

THE INFLUENCE OF EARLY PARENT- CHILD ATTACHMENT STYLE ON
MARRIED COUPLE'S RELATIONSHIP ATTACHMENT STYLE: A CASE OF NAIROBI
CHRISTIAN CENTRE, NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

FREDRICK GITAHI MUIGA

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university or for any other award.

Signature _____ Date: _____

Fredrick Gitahi Muiga

MFT/6501/16

This thesis has been submitted for review with my approval as the University Supervisor.

Signature _____ Date: _____

Dr. Anne Wambugu

Department of Psychology

Pan Africa Christian University

DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my wife Mercy Wanjiru and our children, Brendan Muiga and Kirsten Wanjiru. They immeasurably supported me in their own unbelievable ways and were patient with me throughout my studies. They challenged and inspired me to study. Further, I dedicate this research to all married couples in their endeavours to find fulfilment in their marriage.

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ABSTRACT

The high rate of couple detachment with each other in the Kenyan Church and society at large has become a real threat in married couple's health relationship. Based on attachment theory, the purpose of the study was to identify how early parental child attachment style influence married couple attachment style. The objectives of the study included such as; exploring on how early parental child attachment style influences a married couple's attachment style; examining the influence of attachment style perception construct in early parental child attachment style on married couple's attachment style and; exploring on how the father figure and the mother figure attachment style influences a married couple's attachment style. Participants were drawn from Nairobi Christian Centre in Nairobi County and consisted of 20 married couples in the Church. Of these, 20 participants were male and 20 other participants were female in their different stages of marital couple relationship. The study adopted a correlational research design which sought to examine the relationship between the variables. A questionnaire was used to collect data in the study. Respondents were sampled using simple random sampling from the total population of all the married couples in the Church. A Multiple Logistic Regression analysis was done to test for the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable simultaneously. A Pearson Correlation Coefficient was done to measure the linear correlation between early parental child attachment style and couple attachment style. The data was analysed quantitatively and the results presented using charts, graphs and frequency tables. In the findings, the descriptive statistics on the Multiple Logistic Regression analysis demonstrated a positive relationship that was identified where an early parental child attachment style influenced the couples' attachment style. The emotional availability of the parents was significantly acknowledged by the couples as assumed by the research study. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.857, with a P-Value of 0.000 indicated the significance of father and/or mother figure early childhood attachment style influence on couple attachment style. Since the research was conducted in a church setting and based on attachment theory, religious and spiritual value influences can be factored in future researches.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

IWMs	Internal Working Models
KAG	Kenya Assemblies of God
N	Total Number of Respondents
NIV	New International Version
R**	Pearson Correlation Coefficient
SIG	Significance Value
SPSS	Statistical Package for Science Software
USA	United States of America

DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Attachment:** Attachment means an affectional bond or tie between an individual and an attachment figure (usually parents and other primary care givers). Such bonds may be reciprocal between two adults in couple relationship (Ainsworth & Blehar, 1978).
- Couple relationship:** An interpersonal love relationship between a man and a woman who are married and live together as a husband and wife (Kariuki, 2014).
- Insecure attachment:** An impairment and lack of emotional bond or security and trust that a child develops with the immediate caregivers or parent (Miner, 2009).
- Internal working model:** An internal working model is a set of expectations and beliefs about the self, others and the relationship between the self and others.
- Secure attachment:** The sense where a child develops an emotional bond with great sense of trust and security with the immediate caregiver or parent (Miner, 2009).

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The chapter provides an introduction and the background of the study on the influence of early parental child attachment style to a couple's relationship attachment style. The chapter also outlines the statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, and assumptions of the study, justification, and significance of the study. Also included is the scope of the study as well as the limitations and the delimitations to the study and the chapter summary.

Background of the Study

Marriages are made in heaven as the popular saying goes, but their maintenance occurs in an earthly setting. The emotional euphoria with which most marriages start can be eroded over time by the married couple as they establish daily routines. This is magnified as they experience conflicts and by coping with the innumerable problems, both large and small, that family life in an industrialized and cosmopolitan society such as in Nairobi entails. Consequently, there are many predictable changes that occur as couples proceed through the various stages of the family life cycle. Some of these changes can become crippers of marriage in a couple's relationship in the process. According to Kenya's 2009 population census, a total of 12.6 million Kenyans were married by 2009, and as of 2016, 15% of unions in Kenya ended up in divorce (Kubania, 2016). The biggest predictor as Kubania (2016) observes of marriage problems was poor communication.

While there may be many factors that shape and influence a couple marital relationship, this study sought to find how early parental-child attachment style influence couple relationship attachment style in a couple marital relationship. As Coy, Green and

Davis (2012) indicate, the development of couple relationships has long been associated with the relationship between parents and their children and the manner in which these children were raised. Mikulincer and Shaver (2007) also note that, most people begin to form intimate relationships in their early adulthood and as they further observe, most research suggests that the development of attachment traits and qualities begins in early childhood.

Within psychology, the concept of attachment has been most fully explored in relation to infant behavior. Bowlby's pioneering work on attachment, separation, and loss (Bowlby, 1988) explained how infants become emotionally attached to their primary caregivers and emotionally distressed when separated from them. The focus on infant behavior continued with the classic research conducted by Ainsworth and her colleagues (Ainsworth & Blehar, 1978), linking the caregiver's responsiveness to the infant's signals during the first year of life with the infant's development of one of three attachment styles (secure, avoidant, and anxious-ambivalent). More recently, the literature has focused on the issue of continuity of attachment. A growing number of longitudinal studies provide evidence of such continuity from infancy to the early school years (Doinita & Maria, 2015). In addition, there has been increasing speculation that attachment plays an important part in adult bonds, including romantic relationships (Feeney & Thrush, 2010).

Within attachment theory, infant behavior associated with attachment is primarily the seeking of proximity to an attachment figure in stressful situations with the caregiver (Doinita & Maria, 2015). Infants become attached to adults who are sensitive and responsive in social interactions with them, and who remain as consistent caregivers for some months during the period from about six months to two years of age (Feeney & Thrush, 2010). During the latter part of this period, children begin to use attachment figures who are familiar people as a secure base to explore from and return to. Donita and Maria (2015) consequently argue that, parental responses lead to the development of patterns of attachment and these, in turn, lead

to internal working models which then guide the individual's feelings, thoughts and expectations in later relationships.

The attachment theory approach to adult love relationships has been developed most fully by Shaver and Hazan (Shaver & Hazan, 1988). According to this view, variations in early social experience, the internal working models, produce relatively enduring differences in relationship styles, and the same three attachment styles described in the infant literature are manifested in adult romantic love. Continuity in attachment style is explained largely in terms of the persistence of inner working models of the self and of relationships 'mental models' based on early social interaction (Doinita & Maria, 2015).

Consequently, the quality and type of attachment bond children have with their parents', such as the father and the mother figure has been found to strongly suggest about the future quality of attachment style in couple's marital relationship that an individual experiences as an adult (Gleeson & Fitzgerald, 2014). Feeney (2008) also argue that, according to attachment theory our first relationship bond with our parents' acts as a lifelong internal template, moulding and shaping our capacity to enter into, and maintain, successful subsequent relationships with our partners and friends. It is believed that these early and powerful attachment experiences with our parents shape an individual's long-term emotional wellbeing (Gleeson & Fitzgerald, 2014). With the rise in couple marital conflict among Christian couples in Kenya, this understanding formed the quest to identify how couple relationships at Nairobi Christian Centre may have been affected by their early childhood attachment experiences with their parents.

While conducting research among Kenyan couples in Kiambu County, Kariuki (2014) observed that, in most Kenyan couple relationships and especially within the Christian relationships, a couple's relationship is crucial in providing companionship, friendship, emotional support, and sexual fulfilment. Kariuki asserts that, these are the key ingredients to

a healthy couple relationship. Spouses also receive their emotional fulfilment from each other through value recognition, companionship, praise, support in household chores, accomplishing tasks and contributing ideas for family investment and welfare (Kariuki, 2014).

However, Kariuki indicates that, couple relationship and as such, marriage and family life have undergone major changes during the past few decades globally, Kenya included. As a result, in the last two decades, the family has become more dynamic in structure and prone to changes. According to Mbiti (2006), marriage has been elementary in the foundation of every family in our African traditional and cultural set ups. Today, however as Mbiti observes, marriages are not keeping up with the traditional norms, values and processes. The change with the most effects to family stability is the increase in divorce and separation and as Mbiti argues, based on his research, traditionally, divorce was uncommon and was viewed as a sin in a marital relationship.

This study sought to find whether these changes from the traditional structures may have been influenced by early parental child attachment styles. Musau (2016) argues that, modernization, urbanization and industrialization are believed to contribute more to instability in marriage. The key factor in the increase in marriage instabilities in the most developed countries and in most urban areas has been the increasing social acceptance of separation and divorce (Musau, 2016). This has resulted from relaxation of negative attitudes towards separation and divorce by members of different communities (Musau, 2016). Childlessness is also a major factor viewed as being responsible for marital instability, given the societal social expectations, cultural norms and values associated with marital relationships in the Kenyan societies (Mbiti, 2006). Kariuki (2014) also observes that, the emphasis for an African marriage is procreation which is regarded as pivotal, and as such a child is considered vital to establishing a lasting family.

The above researches done in Kenya have mainly concentrated on cultural, religious and social economic factors. They have not sought to find how the emotional and psychological factors such as parental child attachment may have contributed to the marital connectedness and distress. Hence, this research sought to find how couples at Nairobi Christian Centre relate with each other based on attachment theory as well as identifying how the attachment styles from their early childhood attachment experiences with their parents related to their attachment bond with their spouses.

Statement of the Problem

The high rate of couple detachment with each other in the Kenyan Church and society at large has become a real threat in couple's health relationship (Musau, 2016). Marital happiness and couple relationship emotional connectedness is one of the deepest and most basic human desire in a couple's relationship and should be established within the family environment. If not, couples might suffer psychologically and emotionally if they quarrel or have conflict. As a result, the mental health of all family members may be threatened. Marital dissatisfaction can thus affect the lives of all family members. Most of the researches that are done in Kenya, outline specific social and psychological factors that influence marital couple relationship. These are such as parenting styles influences on individual relationships and cultural socialization (Musau, 2014; Kariuki, 2014). However, couple relationship attachment styles influences from childhood parental attachment styles experiences is lacking. Subsequently, this study sought to find how couple attach to each other based on attachment theory and how this attachment bond relates to their early parental childhood attachment styles experiences.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To establish early parental child attachment styles influences on married couple's relationship attachment style at Nairobi Christian Centre in Nairobi County.

- ii. To examine the influence of attachment style perception construct, the internal working models, in early parental child attachment style on married couple's relationship attachment style with couples at Nairobi Christian Centre in Nairobi County.
- iii. To find out how the father figure and the mother figure attachment style influences a couple's relationship attachment style with married couples at Nairobi Christian Centre in Nairobi County.

Research Questions

- i. How does the attachment style in early parental child attachment bond influence the attachment style in a married couple's relationship?
- ii. How does the attachment style perception construct, the internal working models, in early parental child attachment bond influence married couple's relationship attachment style?
- iii. How does father figure and the mother figure attachment style influence a married couple's relationship attachment style?

Assumptions

The study on couple attachment style at Nairobi Christian Centre was guided by the assumption that the same motivational system that gives rise to the close emotional attachment style between parents and their children was responsible for the attachment style that develops between couples in their relationship attachment style. Some of the assumptions were such as:

- i. Secure couple attachment bond is likely to be positively correlated with secure parental child attachment style and likewise, insecure couple attachment bond is likely correlated with insecure parental child attachment style.
- ii. There is a likelihood of influence on attachment style perception construct, the internal working models, from early parental child attachment style on couple's relationship attachment style.
- iii. The father figure and the mother figure attachment style experiences in early childhood are likely to influence how individuals relate and attach to their spouses.

Justification of the Study

Studies that have been done in the United States of America as Mikulincer and Shaver (2012) indicate that early family attachment experiences have long been recognized as important sources of influence in adult relationships and the importance of family of origin attachment experiences is essential in shaping the development of close bond in a couple's relationship. In Kenya however, Omondi and Kamonjo (2015) observe that, most of the research on couple relationship has concentrated on couple marital satisfaction and marital distress. Hence there is a gap on how these early childhood attachment styles may have influenced couple relationship in how they relate and translate into their attachment bond and attachment style. Consequently, recognizing our attachment patterns can help us understand our strengths and vulnerabilities in a couple's relationship.

Significance of the Study

The research will contribute and add knowledge on couple relationships at Nairobi Christian Centre and the Church at whole. The knowledge will help couples recognize the importance of understanding the relationship between parental child attachment style and its influence on couple relationships attachment style. Parents can become aware of the

magnitude of influence their relationship with their children has and how it may affect their children's subsequent relationships. The knowledge gained will help them proactively put effort in improving on their relationship with their children, so that in the future, their children can partake in healthy relationships. The study will also help contribute valuable knowledge in the discipline of marriage and family therapy. This will help counsellor's evaluate family of origin attachment bond experiences in evaluating couple attachment bond experiences. The knowledge will also help in developing pre-marital counselling programs that would help couples gain knowledge on adopting appropriate early parental child attachment styles.

Scope of the Study

The study sought to interview married couples at Nairobi Christian Centre in Nairobi County who were Church members. This was in view of their consistence in church attendance and commitment to Christian service. Their church membership and commitment was deemed as a demonstration to their dependability and reliability to responding to the study in the most honest way possible regarding their marital couple attachment experiences. The study targeted a sample from all the married couples in the church who were about 100 couples. The research took about 3 months within which the married couples were sampled and analysis concluded. Though the county and the location selected had other numerous churches, the Nairobi Christian Centre was among the oldest and was well established in terms of structures, membership consistency in different family cycle stages and had established other numerous Churches within the Nairobi County as well as across the country. Hence the church was more dependable and was well suited for this study.

Limitations and Delimitations

The study was limited in seeking to identify the relationship between early parental child attachment style and the influence this attachment bond may have to a couple's style of attachment. Hence other factors that would influence these relationship patterns were not considered in this study. Due to time limitation the study was limited to couples within Nairobi Christian Centre. The study was also limited to attachment theory and perceptions that the couples had on their early parental child attachment experiences. Since the study was conducted based on attachment theory, other theoretical factors were not factored and the study factored on concepts based on attachment styles within the attachment theory.

Chapter Summary

The chapter provided an introduction to the various aspects of studies that are related to the research variables of how early parental child attachment styles influences couple relationship attachment style. A rationale to the statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study and assumptions was sought and provided in consideration to the study objectives and research questions.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The chapter highlights on the general literature review, empirical literature, theoretical framework and the conceptual framework that details the interplay of the variables in this study. The chapter in the literature review examines studies that have been done in relation to the objectives of this research.

Parental Child Attachment Style Influence on Couple's Relationship Attachment Style

The most essential part of attachment theory lies in the hypothesis that the experiences of early relationships create active internal patterns in childhood, which affect future knowledge and relationships. As Parade, Supple and Helms (2012) indicate, early family attachment experiences have long been recognized as important sources of influence in adult relationships and the importance of family of origin attachment experiences is essential in shaping the development of close bond in a couple's relationship. Parade et al., (2012) further argue that, parental warmth such as parental expression of affection and approval and harsh parenting such as parental expression of verbal and physical aggression are thought to be relevant in the development of positive expectations for social interaction.

They also note that, children reared in environments characterized by more warmth and less harsh parenting develop a more positive lens through which individuals view the world around them and come to expect that their interactions with others will be pleasant and enjoyable. Based on these observations, the study sought to find relevance with the couples at Nairobi Christian Church. Relating to attachment style, Doinita and Maria (2015) argue that positive parenting practices include more specific behaviours such as parental warmth and openness and constant support, constant monitoring and surveillance, a certain degree of

autonomy, availability, setting limits and clear rules accompanied by inductive discipline, expectations and applications depending on the child's age.

Hence with these experiences, secure attachment in childhood occurs when a parent is responsive to the needs of the child (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2012). This allows the child to explore the environment safe, and it develops confidence in the child's ability to interact with autonomous world, to face challenges, and regulate their own emotions (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2012). They further argue that attachment security and the capacity to be a responsive parent, affords the parent the resources required to provide not only a safe haven in times of threat, but also as a secure base from which to explore the world. Hence its notably evident that parental child attachment is vital for the development of a child relationship patterns.

In their classical initial research, Shaver and Hazan (1988) successfully applied the theoretical framework of attachment theory to adult romantic relationships and explained couple's love as an attachment process. Their research suggested the prevalence of attachment styles in infancy, such as secure attachment and insecure attachment as relatively being the same as in adulthood attachment styles. They further argued that, the type of attachment that a child forms has long-term repercussions into many aspects of the child's development and adult life. Some of these aspects include peer relationships and the ability to maintain long-term intimate relationships. Feeney (2008) also propose that early attachment histories are the basis of an internal working model for adult relationships whereby persons with secure childhood attachments show higher levels of trust, closeness, and dependability while insecure childhood attachments predict the reverse. Consequently, the study at Nairobi Christian Centre based its objective on attachment style based on these research findings in an attempt to identify suitability and replicability.

Individual differences in adult attachment are also an area to observe as they also reflect in a couple's relationship. Doinita and Maria (2015) have argued that individual

differences in adult attachment behaviour are reflections of the expectations and beliefs people have formed about themselves and their close relationships on the basis of their attachment histories. Over repeated interactions, children are theorized to develop a set of knowledge structures, or internal working models, that represent those interactions and contribute to the endogenous regulation of the attachment behavioural system (Feeney, 2008). Arguably, the internal working models can be deemed as the templates in which attachment relational bonds are founded on.

Further research done in the United States of America (USA) by Feeney and Thrush (2010) indicate that, drawing on the attachment behavioural system, it is likely that individual differences in infant parent relationships are similar to individual differences in romantic relationships. As they note, different attachment styles are associated with different attitudes towards couple's relationships. For example, Feeney and Thrush (2010) argue that, individuals who classify themselves as securely attached are focused on the enduring aspects of a relationship. Also, individuals with an insecure avoidant attachment style have the feeling that relations do not really exist and that 'true love' was rare, while individuals who describe themselves as insecure ambivalently attached feel that true love was rare but that one easily falls in love (Feeney & Thrush, 2010).

As noted an attachment pattern is established in early childhood attachments and continues to function as a working model for relationships in adulthood. In relation to early parental child attachment style influences on subsequent attachment relationships, studies that have been done in Kenya have mainly focused on teenage behaviour and not necessarily on couple attachment as Wambua (2015) indicates. Hence there is a gap on how these early childhood attachment styles may have influenced couple relationship in how they relate and translate into their attachment bond and attachment style. Recognizing our attachment patterns can help us understand our strengths and vulnerabilities in a couple's relationship.

Attachment Style Perception Construct, the Internal Working Models

Attachment style perception constructs that a child forms with their primary caregivers can translate and shape future attachment style experiences. Hence this research sought to find the influence such early attachment experience have had with couples at Nairobi Christian Centre over time. According to Hazan and Shaver (1987), working models of attachment continue to guide and shape close relationship behaviour throughout life. As people build new relationships, they rely partly on previous expectations about how others are likely to behave and feel towards them, and they use these models to interpret the goals or intentions of their partners (Coy, Green & Davis, 2012). These researches conclude that, working models are believed to be highly resistant to change because they are more likely to assimilate new relational information, even at the cost of distorting it, than accommodate to information that is at odds with existing expectations (Coy et al., 2012). Consequently, the working internal models are fundamentally important in informing any subsequent relationship in the developmental cycle of an individual.

In this respect, they further observe that, the theory explains continuity in the way people relate to others across different relationships. Moreover, as they indicate, the theory suggests that early caregiving experiences influence, at least in part, how people behave in their adult romantic relationships. As such, the theory provides a way to preserve an early psychoanalytic insight about adult relational patterns without introducing controversial psychoanalytic mechanisms, such as regression or fixation (Coy et al., 2012).

Research has suggested that adult attachment in the context of couple's relationships serve as an evolutionary, adaptive objective that is comparable to the parent-infant relationship (Feeney, 2008). Feeney observes that Hazan and Shaver's preeminent work explored couple's love as an attachment process. Through the construction of self-report questionnaires, they found that the two different styles of attachment, as proposed by

Ainsworth, help explain personality differences in experiences of couple's relationships (Feeney, 2008). In essence, participant's perceptions of the quality of their relationship with both parents during childhood were significantly associated with their attachment style to others in adulthood.

While focusing on an individual internal working model, Dixon, Gordon, Frousakis and Schumm (2012) observe that individuals apply their working models of attachment to future adult relationships thereby transferring attachment styles from one relationship to the next. Their research suggests attachment, security, and parental sensitivity are catalysts for development of trust, happiness, and communication experienced in future relationships. They argue that, those individuals who demonstrate more positive and loving relationships with parents experience more trust, comfort, and communication with their romantic partners. Ling and Qian (2010) also assert that, a catalyst for attachment styles in infancy, such as trust, caregiving, and intimacy are positively associated with development of adult intimate relationships.

Notably, as these study identified is that, age, cognitive growth and continued social experience advance the development and complexity of the internal working model (Dixon et al., 2012). Campa, Hazan and Wolfe (2009) have also observed that attachment related behaviours lose some characteristics typical of the infant-toddler period and take on age related tendencies. Consequently, it is important to find how early childhood attachment experiences with parents may have influenced couple marital relationship. It is also vital to identify how the different attachment styles in early childhood translate in the individual's attachment style in couple's marital relationship.

Across the life span, Dixon et al., observe that, our ability or openness to exchange the two gifts of emotional accessibility and responsiveness, comprise of the building blocks of secure, emotionally healthy, lasting couple relationships. In a study of newlywed years as

predictors of marital distress, happiness and longevity at the University of Texas at Austin (Qian, 2010) found that emotional responsiveness was a powerful predictor of the future quality and length of couple relationships.

Bowlby's theory of attachment offers a clear explanation of why these attachment relationships are of crucial importance for children's subsequent emotional and social development. Building on these ideas, subsequent research has provided strong support for the basic processes that Bowlby described, and has uncovered the details of how attachment relationships are formed and how they affect development into adulthood. Of central importance is the concept of attachment security, where a child with secure attachment feels able to rely on the parent or parents as a source of comfort and safety in times of upset and stress. Equally also as these researches indicate, is the role this attachment style plays in couple romantic relationship.

Father and Mother Figure Attachment Style Influence on Couple's Attachment

The father figure and the mother figure in a child's life are key in shaping the life of a child in the different developmental growth stages of any child. Gleeson and Fitzgerald (2014) observe that, there has been limited attachment research examining how the differential roles played by the mother and father may impact on individual differences in attachment mental representations. Both Bowlby (1969) and Mary Ainsworth (1978) in their initial classical research factored mainly on the mother figure as the primary attachment caregiver and put little emphasis on the father figure as a primary attachment figure. However, as Gleeson and Fitzgerald (2014) posit, over the past few years, studies have incorporated this aspect into research on adult attachment styles.

The aspect of the father figure as an attachment figure as Hall (2009) notes is now a common perception that fathers play an important, if not distinct, role in influencing their young daughters' future, romantic relationships. Hall further notes that, a growing body of

research has demonstrated that having a present, involved, and caring father corresponds with a variety of a healthy outcome for children. Some outcomes may vary depending on the gender of a child in that fathers tend to interact with or differentially influence male and female children in distinct ways (Hall, 2009). In light of the above literature, it is notable that discounting the father as an attachment figure in a child's life would indeed translate to disregarding the father's influence on the development of the child. Major theoretical emphasis within the father daughter literature has been on the role a father plays for his daughter's future, romantic relationships (Holmes & Johnson, 2009). Within such literature, it is commonly suspected that daughters generalize their experiences with their fathers to boys and men as potential romantic partners and husbands. This assertion is generally more speculative than empirical, and the exact means by which this generalization process occurs are not clear.

Fathers and mothers play a unique as well as overlapping and complementary role in children's socialization. Sanders and Morawska (2009) indicate that, studies in many cultures have shown how male as a primary caregiver tend to put a greater emphasis on play, on joint and exciting activities and on mentorship rather than on nurturing interactions. However, because male as a primary caregiver are also attachment figures, they can powerfully influence their children's social and emotional development (Sanders & Morawska, 2009). In a longitudinal study in Germany of children's development up to 20 years of age, in low-risk, middle-class, two-parent families, children's strategies of exploration, qualities of joint play and coping with separation distress were assessed in infancy and childhood with mother and father using standardized assessments and free observations (Sanders & Morawska, 2009). They further note that, in later years, interviews assessing attachment and close relationship representations were added.

The sensitive and challenging interactive play of fathers turned out to be of special importance (Holmes & Johnson, 2009). A father's early play sensitivity with his toddler was found to be a unique and independent predictor of his children's later security of attachment representation at 10, 16 and 22 years of age (Sanders & Morawska, 2009). Moreover, it had a significant impact on the representations of other close relationships such as close friendships at age 16, and on the young adults' partnership representations (Sanders & Morawska, 2009). Young adults whose fathers had been more sensitive in their early play interactions had more secure models of attachment as well as partnership when talking about their current romantic relationships (Holmes & Johnson, 2009). Thus, a father's early sensitive and supportive interactive play behaviour with his toddler has been shown to serve an important socializing function for the child's attachment and social development future relationships.

In relation to romantic relationship socialization, Hall (2009) posits that there are reasons to suspect that fathers can make an important contribution to the eventual romantic relationships of their daughters. This contribution is different from the contribution of mothers, and different from fathers' contributions to their sons. Hall further indicates that, there is a tendency for mothers and fathers to interact in some distinct ways with their daughters. It is possible that because of this tendency fathers are particularly salient for specific domains of their daughters' development (Riggio & Weisner, 2008). This is an assertion that this study was curious to identifying how these different parental genders would have with couples at Nairobi Christian Centre in Nairobi.

Research also indicates that, gender may also influence the roles and type of interaction in the home that can shape unique father daughter relationship characteristics (Riggio & Weisner, 2008). For example, in predicting a child's self-esteem, physical affection from fathers mattered much more for daughters' outcomes than for sons' (Platt,

Nalbone, Casanova & Wetchler, 2008). Similarly, spending time with their fathers was strongly related to school aged girls' feelings of closeness with their fathers, but that was much less the case for boys (Holmes & Johnson, 2009). Pro-social parenting from fathers predicted less childhood delinquency by daughters but comparable maternal influences were not associated with this outcome (Hall, 2009). Overall, Holmes and Johnson (2009) posit that, these studies illustrate that fathers can serve some distinct functions in the lives of daughters, demonstrating the plausibility that fathers likewise contribute uniquely to their daughters' eventual marital functioning.

Furthermore, daughters learn to behave in ways that complement a father's masculine behaviour, thus shaping their future behaviour with other males (Platt et al., 2008). Paired with a Psychodynamic perspective, this socialization process would be especially salient for a daughter's future relationships because her father is her "first love," and she may even fantasize romantically about him (Riggio & Weisner, 2008). Additionally, women with more positive childhood relationships with their parents were more likely to identify stimulus faces as attractive that shared similar features with their own father's features (Riggio & Weisner, 2008). This provides a perspective that demonstrates the magnitude in which fathers are influential with their daughter's attachment bond experiences.

Consequently, fathers may make a lasting impression on their daughters' romantic preferences, though relatively little is known about what factors in the father-daughter relationship account for this connection. However, it is likely that more supportive and less abusive fathering nurture positive assumptions and expectations about relations with males, though this assertion has been made based more on anecdotes and clinical observations than empirical research (Hall, 2009). In addition to the nature of relationship a daughter experience with her father, what she observes about her father's marriage-related behaviour also may be influential on her future relationships (Hall, 2009). Additionally, key means of

paternal influence on a daughter's future relationships is attachment styles (Feeney & Thrush, 2010). Sensitive, consistent parenting results in healthier attachments that shape children's future styles of attaching with others (Ainsworth, 1982). These styles are relevant to marriage in that they influence one's choice of a mate, how one copes with interpersonal conflict (Feeney, 2008), and marital adjustment (Riggio & Weisner, 2008). The development of these styles can also be influenced by modelling of parents' romantic marital relationships (Platt et al., 2008).

In light of the father-daughter literature in attachment theory above, one might expect that a daughter's attachment style would be influenced particularly by her relationship with her father, including the type of marital behaviour modelled by the father (Hall, 2009). Similar to the research noted above regarding beliefs and attitudes, studies that investigated attachment styles as they related to parents' marital dynamics have typically measured it in such a way that limited the ability to isolate and compare the father-daughter dyad to other parent-child combinations (Riggio & Weisner, 2008).

While most of the research identified above demonstrates on the influence of father and daughter relationship, this study was subsequently designed to identify early childhood attachment experiences influence on couple attachment bond. Additionally, the study also aimed at identifying how these attachment experiences help in couple's approach relationships and concepts relevant to a future marriage, with an aim to identify if any such connections are unique for paternal and maternal couple marital relationships attachment styles.

Empirical Literature

The study on how early parental child attachment style influence couple relationship have been researched extensively across the globe. However, systems theories in which attachment theory is based are relatively new in Kenya and there is little research in this area

available based on attachment theory. The study consequently sought to find how early childhood attachment styles with parents influence couple relationship attachment styles with couples at Nairobi Christian Centre in Nairobi. Hall, Fujukawa, Halcrow and Hill (2009) in their empirical research in the United States of America in their research exploring on the internal working models (IWMs) observe that, attachment theorists argue generally that the mental representations of the self in relation to being close to others, developed from a parent child relationship, is actively reflected in a child's social relationships even in to adulthood. This mental representation of self in relation to others is what Bowlby (1988) calls the internal working model (IWMs).

In attachment theory according to Bowlby (1969) in his classical research, the IWMs, initially develop through early childhood experiences with a parent, but remain open to modification and specification across a life time through contact and dealings with attachment figures or other people who are close such as friends, parents, partners, and close attachment figures. He further indicates that the quality of caregiving provided by parents is a template for what later relationships will be like, which in turn affects how people think, feel, and behave in their later relationships.

The internal working models (IWMs) as Kerns and Braham (2012) notes influence an individual's behaviour in their social relationships, particularly an attachment figure. As they point out that, the nature of one's IWMs also determines how individual responses to the availability of an attachment figure to impulses of support, security and protection. Hall et al., (2009) also observe that, attachment theory shows us how the attachment structure impels the parents to function as a secure base, a safe haven, and a target for proximity from where the child engages the world in exploration. The quality of such a relationship, according to Bowlby (1988), is determined by the history of interactions and the extent to which a person

depends on an attachment figure as a source of security and comfort (Bradshaw, Ellison & Marcum, 2010).

Individual's couple's expectations based on childhood attachment style experiences cannot be ignored. According to Dixon et al., (2012) in their research with couples in the United States of America, couples enter relationships with a wide array of expectations. Some of these expectations become part of the explicit, verbal repertoire that spouses share with one another. These expectations represent the opinions and assumptions that each spouse communicates in the hopes that their partner will agree to them and honour them. Other expectations, equally influential, are more implicit and may reflect the individual's unconscious attempt to fulfill personal relationship, sometimes childhood needs through the relationship (Dixon et al., 2012). They further argue that more often people expect their spouse to compensate for qualities and characteristics they lack or to provide specific experiences such as nurturing or security that they have received in insufficient quantity or quality.

This is a factor that this research will attempt to identify whether individuals try to project their childhood attachment needs onto their spouses. Bradshaw et al., (2010) also in their research in the United States of America argue that, when expectations are extreme or demanding, they may lead to conflict and disappointment, because they are less likely to be fulfilled. These explicit and implicit expectations about the relationship are engraved in cultural norms of prototypes of presumably ideal relationships (Bradshaw et al., 2010). They further indicate that, the primary source of these expectations is childhood experiences in the family of origin attachment.

Attachment experiences with our initial primary caregivers provide a basis in which we formulate beliefs and perceptions about ourselves and others. According to Ainsworth and Blehar (1978) in their initial classical research in Northern Uganda observed that, early

parental child attachment styles produces sets of expectations, beliefs, perceptions and attitudes about oneself in relation to others, this continues to exert powerful directive throughout the family lifecycle. Gleeson and Fitzgerald (2014) also in their research noted that through the on-going parental interactions, a child forms an increasingly complex internal representation of his experience with each parent that becomes relatively stable over time. Doinita and Maria (2015) also observed that early interaction between the child and the parent forms some beliefs that are internalized and encoded as internal working models.

These early interactions as Ling and Qian (2010) observe in their study, with the attachment figure, lay the foundation for “internal working models” (IWMs) of self and others in relationships. Consequently, as they further argue, these internal working models then become the templates from which early experiences guide and inform our perception, expectations and individuals thinking processes in future relationships including couple relationships. Children construct their own internal mental representations of other people and project them onto real people based on their early childhood relationships and also make interpretations of other people based on their relationship with significant others such as parents (Ling & Qian, 2010).

Notably, attachment behaviours include stress responses and exploratory behaviour and are shaped by cognition, affect, and interaction with the caregiver (Honari & Saremib, 2014). Early attachment provides an ‘internal working model’ that guides relational behaviour and expectations as an adult, and forms the basis for adult romantic attachments (Honari & Saremib, 2014). These cognitive-affective representations of the self and of others are proposed mechanisms underlying continuity and stability of attachment patterns across the lifespan; they influence personality development, psychological functioning, behaviour, and affect regulation in later relational contexts (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2012).

Bowlby believed that attachment in the parent- child relationship is alienated to an adult romantic relationship and can effect on behaviour, cognition and emotions in any time of life, from infancy to adulthood (Jounston & Finney, 2010). Attachment in relationships is not broken off in a voluntary manner or completely, and any break in relationships is painful and cause to mourning in person (Bowlby, 1969; Ainsworth, 1991). 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 (Jounston & Finney, 2010).

In a longitudinal study done in the United States of America (USA), Feeney (2008) indicates that, as adults we take attachment styles developed in early childhood into our relationships with others, creating a complex interpersonal dance of emotions, motivations, and expectations. These activation models are relatively constant and reflect the individual's primary relationship with his mother (Jounston & Finney, 2010). Thus, childhood attachments affect an individual's adult romantic relationships. Then, as Honari and Saremib (2014) in their research argue, the persistence the primary patterns in later periods is determined by two methods, first it is expected to make a stable relationship between child and caregiver that is continue up to adulthood. Second the development of mental models or attachment system occurs out of person awareness, can direct and guide his behaviours, thoughts and emotions in next romantic situations (Honari & Saremib, 2014).

To determine and explain the social relationships, romantic relationships and sexual relationships in adulthood and youth periods, Hazan and Shaver (1987) in their classical empirical research in the USA, use the theory of attachment styles. From their opinion the attachment styles reflect the mental representation of themselves and the others, and leads to different orientation in close relationship and are considered as fixed personality dimensions which not only has a very essential role in communicate with other in childhood, but also in

adulthood (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2012). The interpersonal style of the adult and their corresponding attachment strategies will continue to be influenced by the internal working models developed in childhood. This as Mikulincer and Shaver (2012) posits means that the securely attached adult will regard themselves as deserving of attachment and others as being able to meet their needs, whereas the opposite is likely to be true for those considered insecurely attached.

Attachment theory normalizes many of the extreme emotions that accompany distressing moments in relationships. The originator of attachment theory and research, Bowlby (1969), viewed anger in close relationships as often being an attempt to connect with a loved one that was perceived as emotionally inaccessible. He distinguished between the anger of hope where a viable response was expected, and the anger of despair, which activated desperate, punitive or coercive behaviors (Honari & Saremib, 2014). In a study in the Australia, Dinero (2009) found that, in all primates, a loss of connection with an attachment figure produces a particular kind of fear, known as a “primal panic” that results in desperate attempts to seek to restore closeness and proximity. Dinero (2009) further argues that, seeking a sense of connection with a loved one is a key built-in drive, a mechanism for regulating painful emotions.

Empirical researches in Finland among children and their primary care givers indicate that, whenever our bids for connection as young children fail to evoke a caring response, our physical body activates separation distress signals (Jounston & Finney, 2010). As children, these responses are critical. Dinero (2009) in a research in the Middle East among children also notes that, depending on the primal panic strategies adopted to handle stress, we may activate behavior patterns that, in a manner of speaking, protest this loss of connection with an array of reactions, to include angry outbursts, depression, clinging, grief, withdrawal, and emotional detachment, among others. Jounston and Finney (2010) indicate that, whether we

call the emotion anger or panic, this fear-based reaction stems from our attempt to realize a love response.

While conducting studies on couple marital relationship in Kenya Omondi and Kamonjo (2015) observes that, the increasing rates of couple marital instabilities, a phenomenon viewed to originate from the western world, is becoming common in the Kenyan societies, an indication of the changing community values and norms concerning marriage and family life. Kariuki (2014) also argues that, couple marital relationship beside the characterisation on the infiltration of the western cultures, has also been affected by some cultural and religious practices that have lost relevance to the dynamics cultural changes and hence deemed as retrogressive. However, these studies focus on cultural, social economic and religious factors and not on early childhood parental attachment bond experiences.

As observed, in Kenya, most of the research on couple relationship has concentrated on couple marital satisfaction and marital distress and assesses factors such as cultural, gender disparities, religion and social economic factors that seek to identify their influence on the couple marital relationship. In order to fill the gap on some of the systemic psychological and emotional factors that may influence a couple's marital relationship, this study sought to identify how early parental child attachment style influence the couple's attachment style in their marital relationship with couples at Nairobi Christian Centre in Bahati, Nairobi Kenya.

Theoretical Framework

The study on how early parental child attachment style influences couple relationship attachment style at Nairobi Christian Centre in Bahati was based on attachment theory that was initially conceptualized by Bowlby (1969) and later Mary Ainsworth (1972) while researching on the attachment styles. The concept of attachment theory was well suited in a church set up as attachment is a concept that is well articulated in the Bible and hence it was

deemed that it would be well understood by the respondents in the research. The concept of attachment has been mostly fully explored in relation to infant behaviour (Bowlby 1980).

Bowlby pioneering work on attachment, separation, and loss explained how infants become emotionally attached to their primary caregivers and emotionally distressed when separated from them. The focus on infant behaviour continued with the classic research conducted by Ainsworth and her colleagues (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978), linking the caregiver's responsiveness to the infant's signals during the first year of life with the infant's development of one of three attachment styles (secure, avoidant, and anxious-ambivalent). More recently, as Feeney and Thrush (2010) posit, a lot of the literature has also focused on the issue of continuity of attachment. A growing number of longitudinal studies provide evidence of such continuity from infancy to the early school years (e.g., Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985). In addition, there has been increasing speculation that attachment plays an important part in adult bonds, including romantic relationships (Jerga, Shaver & Wilkinson, 2011).

The attachment theory approach to adult love relationships has been developed most fully by Hazan and Shaver (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). According to this view, variations in early social experience produce relatively enduring differences in relationship styles, and the same three attachment styles described in the infant literature are manifested in adult romantic love. Continuity in attachment style is explained largely in terms of the persistence of inner working models of the self and of relationships, based on early social interaction. Hazan and Shaver (1987) have presented theoretical and empirical evidence for the relevance of attachment style to romantic love. Their theoretical work drew on the strong similarities between infant and adult attachments (Jerga et al., 2011).

According to attachment theory as originated by Bowlby, the quality of early interactions between the child and their parents has a significant impact on the child's

subsequent psychological and interpersonal functioning throughout the lifespan. Kerns and Braham (2012) posit that, this theory is based on the premise that attachment security develops when the parent is perceived as being responsible and caring whereas attachment insecurity results when the parent is perceived as inconsistent in their responses and availability. Importantly, it is believed that as a result of these early interactions, the child develops mental representations or internal working models of attachment which act as a guide for perceptions and behaviours in subsequent relationships (Gleeson & Fitzgerald, 2014).

Early childhood Parental attachment influence subsequent attachment relationships. Kerns and Braham (2012) indicate that, the development of couple's relationships has long been associated with the relationship between parents and their children and the manner in which these children were raised. Kerns and Brumariu further argue that, although most people begin to form intimate relationships in their early adulthood, much research suggests that the development of intimacy traits and qualities begins in early childhood. Research indicates that, the quality and type of attachment children have with their mothers and fathers have been found to strongly suggest the future quality of attachment in couple's relationships that a child experiences as an adult (Gleeson & Fitzgerald, 2014).

The theory of attachment offers a promising theoretical framework for understanding friendship, marriage, romantic and other human relationships. Based on these ideas, several authors such as Hazan and Shaver (1987), pioneers in the field, conceptualized romantic love, or pair bonding, as an attachment process that is characterized by dynamics similar to infant-parent attachment. Hazan and Shaver argued that, when an individual is feeling distressed, sick, or threatened, the partner can be used as a source of safety, comfort, and protection. For example, adults typically feel safer and more secure when their partner is nearby, accessible, and responsive (Gleeson & Fitzgerald, 2014). Hence, the partner may be used as a "secure

base” from which one could more freely explore the environment as part of leisure or engage in more creative work projects (Mohammadi, Samavi, & Ghazavi, 2016).

Ravitz, Maunder, Hunter, Sthankiya, and Lancee (2010) adopted Ainsworth and her colleague’s three-category scheme as a framework for organizing individual differences in couple’s relationships and they argued that the same two types of attachment existing in childhood can be seen in adults. They note that, trust in people, as well as easiness with which they make close contacts with others are typical of securely attached individuals. On the other hand, individuals with the insecure attachment style have an intensive need for emotional closeness with other people but they are afraid that they are not loved enough (Mohammadi et al., 2016).

Consequently, the use of attachment theory was deemed as most appropriate as it provided a framework that was more likely to meet the research study objectives. Additionally, attachment theory aligned to Biblical texts as found in the book of Genesis 2:24 and Mathew 19:5-6 where the scripture gives emphasis on the attachment bond between a husband and wife in a marital union (New International Version, NIV, 2011).

Understanding Attachment Styles

Bowlby (1982) proposed that human infants are born with an innate psychobiological system which he called the attachment behavioural system, which motivates them to seek proximity to supportive others, attachment figures, as a means of protecting them from physical and psychological threats and promoting affect regulation, well-being, and increasing self-efficacy. Bowlby speculated that the need to seek and maintain proximity to attachment figures evolved biologically because of children’s prolonged dependence on “stronger and wiser” others, usually parents, who can defend children from predators and other dangers while supporting their gradual physical and cognitive development (Coan, 2008). Although the attachment system is most critical during the early years of life, Bowlby

assumed that it is active over the entire life span and underlies the formation and maintenance of relational bonds in adulthood.

As Coan (2008) observes, Bowlby theorized that early interactions with attachment figures were encoded in mental representations that he called internal working models (IWMs) of self and others. These beliefs, both conscious and unconscious, are understood as personal theories about behaviour in interpersonal relationships (Coan, 2008). Attachment theorists believe that internal working models are formed from actual relationship experiences and impact future attachment behaviours (Fraley, Vicary, Brumbaugh, & Roisman, 2011). Bowlby posited that internal working models of self and others are complementary. In other words, as an infant becomes confident in the caregiver's capacity to provide regulatory assistance, s/he also develops confidence in his or her own capacity for regulation (Fraley et al., 2011). According to attachment theory, people consequently develop distinct attachment styles based on their perception of the availability and responsiveness of their primary caregivers during childhood. Furthermore, attachment theory promotes the notion that relationships are the primary foundation for the psyche and wellbeing (Hood, 2014).

Mary Ainsworth, another pioneer in the field of attachment theory, developed an experimental procedure called the strange situation. The strange situation was used to assess attachment patterns of infants (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Within a laboratory setting, Ainsworth observed the attachment behaviours of 12 to 20 month olds in eight separate situations over the course of a twenty-minute time period (Hood, 2014). Through observing an infant's responses to very brief separations from, and reunions with a given parent, Ainsworth classified the organization of the infant's attachment to that parent as secure and insecure in which insecure was classified as avoidant, anxious or ambivalent (Hood, 2014). Consequently, based on Bowlby's claim that attachment needs are active "from the cradle to

the grave,” Shaver, Hazan, and Bradshaw (1988) proposed that romantic relationships in adulthood can be conceptualized as involving attachment bonds that function to regulate distress and provide a secure base for continued psychological growth and increasing maturity and autonomy (Fraley et al., 2011).

Secure attachment promotes exploratory competence because secure children feel confident that someone will rescue them, should they experience distress while exploring (Fraley et al., 2011). Infants with a secure pattern of attachment typically protest when they are separated from their caregiver, and the attempt to regain closeness to the caregiver upon reunion (Fraley et al., 2011). Through Ainsworth’s et al., (1978) observations, she defined securely attached children as those who cried very little and seemed to be content with their mothers. Ainsworth further explained that predictors of secure attachment were amount of care the mother gave to the child, the mother’s interest in her child, and the mother’s enjoyment of breastfeeding. Further, Bowlby (1973) associated secure attachment with the confidence to approach problems in an effective way, and Ainsworth et al., (1978) found that securely attached infants scored better on developmental tests and language development. Securely attached infants were found to be more cooperative with better problem solving skills, were better at sharing and rated as socially competent by five year olds (Coan, 2008).

Securely attached children are noted for how they become noticeably upset when their mother leaves and yet quickly calmed and happy once parent returns. Separation may be upsetting, yet it is tolerable (Coan, 2008). Further as Coan (2008) observes, they are responsive to their mother’s attempts to greet, comfort or play with them. When scared, they quickly seek comfort from the parent (Fraley et al., 2011). They are responsive to their mother’s attempts to interact with them (Fraley et al., 2011). They can also be comforted by other people in the absence of mother, yet show clear preference for their mother (Hood, 2014). Their sense of the world around them is one they can trust and predict to some extent.

Parents of securely attached children are responsive to their needs consistently (Fraley et al., 2011). Hood (2014) also argues that, they are confident overall in their ability to soothe their children, and thus calm and emotionally present, and more likely to be empathic, and validating of their children's emotional ups and downs.

In later childhood, securely attached children are more empathic toward others, less disruptive or aggressive in group settings and generally exhibit more common sense wisdom than children with insecure styles of attachment (Hood, 2014). Coan (2008) also observes that, as adults, children who are attached securely have greater chances of being in secure, healthy love relationships. They also have higher self-esteem, can express their feelings, listen empathically to others feelings, resolve problems, and exhibit flexible thinking (Coan, 2008).

Mary Ainsworth defined insecurely attached infants as crying a great deal and demanding a great deal of attention from their mothers. Additionally, these infants seemed reluctant to explore the world, even in the presence of their mothers (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Insecure attachment can be broken down into three different sub-categories; avoidant, resistant-ambivalent and disorganized-disoriented (Coan, 2008). Avoidant attachment involves behaviors that resemble rejection. Infants will often ignore the caregiver's departure and return and actively avoid the caregiver's attempts to regain contact. Resistant-ambivalent is characterized by a preoccupation or fixation on the caregiver in which the caregiver is alternately sought for comfort and rejected (Fraley et al., 2011).

Parade et al., (2012) argues that, anxiously attached children show considerable more distress when separated from their mother, and yet have a difficult time being comforted by the mother's return or reassurance. The child may turn away from the mother entirely and refuse to be comforted and instead act out in anger (Feeney and Thrush, 2010). These

children may be very suspicious of strangers on the one hand, or are very clingy at other times and over dependent on mother to take care of their needs (Feeney, 2008). Doinita and Maria (2015) also notes that, parents of anxious style children are unavailable emotionally, and overall fearful, anxious or reactive to their children's expressions of certain emotions. As adults, partners with ambivalent attachment styles often feel anxious about their partner and worry that their partner does not reciprocate their feelings (Feeney, 2008). They tend to work too hard to please and appease their partners, and increasingly become resentful when the caring responses or appreciation they seek fail to be realized (Feeney, 2008). Doinita and Maria (2015) argue that, they experience frequent breakups, complain that the relationship feels cold and distant, and may go into despair each time their relationships end and as adults they may cling to their children for security.

On the other hand, children who are avoidant in their style of attachment tend to be dismissive or indifferent toward their mother or caregiver (Fraley et al., 2011). Feeney (2008) also note that, this avoidant behavior is more pronounced following a period of the mother's absence. Parade et al., (2012) argues that, they may or may not reject the parent's attention but they do not seek their comfort or contact with their parents, and become adept at taking care of their needs and wants separate from their parents Parade et al., (2012). They behave similarly to parents as they do to strangers. In adulthood, these children experience difficulty in their love relationships (Fraley et al., 2011). They are not aware of their emotional needs for connection, and thus invest little emotional energy in connecting (Coan, 2008). Their relationships tend to be shallow as they're accustomed to showing little distress when their partner is away or expresses their pain and sense of disconnect in the relationship (Feeney, 2008). Parade et al., (2012) posits that, they find it difficult or very uncomfortable to connect to emotions, thoughts, and thus may use excuses to avoid intimacy, affection and overall

resist encounters that invite them to express their emotion, grow closer and connect more deeply with their partner.

The disorganized style of attachment is typically seen in infants who have been maltreated by their attachment figure; they exhibit conflicted behaviors such as simultaneously reaching for and turning away from the caregiver (Fraley et al., 2011). The disorganized style of attachment is likely caused by the attachment object being both a stressor and a comfort for the child (Fraley et al., 2011). Bowlby described those who suffer from insecure attachment as those who avoid problems in their lives and are at risk of psychopathology because of anxiety or distrust (Bowlby, 1973). Additionally, (Coan, 2008) found that insecurely attached preschoolers would display greater behavioral problems than those who were securely attached.

Children with disorganized-insecure attachment styles exhibit an absence of primary pattern of relating, and their behaviors in relation to their caregivers, as well as in relation to their partners as adults, are more inclined to be a combination of either avoidance or anxiety (Fraley et al., 2011). When they need assurance, they may seem confused or distraught and uncertain, and may behave erratically (Fraley et al., 2011). This confusion as Coan (2008) notes may have to do with experiencing unpredictability in relation to their caregiver with a caregiver who was both a source of comfort yet also cause of intense fear.

Understanding the attachment styles was valuable as it aided in conceptualizing the conceptual framework on the study variables as well as providing a platform for the formulation of the research objectives. The relationship that the attachment styles had from the onset of early parental child attachment style experiences were demonstrated through to couple relationship attachment style experiences in the study.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable

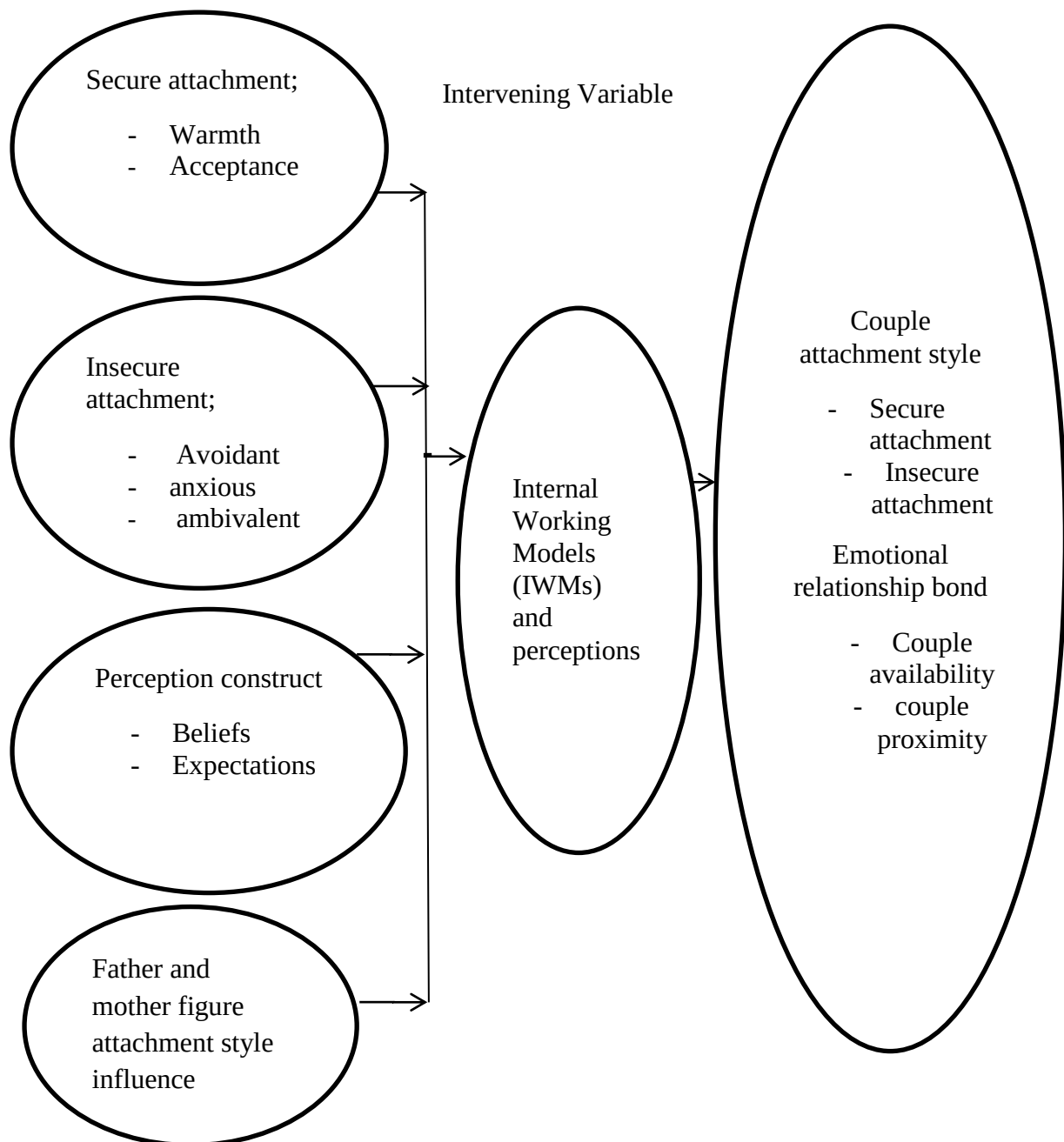


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Research Data, 2018

The conceptual framework role in this study was key as it demonstrated the attachment theory system as an important concept in attachment relationship development from early childhood through to subsequent relationships over an individual's lifespan.

It provided the conceptual linkage between early attachment styles and couple attachment styles variables. The conceptual framework demonstrated on how the variables interplay between the independent variables, the intervening variable and the dependent variable.

The independent variables of secure and insecure attachment styles, the attachment changes over the lifespan of the individual spouses and the father and mother figure attachment were evaluated on their influence to the dependent variable. The intervening variable, the Internal Working models which are the mental representations and perceptions learned over time from childhood relationships with the primary caregivers help conceptualize the dependent variable. The conceptual framework consequently described how the dependent variable, couple relationship attachment style, is dependent on the early parental child attachment style.

Chapter Summary

The chapter explored on the literature review and the theoretical literature in relation to the objectives of the research. The chapter also detailed how the different variables relate with each other in the conceptual framework. The literature review sought to identify how the study objectives in relation to early parental child attachment style influence couple relationship attachment style. In relation to the study objectives, the empirical literature provided similar researches that have been done demonstrating how attachment styles in early childhood experiences influence couple relationship attachment style.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The chapter explains the logical steps that demonstrated on how the objectives of this study were answered. The chapter explains the research design, the target population, and the location of the target respondents as well as the sampling techniques. This ensured that the sampled respondents were a true reflection of the population targeted in the study.

Consequently, research instruments were detailed and data collection tools that included piloting and tool pretesting were explained. The chapter also highlighted on the validity and the reliability of the study. Data collection procedures and data analysis were also explained.

Research Design

The study adopted a correlational research design as it was the most suitable research design for the study and in relation to the study variables. The correlation research design sought to identify the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables in how early parental child attachment styles influence couple relationship attachment style. Creswell (2013) notes that the aim of correlational research is used to either explore the extents to which two or more variables co-vary, that is, where changes in one variable are reflected in changes in the other. Bernard and Bernard (2012) also note that correlational research is used when the purpose of the study is to predict certain outcomes in one variable from another variable that serves as the predictor. Hence a correlation in this study was the ideal to assess the relationship between the study variables on how early parental child attachment style influences couple relationship attachment style.

Population

The study targeted both men and women who were married within the Nairobi Christian Centre. The Church had about 50 married couples who were active and were registered members as demonstrated by the church records. The selection of the sampled couples was informed by their church membership, consistence in church attendance as this was deemed as a demonstration of their commitment in Christian service and this also gave a more dependable reflection in the response to the study. Nairobi Christian Centre is one the oldest Kenya Assemblies of God Church (KAG), which was founded in 1970 and has a demonstrated consistency of church membership where a majority of church members have grown within the church since their Sunday school days. Arguably then, such congregants then were deemed as the most likely to provide a most favourable response to the study.

Study Location

The study location was at the Nairobi Christian Centre in Nairobi County. The church is an affiliate of the Kenya Assemblies of God (KAG) and was founded in 1970. The church has well defined structures and departments such as the Men's Fellowship department, Women Fellowship department, Youth department, Teens department and the children department and those departments have frequent meetings that are held once a month. The church being one of the oldest in Nairobi has established many other churches within Nairobi and is home to many. The church also provided a wide variety of couples in different generations in their family life cycle and hence had a representation of different generational couple marital experiences.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Respondent were sampled using simple random sampling from the total population of all the married couples in the church. Dean and Ghemawat (2008) indicate that, simple random sampling is the purest and most straightforward probability sampling strategy.

They note that, in simple random sampling, each member of the population is equally likely to be chosen as part of the sample. It has been stated that, the logic behind simple random sampling is that it removes bias from the selection procedures and should result in representative sample (Dean & Ghemawat, 2008). In consideration to the couples in the church, the study targeted 40% of the couples. Out of the 20 couples, 20 respondents were married males while the other 20 respondents were married females. Using the Raosoft Sample Size Calculator, with a margin of error set at 15% since the sample size is small representation of the couples in church and Confidence level at 95%, the recommended sample size is 24. Four (4) of the respondents did not fully meet the eligibility criterion as they did not fully complete the data tools thus data for 20 couples was considered. As Mugenda (2008) argues, the representation of this sample size provided a reflection with most probable outcome.

Research Instruments

The study used a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire constituted three sections. The first part constituted questions on the respondents' demographics in, which it provided an insight into characteristics of the population within the marriage demography. The second section had questions related to the nature of the respondents' upbringing. This provided information on the kind of family setup the subjects under the study were brought up under, nature of parental bond when growing up, parental gender they were oriented to and their perception of this relationship. The third section comprised of questions on the couple's relationship and attachment style. It sought to ask questions on personal perceptions of how the relationship with parents when growing up influenced their marital bonds.

Piloting and Tool Pre-testing

The research questionnaire was pre-tested at Kenya Assemblies of God (KAG) Fedha Church using 8 couples. This was in consideration to what Mugenda (2008) argues that for

piloting purposes, a representation of more than 2% of the total sample size is an appropriate percentage. Data collected was checked for coherence, clarity and consistence. Where inconsistencies were noted the questionnaires were adjusted appropriately. The KAG Fedha Church was most appropriate as it was one of the branches that had been founded by the Nairobi Christian centre in Bahati and its cosmopolitan population is similar to the founding church.

Data Collection

Data was collected by the lead researcher to ease in data collection and in ease of answering any questions the respondents raised. The lead researcher was also available in providing clarity to the respondents in regard to data collection procedures. Collection was preceded by the researcher explaining on the collection procedures to the respondents to ensure uniformity and in distributing the questionnaires. The couples were required to fill the questionnaires within a period of one month, and then provide their feedback. The researcher explained on how the questionnaires were to be returned and provided a means to which the respondents were to use.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability is the extent to which a questionnaire, test, observation or any other instrument produces the same results on repeated trials and can be considered as the stability or consistency of scores over time (Creswell, 2013). Validity on the other hand refers to the relationship between data and the variable being measured (Creswell, 2013). Cronbach's α test was conducted then the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, r , was measured to determine the internal consistency of the research instruments and to test the relationship between the variables on early parental – child attachment style influence on couple relationship attachment style. Heale and Alison (2015) indicate that, Cronbach's α is the most commonly used test to determine the internal consistency of an instrument in quantitative research. In

this test, the average of all correlations in every combination of split-halves were determined. Instruments with questions that had more than two responses were used in this test. Heale and Alison (2015) further indicate that, Cronbach's α result is a number between 0 and 1. An acceptable reliability score is one that is 0.7 and higher (Heale & Alison, 2015).

Data Analysis

Data was entered into organised templates using MS Excel for analysis. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) aided in data analysis. A Pearson correlation analysis was done to evaluate the relationship between couples' parental bond and marital bond. A Multiple Logistic Regression analysis was done to test relationships between the independent variable and the dependent variable simultaneously. The Wald Chi-square test was applied when testing two categorical variables from a single population and was used to determine whether there was a significant association between the two variables (Dean & Ghemawat, 2008). The analysis allowed the research to test relationships between the independent variable and the dependent variable simultaneously. Pearson Correlation Coefficient was also conducted to investigate whether early parental child attachment style is likely to influence couple relationship attachment style.

The data was analysed quantitatively using charts, graphs and frequency in order to understand statistically the demographic distribution of the couples surveyed and the research variables correlation. Analysis for descriptive statistics was done through generation of frequency tables. These displayed the age, gender, education and years of stay in marriage. These also provided insight into the attachment styles that play into affecting the marriage and relationship status. A frequency distribution was used to assess the extent to which their relationship with their mother and/or their father had affected their relationship with their spouse. A Pearson Correlation analysis was also used to assess

the relationship between early parental attachment bond and marital couple attachment bond. I regard to the statistical procedures used, the assumptions included such as:

- i. The Logistic regression does not require a linear relationship. Thus, the log odd was used to establish the linear relationship.
- ii. Since the use of Simple Random Sampling without replacement was used, logistic regression was ideal for the independence of each other.
- iii. Logistic regression assumes linearity of independent variable and log odds. The log odds however needed to be related to the independent variables.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics of research and rights of participants were honoured. Participation in the research was on voluntary basis. The eligible respondents were informed on the purposes of the study and their right to volunteer or not to volunteer by the researcher. Respondents were also promised of confidentiality of the information they provided during the study and were not required to disclose their names. The information provided was to be used for academic purposes only and was not to be associated to the respondents. Prior to data collection, an introductory letter from the Pan Africa Christian University Post Graduate Research Office was obtained detailing the study affiliation to the university. A letter of approval and licence was also obtained from the relevant government office the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) permit that gave permission for the study.

Chapter Summary

The chapter provides a detailed methodology and procedures that aided in the intended research. The procedures adopted in this chapter helped explore the relationship between the study variables of early parental child attachment style influences on couple relationship attachment style.

Selection of the participants, assessment and analysis was well articulated. Ethical consideration and issues of confidentiality are also well explained in this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The chapter highlights the research finding based on the research objectives of the study and the data analysis of the sample collected from the 20 married couples recruited from Nairobi Christian Centre, Nairobi County, Kenya. The results and discussions justify and depict the relationship between early parent-child attachment style and the couple's relationship attachment style later in their lives. The data collected from the respondents of the overall questionnaire response rate was 95% (38/40) of which all were valid and fully completed and 2/40 were incomplete. The data gathered was subjected to frequency counts by adding together to find the highest frequency of occurrence.

Data Demographic Representation

The following graphical representation is the age bracket distribution of the respondents who participated in the research study, where the sample size (N) was 40.

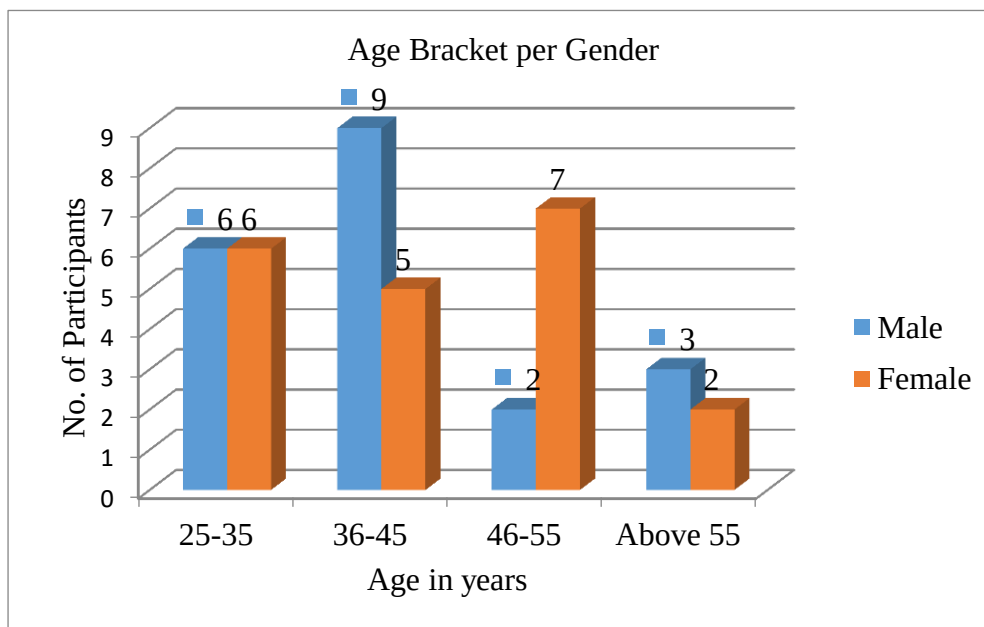


Figure 2: Age Bracket of Couples in Nairobi Christian Centre Church

Where; N=40.

The Males aged between 36 years to 45 years were the majority amongst their counterparts sampled in the research. The females aged between 46 years to 55 years were the majority amongst their counterparts as show above in Figure 2.

The majority of the couples who attended KAG had tertiary education (82%). Those with secondary education were 17.5% and those with primary school education were 0.5 %.

Table 1: Participants Education Level

Primary school	Secondary School	Tertiary School
1	7	32

The respondents were unevenly skewed according to their years in marriage as seen in Figure 3 below. About 20%, [$\frac{1}{5}$] of the males had between 6- 10 years in their marriages while the females of the same proportion, 20%, [$\frac{1}{5}$] , had over 25 years' experience in marriage.

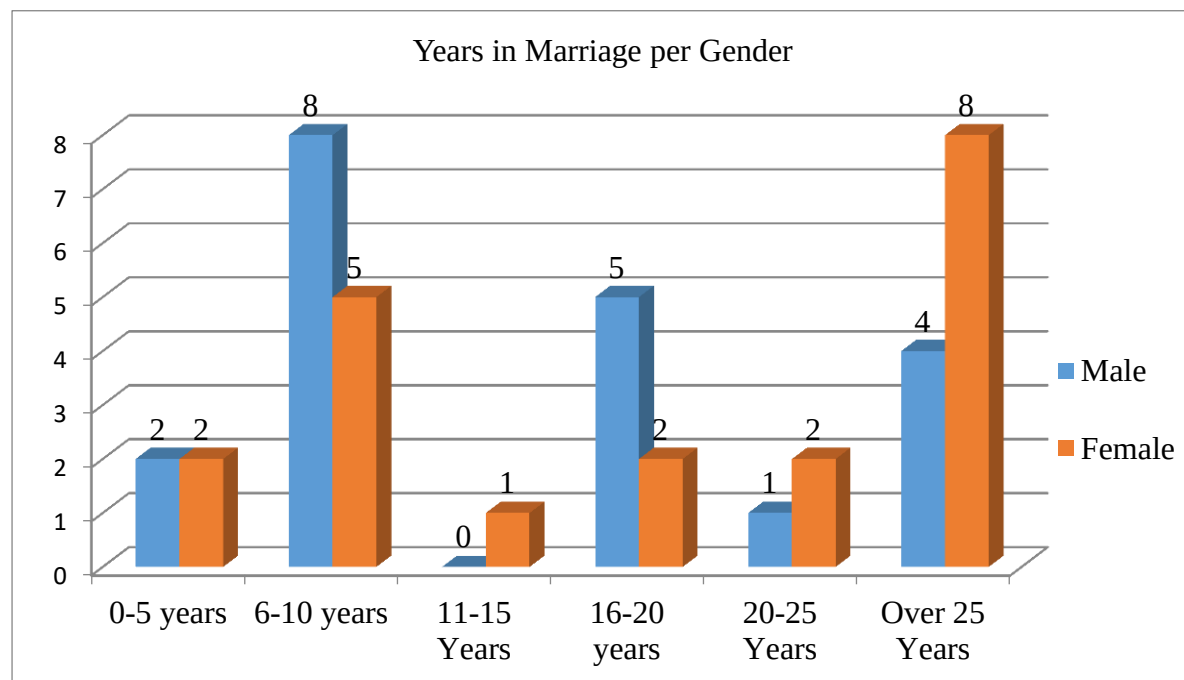


Figure 3: Years in Marriage per Gender in Nairobi Christian Centre Church

A comparison of the two genders, the males had the highest number where they had recorded between 6 to 10 years in marriage as compared to their female counterparts who were highest where they had over 25 years in marriage.

Early Parental Child Attachment Style and Couple Attachment Style

From the survey questionnaire, the research study focused on evaluating the early childhood attachment style influence with the couple marital relationship attachment style. The relationship was captured using a Likert scale questionnaire, and more than 80% of the respondents agreed that their childhood attachment style had a positive influence on their current couple marital relationship attachment style as demonstrated in Figure 2 below.

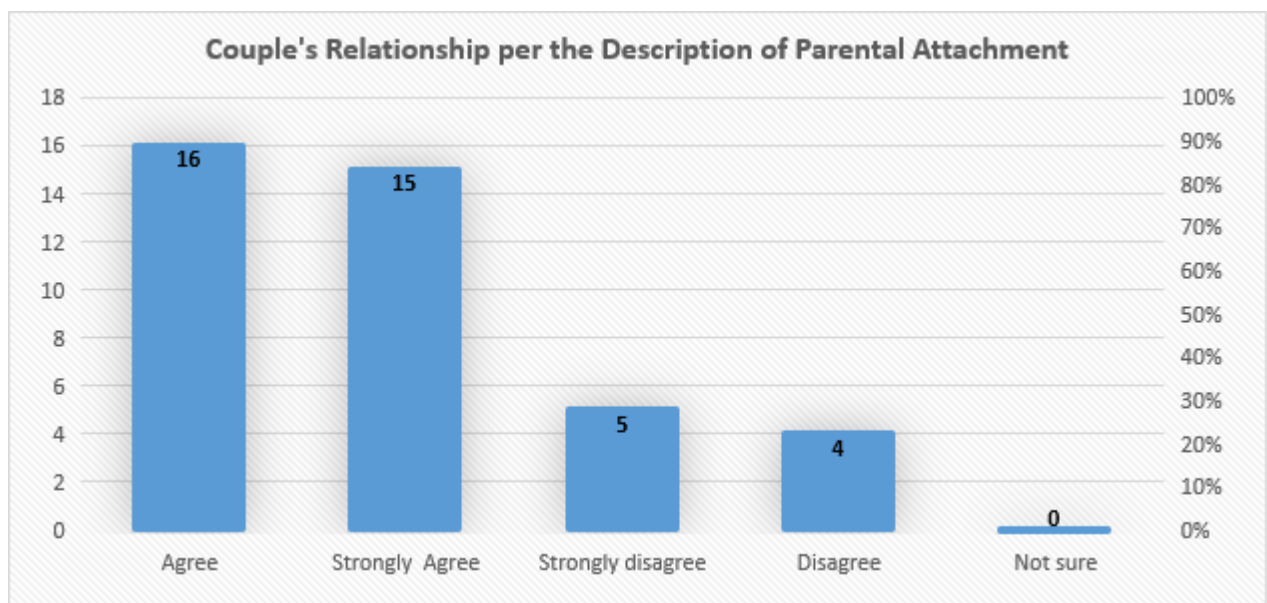


Figure 4: Early Parental Child Attachment Style and Couple Relationship Attachment Style

A Multiple Logistic Regression, represented by the mathematical formulae as $Y_i (\text{Log} \frac{p}{1-p}) = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + B_4X_4 + B_5X_5 + \alpha^2$, was used to establish the relationship of the two components in the research study i.e. early parent-child attachment style (Y_i) and; couple's relationship attachment style (X_i).

The components of the model are represented as follows;

Log_i represents the Logarithm of the probability the having a positive early parent child attachment style. This is necessary as the independent variables are exponentials.

Y_i represents the predicator variable representing Relationship with the caregiver and the Demonstration of love by the parent to the child.

B_i these represents the coefficients of independent variables (X_{5i}) of the model.

α^2 this represents the variance of the model

Variables under the Predictor variable component, Y_i , included; Relationship with the caregiver and the demonstration of love by the parent to the child (emotions, closeness, availability and perception of their relationship). The dependent variable was in log-odd units. Whereas the independent variables component, X_i , included; Years in marriage, the age group of the couples, Conflict Resolution, Description of couple's relationship and the influence of childhood parents' attachment style on the couple's marital relationship attachment style.

The P in the model represented the probability of having a positive early parent child attachment style. This was the ideal model as the variables met the required assumptions and dynamics of the design. The analysis of the combinations of the two components results were tabulated as demonstrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Results of the Multiple Logistics Regression

			B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1	Years in Marriage		-1.01	0.25	15.199	1	0	0.363
	Age bracket		0.057	0.15	5.923	1	0.017	1.097
	Description of the relationship		0.066	0.27	5.867	2	0.033	1.068
	Conflict resolution		0.06	0.532	0.012	1	0.904	1.060
	Effect of parents' attachment on the couple's attachment		0.097	0.444	5.212	1	0.023	1.103
	Constant		0.45	1.662	33.112	1	0	0

Key:

B_ Independent Variables

S.E_ Standard Error

Wald_ Wald Chi-Square Coefficient

Df_ Degrees of Freedom

Sig_ Level of Significance (Calculated)

Exp (B) _Exponentials of Independent Variables

The results in the multiple logistic regression mathematical model was represented as follows;

$$Y_i \left(\text{Log} \frac{p}{1-p} \right) = 0.45 + 1.103 * \text{Effect of Parent...} + 1.06 * \text{Conflict Resolution} + 1.068 * \text{Description of the Relationship} + 1.097 * \text{Age bracket} + 0.363 * \text{Years in Marriage} + \alpha^2$$

These estimates, $\text{Exp}(B_i)$, indicated the relationship between the predictors, Early Parent-Child Attachment Style (Y_i) components and the dependent variables, Couple's Relationship Attachment Style (X_i) component, where and how the predictor variable responded on the log scale. Since the estimates, B_i , were in log-odds unit, inferring from them was difficult thus they were converted into odds ratio. The estimates informed the changes (increase or decrease) of the predictor variable where there were unit changes of the independent variable, X_i while holding the other variables constant.

From the results, the influence of early parental child attachment style on the couple's marital relationship attachment style, (1.103) was the highest and would be interpreted as following; For every unit change in the influence of early childhood parents' attachment style on the couple's marital relationship attachment style, the early parent-child attachment style component would increase by 1.103 units holding the other variables in the independent component constant. Further, for every unit change in conflict resolution approach used by the couples, the early parent-child attachment style component would increase by 1.060 units holding the other variables constant in the independent component. The same interpretation was given for the description of the relationship the couples had with their parents, an increment of 1.097 units of the predictor variable; Years in marriage would also cause an

increment of 0.363 units of the predictor variable; respectively holding the other appropriate variables constant.

The overall effect, the intercept coefficient, $B_0=0.45$ [$\text{Exp}(B_0)= 1.5683$] inferred a direct proportional relationship between the two components i.e. Early Parent-Child Attachment Style (Y_i) components and the dependent variables, Couple's Relationship Attachment Style (X_i) component. The significance of the variables is given by Wald Chi-Square Test as given on the tables, using a 2- tailed p-value test. The alpha for the test is at $\alpha=0.05$ and compared to the figures in the Table 2, column with the significance values, indicates only Conflict Resolution Variable is not statistically significant ($p=0.904$).

The following results, Table 2, explain how the early parental child attachment style perceptions influence the couple relationship attachment style with the respondents. The results indicate that, the respondents who had a secure and loving relationship with the parents had a similar secure and loving relationship with their spouses in their marital relationship.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Coefficient Table

		Secure and Loving Relationship	Childhood attachment bond with parents lasts and informs how one relates in their future marital relationship
Secure and Loving Relationship	Pearson Correlation	1	0.857***
	Sig. (2 Tailed)		0
	N	40	40
Childhood attachment bond with parents lasts and informs how one relates in their future marital relationship	Pearson Correlation	0.857***	1
	Sig. (2 Tailed)	0	
	N	40	40

Key

Sig: Significance

***_Pearson Correlation Coefficient

A Pearson correlation coefficient in Table 2 above (r) measure of 0.857, with a Calculated Probability (P-Value) of 0.000 indicates the strength of association between the two parameters where the calculated Pearson Correlation coefficient(r) is at 0.857, and that the coefficient is significant from 0 ($P < 0.001$).

The graph below Figure 5 represents the relationship of the attachment style influences in child parental attachment style and couple attachment style in which there is a demonstration of a positive relationship where secure attachment style in childhood is also similarly experienced in couple relationship attachment style.

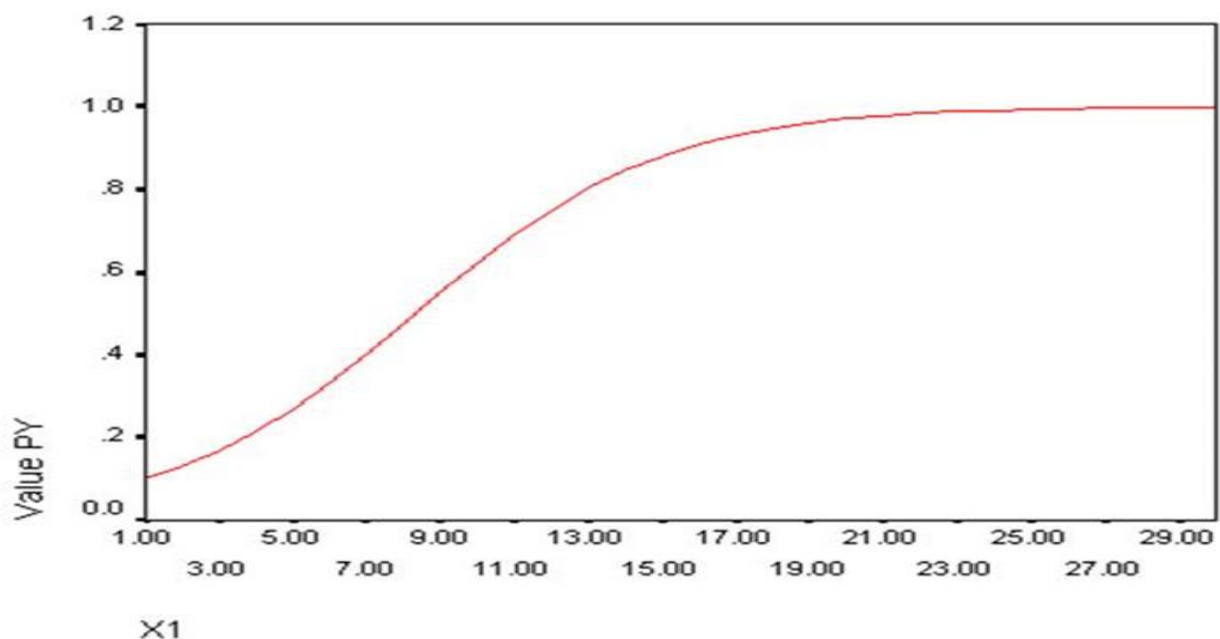


Figure 5: Pearson correlation Coefficient Graph

Key

PY_ Secure and Loving Relationship

X1_ Childhood attachment style with parents lasts and informs how one relates in their future marital relationship.

Attachment Style Perception Construct, the Internal Working Models

Table 3: Attachment Style Perception Construct, the Internal Working Models

Variables/Question	Number of Respondents			
	Agreed	%	Disagreed	%
Does your relationship with your parents affect your marital relationship?	36	90	4	10
Do you think your childhood attachment affects your marital relationship?	38	95	2	5
Do you acknowledge the relationship with your father figure and mother figure greatly influences your relationship with your spouse?	39	97.5	1	2.5
My parents had a close relationship with each other that I admired.	37	92.5	3	7.5
Parental relationship is key to establish close relationship in children's future marital relationships.	39	97.5	1	2.5
Do you agree the childhood attachment bond with parents lasts and informs how one relates in their future marital relationship?	40	100	0	0

Based on the quantitative findings expounded in the above Table 3, it can be observed that early parental child attachment styles can be related by the IWM and the couple's perception attachment style formed during the early stages of life.

Majority of the couples were positively inclined to resolve conflicts with their spouses by longing to make amends (88%) as shown below in Figure 6. This was important to check with how their early parent child attachment style perception's, the

internal working models influenced couple's conflict resolutions based on the internal working models formed in childhood into their internal working models in their relationship.

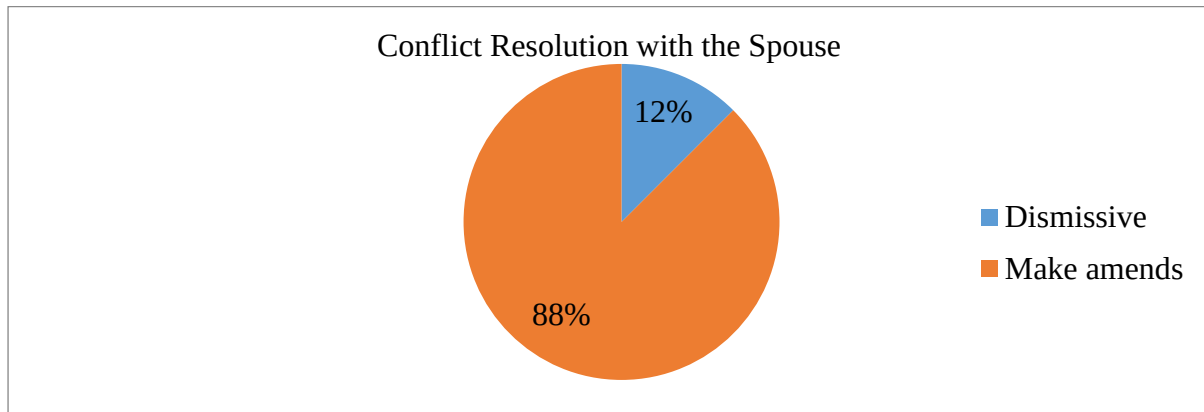


Figure 6: Conflict Resolutions with Spouses in Nairobi Christian Centre Church

The early parental child attachment style perception, the internal working model (IWMs), with couples showed emotional attachment is shown in Figure 7 below. This addressed the need to examine the evolving nature of the attachment perception (IWMs), established while growing up and the couple's attachment perception, internal working model (IWMs).

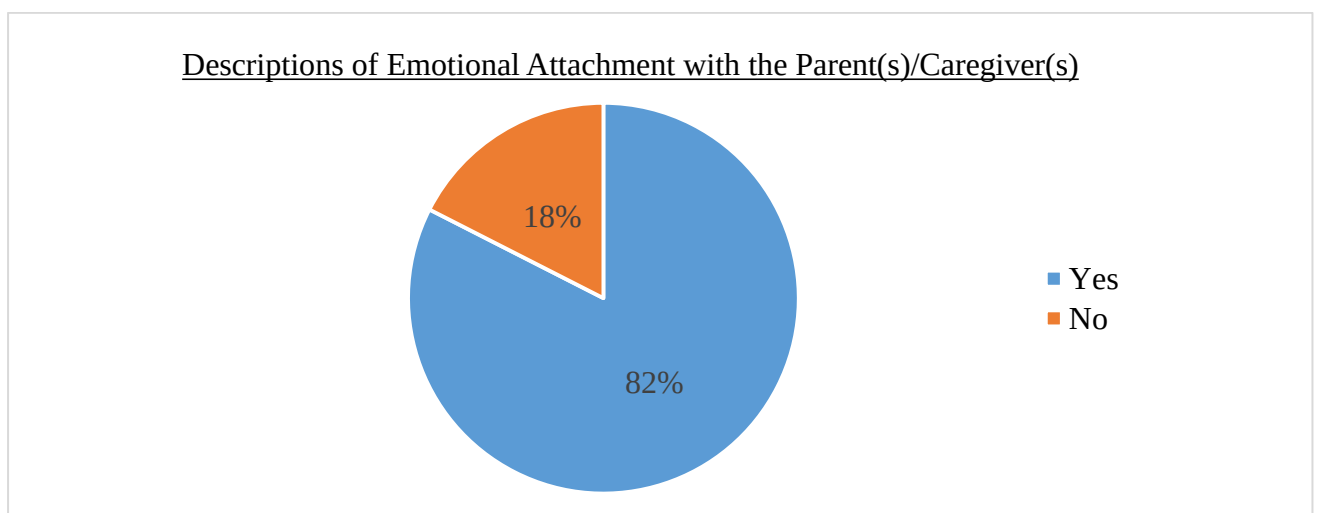


Figure 7: Emotional Attachment with Parent(s)/Caregiver(s) Internal Working Model

Father Figure and the Mother Figure Attachment Style Influences

The respondents were also questioned to establish as to who was the initial primary caregiver so as to establish the attachment bond influence that as a child, the respondents would refer to as their significant attachment figures. In their response, 2.5% of the respondents were brought up their grandparents while an equal number were brought up by a single parent-mother. 95% were brought up by both parents thus the respondents proved to be significant in determining the parental figure that had influence relationships attachment.

Table 4: attachment primary care giver figure

Single Parent-Father	Single Parent-Mother	Both Parents	Grandparents
0	1	38	1

The above table, Table 4, shows the validity of the inference of responses that base the importance of parental figures in the early life of a child. Additionally, Table 5 below demonstrates how early parental gender such as the father and the mother figure attachment experiences were recognized as important sources of influence in adult relationships and the importance of family of origin attachment experiences is essential in shaping the development of close bond in a couple's relationship. The following table demonstrates the questions poised to establish parental figure attachment style that influences a couple's relationship attachment style;

Table 5: Father/Mother figure influence

Variables/Question	Number of Respondents			
	Yes	%	No	%
Did your parent demonstrate love to you?	34	90	6	10
Growing up, did you feel close and connected emotionally to your parents?	33	82.5	7	17.5
Would you describe your parents/caregiver as emotionally available to you?	36	90	4	10
How close was your father figure to you?	28	70	12	30
How close was your mother figure to you?	37	92.5	3	7.5
Was their availability a secure and loving relationship?	34	90	6	10

Based on the quantitative findings expounded in the above table 4, it can be observed that a parental figure is significant in modeling the couple's attachment style.

As shown in the in figure 7, most of the respondents strongly agreed they had significant parental attachment which influenced the romantic relation as couples. It also shows the effect the respective mother and father figure influenced their relationship, the closeness and childhood upbringing.

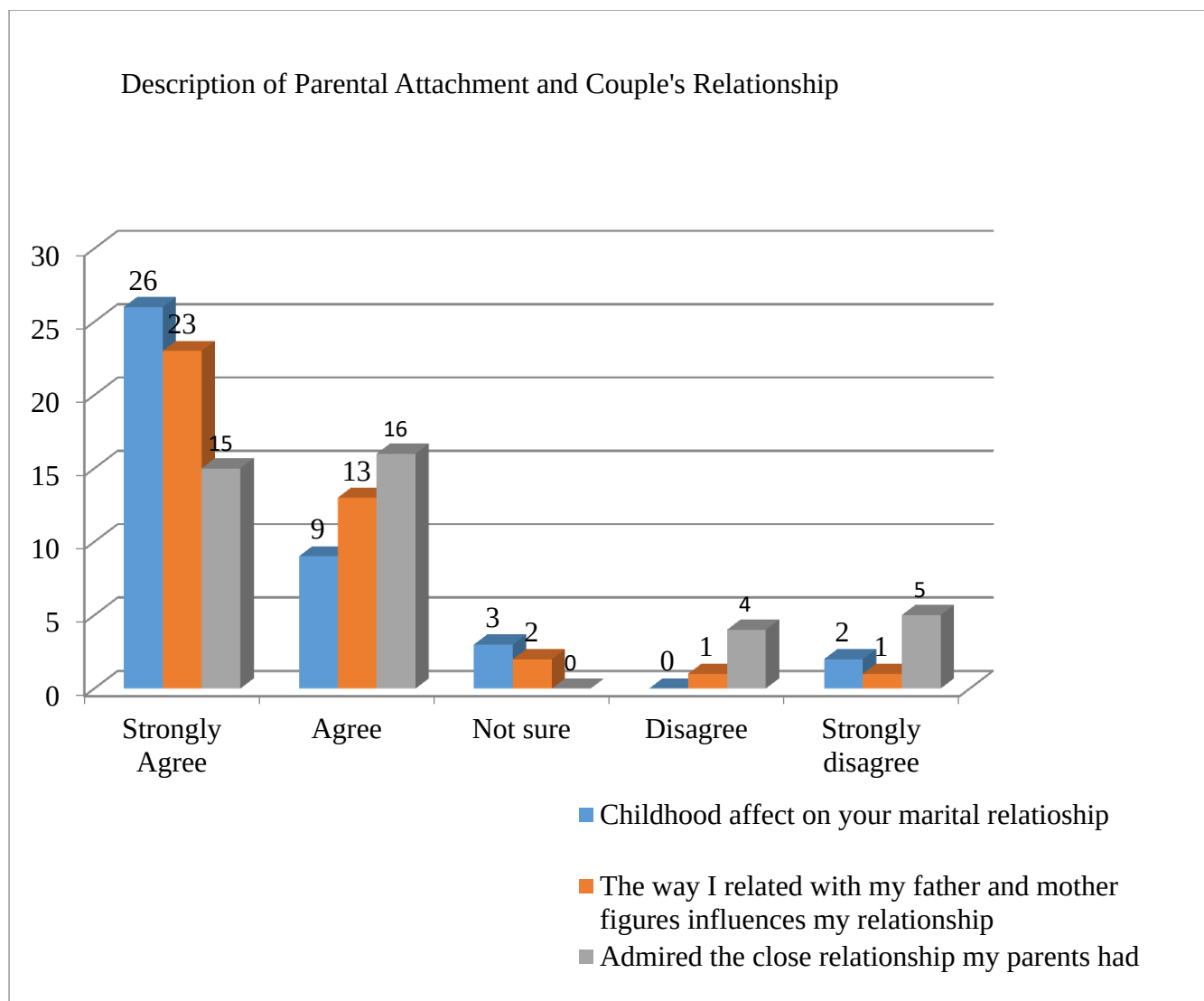


Figure 8: Early Parental Child Gender Attachment and Couple Relationship Attachment

Chapter Summary

This research study was to establish the influence of early parent-child attachment on couple's relationship attachment. The respondents provided data that was used in analysis and various variables analyzed against the expectation of the study. The objectives of the study were examined and established; From the descriptive statistics of the Multiple Logistic Regression, a positive relationship was identified where an early parental child attachment style influenced the couples' relationship attachment style; From figure 3, the emotional availability of the parents is significantly acknowledged by the couples as assumed by the research study; and the Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.857, with a P-Value of 0.000

indicates the significance of father and/or mother figure in the couples' early childhood experiences and it influenced their current relationship and attachment to their spouse.

The results established a directly proportion relation between the two components of the study, where variable; Years in Marriage, the age group of the couples, Description of couple's relationship and the effects of parents' attachment on their couple's marital relationship were significant variables.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This chapter reconciles the summary of findings, implications, conclusions, recommendations and areas for further research as implicated by the results. This highlights the conclusive areas the study has reached, recommendation arising from the study and eventually the viable areas for further study that may be done in the same line of the family and marriage therapy discipline.

Early Parental Child Attachment Style Influence on Couple's Relationship Attachment Style

After the analysis of the data provided by the respondents, there was positive relationship between the two components and it can be significantly concluded that early parental child attachment style has a direct proportion on how the couples' relationship attachment style is shaped. The positive intercept coefficient, B_0 infers a direct proportional relationship between the two components i.e. Early Parent-Child Attachment style components and the dependent variables, Couple's Relationship Attachment style component.

Parade et al. (2012) indicated that these experiences are important sources of influence in adult relationships and the importance of family of origin attachment experiences in shaping up the development of close bond in couple's relationship. The high Pearson Correlation Coefficient also is in tandem with (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2012) inference that with experiences, secure attachment in childhood occurs when a parent is responsive to the needs of the child. This boosts the child's self-esteem and approach towards building relationships.

Attachment Style Perception Construct, the Internal Working Models

The high positive response of the attachment style perception construct, the internal working models with the couples' relationship attachment style perception construct agrees with Feeney and Thrush (2010) whom observed that the attachment behavioral system has a similarity between the individual differences in the infant relationships and the individual differences experienced in romantic relationship. This is also in line with (Feeney, 2008) who observed the participants' perceptions of the quality of their relationship with both parents during childhood were significantly associated with their attachment style and the analysis of the data collected from the respondents confirms this with >80% affirmation to this inference.

The research findings are also in tandem with what research findings conclude that, working models are believed to be highly resistant to change because they are more likely to assimilate new relational information, even at the cost of distorting it, than accommodate to information that is at odds with existing expectations (Coy et al., 2012). Dixon et al., (2012) has further observed that, the theory explains continuity in the way people relate to others across different relationships. Moreover, Coy et al., (2012) indicate, the theory suggests that early caregiving experiences influence, at least in part, how people behave in their adult romantic relationships. As such, the theory provides a way to preserve an early psychoanalytic insight about adult relational patterns without introducing controversial psychoanalytic mechanisms, such as regression or fixation (Coy et al., 2012).

Father and Mother Figure Attachment Influence on Couple's Attachment

The results of the study as shown by the Pearson Correlation Coefficient ($r=0.857$) highlights the importance of the either the father or mother figure in the upbringing and influence of the child's development and perceptions of relational matters. As Hall (2009) noted the common perception that a parent's role in the healthy outcome for the children with regards to the relational layout. Ainsworth (1982) recommended for sensitive, consistent

parenting results in healthier attachments that shape children's future styles of attaching with others.

The results of the study with couples at Nairobi Christian Centre in Bahati, Nairobi coincided with what Hall (2009) argued that fathers can make an important contribution to the eventual romantic relationships of their daughters, and that it is different from the contribution of mothers, and different from fathers' contributions to their sons. Hall further indicates that, there is a tendency for mothers and fathers to interact in some distinct ways with their daughters. It is possible that because of this tendency fathers are particularly salient for specific domains of their daughters' development (Riggio & Weisner, 2008). The results with couples at Nairobi Christian Center in Bahati noted that, women who had a secure relationship with their fathers indeed had a secure relationship with their spouses and were more inclined to resolving conflict with their spouses rather than being dismissive.

Implication of the Study

Based on the study findings, there are indications that suggest that early parent-child attachment style is important and directly proportional in couple's relationship attachment style. This would form a secure attachment in all the adult relationships with development of trust, happiness, and communication needed. The positive development of the perception construct, the internal working models influences over the couple's relationship attachment style perception construct is assured and the attachment internal working model is maintained. Consequently, the present research provides support that early childhood parental secure attachment contributes to secure couple attachment representation and early childhood parental insecure attachment relationship contributes to insecure representation in couple attachment relationship.

Conclusions

Based on the research findings, conclusion and inferences can be made in the influence of early parent-child attachment style in couple's relationship attachment style. The study results have empirically highlighted the importance of recognizing the attachment style that an individual have had with their parents for them to understand a couple's relationship attachment style. This is important in the discipline of marriage and family therapy. This will influence the literature and understanding of the attachment theory on both components; early parental childhood attachment style and couple's relationship attachment style.

Recommendations

In regard to the findings of this study, the following recommendations are suggested in regard to the fact that early parental child attachment is an important component in shaping an individual's attachment on future relationships.

- i. The research findings demonstrated that attachment theory predicts that lack of parental care and secure attachment style in childhood affect the ability to relate in couple marital relationship and hence there is need for the church to develop programs that would educate on appropriate parental attachment style.
- ii. The research findings demonstrated clearly the influence fathers have on their children in future adult relationships and hence, fathers need to be psycho educated on the crucial role they play as attachment figures to their children.
- iii. From the research findings, couples can be encouraged to evaluate their marital relationship in retrospect to their early childhood attachment experiences with their primary caregivers and the impact such attachment experiences may have had in their relationship.

Areas for Further Research

While attachment theory predicts that lack of parental care in childhood may affect the ability for an individual to relate in adulthood, further research need to be done to explore on how individual differences in the way people think about their experiences in attachment may influence their relationships. Additionally, since the research was conducted in a church setting, religious and spiritual value influences can be factored in future researches. Further research can also be done to evaluate the possibility for persons with secure relating styles in childhood to experience setbacks or events that, for various reasons, may find them relating insecurely in their marital couple relationship in a period of their adult life and equally as well with the insecurely attached styles.

Chapter Summary

The chapter highlighted the research findings, implications of the study, conclusions, and recommendations and highlighted on areas for further research. The analysis from the cohort researched on was compared to the referenced literature review and the similarities and differences identified. The paramount finding in the research study was the importance of the early parent child attachment style as a way of securing a marital relationship that encompasses key attachment style that is necessary for couple relationship attachment style.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS OF THE SURVEY

PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY – MASTERS IN MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY

Dear Respondent,

The following is a questionnaire that seeks to establish how early parental child attachment style influences couple relationship attachment style. It has three sections that will require some of your time to give response. We kindly request you to spend just a few minutes to answer the simple questions that will be helpful in this research as we seek to examine how early parental child attachment style may influence couple relationship attachment style. Parent or primary caregiver can be used interchangeably. Confidentiality will be observed and the information will not be used for any other purposes besides this study.

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION (Tick where appropriate)

1. Gender:

Male ☐

Female ☐

2. Age Bracket:

25 – 35 ☐

36 – 45 ☐

46 – 55 ☐

If above 55 Years State Age ☐ _____

3. School level:

Primary School ☐

Secondary School ☐

College/University ☐

4. Years in Marriage

0-5 Years ☐ 6 – 10 Years ☐ 11- 15 Years ☐ 16 – 20 Years ☐

20 – 25 years ☐ Over 25 years ☐

5. State occupation _____

SECTION B: EARY PARENTAL CHILD ATTACHMENT STYLE (PARENT/PRIMARY CAREGIVER ATTACHMENT BOND, FATHER/MOTHER FIGURE ATTACHMENT)

6. What kind of a family set up did you grow up in?

Single Parent Mother ☐ Single Parent father ☐ Both Parents ☐

Foster Parents ☐ Grandparents ☐ Any other ☐

7. In a scale of 1 – 5, 1 being the lowest/poor and 5 being the highest/best, how poor or best would you rate your relationship with your parent/ primary caregiver(s)?

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

8. Did your parents demonstrate Love to you?

Yes ☐ No ☐.

9. Growing up did you feel close and connected emotionally to your parents?

Yes ☐ No ☐.

10. Would you describe your parents/caregiver as emotionally available to you?

Yes ☐ No ☐

11. Who among your parents would you deem as closest to?

Father figure ☐ Mother figure ☐

12. How available was your father figure to you emotionally?

Always ☐ Most often ☐ Rarely ☐ Never ☐

13. How available was your mother figure to you emotionally?

Always ☐ Most often ☐ Rarely ☐ Never ☐

14. How did this availability affect your relationship with them?

Secure and Loving Relationship ☐ Distant and Insecure Relationship ☐

15. Which would best describe your relationship with your parents as a child? “It felt....”

Close and secure ☐ Secure but not very close ☐ Distant and insecure ☐

SECTION C: PERCEPTION CONSTRUCT THE INTERNAL WORKING MODEL
AND COUPLE RELATIONSHIP ATTACHMENT STYLE

16. How would you describe your relationship with your Spouse at the moment?

☐ Loving ☐ Distant ☐ Conflictual

17. How do you respond to your spouse during conflict?

I am dismissive of them ☐ I long to make amends ☐

18. How does your relationship with your parents affect your marital relationship?

☐ I am able to relate with them in a lovingly way as a result of how I related with my parents

☐ I struggle in my marital relationship as a result

☐ I have a different relationship

19. Do you think your childhood attachment affects your marital relationship?

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

20. The way I related with my father figure and mother figure greatly influences my relationship with my spouse

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

21. My proximity to my father figure contributes positively to my relationship with my spouse

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

22. My proximity to my mother figure contributes positively to my relationship with my spouse

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

23. My parents had a close relationship with each other that I admired

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

24. I relate with my spouse more easily as a result of my relationship with my mother

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

25. I relate with my spouse more easily as a result of my relationship with my father

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Not sure ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

26. Parental relationship is key to establishing close relationship in children's future marital relationships

Yes ☐

No ☐

27. Does how you related/ attached with your parents affect your other relationships

Yes ☐

No ☐

28. Do you think this childhood attachment bond with parents lasts and informs how one relates in their future marital relationship?

Yes ☐

No ☐

APPENDIX II: CERTIFICATION OF CORRECTIONS



Pan Africa Christian University
P.O Box 56875-00200
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 721-932050/734-400694
Website: www.pacuniversity.ac.ke

CERTIFICATION OF CORRECTION OF THESIS PROPOSAL

PART I: RELEVANT DETAILS OF THE THESIS

Department: PSYCHOLOGY Degree Title: MAMFT
Candidates' Name: PASTOR FREDRICK GITAH/IMUGA Registration No. MFT 650116 Signature: [Signature]
Date of Oral Defense: _____
Title of Thesis: THE INFLUENCE OF EARLY PARENT-CHILD ATTACHMENT
IN COUPLE'S RELATIONSHIP ATTACHMENT STYLE: A CASE
OF NAIROBI CHRISTIAN CENTER, NAIROBI, KENYA

PART II: DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR(S) AND THE REVIEWER(S)

☒ We, the undersigned do hereby confirm that ☒ we have closely looked at the corrections as instructed by the Post Graduate Defense Committee and I / we do hereby certify that ALL the corrections have been effected as agreed.

NAME: DR. ANNE WAMBIGU SIGN: [Signature] DATE: 09/05/2018
(SUPERVISOR)

NAME: _____ SIGN: _____ DATE: _____
(SUPERVISOR)

NAME: DR. BARNABE ANZURUNI SIGN: [Signature] DATE: 09/05/2018
(REVIEWER)

PART III: CONFIRMATION BY GRADUATE SCHOOL

Confirmed that the Supervisor and Reviewer appointed to oversee the corrections have done so as per the Instructions of the Post Graduate Committee

NAME: DR. S. KIAMBO SIGN: [Signature] DATE & STAMP: 8/5/2018
Dean, Graduate School

The Leadership University of Choice

APPENDIX III: INTRODUCTION LETTER

9th May, 2018



P.O. Box 56875 - 00200
Nairobi, Kenya
Lumumba Drive, Roysambu
off Kamiti Rd, off Thika Rd
Tel: 0734 400694/0721 932050
Email: enquiries@pacuniversity.ac.ke
website: www.pacuniversity.ac.ke

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: FREDRICK GITAHU MUIGA (MFT/6501/16)

Greetings! This is an introduction letter for the above named person a final year student in Pan Africa Christian University (PAC University), pursuing a Masters in Family Therapy.

He is at the final stage of the programme and he is preparing to collect data to enable him finalise on his research project. The title of his project is **'The Influence of Early Parent-Child Attachment Style in Couple's Relationship Attachment Style: A Case of Nairobi Christian Centre, Nairobi County, Kenya'**.

We therefore kindly request that you allow him conduct research at your organization.

Warm Regards,

Dr. Lilian Vikiru
Registrar Academics

9th May, 2018

APPENDIX IV: NACOSTI PERMIT

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT: MR. FREDRICK GITAHU MUIGA of PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY, 62922-200 NAIROBI, has been permitted to conduct research in Nairobi County on the topic: THE INFLUENCE OF EARLY PARENT- CHILD ATTACHMENT STYLE IN COUPLE'S RELATIONSHIP ATTACHMENT STYLE: A CASE OF NAIROBI CHRISTIAN CENTRE, NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA for the period ending: 22nd June, 2019  Applicant's Signature	Permit No : NACOSTI/P/18/61225/22931 Date Of Issue : 25th June, 2018 Fee Received : Ksh 1000   Director General National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation
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CONDITIONS 1. The License is valid for the proposed research, research site specified period. 2. Both the License and any rights thereunder are non-transferable. 3. Upon request of the Commission, the Licensee shall submit a progress report. 4. The Licensee shall report to the County Director of Education and County Governor in the area of research before commencement of the research. 5. Excavation, filming and collection of specimens are subject to further permissions from relevant Government agencies. 6. This License does not give authority to transfer research materials. 7. The Licensee shall submit two (2) hard copies and upload a soft copy of their final report. 8. The Commission reserves the right to modify the conditions of this License including its cancellation without prior notice.	 REPUBLIC OF KENYA  National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation RESEARCH CLEARANCE PERMIT Serial No.A 19114 CONDITIONS: see back page
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