



SECURE ATTACHMENT STYLE IN NEIGHBORHOOD DISORDER AND TENDENCY TO COMMIT CRIME AMONG UNDERGRADUATES

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Abstract

The study investigated the moderating role of secure attachment style in neighborhood disorder and tendency to commit crime among undergraduate of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Participants included 297 university students of psychology department. They included 66(22.2%) males and 229(77.1%) females, whose ages ranged between 17 to 43 years, with the mean age of 21.96 and standard deviation of 3.18. The Crime Behavior Rating Scale, Attachment Style Questionnaire, and perceived Neighborhood Disorder Scale were used for data collection. The design of the study was moderated predictive design, while Process Macro Model 1 via SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) was used for data analysis. The result revealed that secure attachment style negatively and significantly predict tendency to commit crime, neighborhood disorder positively and significantly predict tendency to commit crime, and neighborhood disorder positively but not significantly moderated the relationship between secure attachment style and tendency to commit crime. It was recommended that parent and caregivers should adopt secure attachment style in raising their children to inculcate in them the ability to resist criminal thoughts.

Introduction

In most cities around the world, crime appears to be a common occurrence. Many governments, particularly those that are democratically elected, seem to be very concerned about this. A well-known Chinese man was recently charged with bribery that resulted in billions of yuan being lost. It seems that most people are always eager to commit some kind of crime, even though defaulters suffer severe penalties when caught. Even while crime may not be uncommon in society, most criminals grow up in different homes. For instance, different parents raise their kids in different ways using different methods. Every parenting approach, however, offers a different future. These parents live in what may be called a neighborhood, which is a different setting. It is well known that children who grow up in diverse neighborhoods may exhibit various habits. Regardless of the parenting style, it seems that our environment has a significant impact on our cognitive behavior. Various authors have examined various facets of crime and the ways in which it can be experienced (Jude, 2021). However, crime is a natural and unavoidable part of social life, according to Emile Durkheim (1938). As a result, crime occurs in all kinds of societies, albeit it appears that more developed nations have greater crime rates. Despite research targeted at reducing crime, it seems that crime is steadily increasing. The researcher's investigation into the "moderating role of neighborhood disorder in the relationship between secure attachment style and tendency-to-commit-crime" among undergraduates is motivated by the aforementioned.

As a psychological notion, "tendency to commit crime" refers to a trait that increases a person's likelihood of committing crimes or turning into a criminal. Despite every attempt to investigate crime, scholars have failed to reach a consensus on a definition of criminal propensity. But according to this study, a person's propensity to commit crimes is defined as their capacity to imagine and lean toward criminal activity. According to research, a number of factors contribute to the prevalence of crime, including but not limited to poverty and inequality, underemployment and unemployment, the widening wealth gap, a lack of prudent parental guidance, and a reluctance to seize favorable opportunities (Ijzerman & Denissen, 2019). According to Howitt (2006), a person may not be born with the traits of a criminal, but they may gradually acquire them. Researchers have looked at a variety of theories. Some argue that criminal

conduct may be primarily explained by genetics, while others contend that a person's environment can affect their likelihood of becoming a criminal (Laird, & Pettit, 2005). Studies have shown a positive relationship between tendency to commit crime and attachment styles (King, 2021).

As a term in developmental psychology, attachment style has been characterized by several authors. According to Bowlby (1982), for example, attachment styles are patterns of behavior that can change over the course of a person's life and are typified by degrees of anxiety and avoidance that reflect internal working models of the world, relationships, and oneself. Second, according to Mikulincer & Shaver (2013), attachment styles are the socio-emotional behavioral systems that direct people's responses to their emotional security requirements. Nonetheless, the present study defines attachment style as an individual's degree of comfort with closeness and reliance in long-term partnerships. We now know that early encounters with our early caregivers are the primary factor in the formation of attachment styles. It alludes to a person's unique interpersonal relationships. We form our earliest thoughts and emotions about the world, other people, and ourselves through these parent-child interactions.

Bowlby distinguished four categories of attachment styles: avoidant, disorganized, anxious-ambivalent, and secure. (i) Secure Attachment: According to Bowlby (1988), secure attachment is the ability to form strong, stable bonds with people while simultaneously being able to act independently when necessary. (ii) Anxious (Ambivalent) Attachment: Anxious attachment, sometimes referred to as ambivalent, relationships are characterized by the concern that other people won't feel the same way about you. (iii) Avoidant Attachment: People with this type of attachment avoid interacting with their caregiver and don't seem upset when they are separated. (iv) Disorganized (Fearful) Attachment: People with disorganized attachment, which combines anxious and avoidant attachment styles, frequently exhibit extreme fury and hostility. According to Hay, et al (2006), children who are emotionally attached to their parents and are continuously watched over by them commit less crimes. This is especially true when they engage in prosocial activities. Numerous academics have tried to clarify how family, parental supervision, and the strength of the parent-child bond affect crime rates and how these factors function in a societal context in connection

to the living situations of underprivileged communities. Studies have shown a positive relationship between tendency to commit crime and neighborhood disorders (Alraksinen et al (2021) & Olofinbiyi and Balgobind (2020).

Many authors have defined neighborhood disorders, which are thought to be a social psychological construct. For example, neighborhood disorder was characterized by Shah (2018) as when the components of a social structure either fail to carry out their duties effectively and efficiently or do so in a poor manner. Secondly, according to Bursik (1988, p. 521), neighborhood orders are "the inability of local communities to realize common values of their residents to solve commonly experienced problems." According to the current study, neighborhood disorder is defined as the physical and social characteristics of communities that are seen or felt to be a symptom of a breakdown in social control and order, which can lower quality of life. To explain this phenomena, Shaw and McKay provided the following three explanations: Residential instability/mobility is the term used to describe people who move about a lot and don't establish a connection with the community they temporarily resided in.

According to Shaw and McKay, poverty and racial/ethnic heterogeneity—defined as residential isolation due to racial, cultural, and linguistic characteristics that prevent the development of community unity—do not cause crime; rather, they enable it due to a lack of resources needed to eradicate criminal behavior (Harbeck, 2017). Numerous sociological circumstances, including parental loss, poor upbringing, and school dropout, might contribute to the development of a person's negative character (Hentig, 2009). Stress is a contributing component that makes someone adopt a narrow viewpoint and make the hostile decision to act in a way that would satisfy their desires but through unlawful ways (Jackson & Foshee, 2008). Research has shown a favorable correlation between neighborhood issues and criminal propensity (Jude, 2021 & Boyd, 2020). However, few research have attempted to examine the relationship between criminal tendency, community issues, and attachment style. This study aims to bridge this gap and make an effort to provide us with a solid fact about the extent to which these two factors—neighborhood issues and attachment style—had affected an individual's (undergraduates') likelihood of committing a crime.

Statement of the Problem

It shouldn't be the case that crime has nearly become an everyday occurrence. The majority of people thought that crime was a way to get revenge, relieve stress (like stealing money you want), or deal with negative feelings (like using illegal drugs). Crime is one potential reaction to these feelings, which put pressure on people to take corrective action (Agnew 1992). A person may not be born with the traits of a criminal, but they may gradually acquire them over time. Howitt (2006). People (undergraduates) who don't have the right attachment or bonding from childhood are more likely to conduct crimes. Early interactions with their primary caregiver can mold and impact a child's behavior and social characteristics in the future. These behaviors may indicate a breakdown in social control and order, which can lower a child's quality of life and ultimately result in criminal activity.

Numerous academics have tried to clarify how family, parental supervision, and the strength of the parent-child bond affect crime rates and how these factors function in a societal context in connection to the living situations of underprivileged communities. The prevalence of criminal activity among undergraduates may be attributed, in part, to the neighborhood and the attachment style of the individual. Studies examining the moderating role of secure attachment style, in the relationship between neighborhood disorder, and tendency criminal are scarce. This study aims to fill this knowledge vacuum and make an effort to provide a solid estimate of the extent to which neighborhood issues and attachment style have affected undergraduates' likelihood of committing crimes.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation used in this study is rational choice theory. Since rational choice theory may connect my independent variables (neighborhood disorders and attachment style) and dependent variable (propensity to commit crime) to explain crime, it is appropriate for this study. This is why: In addition to offering a framework for comprehending crime causation, rational choice theory offers a thorough explanation. It highlights the role of environmental factors in crime decision-making, allows for flexibility in accommodating different explanations of crime types, and includes cognitive aspects of a person's tendency to commit

crime (i.e., before committing a crime, the person must analyze the potential outcome). Crime prevention tactics are informed by pertinent policy. According to this hypothesis, people assess the advantages and disadvantages of committing crimes before acting logically. Legal repercussions, social rejection, or other hazards could be the expenses, but incentives like money, prestige, or self-satisfaction could be the advantages. The rational choice perspective begins with the idea that people choose crime because it is advantageous.

According to rational choice theory, crime will happen if there are many advantages to it and few disadvantages. However, there won't be any crime if the disadvantages of crime exceed the advantages. According to this hypothesis, rational criminals will be stopped or discouraged from committing crimes if the consequences of breaking the law are made high (Paternoster & Bachman 2001: 1). The rational choice theoretical framework holds that different types of crimes have different decision-making models; hence crime is not regarded as random (Cornish & Clarke, 1986). Instead, criminal behavior is thought to result of a person's interaction with the situational context of their decision-making. The offender's logical decision-making process also makes a distinction between involvement in the "criminal event" and "criminal involvement." Criminal involvement refers to the choice to conduct crime in order to meet demands and is influenced by a variety of factors, including moral standards, prior learning experiences, and personal experiences with crime.

Empirical Review

Attachment Style and Tendency to Commit Crime

Luke, (2024) carried out a study titled "Influence of Attachment Styles on Delinquency among Adolescents in Church Managed Reintegration Centers in Lang'ata Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya". The participants were eighty-nine (89) adolescents, residing in three church-managed reintegration centers. Age range from 13-17 years. The statistics used was Anova. This study examined criminal activity by minors (Adolescent delinquency). The findings of this study suggest that attachment styles influence

delinquency among adolescents in reintegration centers. However, the current study is on tendency to commit crime. Earlier, Mulder (2022), carried out a study on "The Relationship Between Type of Attachment Styles and Antisocial Behavior Moderated by Gender". The participants were one hundred and ninety-one undergraduates' students (male and female) with maximum age of 18 years, in Tilburg. The statistics used for data analysis was Multiple Regression. According to this study, it examined antisocial behavior moderated by gender. The findings of this study indicated that secured attachment style did not have significance on antisocial behavior but insecure does. However, the present study is on Tendency to commit crime

Similarly, King (2021), conducted research on "The Impact of Perceived parenting style During Childhood Experiences of Bullying on Emerging Adult Attachment". The participants were one Hundred and thirty-nine with age range from 18-25. The statistics used for data analysis was Hierarchical Multiple Linear Regression. This study examined bullying. The findings of these study revealed that there is significance in relationship between youth bullying and attachment. However, the present study is on tendency to commit crime Likewise, Owino and Asakhulu (2021), conducted research titled "Attachment Styles and Risky Sexual Behavior in Adolescent". The participants were three hundred and sixty-seven secondary school students with age range from 16-18 years in Nairobi County. The statistics used for data analysis was Multiple Regression, Kurtosis and Skewness. The study examined risky sexual behavior in adolescents. The findings of this study showed that preoccupied attachment style and secure attachment style had predictive effects on risky sexual behavior. Nonetheless, the current study focuses on tendency to commit crime. Furthermore, Gibson (2021), reported a study, title "A phenomenological Study of Attachment and Juvenile Justice Involvement "The participants were seven adult males (involved in juvenile justice) with age range from 18-25 years in United States of America. The method used for data analysis was Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). According to the study, it examined Juvenile Justice Involvement which may be as a result of attachment. The findings of this study revealed that lack of attachment causes trust issues, as a result of feeling of abandonment which has negative effect on juvenile justice system. Howbeit, the present study is on Tendency to Commit Crime.

Plotka et al (2020), investigated "The Relationship Between Implicit and Explicit Attitude Towards Criminal Violence and Attachment Styles". The participants were eighty-eight male criminal offenders which was divided into two groups (i.e. sentenced and not sentenced). Statistics used were Pearson and Spearman correlation. According to this study, it examined criminal violence. The findings of this study disclosed that a partial correspondence between implicit and explicit measurement of attitude toward violence due to attachment style, the difference of the strength of explicit criminal attitude toward the groups was not revealed but implicit association of oneself with nonviolence are more pronounced in the "not sentenced" group. Although, the present study focuses on tendency to commit crime. Owvor (2020), made research on "Relationship between Attachment Styles and Risk for Problematic Drug Use among Undergraduate". The participants were four hundred undergraduate students. Statistics used for this study was Pearson product moment correlation, ANOVA and Chi-square. This study examined problematic drug use among undergraduates. Still and all, the current research work is on Tendency to Commit Crime. The findings of this study disseminated that there is significant difference in attachment style and problematic drug use in which anxious and avoidant attachment are correlated. Gail et al (2013), carried out a study "Parental Attachment as Predictor of Delinquency". The participants were three hundred school students with age range from 15-18 years in Selangor. Statistics used for data analysis was Pearson correlation Matrix. This study investigated delinquency (teenagers) who might be seen as potential criminals. Findings of this study reported a negative linear relationship between parental attachment style and delinquent behavior. Although, the current study is on Tendency to Commit crime.

Neighborhood Disorder and Tendency to Commit Crime.

Alraksinen et al (2021), researched on "Association of Neighborhood Disadvantages and Offender Concentrated with Criminal Behavior". The participants were one hundred residents with age range from 18-31 in Finland. Statistics used for analysis was Multilevel Logistics Regression. This study focused on criminals. Findings of this study indicated strong associations of neighborhood disadvantage and offender concentration with criminal behavior between individuals. However,

the present study is on Tendency to Commit Crime.

Jude (2021), conducted a study on "Social Disorganization and Violent Crime across Non-metropolitan Areas Kentucky. The participants were three hundred and forty non-metropolitan counties in Kentucky. In data analysis, Mediator regression, Kurtosis and Skewness were used. This study focuses mainly on violent crime involvement. Findings of this study admitted that residential instability, ethnic heterogeneity and family disorganization predict higher levels of violent crime. Although poverty has a significant positive indirect effect on violent crime via family disorganization, the total effect of economic disadvantage on violent crime is negative.

The present study is on Tendency to Commit Crime. Olofinbiyi and Balgobind (2020), examined "Poor Education and Unemployment Implication for Youth Crime in Nigeria". The participants were one hundred youth with age range from 18-40 in Bariga. Mixed method analysis which is descriptive and inferential analytical technique were used to analyze the data collected. This study focused on crime committed by youth. Findings of this study disclosed that educational and occupational variables are significant determinants of criminal propensities. Regardless, the current study is on Tendency to Commit Crime.

Boyd (2020), investigated on "Beyond Social Disorganization Theory: The Influence of Multiple Structural Determinant of Crime on Urban Community". The participants were fifty-nine residents in New York district. Statistics used for data analysis was Correlational matrix and Simultaneous linear regression model. This study focuses primarily on crime commission as a result of multiple structural determinants. Findings of this study indicated that the level of the community's economically disadvantaged and residential instability/mobility does influence the rate of violent crimes in communities. Notwithstanding, the present study is on Tendency to Commit Crime. Zaun (2016), carried out research "The Influence of Disorganized Neighborhood on Delinquency". The participants were fifty-five undergraduate students (male) in Dakota and California. The study examined on delinquency (teenagers) who may be perceived as potential criminals. Findings of this study indicated strong association of neighborhood disadvantages with criminal behavior.

Hypotheses

- i. Secure attachment style will positively and significantly predict tendency to commit crime among undergraduate of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
- ii. Neighborhood disorder will positively and significantly predict tendency to commit crime among undergraduate of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
- iii. Secure attachment style will positively and significantly moderate the relationship between neighborhood disorder and tendency to commit crime among undergraduate of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Method

A total of two hundred and ninety-seven (297) undergraduates from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka were used as participants to conduct the research. The Participants were conveniently selected from the department of psychology without cohesion or any form of reinforcement. Participants age ranges between 17 to 43 years, with mean age of 21.96 and standard deviation 3.180. The participants were from different level; 2 participants were 100 level student, 80 individuals were 200 level students, 97 individuals were 300 level and 116 individuals were 400 level students. The participants also included: Christians (291), Muslims (1) and others (3). Three instruments were used for data collection The instrument include: Criminal Behavior Rating Scale (CBRS) developed by Animasahun (2011), Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ) developed by Feeney & Noller (1994) and Neighborhood Disorder Scale (NDS) developed by Ross & Mirowsky (1999). The criminal behaviour rating scale (CBRS) was developed and validated by Animasahun (2011). It consists of thirty-three (33) items scale, these thirty-three (33) items scale was used to measure tendency to commit crime. It is designed to measure behaviors and characteristics that can easily predispose an individual to commit crime. The 33 items were directly scored. The scoring was done on five (5) point scale ranging from 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree" indicating the extent to which the items apply to the participants. Sample items of the (CBRS) include statements such as "my behaviors often go contrary to acceptable norms", "I can find any means to make money to survive". Animasahun (2011) reported internal consistency reliability estimates (Cronbach

Alpha) for CBRS 0.94 and the validity was obtained by inter items correlation ranged from 0.56 to 0.88; convergent validity of 0.86 and discriminant validity of 0.02. In this study, a Cronbach alpha's coefficient of 0.91 was obtained. Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ) was developed by Feeney & Noller, (1994), is a broad-based self-report measure. The scale consists of multiple items that respondents answer to reflect their feelings and behaviors in close relationships. For the purpose of this study, one dimensions of this scale was used. The secure attachment style domain has 8 items each and Each item was rated on 5 point Likert type rating scale ranging from 1 "Strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree". which targets the respondents' views of self and other, and are conceptually compatible with Bartholomew's (1990) and Hazan and Shaver's (1987) understandings of attachment. The internal consistency estimates (Cronbach Alpha) coefficient of 0.80 indicating good internal consistency. The Neighborhood Disorder Scale (NDS) was developed by Ross & Mirowsky (1999), is a 15-items 4-point Likert-type scale consisting of two sub-scales: Social Disorder (n=9 items) and Physical Disorder/Decay (n=6 items). Each item was rated on 4-point Likert type rating scale ranging from 1 "Strongly disagree" to 4 "strongly agree".

Procedure

Each of the 15 faculties of Nnamdi Azikiwe University was carefully arranged in alphabetical order on the floor, and someone who happened to walk by was instructed to select one. The social sciences department was chosen using this method. Additionally, each department within the faculty of social sciences was listed on properly folded pieces of paper, with a randomly chosen psychology department included. A Google Form with a page asking for informed consent was emailed to psychology students in the Faculty of Social Sciences. Students who were willing and took part in the survey provided responses. The responses of the participants were guaranteed to remain confidential. Two hundred ninety-seven (297) copies of the questionnaires were received for data analysis, making up the total amount of data collected. This study was designed using a moderated predictive design. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 30.0 was utilized to analyze the data using Process Macro Model 1.

RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic representation of the study participants

S/N		Mean	SD	N
1	Age	21.96	3.180	297
2	Religion			297
3	Nationality			297
4	Qualification			297

Table 2: Moderation table of secure attachment style in Neighborhood disorder and Tendency to Commit Crime

	B.Coefficient	t	P	LLCL	ULCL	Se
Secured attachment Style	-.5916	-2.3843	.0178	-.10800	-.1033	.2481
Neighborhood disorder	1.2496	6.7645	.0000	.8860	1.6132	.1847
Int-1	.0123	3551	.7227	-.0556	.0802	.345

The model *R*-square value of .1377 explain changes in tendency to commit crime among undergraduates of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka. Specifically, neighborhood disorder positively predict tendency to commit crime ($b = 1.2496$, $t = 6.7645$, $P < .0000$), secure attachment style ($b = -.5916$, $t = -2.3843$, $P < .0178$), and moderation of secured attachment style in neighborhood disorder and tendency to commit crime ($b = .0123$, $t = .3551$, $P > .7227$).

Discussion

The study looked at how secure attachment style moderated the association between neighborhood disorder and a propensity to commit crimes. A total of 297 participants were utilized. The study's results showed that a secure attachment type significantly and negatively predicts a person's propensity to commit crimes, rejecting hypothesis one. Mulder (2022), an earlier researcher, validated this finding by demonstrating that insecure attachment styles have a strong correlation with antisocial behavior but secure attachment styles do not.

Others, however, presented conflicting findings. Owino and Asakhulu (2021) found that both secure and preoccupied attachment styles positively and significantly influence risky sexual behavior. This discovery provides support for the attachment theory. In contrast to those who did not get affection, support, and attention from their caretakers, Bowlby suggests that undergraduates who experience stable attachment may report greater favorable consequences in later life.

Therefore, one may draw the conclusion that the propensity to conduct crimes will decrease as secure attachment increases. Crime, according to the principle of reasoned action, is a rational behavior that calls for an undergraduate to investigate the idea for potential consideration. Once the information has been processed cognitively, one may choose to follow the idea. These thoughts could be any action that goes against the socially acceptable norm, which is illegal. In this sense, Bowlby argues that an undergraduate who grew up in a home with a "secured attachment" would not be able to think of committing a crime.

In a similar vein, the second hypothesis—that neighborhood disorder will positively and strongly predict the likelihood of committing crimes—was validated. Jude (2021) found that family disarray, ethnic heterogeneity, and residential instability all positively and significantly predict greater levels of crime. This finding was corroborated by other researchers. Furthermore, according to Olofinbiyi and Balgobind (2020), criminal tendency was positively and strongly influenced by occupational

position and low levels of education. It becomes very evident that people who reside in areas with rough and unwelcoming surroundings may struggle with happiness and safety. These people may be more prone to melancholy, worry, and fear, as well as being exposed to a variety of vices. The younger residents of the area may also be directly impacted by these unfavorable outcomes, which could involve social actors or models being observed. The models created by these neighborhood effects encourage non-criminals to learn about the real-life actions of criminals and the ways in which the police dealt with them. If it turns out that they were not given enough punishment, they will be encouraged to join and look for advantages in terms of money and social standing simply by living in the neighborhood. The rational choice theory captures this explanation since all crimes must be thoroughly investigated before being committed.

Additionally, secure attachment style was found to negatively but not significantly mitigate the association between neighborhood disorder and criminal propensity, hence confirming hypothesis three. The rational choice theory (RCT) can be used to explain these results. Undergraduates possess the capacity and authority to freely choose their own acts and conduct, according to this idea (i.e., illegal behavior is the outcome of a reasoned decision). The moderating effect showed a negative and negligible correlation between the secure attachment style and criminal propensity. The result indicates that the relationship would be further weakened by the neighborhood disturbance. The rate at which students ponder criminal behaviors would decrease, resulting in a society with fewer crimes, if all caregivers endeavor to raise their children with a secure attachment style, even in the face of a highly disordered neighborhood.

Limitation of the Study

The study is limited to for instance, the use of only undergraduates as sample participants of Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Implications of the study

According to the current study, traits like a secure attachment style have a negative correlation with the likelihood of committing crimes. Secondly, the likelihood of committing a crime is positively and strongly predicted by neighborhood disturbance. Nonetheless, the association between undergraduates' neighborhood instability and

propensity to commit crimes is negatively moderated by secure attachment type. It was suggested that throughout a child's formative years, parents should provide them more love, care, and attention. This strategy will instill in the undergraduates from an early age the importance of adopting crime-free, environmentally friendly behaviors. Additionally, this protects the undergraduates from criminal thinking, making them incapable of engaging in criminal activity. Since no society is immune, it concluded that crime is a worldwide issue. All people have the propensity to do crimes. According to the study's findings, neighborhood disturbance and secure attachment type predict criminal propensity in a positive and negative way, respectively. Additionally, the association is negatively moderated by neighborhood disorder.

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