, and insecure in relationships. Extraversion is used to describe an individual with energy, positive emotion, assertiveness, sociability and the tendency to seek stimulation in the company of others and talkativeness. Individuals high on extraversion or positive emotionality are generally described as outgoing, animated, and lively. Individuals low on extraversion or positive emotionality are quiet, submissive, and inhibited.

Furthermore, openness to experience (sometimes called intellect) is the least-well understood trait of the Big Five dimensions and reflects individuals who are inventive and creative. Openness to experiences reflects appreciation for art, emotion, adventure, unusual ideas, curiosity, and variety of experiences. It reflects the degree of intellectual curiosity, creativity and a preference for novelty and the variety a person has. It is also described as the extent to which one is imaginative or independent and depicts a personal preference for a

variety of activities over a strict routine. Agreeableness is a tendency to be compassionate and cooperative rather than suspicious and antagonistic toward others. It is also a measure of one's trusting and helpful nature, and whether a person is generally well tempered or not. Agreeable individuals are thoughtful, kind, and supportive and disagreeable people are impolite, stubborn, and aggressive. Conscientiousness refers to the tendency to show self-discipline, act on duty, and aim for achievement planned rather than spontaneous behaviour, organised and dependable. Individuals who are highly conscientious are responsible, focused, and organised; but those who are low on this trait are irresponsible, forgetful, and unreliable (Atkinson, Atkinson, Smith, Bem & Hoksema, 2000).

Attachment style is another important psychological construct that determines quality romantic relationship. The term attachment style represents relatively stable behavioural patterns within one's close relationships. The concept of attachment style is based on the pioneer work of Bowlby (1967) which suggests that the formation of attachment relationships is important to humans across the lifespan. He explained that the attachments formed during the early stages of childhood between an infant and a primary caregiver has a great impact on personality and development of intimate social relationships in adulthood through the use of early relationships as a template by which individuals approach future relationships.

Other researchers such as Hazan & Shaver (1987) used the theory of attachment styles to determine and explain the social relationships, romantic relationships and sexual relationships in youth periods and adulthood. These early

attachment provides an 'internal working model' that guides relational behaviour and expectations as an adult, and forms the basis for adult romantic attachments (Rholes & Simpson, 2004). Also, Mikulincer & Shaver (2012) suggested that the cognitive-affective representations of the self and of others are proposed mechanisms underlying continuity and stability of attachment patterns across ones lifespan and as such influences personality development, psychological functioning, behaviour, and affect regulation in later relational contexts.

Although secure or insecure strategies were originally measured in categories, in recent years, researchers have begun to assess adult attachment on a dimensional basis. Brennan, Clark, & Shaver (1998) identified two reliable dimensions of attachment style namely: attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety. The interaction between these two dimensions determines the individual's attachment strategies and security level. Accordingly, attachment security represents the ability to approach a partner for affection and keeping him or her close, when necessary (Edelstein & Shaver, 2004). On one hand, attachment insecurity has been identified as having either higher levels of attachment avoidance or attachment anxiety (Brennan et al, 1998). Attachment anxiety is defined as involving a fear of interpersonal rejection or abandonment, an excessive need for approval from others, and distress when one's partner is unavailable or unresponsive. On the other hand, attachment avoidance is defined as involving fear of dependence and interpersonal intimacy, an excessive need for self-reliance, and reluctance to self-disclose. People who score high on either or both of these dimensions are assumed to have an insecure adult attachment orientation. Contrastingly, people with low levels of

attachment anxiety and avoidance can be viewed as having a secure adult attachment orientation (Brennan et al., 1998).

Generally, most research findings are unanimous that romantic relationship qualities vary with age. It was reported that early adolescents subscribe to affiliation or companionships while older adolescents and young adults have more committed, loving, and supportive relationships (Shulman and Kipnis 2001; Shulman and Scharf 2000). Also, Seiffge-Krenke (2003) reported that young adults considered support from their romantic partners as more important than support from their best friends and parents compared to younger adolescents who rate parents or peers higher or do not differentiate support from parents, peers, and partners.

Empirical investigations on gender differences in relationship qualities suggest that females are more relationship-focused than males (Galliher, Welsh, Rostosky, & Kawaguchi 2004). Females are reported to value relationships more for interpersonal qualities while males value them for physical attraction (Feiring 1996). Joyner and Udry (2000) reported that females are more likely to engage in romantic relationships, and experience the emotional and social consequences more directly than males. Also, Giordano et al. (2006) stated that females often have long histories of intimate friendships with peers and may be more inclined to turn to them for support which invariably affects their adult relationship quality. Females, compared to males, are considered more "relationship-oriented" and often take more responsibility for maintaining relationships, romantic or otherwise (Wood, 2000). However, recent research offers a portrait of gender differences in relationships that is somewhat different from that suggested by past studies. For instance, Giordano et.al (2006) reported

that males have less confidence and a fairly similar level of emotional engagement to relationships than females. Perhaps gender norms are changing (Risman & Schwartz 2002).

Statement of the Problem

Relationships have long been considered an important part of human life and existence. Generally, males and females consider romantic relationships very important in their lives. This suggests that not only parents and peers, but also romantic partners can play a significant role in development. In recent times, establishing a healthy, high-quality, satisfying romantic relationships that can set the stage for successful relationships into adulthood has become difficult and gloomy task for most emerging adults. This is evident in the vast proportion of young adults moving in and out of romantic relationships, which has increased the number of young adult delaying marital commitment. More importantly, the complexity of romantic relationships is exhibited by those who are courageous enough to venture into romantic relationship. These individuals, however, are often not able to sustain the commitment to marital life, hence, end up with troubled or unstable relationship. The issue is further confounded by the recent sociological trends in the society today with marked increase in number of failed romantic relationship amongst young adults.

While potential romantic relationships experiences help in setting the stage for formation of stable relationships during young adulthood with prospect for a healthy adult development, it becomes imperative to understand the determinants impacting romantic relationship quality of emerging adults. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the extent to which personality

traits, attachment styles, age and gender determines quality romantic relationship among emerging adults in tertiary institutions in Oyo State.

Research Questions

1. Is there a relationship among the independent variables (personality traits, attachment style, age and gender) and quality romantic relationship among emerging adults in tertiary institutions?
2. What is the joint contribution of independent variables (personality traits, attachment style, age and gender) on quality romantic relationship among emerging adults in tertiary institutions?
3. What is the relative contribution of independent variables (personality traits, attachment style, age and gender) on quality romantic relationship among emerging adults in tertiary institutions?

Methodology

Research Design

Descriptive survey research design of the *expo-facto type* was used to execute the study since it was considered the most appropriate to systematically describe the phenomenon under study without manipulation.

Participants

Young adults between 18 and 25 years old in tertiary institutions in Oyo state were the target population for this study. However, three major higher institutions of learning situated in semi-urban cities in Oyo state were purposely selected. This was necessary to achieve some sort of uniformity in environmental and cultural influence interplay. These comprised of both male (215) and female (235) students of Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo, Ibarapa Polytechnic, Eruwa

and Oyo State College of Agriculture, Igboora. A simple random sampling technique was used to select one hundred and seventy five students from each institution. Respondents were randomly drawn from four faculties within the institutions based on availability. However, only a total of four hundred and fifty students participated in the study.

Instrumentation

Network of Relationship Inventory-Revised (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985)

The Network of Relationship Inventory-Revised was used to assess the qualities of romantic relationships. The inventory measures nine positive qualities (i.e., companionship, affection, disclosure, nurturance, instrumental aid, approval, support, reliable alliance, and satisfaction) and five negative qualities (i.e., conflict, criticism, exclusion, dominance, and pressure). Each factor is assessed by three items that are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*little or none*) to 5 (*the most*). Participants who reported that they have romantic partners completed the scales. A romantic partner was defined as "someone physically attracted to, have had intimate contact with (e.g., hand holding, kissing, etc.), considered to be more than a friend, and go out on 'dates' with." Internal consistencies were .94 to .95 (positive qualities) and .83 to .84 (negative qualities). The whole scale reported reliability coefficient of 0.91.

Experiences in Close Relationships (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998)

To assess individual differences in attachment style, participants completed the Experiences in Close Relationships (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998)). This measure is a 36-item questionnaire that

includes two subscales (avoidant and anxious attachment) with 18 items each. The avoidance of close relationships scale assesses the individual's difficulty with emotional intimacy and relying on someone for support (e.g., "I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners"). The anxiety about close relationships scale assesses the desire to be extremely close to one's partner but coupled with concerns about abandonment (e.g., "I worry that my romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about him/her"). Items were answered on a 7-point scale (strongly disagree =1 to strongly agree = 7). Good internal reliability was demonstrated for attachment-related avoidance and attachment-related anxiety items (Cronbach- α in the range of .92 Anxiety and .93 Avoidance).

Big Five Inventory (Johns & Srivastava, 1999).

The five factors of personality were measured with the 44- items Big Five Inventory (BFI) developed by Johns & Srivastava (1999). The BFI reliably assesses Extraversion ($\alpha = .80$), Agreeableness ($\alpha = .73$), Conscientiousness ($\alpha = .77$), Neuroticism ($\alpha = .81$), and Openness to Experience ($\alpha = .78$). It contains items such as "*I See Myself as Someone Who . . .*" "Tends to find fault with others", "He is outgoing, sociable" etc.

Procedure

The research instruments were

administered with the help of six research assistants in the ratio of two assistants per institution. The research assistants were trained on how to administer the questionnaire and the need to guide the respondents in ensuring the questionnaires were properly filled was emphasized. The participants were assured of confidentiality of their responses and adequately briefed on the essence of the research which is mainly for academic purposes and the need to cooperate with the researcher. A total of five hundred and twenty five (525) questionnaires were administered to the participants in the three institutions. However, a total of four hundred and fifty (450) questionnaires were properly filled and retrieved from participants for further analysis.

Method of Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using Pearson's product moment correlation and multiple regression analysis at 0.05 significant level.

RESULTS

Research Question One: Is there relationship among the independent variables (personality traits (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism) attachment style (avoidant attachment and anxious attachment), age and gender) and quality romantic relationship among emerging adults in tertiary institutions?

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and Inter-correlations among the variables

Variables	N	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Romantic Relationship	450	32.73	8.69	1.00								
Extraversion	450	12.02	4.54	.640**	1.00							
Agreeableness	450	11.44	4.34	.836**	.592**	1.00						
Conscientiousness	450	10.59	4.51	.861**	.782**	.747**	1.00					
Neuroticism	450	10.58	4.11	.775**	.715**	.785**	.807**	1.00				
Openness	450	13.76	4.27	.286**	.299**	.371**	.604**	.408**	1.00			
Avoidance attachment style	450	21.80	6.23	.527**	.346**	.649**	.696**	.553**	.750**	1.00		
Anxious attachment style	450	20.76	4.56	.572**	.463**	.469**	.669**	.535**	.507**	.723**	1.00	
Age	450	9.98	2.36	.612**	.536**	.489**	.664**	.573**	.705**	.721**	.233**	1.00
Gender	450	10.38	3.39	.712**	.662**	.709**	.636**	.581**	.592**	.813**	.683**	.300

Key: **Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 1 contains descriptive statistics and inter-correlations among the study variables. As shown in the table, emerging adults' quality romantic relationship is significantly correlated with: (1) Extraversion ($r = .640$; $p < .05$); (2) Agreeableness ($r = .836$; $p < .05$); (3) Conscientiousness ($r = .861$; $p < .05$); (4) Neuroticism ($r = .775$; $p < .05$); (5) Openness ($r = .286$; $p < .05$); (6) Avoidance attachment Style ($r = .527$; $p < .05$); (7) Anxious attachment style ($r = 0.752$; $p < 0.05$), (8) Age ($r = .612$; $p < .05$); (9) Gender ($r = .712$; $p < .05$). There were also significant correlations among the independent

variables. This implies that quality romantic relationship is related to an individual's personality traits, attachment style, age and gender.

Research Question Two: What is the joint contribution of independent variables (personality traits, (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism) attachment style (avoidant attachment and anxious attachment), age and gender) on quality romantic relationship among emerging adults in tertiary institutions?

Table 2: Multiple Regression Analysis on Emerging Adults' Romantic Relationship

Multiple R (adjusted)=.961				
Multiple R ² (adjusted)=.922				
Standard error of estimate= 2.42				
Analysis of variance				
	Sum of square (SS)	DF	Mean square	F
Regression	1301.53	9	144.61	2.37
Residual	26804.94	440	60.92	
Total	33906.46	449		

Table 2 shows that the independent variables when pulled together have significant effect on the emerging adults' quality romantic relationship. The value of R (adjusted) =.961 and R² (adjusted) =.922. The analysis of variance performed on the multiple regressions yielded an F- ratio value of 2.37 and was found to be significant at 0.05level. The implication of this is that all the independent variables jointly predict quality romantic relationship among emerging adults.

Research Question Three: What is the relative contribution of independent variables (personality traits, (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism) attachment style (avoidant attachment and anxious attachment), age and gender) on quality romantic relationship among emerging adults in tertiary institutions?

Table 3: Relative Contribution of Independent Variables to the Prediction

Model	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients		T	p
	B	Standard error	Beta		
Constant	21.752	.550		39.526	p<0.05
Extraversion	.620	.047	.324	13.285	p<0.05
Agreeableness	.873	.050	.437	17.370	p<0.05
Conscientiousness	2.113	.067	1.096	31.483	p<0.05
Neuroticism	.007	.055	.003	.128	p>0.05
Openness to Experience	.634	.045	.312	14.170	p<0.05
Avoidance Attachment Style	.243	.037	.174	6.556	p<0.05
Anxious Attachment style	.432	.026	.247	5.337	p<0.05
Age	.283	.057	.274	1.556	p<0.05
Gender	.433	.004	.007	.523	p>0.05

Table 3 reveals that each of the independent variables made significant contribution to the prediction of emerging adults' quality romantic relationship. In terms of magnitude of contribution, conscientiousness made the most significant contribution (Beta= 1.096; $t = 31.483$; $p < 0.05$) to the prediction. Other variables contributed in the following order: agreeableness (Beta= .437; $t = 17.370$; $p < 0.05$); extraversion (Beta= .324; $t = 13.285$; $p < 0.05$); openness to experience (Beta= .312; $t = 14.170$; $p < 0.05$); age (Beta= .274; $t = 1.556$; $p < 0.05$) anxious attachment style (Beta = .247; $t = 5.337$) and avoidance attachment style (Beta = .174; $t = 6.556$, $p < 0.05$), while neuroticism (Beta= .003; $t = .128$; $p > 0.05$) and gender (Beta= .004; $t = .007$; $p > 0.05$) had insignificant relative contribution. This implies that conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, openness to experience, age, anxious attachment style and avoidance attachment style made independent significant contribution to the prediction of quality romantic relationship among emerging adults while neuroticism and gender did not.

Discussion

The present study examined determinants of quality romantic relationship among emerging adults. The results of the study showed that all the independent variables- personality traits (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism) attachment style (avoidant attachment and anxious attachment), age and gender) significantly influenced the dependent variable-quality romantic relationship quality among emerging adults in tertiary institutions. This result corroborated several studies which show that personality traits influence

romantic relationship quality (Watson, Hubbard, & Wiese, 2000; Robins, Caspi, & Moffitt, 2000, 2002; Donnellan, Conger, & Bryant, 2004; Bouchard & Arseneault, 2005; Fisher & McNulty 2008). Extraversion and agreeableness were positively associated with relationship satisfaction and intimacy. Extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience were linked to the quality of romantic relationships, although less consistently than neuroticism. It also buttressed the report of Engel, Olson, and Patrick (2002) that conscientiousness was a significant predictor of intimacy for both female and male and of commitment for male alone. A plausible explanation for this is that conscientiousness may be associated with intimacy because the personality factor involves self-control and achievement orientation which may lead conscientious individuals to express greater intimacy in order to achieve more successful relationships. In addition, conscientiousness is associated with reliability, persistency, and goal-fulfillment, which may help explain the association between this personality traits and relationship quality evident through commitment and intimacy.

Also, this finding is in line with Caughlin, Huston and Houts (2000) report that those who are high in neuroticism and generally characterised as anxious, irritable, and emotionally unstable were typically less satisfied in their romantic relationships than those who are low in neuroticism and have less stable relationships. Neuroticism was negatively associated with and predictive of satisfaction and intimacy. Further, neuroticism has been shown to be prospectively linked to declines in relationship satisfaction in ongoing relationships and lower levels of satisfaction in future romantic relationships (Donnellan,

Larsen-Rife, & Conger, 2005).

It is also not surprising that attachment style has significant relationship with romantic relationship quality. This is in agreement with previous studies (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Mikulincer, Shaver, & Pereg, 2003; Stackert & Bursik, 2003;) that individuals who are higher in attachment security are more likely to be in long-term, stable relationship and generally report more frequent positive and less frequent negative emotions, as well as greater trust, satisfaction, interdependence, and commitment in their relationships. It implies that the individual differences in adult attachment behaviour reflect the beliefs and expectations that people have about themselves and their intimate relationships in a previous attachment relationship. These activation models are relatively constant and reflect the individual's primary relationship with the caregiver. Thus, childhood attachments affect adult romantic relationships. Campbell, Simpson, Boldry and Kashy (2005) also reported that anxious attachment is linked to the tendency to exhibit heightened distress levels and a desire to have attachment figures close by or available. Furthermore, they tend to have lower satisfaction than securely attached individuals. In addition, evidence indicates that romantic relationships are also more conflictual than are relationships of securely attached couples, most likely due to anxious individuals' intense emotional reactions and how critical their relationships are to their own well-being.

Also, Stackert and Bursik (2003) reported that avoidant attachment individuals are often uncomfortable with emotional intimacy and relying on others for support due to their negative views of others as untrustworthy or unsupportive. They experience less satisfaction with their

relationships and provide less support to their partners (Collins & Feeney, 2000; Feeney & Collins, 2001; Simpson, Rholes, Oriña, & Grich, 2002). In adulthood, people who are more avoidantly attached tend to limit intimacy in their romantic relationships.

In relation to age, this result re-echoed the view of previous studies (Furman 2002; Collins 2003; Roisman et.al 2004;) that as individuals become older, their relationships tend to increase in commitment and interdependence, and these relationships more closely mirror adult relationships. This implies that there is increase in support from romantic relationships as youth grow older thus encouraging support from partners relative to support from friends and parents.

This result showed that gender did not significantly contribute to the prediction of quality romantic relationship. This contradicted earlier findings (Wood, 2000; Joyner & Udry 2000; Galliher, Welsh, Rostosky, & Kawaguchi 2004; Crockett & Randall, 2006;). However, it supported the findings of Giordano et al., (2006); Risman and Schwartz (2002) that males have less confidence and a fairly similar level of emotional engagement to relationships than females buttressing the fact that gender norms are indeed changing. This implies that beyond gender, the individual is a relational being. Either male or female, issues bothering on intimacy and romance are of equal importance to the individual.

Conclusion

A primary reason for recent scholarly interest in the transition to adulthood is the great shift in the sustenance of relationship and change in the order of major events in the life course of most emerging adults. This study provided empirical data to suggest that personality traits, attachment styles, age and

gender all determine quality romantic relationship among emerging adults though neuroticism personality traits and gender in isolation made insignificant contribution to quality romantic relationship. These findings illustrate the complex processes by which personality might affect quality of close social relationships in the short run, and the longer run. They suggest a developmental sequence in which individuals' personality predicts quality romantic relationship during young adulthood and in later life.

Though other studies have attempted to examine what is known about the course of relationship development through adolescence and its influence on relationship formation in adulthood, this study has further shown that attachment styles and personality traits play an important role in relationship formation and progression to emerging adults. Therefore, this study confirms that rather than being trivial or ephemeral, any relationship experience is consequential for young adult partnerships most importantly, early experience with parents and family and thus play an essential role in forming intimate and romantic relationship and in tackling emotional issues. Therefore, by assessing the attachment styles, personality traits of people, age and gender, a counsellor or therapist can predict the extent with which an individual would have quality romantic relationship and may provide necessary intervention for increasing interpersonal relationship.

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