
Caring Attachment and Kindergartens' Academic Interest

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ABSTRACT: Secure attachments promote confidence and exploration, this bond allows the child to feel safe and secure. This study investigated the level of caring attachment in terms of child-teacher relationship, learning environment, peer relationship, and family dynamics, the level of kindergartens' academic interest, the relationship between caring attachment and kindergartens' academic interest and the variables that affect singly or in combination the kindergartens' academic interest. There were two hundred-thirteen (213) selected parents in the kindergarten level as actual respondents who were selected through simple random sampling technique using Slovin's Formula. The study employed a descriptive correlational and causal research designs, which included a quantitative approach in collecting data through a modified questionnaire. The data utilized statistical tools such as Mean and Standard Deviation, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Linear Regression Analysis to examine the variables. Results revealed that caring attachment and kindergartens' academic interest were High. There is a low to moderate correlation between caring attachment and kindergartens' academic interest. Kindergartens' academic interest is greatly influenced by Child-Teacher Relationship and Family Dynamics. Thus, having caring relationship with children is crucial in a child's interest for school. It is recommended that school heads, teachers and even the stakeholders may give importance and priorities in providing their support, guidance, assistance, and attention to their pupils' educational activities.

KEYWORDS: academic interest, caring attachment, child-teacher, family dynamics

I. INTRODUCTION

Childhood attachment significantly influences educational engagement. The importance of early childhood education in molding a child's future trajectory cannot be emphasized enough. Kindergarten lays the groundwork for a child's academic path, shaping their attitudes towards learning and their capacity to develop meaningful relationships with peers and teachers. Secure attachments promote confidence and exploration, this bond allows the child to feel safe and secure, using their parents as a "secure base" from which to explore their environment and return to for comfort when distressed.

Recent studies have further elucidated the connections between attachment and school interest. The study by Goldberg (2022) examined the stability of child attachment to parents from infancy to preschool age and found that secure attachments were associated with higher levels of school readiness and interest. These findings suggest that early attachment experiences have long-lasting effects on a child's educational trajectory.

Moreover, interventions aimed at enhancing guardian responsiveness have shown promise in improving children's attachment security and school outcomes. Research by Georges and Jackson (2021) revealed that programs focusing on increasing parental sensitivity led to significant improvements in children's attachment security and academic engagement. These results underscore the potential benefits of supporting parents in fostering secure attachments to promote children's interest in school.

Understanding the link between attachment and academic interest is crucial for educators and policymakers. Emphasizing secure attachments can improve child-teacher relationships, create supportive learning environments, and encourage family involvement. Bowlby's Attachment Theory highlights how nurturing bonds influence kindergartens' enthusiasm for school, guiding strategies that enhance educational engagement early in their academic journeys through positive peer interactions and family dynamics. According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), a significant proportion of learners exhibit low levels of engagement and motivation in learning. This alarming finding highlights the urgent need to investigate factors that contribute to positive school experiences, particularly in early childhood (Rommel & Yousef, 2024).

Research on attachment responses in caring relationships and kindergartens' interest in school is crucial for emotional and social growth, impacting lifelong education. Bowlby's Attachment Theory highlights those secure attachments foster safety, enabled

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exploration and engagement in learning. Bowlby (2019) found that strong caregiver bonds enhance positive feelings towards school, emphasizing the need for nurturing educational environments.

The link between caring attachment and school interest is crucial for tackling school readiness and participation challenges. Research by Pianta and Hamre (2022) revealed that teacher-learner interactions in kindergarten significantly impact children's motivation for school. A nurturing environment, marked by warmth and understanding, can alleviate separation anxiety and foster positive school associations. Addressing attachment responses was especially important for diverse learners, particularly those facing socio-economic disadvantages or trauma. Targeted interventions can enhance emotional security and promote a love for learning through culturally relevant practices (Oco, 2023). The connection between caring attachment and school interest is vital for addressing school readiness issues. Research indicated that positive teacher-student interactions in kindergarten enhanced children's motivation. Nurturing environments can ease anxiety and improve school associations, benefiting diverse learners through targeted, culturally relevant interventions.

This study served as the foundation for investigation based on the concept introduced by John Bowlby, which served as a cornerstone of Attachment Theory. Bowlby (1969) posited that infants and toddlers possessed an innate behavioral system designed to ensure their safety and survival. The primary objective of this system, referred to as the "set-goal," is to maintain or achieve closeness to their attachment figures, typically their parents or primary caregivers.

In exploring the relationship between caring attachment and kindergartens' academic interest, attachment theory provides a foundational framework. Originally developed by John Bowlby, attachment theory emphasizes the significance of early emotional bonds between children and their caregivers, positing that these relationships form the basis for future social, emotional, and cognitive development. In the context of education, the attachment relationship extends beyond primary caregivers to include educators, highlighting the importance of teacher-student interactions in shaping a child's attitude toward learning. McDevitt and Ormrod (2021)

A secure attachment is characterized by a child's confidence in the availability and responsiveness of their caregiver or teacher, fostering a sense of safety that encourages exploration and engagement. In the classroom, teachers who exhibit warmth, sensitivity, and consistency can create a secure base for students, promoting active participation and enthusiasm for learning. Conversely, insecure attachments, which may result from inconsistent or unresponsive interactions, can lead to anxiety, withdrawal, or disruptive behaviors, adversely affecting a child's interest in school (Nicolini, 2020).

Research indicated that positive teacher-pupil relationships are associated with increased pupils' engagement, motivation, and academic success. For instance, a study by Bergin (2019) found that secure attachments within the school environment contributed to better student outcomes, as children feel more comfortable taking intellectual risks and seeking help when needed. This underscores the role of educators in not only delivering academic content but also in providing emotional support that nurtured a child's intrinsic interest in learning.

Incorporating attachment theory into educational practices involves creating a classroom environment that prioritized emotional security and responsive interactions. Strategies such as maintaining consistent routines, offering empathetic responses to students' needs, and fostering a culture of respect and trust can enhance the quality of teacher-pupil relationships. By understanding and applying the principles of attachment theory, educators can better support kindergarten pupils' interest in school, laying a foundation for lifelong learning and development (Anderson & Ziegler, 2020).

II. METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive correlational and casual research designs. These designs were used to investigate the relationship between caring attachment and kindergartens' academic interest. Descriptive statistics was used to characterize the levels of caring attachment among the participants. Correlational analysis was conducted to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between caring attachment and kindergartens' academic interest that identified in the study (Creswell & Gutterman, 2019)

Also, causal research design identifies the extent and nature of cause-and-effect relationship between caring attachment and kindergartens' academic interest. This design was allowed for the identification of potential associations between these variables, providing valuable insights into how kindergartens' academic interest (Steiner, 2024).

The following statistical treatment of the data provided guidance for the researcher to achieve the same treatment for each of the following problems. Problems 1 and 2 made use of mean to determine the level of the caring attachment and kindergartens' academic interest. Problem 3 utilized Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient analyzing the significant relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables based on their significant level and critical value. Problem 4 utilized Multiple Linear Regression that estimates the relationship between a dependent variable and two or more independent variables.

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III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problem 1. What is the level of caring attachment in terms of:

- 1.1 child-teacher relationship;
- 1.2 learning environment;
- 1.3 peer relationship; and
- 1.4 family dynamics?

Table 1. Overall level of Caring Attachment

Variable	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
Child-Teacher Relationship	4.21	0.53	Agree	High
Learning Environment	4.22	0.54	Agree	High
Peers Relationship	4.19	0.55	Agree	High
Family Dynamics	4.20	0.55	Agree	High
Overall Mean	4.21	0.54	Agree	High

Note: 4.31 - 5.00 Very High 3.51 - 4.30 High 2.71 - 3.50 Moderate

1.91 - 2.70 Low 1.00 -1.90 Very Low

Table 1 presents the overall level of caring attachment. It registered an overall Mean of 4.21 with SD=0.54, described as Agree and interpreted as High Level. The data imply that parents perform their duties and responsibilities as parents in making sure that their children are safe, secure and well taken-cared for, consistently checked and make follow up their child's status, activities and performance. This in return made their child motivated and inspired them to perform at their best.

According to Gordon (2023) responsible parents make sure that the safety and welfare of their children are always secure. Whenever they have the chance to be with them, they will do it as they know that their presence and guidance to them is crucial and has a heavy impact on the pupils.

In the same table, the variable, *Learning Environment*, was rated the highest with the Mean of 4.22 with SD=0.54, described as Agree and interpreted as High Level. In the school setting, the learning environment is very important as it provides the opportunity for the pupils to learn new knowledge and skills that are useful in their studies and their future. To be able to acquire the necessary level of knowledge and level of mastery, the pupils must be free from distractions so that their full concentrations are on the lessons they are studying. Thus, schools must always employ safety and security in the school premises. According to Larwin (2019) when the pupils are free from distractions from the school and even gadgets, they become productive and achieve better performance. This is because their attention and focus are on the valuable lessons and activities presented by the teachers. Meanwhile, the variable, *Peer Relationship*, was rated the lowest with a Mean of 4.19 and SD=0.55, described as Agree and interpreted as High Level. The data imply that the parents also make sure that peer relationship of their child is monitored and checked so that they will not be with people that will influence them badly. Moreover, the parents also monitor the activities of their children, especially when they are already out of the school premises. This is to ensure their safety and security. According to Bowlby (2019) safety and security is the number 1 priority of the parents why they want to know the friends of their child. In this way, they can easily contact the parents of their friends if they want to make queries, follow up and confirmation of the reasons that their child provided to them.

Problem 2. What is the level of kindergarten's academic interest?

Table 2 shows the Kindergartens' Overall Academic Interest. It registered an overall Mean of 4.24 with SD=0.53, described as Agree and interpreted as High Level. The data imply that the pupils have high interest in their studies. This can be attributed to the support they receive from their parents as well as the provision of ideal school facilities and good relationship with their teachers. The Childs' interest must be kept high so that their motivation and inspiration to come to school and perform is at high level as well. According to Cassidy and Shaver (2021) teachers and parents must do their best in making sure that the pupils' interest is kept at a high level so that they will continue to aspire in achieving their goals and objectives as well as prevent them from negative thoughts like committing absences and tardiness.

In the same table, indicator 1, *The variety of activities at school enhances my child's excitement and interest in attending school*, was rated the highest with the Mean of 4.30 with SD=0.53, described as Agree and interpreted as High Level. The data tells that the teachers' efforts in making sure that the set of activities they prepare and use for the pupils to perform has made the pupils inspired and excited to come to school. A simple praise and reward system are already pleasing to the eyes and minds of the pupils. Therefore, teachers should not wane from providing the best experience for the pupils in learning and studying at school.

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According to Hughes and Dunn (2020) the teachers' efforts, sacrifices and initiatives are always welcome by the pupils. It ignites their curiosity as to what the activities they will have on the next day will be. Moreover, the love and care of the teachers will also make the pupils miss them so that they will be inspired to come to school early or on time.

Meanwhile, indicator 7, *There is effective communication between the school and parents that positively influences my child's interest in school*, was rated the lowest with the Mean of 4.19 with SD=0.55, described as Agree and interpreted as High Level. The data indicates that the teachers and parents must establish secure and consistent ways of communication so that they can constantly communicate as to the welfare and status of their child at school. They can also keep track if their child is still at school or has left for home. These ways and means will make sure that the child is always safe and secure.

Table 2. Kindergartens' Academic Interest

Indicators	Mean	SD	Description	Interpretation
1. The variety of activities at school enhances my child's excitement and interest in attending school.	4.30	0.53	Agree	High
2. My child enjoys interacting with their classmates, which increases his/her enthusiasm for school.	4.27	0.52	Agree	High
3. My child's teacher provides sufficient emotional and academic support, which fosters their interest in school.	4.27	0.53	Agree	High
4. The teacher maintains a positive relationship with my child, which motivates them to engage in school activities.	4.20	0.54	Agree	High
5. I regularly participate in my child's school-related activities, which positively influence his/her interest in school.	4.26	0.52	Agree	High
6. The classroom environment is engaging and stimulating, which encourages my child to be interested in learning.	4.22	0.54	Agree	High
7. There is effective communication between the school and parents that positively influences my child's interest in school.	4.19	0.55	Agree	High
8. I provide my child with a supportive home environment that encourages them to value education and school activities.	4.27	0.53	Agree	High
9. The school provides adequate learning materials and resources that make my child interested in participating in school activities.	4.23	0.52	Agree	High
Overall Mean	4.24	0.53	Agree	High

Note: 4.31 - 5.00 Very High 3.51 - 4.30 High 2.71 - 3.50 Moderate
1.91 - 2.70 Low 1.00 - 1.91 Very Low

According to Ahn and Lee (2021) the collaboration between the school and the stakeholders like the parents will inspire the pupils as they will always feel safe and secure and that they can concentrate on performing their tasks and educational activities to have better performance at the end of every quarter in a grade level they are currently at.

Problem 3. Is there a significant relationship between caring attachment and kindergartens' academic interest?

Table 3. Test of Correlation Between Caring Attachment and Kindergartens' Academic Interest

Variables	r-value	p-value	Level of Correlation	Decision	Interpretation
Child-Teacher Relationship	0.542	0.001	Moderate Positive Correlation	Reject Ho	Significant
Learning Environment	0.232	0.004	Low Positive Correlation	Reject Ho	Significant
Peer Relationship	0.313	0.029	Low Positive Correlation	Reject Ho	Significant
Family Dynamics	0.579	0.001	Moderate Positive Correlation	Reject Ho	Significant

Note: 0.91 - 1.00 Very High Positive Correlation 0.71 - 0.90 High Positive Correlation
0.51 - 0.70 Moderate Positive Correlation 0.31 - 0.50 Low Positive Correlation
0.00 - 0.30 Negligible Positive Correlation Significant when computed p-value < 0.05

Table 3 illustrates the Test for Correlation Between Caring Attachment and kindergartens' academic Interest. The independent variable is Caring attachment in terms of Child-Teacher Relationship, Learning Environment, Peer Relationship, and Family Dynamics while the dependent variable is the kindergartens' academic interest.

Child-Teacher Relationship registered a computed r-value=0.542 with a computed p-value=0.001. The computed p-value is less than the p-critical value at 0.05 level of significance. The data imply that there exists significant to moderate positive correlation

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was established between caring attachment and kindergartens' academic interest when child-teacher relationship is put into account. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Child-Teacher Relationship is essential for the pupils' adjustments as they are placed in an environment that is new to them. They are also seeking faces that are not familiar to them. When the child and teacher rapport is established, pupils become at ease inside the classroom. They will start to get attentive to their teacher that will enable them to learn the lessons presented to them.

According to Anderson and Ziegler (2020) establishing the teacher and pupil relationship is important as it will provide comfort to the pupils that they have someone to trust and confide with aside from their parents. They will start to feel safe and secure even if the parents will no longer stay on their side attending their classes.

Learning Environment registered a computed r -value=0.232 with a computed p -value=0.004. The computed p -value is less than the p -critical value at 0.05 level of significance. The data shows that significant to low positive correlation was established between caring attachment and kindergartens' academic interest when learning about the environment is put into account. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. A safe and secure learning environment that also promotes fairness and equality is ideal for the pupils. It will help them feel confident and inspired to learn new things knowing that they have nothing to worry about but concentrate on the lessons that will help them acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to move forward.

According to Bergin (2019) when the pupils feel secure and well attended, they become at peace and will have no worries giving their full attention and focus to their educational activities.

Peer Relationship registered a computed r -value=0.313 with a computed p -value=0.029. The computed p -value is less than the p -critical value at 0.05 level of significance. The data indicates that significant low positive correlation was observed between caring attachment and kindergartens' academic interest when peer relationship is put into account. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Peer relationships are the pupils' first step to socializing outside of their comfort zones. They need guidance and assistance so that they will not be with people that may have a negative influence on them. Parents and teachers must collaborate for the pupils' welfare in socializing with others as they are still vulnerable.

According to Nicolini (2020) socializing is important to the pupils' growth and development. It helps them to develop the skills of being able to adjust to various personalities and people with different likes from them. These qualities must be developed as they can be utilized once the pupils reach the stage where they need to work with other individuals.

Family Dynamics registered a computed r -value=0.579 with a computed p -value=0.001. The computed p -value is less than the p -critical value at 0.05 level of significance. The data imply that significant moderate positive correlation was established between caring attachment and kindergartens' academic interest when family dynamics is put into account. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Family Dynamics is vital to the psyche of the pupils. The presence, support and guidance of the parents contributes to the motivation and inspiration of the pupils in their studies. Their simple gestures are already considered big thing for the pupils. Parents should make sure that their presence as well as love and care must be felt by their child whether at school or at home.

According to Pianta and Hamre (2022) pupils that are well guided and supported by the parents are more inspired, motivated and interested in performing their best at school. In the end, they are also the once that will get better performance.

Problem 4. Which of the independent variables affects singly or in combination kindergartens' academic interest?

Table 4. Regression Analysis for Between Caring Attachment and Kindergartens' Academic Interest

Variables	UC		SC		t-value	Sig. (P-value)	Decision	Interpretation
	B	SE	B					
Constant	0.5387	0.7989	0.8697		6.664	0.000		
Child-Teacher Relationship	0.5678	0.6784	0.6482		4.138	0.001	Reject Ho	Significant
Learning Environment	0.3461	0.5768	0.2558		1.068	0.071	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Peer Relationship	0.2253	0.2438	0.3431		1.002	0.092	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Family Dynamics	0.6877	0.7629	0.6879		5.186	0.001	Reject Ho	Significant
Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	f-value	Sig. (P-value)	Decision	Decision	
	0.434	0.449	0.434	16.482	0.000	Reject Ho	Significant	

Note: UC = Unstandardized Coefficients SC = Standardized Coefficient

Dependent Variable = Pupils' Interest Significant when computed p -value < 0.05.

Table 4 presents regression analysis if caring attachment in terms of child-teacher relationship, learning environment, peer relationship, and family dynamics affects kindergartens' academic interest. It is hypothesized that the four (4) predictors will be

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positively associated with kindergartens' academic interest. Results show that 45% of the variance is explained by the four (4) predictors, $F= 16.482$, $p< .000$. Specifically, Child-Teacher Relationship ($\beta=0.6482$, $t\text{-value}=4.138$, $p\text{-value}< .001$) and Family Dynamics ($\beta=0.6879$, $t\text{-value}=5.186$, $p\text{-value}=0.001$) are positively associated with kindergartens' academic interest. It can be inferred that if the parents are able to increase their caring attachment in terms of child-teacher relationship and family dynamics it will also increase the kindergartens' academic interest respectively.

Child-Teacher Relationship registered a computed $\beta=0.6482$, $t\text{-value}= 4.138$ with a computed $p\text{-value}=0.001$. The computed $p\text{-value}$ is less than the $p\text{-critical}$ value at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Child-Teacher Relationship is essential for the pupils' adjustments as they are placed in an environment that is new to them. They are also seeking faces that are not familiar to them. According to Ahn and Lee (2021) Positive interactions between children and their educators foster a sense of security and belonging, which are essential for engaging in learning activities. Research indicates that strong child-teacher relationships were associated with increased motivation and academic success.

Family Dynamics registered a computed $\beta=0.6879$, $t\text{-value}= 5.186$ with a computed $p\text{-value}=0.001$. The computed $p\text{-value}$ is less than the $p\text{-critical}$ value at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Family Dynamics is vital to the psyche of the pupils. The presence, support and guidance of the parents contributes to the motivation and inspiration of the pupils in their studies.

According to Brown and Wilson (2022) Family dynamics play a pivotal role in shaping children's mental health and overall emotional well-being. Parenting styles, communication patterns, attachment styles, and socioeconomic influences within the family environment can serve as protective or risk factors. A study highlights the intricate relationship between these family dynamics and their consequences for children's mental health, emphasizing the need for supportive family environments to promote positive mental health outcomes.

Caring attachment is essential to the kindergartens' academic interest. They are the people that can help their child maintain their interest and motivation to their studies. Their presence, support and guidance must be seen and felt by the pupils so that they will feel secure and safe and be able to put their full concentration into their studies and school activities participation. According to Georges and Jackson (2021) the parents' presence motivates and inspires the pupils to strive in achieving better learning performance as their way of telling their parents that they appreciate and value their sacrifices and the support that they provided to them.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are formulated:

1. Caring attachment response is crucial to kindergartens' early education.
2. Pupils' desire to go to school is imminent.
3. Caring attachment response is important in the pupils' development.
4. Kindergartens' academic interest is greatly influenced by Child-Teacher Relationship and Family Dynamics.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Caring attachment response may maintain high so that pupils will always feel safe and secure.
2. Parents and teachers may work collaboratively to sustain high of kindergartens' academic interest.
3. Teachers and parents may always collaborate in making sure that the welfare and development of the pupils are safe and sound.
4. School heads, teachers and even the stakeholders may give importance and priorities in providing their support, guidance, assistance, and attention to their pupils' educational activities.

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