

Parental Attachment, Coping Style, and Trait Emotional Self-Efficacy as Antecedents of School Attachment

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Introduction

School attachment has been defined as a sense of belonging or connectedness at school, a network of relationships with peers as well as other school personnel and a sense of inherent value for the learning process as it relates to students' lives (Mouton, Hawkins, McPherson, and Copley, 1996; Ornelles, 2007). It is the extent to which students feel accepted, valued, respected and included in the school (Shochet, Smyth, & Homel, 2007). The School Attachment Scale by Hill (in press) measures three subscales – attachment to school, attachment to peers, and attachment to teachers. The attachment to school subscale pertains to commitment to conventional academic activities and belief in the established norms for school behavior (Hawkins and Weis, 1985 as cited in McNeely, 2003).

School attachment has been associated with positive social, emotional, and academic adjustment, achievement and motivation (Hill & Werner, 2006; Hill, 2008; Jimerson, 2003). Recently, it has been discovered as an important predictor of adolescent mental health and of disciplinary referrals, victimization, and symptoms of oppositional disorder (DeWit, et al., 2002; Shochet, Homel, & Montgomery, in press). Low level of school attachment may lead to school alienation demonstrated by students' withdrawal from school activities, cheating, delinquency, discipline problems, low school motivation and achievement, negative attitudes towards school, poor attendance, poor social and emotional adjustment to school, school dropout, risky sexual behavior, and substance abuse (DeWit, et al., 2002; Hill, 2008; O'Farrel, & Morrison, 2003; Ornelles, 2007).

Since school attachment plays a very important role in the success or failure of middle and high schools students (Mouton, Hawkins, McPherson, & Copley, 1996), it is essential to identify the predictors of school attachment. Reinforcement of positive involvement in the classroom through teacher warmth and support, increased opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities and greater community support of schools have been found to result in increased level of school attachment (Gottfredson, 1988 as cited in Hill & Werner, 2006). What have not been explored were parental attachment and individual-level contributions to differing levels of school attachment within the same or similar school environments (Hill & Werner, 2006; Shochet, Homel, & Montgomery, in press).

Parental Attachment and School Attachment

Parental attachment is the discourse of one's affective quality of relationship with his or her parents/ primary caregiver (Sonkin, 2005). It also refers to how much the individual sees the parents/ primary caregiver as facilitator of independence and source of support. Attachment pattern has been hypothesized to persist across the lifespan through the reinforcing properties of internal working models (Bowlby, 1973; Main, Kaplan, and Cassidy, 1985 as cited in Carpenter, 2001). The first attachment relationship provides a self-perpetuating schema or template that influences how individuals seek, anticipate, and interpret subsequent relationships (West and Sheldon-Keller, 1994 as cited in Carpenter, 2001; Wilkinson, 2004 as cited in Shochet, Smyth, & Homel, 2007).

Adolescents who have greater sense of autonomy are able to comfortably explore their environments and return to the family for emotional support (Karavasilis, Doyle, & Margolese, 199 as cited in Somers, Owens, and Piliawsky, 2008). Students who reported socially supportive family members, close parental monitoring of their activities, and strong parental interest in their education are most satisfied in terms of school attachment (De Wit, et al., 2002). Because parental attachment plays an important

Role in the adolescent's construction and evaluation of self-identity which in turn influences their psychological well-being (Wilkinson, 2004 as cited in Sochet, Homel, & Montgomery, in press), poor parental attachment may predispose students to difficulties in attaching to schools. An adolescents' ability to experience a sense of school connectedness may be dependent on the previous socialization in the family context (Barber & Olson, 1997 as cited in Shochet, Homel, & Montgomery, in press).

It should be noted however that attachment status is not necessarily permanent. The term "earned secure" has been used to describe individuals who experienced malevolent parenting, but have risen above those experiences and are assessed as securely attached (Main and Goldwyn, 1993 as cited in Sonkin, 2005). Therefore, a student can be helped in changing his or her attachment state-of-mind and may consequently improve adjustment to new environments and future interpersonal relationships. Attachment theory suggests that during adolescence, attachment changes to include other adults and peers who may assume equal or greater importance than that of parents (Bowlby, 1969; Ainsworth, 1978 as cited in Kalsner & Pistole, 2003).

Coping Styles and School Attachment

Adolescence is a period of stress resulting from new developmental and environmental challenges, including peer pressures, family conflicts, academic strains, and future career choices (Alumran & Punamaki, 2008). However, they rely on very few coping strategies because of limited resources and experience (Vaughn & Roesch, 2003). For this reason, there is a need to find out adaptive coping styles that can be taught to adolescents to help them in developing school attachment. Healthy coping with the challenges is essential for adolescents to attain independence, personal identity, and successful academic achievements, while inadequate coping may result in psychological and social problems (Frydenberge & Lewis, 1993; Gerald & Gerald, 2002 as cited in Alumran & Punamaki, 2008).

Trait Emotional Self-Efficacy and School Attachment

Trait emotional self-efficacy or trait emotional intelligence (EI), a relatively new concept in the field of educational psychology, is "a constellation of emotion-related self-perceptions and dispositions located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies" (Petrides & Furnham, 2001). Boys and girls with high trait EI have an advantage in terms of effective coping. Trait EI has been found to be positively associated with peer-rated social competence such as prosocial behavior, cooperativeness, and leadership and negatively correlated with peer-rated aggression, depression, and somatic complaints (Mavroveli, Petrides, Rieffe, & Bakker, 2007). Pupils with high trait EI scores were tended to be seen as having leadership qualities and being cooperative and less likely to be disruptive, aggressive, and dependent.

The emotion-related self perceptions and dispositions of trait EI influence children's peer relations at school (Petrides, Sangareau, Furnham, & Frederickson, 2006). Adolescents with high trait EI tend to more likely enjoy fulfilling personal relationships during a period when they are crucial to personal development (Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2000 as cited in Mavroveli, Petrides, Rieffe, and Bakker, 2007). A person's trait emotional self-efficacy is related to his or her social skills and social network formation, thus, may be crucial to development of school attachment. Not much study has been done on trait EI yet, thus the current study may be able to fill some gaps in the elaboration of the construct in connection with school attachment.

Purpose of the Study

The study hypothesizes that parental attachment, coping, and trait emotional self-efficacy are antecedents of school attachment. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: (1) Is there a difference between students with low and those with high attachment to school in: (a) parent attachment; b) coping styles; c) trait emotional self-efficacy? 2) ?

Which among the hypothesized antecedent variables are the significant predictors of school attachment?

Methodology

The sample comprised of 146 first year high school students of a science high school in Metro Manila. The science high school was chosen because it has no elementary school, thus all of the first year students would be new to the school and would be equally adjusting to the new environment and establishing school attachment.

Sixty-three percent (63%) of the first year high school students were males; 37% were females. Ages ranged from 11 to 15, with a mean age of 12.89. Most (77.4%) came from private elementary schools, majority (63.7%) from Metro Manila, thus only a third (38.4%) were staying in a dormitory. Only four of the participants claimed that they belonged to single-parent family structure. Almost all (97.4%) came from two-parent family structure.

After permission to conduct the study was granted by the school, the administration of the questionnaire was made part of the guidance activities with the agreement that all individual results would be given to the guidance office and be included in the students' personal files. The freshmen guidance counselor administered the questionnaires during the 50-minute values education class of each section. The administration of the questionnaires was done in November 2008, five months after opening of classes in order to give time for the students to develop school attachment, and not during or after December because the season and the Christmas vacation might affect the perceptions of the students especially on their attachment. Of the eight first year high school sections with thirty students each, five sections were randomly selected using fish bowl technique. Participation was voluntary, but none refused to participate. Also, students were told that it was very important that they be honest in answering the questionnaires and that all their answers would be treated with utmost confidentiality.

All the instruments used in the study were pilot tested to 105 high school students of a private school in Metro Manila. Self-report measures were utilized to document the adolescents' descriptions of their internal thoughts and feelings. While self-report measures pose risk in social desirability bias, Edelstein et al. (2004) maintain that self-report measures, particularly attachment measure, obtain findings that are generally consistent with those obtained using alternative measures such as interview and observation.

The *School Attachment Scale (SAS)*, recently developed by Hill (in press), was used to measure how attached the students are to their classmates and teachers and to their school in general. It is a 15-item, self-report instrument asking students to respond to simple, declarative statements (i.e. "People at school like me") with one of five responses: strongly disagree, disagree, don't know, agree, or strongly agree. Total scores were computed by summing responses, such that the higher the score, the more attached to school a student may be presumed to be. The three subscales – attachment to school in general, attachment to peers, and attachment to teachers – have five items each. The SAS has been found to be internally consistent among high school students in a private school in Metro Manila, as demonstrated by a Cronbach's alpha of .8827. The Cronbach alpha of the subscales are as follows: school in general (.8315), peers (.8515), and teachers (.7805). The factor loadings of the items are the same as those of the author of SAS.

The *Parental Attachment Questionnaire (PAQ)*, developed by Kenny (1990) was used because maternal and paternal attachments are rated separately. Three sub-scales are measured by this 55-item inventory: 1) *Affective Quality of Relationship*, that is, the caregiver's availability, understanding, acceptance; 2) *Fostering of Autonomy/ Independence*; and 3) *Emotional Support*, which refers to the person's satisfaction with help obtained from the caregiver. The *Affective Quality of Relationship* assesses the connection component, while the *Parents as Facilitators of Independence* sub-scale assesses the psychological autonomy element of attachment.

Responses are on a 5-point Likert-type scale with higher scores on the scales denoting high level of parental attachment, which characterizes secure attachment. The Cronbach's alphas are .9171 for mother and .9065 for father attachment; .8919 for Mother's Affective Quality, .6506 for Mother's Fostering of Autonomy, and .7942 for Mother's Emotional Support; .9214 for Father's Affective Quality, .5024 for Father's Fostering of Autonomy, and .7885 for Father's Emotional Support.

The *COPE* is a multidimensional coping inventory developed by Carver, Scheier & Weintraub (1989), which assesses the different ways in which people respond to stress. This measure is composed of 15 scales, with higher scores indicating higher levels of use of each type of coping. The authors noted that they do not combine scales into problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidant coping aggregates and that each scale should be looked at separately. Internal consistency of reliability the questionnaire yielded Cronbach alpha of .7670. Internal consistency reliability of the subscales are as follows: Seeking instrumental social support, .7372; Seeking emotional social support, .8077; Active coping, .5199; Planning, .4723; Positive reinterpretation and growth, .6159; Acceptance, .5108; Turning to religion, .6778; Denial, .7610; Focus on and venting of emotion, .4756; Behavioral disengagement, .6056; Substance abuse, .7910; Self-blame, .6058; Humor, .7694; and Self-distraction or mental disengagement, .2396.

The *Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire-Adolescent Short Form (TEIQue-ASF)* by Petrides, Sangareau, Furnham, & Frederickson (2006), covers the sampling domain of trait emotional self-efficacy or trait emotional intelligence (EI) comprehensively, providing scores on four factors, namely well-being ($\alpha = .7880$), self-control ($\alpha = .5665$), emotionality ($\alpha = .5275$), and sociability ($\alpha = .6061$). It includes 30 short statements responded to on a seven-point Likert scale. Scores on the EI facets reflect self-perceived abilities and behavioral dispositions. Higher scores on the TEIQue-ASF indicated higher levels of trait EI.

The internal consistency of the TEIQue-ASF based on the pilot testing of the study was .8468. Petrides and Furnham (2003) discuss that trait EI self-perceptions are accurate to some extent because they found the children who perceive themselves as emotionally adjusted, with good social skills, and self-control are rated by their peers as more cooperative and less disruptive.

Data Analysis

In order to answer the questions of the study, several analyses were done. First, descriptive statistics, including brief examination of differences (gender, type of school, and place of origin) in the research variables using univariate F tests, was done. Second, relative attachment levels of the participants were identified using z-scores. Then, the scores in the research variables were compared using t-test. Third, step-wise linear regression analysis was performed to identify the predictors of school attachment.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Statistics

The means and standard deviations of the school attachment, parental attachment, coping styles, and trait emotional self-efficacy scales are presented in Table 1. The skewness and kurtosis for each variable were examined. It is observed that there are no values greater than an absolute value of one, suggesting reasonably normal distributions, except for school attachment (kurtosis=1.374), attachment to teachers (kurtosis=1.588), paternal support for independence (skewness=2.291; kurtosis=15.988), substance abuse coping style (skewness=4.190; kurtosis=19.266), and trait emotional self-efficacy (kurtosis=1.283).

F-tests were also conducted to find significant differences in research variables among background variables. No significant difference has been found among other background variables, except for sex differences as shown in Table 1.

	<i>Total</i>		<i>Male</i>		<i>Female</i>		<i>Sex Difference (F)</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
School Attachment (Total)	59.95	8.31	59.12	8.92	61.35	7.01	2.481
<i>School</i>	20.05	3.58	19.72	3.63	20.63	3.45	2.232
<i>Peers</i>	20.66	3.37	20.14	3.61	21.56	2.73	6.217**
<i>Teachers</i>	19.23	3.37	19.26	3.55	19.17	3.06	.026
Maternal Attachment	196.41	25.45	194.26	24.02	200.07	27.57	1.784
<i>Affective Quality of Relationship</i>	102.49	14.69	101.53	14.23	104.11	15.45	1.048
<i>Fostering Autonomy</i>	48.90	6.59	48.50	6.29	49.57	7.09	.902
<i>Emotional Support</i>	45.03	7.87	44.23	7.26	46.39	8.70	2.596
Paternal Attachment	189.75	38.77	186.63	43.53	195.06	28.51	1.614
<i>Affective Quality of Relationship</i>	98.36	21.87	96.74	24.02	101.11	17.51	1.363
<i>Fostering Autonomy</i>	49.25	10.73	48.09	12.39	51.22	6.72	2.944*
<i>Emotional Support</i>	42.14	9.80	41.80	10.54	42.72	8.44	.297

Coping Styles							
<i>Acceptance</i>	6.21	1.30	6.08	1.34	6.44	1.19	1.007
<i>Self Distraction or Mental Disengagement</i>	6.10	1.33	6.10	1.39	6.11	1.22	.836
<i>Active Coping</i>	6.08	1.18	6.08	1.22	6.09	1.12	.003
<i>Positive Interpretation and Growth</i>	5.97	1.46	5.97	1.49	5.98	1.41	.808
<i>Planning</i>	5.88	1.37	5.68	1.43	6.20	1.20	2.650
<i>Seeking Instrumental Social Support</i>	5.75	1.60	5.65	1.52	5.93	1.71	.007
<i>Seeking Emotional Social Support</i>	5.59	1.61	5.42	1.59	5.87	1.61	.007
<i>Turning to Religion</i>	5.53	1.67	5.25	1.64	6.00	1.64	.139
<i>Self Blame</i>	4.96	1.71	4.91	1.57	5.04	1.93	.179
<i>Focus on and Venting of Emotion</i>	4.93	1.63	4.84	1.59	5.09	1.71	2.773*
<i>Humor</i>	4.78	1.86	4.93	1.89	4.52	1.80	7.154***
<i>Behavioral Disengagement</i>	3.65	1.44	3.68	1.47	3.59	1.39	1.708
<i>Denial</i>	3.54	1.57	3.53	1.50	3.56	1.70	.003
<i>Substance Abuse</i>	2.25	.90	2.30	1.05	2.17	.54	5.024**
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Trait Emotional Self-Efficacy	133.13	20.95	130.83	21.73	137.06	19.11	3.050
<i>Well-being</i>	30.10	7.01	29.49	7.31	31.15	6.41	1.917
<i>Self-control</i>	24.64	5.50	24.28	5.37	25.26	5.70	1.075
<i>Emotionality</i>	33.51	6.51	32.67	6.59	34.94	6.16	4.238**
<i>Sociability</i>	26.76	5.38	26.36	5.54	27.44	5.07	1.389

* p < .10, ** p < .05, *** p < .01

School Attachment. The first year high school students have a mean score of 59.95 (SD=8.31). Significant difference is found between males' and females' attachment to peers ($F=6.217$, $p<.05$), with females having higher attachment mean score (21.56, $SD=2.73$) than males ($M=20.14$, $SD=3.61$). This reflects the tendency of females to be more relationship-oriented characteristic than males. According to Gilligan (1982), male adolescents and adults place a particularly high value on autonomy, while female adolescents and adults place an emphasis on social connection.

In addition, Yeo, Ang, Chong, and Huan (2007), who studied gender differences in adolescent concerns and emotional well-being in Singapore, found that girls have better friendship skills.

There is no significant difference in other subscales of school attachment as well as the total school attachment scores of the first year high school students. This supports the finding of Johnson, Crosnoe and Thaden (2006), and Sanchez, Colon, and Esparza (2005) that there is no significant difference between males and females on sense of school belonging.

They hypothesized that it is probable that gender difference in sense of belonging weakens in later adolescence, when individuals are not so much interested in fitting in. This study shows that lack of gender difference was already evident even among early adolescents, thus would not weaken in later adolescence. Further research on this aspect is needed to explore possible reasons.

School Attachment and Other Background Variables. No significant difference in school attachment is found between students who come from Metro Manila and those who come from the provinces, between those who come from private and those who come from public schools and between those who are staying in the dormitory and those who are staying in their family homes. Therefore, separation from parents and family homes does not have significant effect on the school attachment of the students, neither does the type of school where the students come from.

This finding is contrary to the results of Wang, Chen, Zhao, and Yu (2006) investigation, revealing that first-year students who were from countryside and lived in poor families had poorer adaptation to college than those who were from the cities and lived in rich families. First-year students' psychological and behavior adaptation to college was influenced by not only directly coping strategies, but also indirectly social supports. Future studies can include social support as additional predictor.

Parental Attachment. Among the first year high school students, attachment with their mothers ($M=196.41$, $SD=25.45$) is stronger than with their fathers ($M=189.75$, $SD=38.77$). T-test was performed to test the difference ($t=2.413$, $p<.05$). The participants indicated that they have better affective quality of relationship ($t=2.840$, $p<.01$) with their mothers and that their mothers give more emotional support ($t=4.290$, $p<.001$) than their fathers. No difference is found in fostering autonomy.

Adolescents consistently report closer relationships with their mother than with their fathers (Willgerodt & Thompson, 2005) and Filipino adolescents do not differ from this. The main reason is that the caregiving role is normally given to mothers. Furthermore, affect and emotion has always been associated with women.

Coping Styles. The participants of the study tend to use acceptance ($M=6.21$, $SD=1.30$), self-distraction or mental disengagement ($M=6.10$, $SD=1.33$), active coping ($M=6.08$, $SD=1.18$), positive interpretation and growth ($M=5.97$, $SD=1.46$), and planning ($M=5.88$, $SD=1.37$). Among the five most commonly used coping strategies, two are emotion-focused, two are problem-focused, and one is avoidant type. No significant difference is found between genders, thus, the study does not support the literature stating that males tend to utilize problem-focused, while females tend to use emotion-focused strategy.

Gender difference can be found among the least used coping strategies, namely, substance abuse ($M=2.25$, $SD=.90$), humor ($M=4.78$, $SD=1.86$), and focus on and venting of emotion ($M=4.93$, $SD=1.63$). Males tend to use more substance (i.e. drink alcohol, $F=5.024$, $p<.05$) and humor ($F=7.154$, $p<.01$) than females. Females, on the other hand, tend to focus on and use venting of emotion ($F=2.773$, $p<.10$) more than males.

Trait Emotional Self-Efficacy. Trait emotional self-efficacy mean score is 133.13 ($SD=20.95$). Females ($M=34.94$, $SD=6.16$) rated themselves more highly than males did ($M=32.67$, $SD=6.59$).

Is there a difference between students with low and those with high attachment to school in parent attachment, coping styles, and trait emotional self-efficacy?

Distinct Characteristics of High- and Low-Attached Students

Based on the z-scores of the school attachment scores, the students with high and low school attachment were identified (Table 2). Fifteen were identified to have relatively low attachment to school. These students may be considered at-risk of having negative academic outcomes such as absenteeism (Sanchez, Colon, & Esparza, 2005), drop out (Becker & Luthar, 2002), low achievement motivation (Becker & Luthar, 2002), poor academic performance (Rossi & Montgomery, 1994), and emotional distress (Roeser, et.al., 1998) which should not be neglected. They are the ones who may benefit from intervention.

<i>School Attachment</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
Low ($z < -1.000$; SA score range: 27-50)	15	10.3
Average ($-1.000 > z < +1.000$; SA score range: 51-68)	113	77.4
High ($z > +1.000$, SA score range: 69-75)	18	12.3
Total	146	100.0

SD=.47661

Skewness = .063, Std. Error=.201

Kurtosis = 1.511, Std. Error=.399

To find distinct characteristics of the high- and low-attached students, an independent groups t-test was conducted. Table 3 shows the variables with significant differences. Students who are relatively high in school attachment have higher scores in maternal attachment ($t = -3.095$, $p < .01$) and in all its subscales; and have higher scores in trait emotional self-efficacy ($t = 4.036$, $p < .001$) and all its subscales. High-attached students tend to use seeking emotional social support ($t = -2.319$, $p < .05$), seeking instrumental social support ($t = -4.402$, $p < .001$), positive interpretation and growth ($t = -3.094$, $p < .01$), planning ($t = -2.068$, $p < .05$), humor ($t = 2.466$, $p < .05$), and acceptance ($t = 2.707$, $p < .05$). On the other hand, low-attached students tend to use behavioral disengagement more ($t = 4.063$, $p < .001$).

Maternal Attachment. Interestingly, significant difference is found between high- and low-attached students in maternal attachment scale and all its subscales. This may be due to the possible transfer of secure attachment pattern that the high-attached students have with their mothers to students' relationships in school, particularly with their peers and teachers. As cited by Bernier, Larose, Boivin, and Soucy (2004), secure attachment, characterized by an open and coherent discourse about childhood experiences with the parents, relates to

social competence and good integration in peer groups during adolescence (Allen, Moore, Kuperminc, & Bell, 1998; Kobak & Sceery, 1988; Zimmermann & Grossmann, 1997). The research of Gloger-Tippelt, Gomille, Koenig, and Vetter (2002) reveals substantial association between infant and pre-school attachment at the age of 6. This study suggests that maternal attachment still has significance in later school attachment.

Coping Style. Significant differences in coping styles show that high-attached students have more coping styles to choose from, whether emotion-focused (i.e., acceptance, positive interpretation and growth, and seeking emotional support, humor), or problem-focused (i.e., seeking instrumental social support, planning). This suggests that emotion-focused strategies are not necessarily maladaptive, unlike what some western researches have established (i.e., Terry, 1991; Vaughn & Roesch, 2003).

High-attached students may have realized that there are stressful situations that are out of their control and must be tolerated, thus, they resort to accepting the reality, or managing their distress emotions by construing a stressful situation in positive terms.

Table 3. Significant Differences in Research Variables

	Low	High	t	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Maternal Attachment	179.60	204.00	-3.095**	-24.40	7.883
<i>Affective Quality of Relationship</i>	93.00	105.28	-2.623*	-12.28	4.681
<i>Fostering Autonomy</i>	45.80	52.11	-2.785**	-6.31	2.266
<i>Emotional Support</i>	40.80	46.61	-2.277*	-5.81	2.553
Coping Styles					
<i>Seeking Emotional Social Support</i>	4.33	5.72	-2.319*	-1.39	.599
<i>Seeking Instrumental Social Support</i>	4.60	6.39	-4.402***	-1.79	.406
<i>Behavioral Disengagement</i>	4.73	2.61	4.063***	2.12	.522
<i>Positive Interpretation and Growth</i>	5.07	6.61	-3.094**	-1.54	.499
<i>Planning</i>	5.33	6.33	-2.068*	-1.00	.484
<i>Humor</i>	3.87	5.33	-2.466*	-1.47	.595
<i>Acceptance</i>	5.80	6.94	-2.707*	-1.14	.423
Trait Emotional Self-Efficacy	117.27	151.17	-4.036***	-33.90	8.400
<i>Well-being</i>	26.00	33.89	-2.728**	-7.89	2.892
<i>Self-control</i>	23.73	29.33	-2.907**	-5.60	1.926
<i>Emotionality</i>	27.93	37.22	-4.730***	-9.29	1.964
<i>Sociability</i>	23.73	29.50	-2.484*	-5.77	2.322

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***.001

(Lazarus and Folkman, 1984 as cited in Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989) or creating humor out of it.

Students with high level of school attachment also consider social support as their way of coping. Since the high-attached students have higher level of maternal attachment, they have more responsive mothers, which developed them to become more secure in seeking support from others. In contrast, the low-attached students did not develop expectancy and competency to ask for help because of probably difficulty in the past to derive support from caregivers. Seeking social emotional support may actually co-occur with seeking social instrumental support. Students who sought emotional support such as moral support, sympathy, or understanding may have, at the same time, sought instrumental social support such as advice, assistance, or information from people around them.

When stressors were appraised as controllable (Lazarus 1993, as cited in Alumran & Punamaki, 2008), high-attached students planned or thought about how to cope with their stressors so that they could deal with their problems constructively. Such is not the case of low-attached students. This may be due to their feelings of helplessness and low self-esteem, which are characteristics of insecurely attached individuals.

Helplessness is also identified with behavioral disengagement, which the low-attached students tend to use as their coping strategy. According to Finnegan, Hodges, and Perry (1996) "avoidant coping interferes with the development of feelings of emotional connectedness and fosters a self-promoting and inflated self-concept

Leading to a focus on satisfying one's own needs with little regard for those of others."

The low-attached students either reduce their effort to deal with their stressors or they give up the attempt to attain goals with which the stressor is interfering (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989). This may be due to poor outcome expectations deemed by the low-attached students.

It is important, therefore, that students develop the coping styles that high-attached students utilize and this can be done by teachers and peers who may have equal or greater importance to adolescents than that of their parents (Bowlby, 1969; Ainsworth, 1978). Availability of social instrumental and emotional support in school, may be beneficial.

Trait Emotional Self-Efficacy. As expected, high-attached students have higher trait emotional self-efficacy. High-attached students see themselves to be more positive, happy, and having fulfilled feelings (well-being), thus they are more likely to enjoy fulfilling personal relationship at school (Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2000 as cited in Mavroveli, Petrides, Rieffe, & Bakker, 2007). Moreover, this may be attributed to their positive regard of past experiences leading to positive future expectations. They become resilient and not easily disappointed by relations in schools.

High-attached students are also characterized of having healthy degree of control over their urges and desires (self-control). This may have been brought about by autonomy fostered at home. Self-control is developed by responsive parenting. As a result, high-attached students are more able to regulate external pressures and stress than those who have low level of self-control, and who are prone to be more impulsive and inflexible.

High level of emotionality or the ability to perceive and express emotions is also deemed by the high-attached students as their characteristic. With this ability, they are able to develop and sustain close relationships with important others and have rewarding relationships in school.

Lastly, high-attached students perceived themselves as sociable, able to communicate clearly and confidently with people from diverse backgrounds and able to affect others' emotions. Such confidence in social situations is characteristic of secure adolescents. Because they believe they are good negotiators, they are able to form network of relationships at school.

Which among the hypothesized antecedent variables are the significant predictors of school attachment?

Predictors of School Attachment

To explore the practical importance of the significant variables related to school attachment, stepwise multiple linear regression analyses were performed. Initial correlation analysis identified the following variables to be included in the multiple regression analyses -- maternal attachment, trait EI and the seven coping styles, namely, seeking emotional social support, seeking instrumental social support, behavioral disengagement, positive interpretation and growth, planning, humor, and acceptance. Outliers were identified using z-scores. Those who had z-score less than -3 and more than +3 were removed. A total of three participants reported very low scores in school attachment and trait emotional self-efficacy. The results of the final regression analysis appear in Table 4.

The predictors of school attachment are Trait Emotional Self-Efficacy and Planning coping style. Together, Trait Emotional Self-efficacy and Planning coping style explain 20% of the variance in school attachment. The stronger positive predictor is Trait Emotional Self-Efficacy ($r = .357, p < .001$) as adolescents with higher trait emotional self-efficacy scores tend to have higher school attachment scores. Planning is also a positive predictor of school attachment ($r = .218, p < .01$). Multicollinearity does not exist since tolerance is greater than .1 and VIF is less than 10.

Table 4. Results of the Final Step of Stepwise Regression Analysis

<i>Predictors</i>	<i>School Attachment</i>		<i>Collinearity Statistics</i>	
	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Tolerance</i>	<i>VIF</i>
Trait Emotional Self-Efficacy	.357	4.667**	.975	1.026
Coping Style: Planning	.218	2.845*		
<i>R</i> =.447 <i>R</i> ² =.200 <i>r</i> ² =.189 <i>F</i> =17.496** * <i>p</i> <.01, ** <i>p</i> <.001				

The trait emotional self-efficacy as a predictor of school attachment points out the importance of developing self-efficacy in well-being, self-control, emotionality, and sociability to have better school attachment. This finding supports previous findings that emotion-related self-perceptions and dispositions of trait EI influence children's peer relations at school (Petrides, Sangareau, Furnham, & Frederickson, 2006) and that adolescents with high trait EI tend to more likely enjoy fulfilling personal relationships (Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2000 as cited in Mavroveli, Petrides, Rieffe, & Bakker, 2007). The contribution of this study is that trait EI as predictor extends even among Filipino adolescents.

Parental attachment was not found to be direct predictor of school attachment. This finding confirms the finding of Shochet, Smyth, and Homel (2007) that the relationship between parent attachment and school connectedness is not a direct one. Shochet, Smyth, and Homel (2007) found that the parent attachment influences the way adolescents perceive the school environment, which in turn influences school connectedness. In the current study, further regression analysis was made having parental attachment as predictor of trait EI. It was found that affective quality of relationship with mother ($B=.389$, $t=5.010$, $p<.001$) explain 15% of the variance of trait emotional self-efficacy ($R=.389$, $R^2=.151$, $R^2=.145$, $F=25.101$, $p<.001$).

Table 5. Results of the Final Step of Stepwise Regression Analysis

<i>Predictors</i>	<i>Trait EI</i>		<i>Collinearity Statistics</i>	
	<i>B</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Tolerance</i>	<i>VIF</i>
Affective quality of relationship with mother	.389	5.010**	1.000	1.000
<i>R</i> =.389 <i>R</i> ² =.151 <i>r</i> ² =.145 <i>F</i> =25.101** * <i>p</i> <.01, ** <i>p</i> <.001				

Karavasilis, Doyle, and Markiewicz (2003) emphasize the importance of overall climate created by warm parental involvement, psychological autonomy granting, and behavioral monitoring in development of secure attachment to mother during middle childhood and adolescence. They suggest that psychological autonomy may have important implications for children's views of self whereas warm parental involvement may play a role in their views of the attachment figure. The finding of the current study suggests that warm parental involvement

also plays a role in the adolescents' view of self particularly in the emotion-related self-perceptions and dispositions of trait EI.

Since some insecurely attached individuals have been found to have risen above malevolent parenting and have been assessed as securely attached (Main & Goldwyn, 1993 as cited in Sonkin, 2005), a student can be helped by adults and peers in school to improve his attachment state-of-mind. This can be achieved by establishing a school environment that has

support for autonomy, competence, and care and warmth as purported by self-determination theorists (Ryan, Connell, & Deci, 1985; Skinner & Belmont, 1993 as cited in Ng, 1998).

Coping Styles. Among the different coping styles, planning is found to be the best predictor. It is an active, cognitive coping mechanism (Eisenberg, Champion, & Ma, 2004) that is commonly associated with the belief that something can be done when problems arise. Action done may be overt or behavioral, or covert or cognitive and/or affective. This means that since planning involves many actions to choose from, the individual, utilizing the coping style, becomes optimistic and satisfied in the relationships and environment that the he/ she is in. This leads to high level of school attachment.

Conclusions

Among the hypothesized variables, only trait emotional self-efficacy and planning coping style are found to be antecedents of school attachment. However, aside from trait emotional intelligence and planning, significant differences are found among high- and low-attached students in maternal attachment and in the following coping styles -- seeking emotionally and seeking instrumental social support, positive interpretation and growth, humor, acceptance, and behavioral disengagement.

The findings imply that trait emotional self-efficacy and coping styles measures taken in early freshman year may help identify students who are at-risk of developing low level of school attachment. Interventions can be made in the ecology of the child to facilitate school attachment. Schools can work on school climate that is characterized by active and cooperative interaction between a teacher and students who are motivated (Shin & Koh, 2007 as cited in Heydenberk & Heydenberk, 2007). This can be done by having teachers who facilitate autonomy and show support and by aiding students have stronger and more positive peer affiliations. Family relationships can be strengthened through workshops on fostering autonomy and support.

In the workshops, parents need to face their attachment styles in order to learn how to connect better, regulate, and grant autonomy to their adolescent offsprings.

The students' cognitive-behavioral and socio-emotional aspects can be addressed too. Students can be trained on stress management techniques to help them understand stress and adopt better coping skills. Lee and Graham (2001 as cited in Eisenberg, Champion, & Ma, 2004) suggest that aside from stress management, time management taught along with the first and second year curricula may assist students in dealing with stress. Zimmerman (1996 as cited in Mouton, Hawkins, McPherson, & Copley, 2002), on the other hand, proposed conceptual framework of academic self-regulation which includes six learning processes: (a) self-efficacy and self-goals; (b) strategy use; (c) time management; (d) self-observation, self-judgment, self-reaction; (e) environmental structuring; and, (f) help seeking.

Since only 20% explains prediction of trait emotional self-efficacy and planning to school attachment, interaction with other variables such as emotion-related regulation and personality, may be explored. It should be noted too that the sample of the current study came from a single school and these results may be unique to that school. Future researchers can have more definitive conclusions with larger samples, across different age groups, family structures, gender, gender-orientation, school type, and socio-economic status. Aside from data gathered from students' self-report, additional sources of information can be gathered from parents, teachers, and peers. Longitudinal studies may also find differences in length of time of school attachment development and factors attributed to it. Moreover, longitudinal studies may find whether school attachment declines and for what reasons.

DeWit et al. (2002) identified that the following aspects of school culture are associated with enhanced student feelings of school membership and reduced academic and behavioral difficulties:

DeWit et al. (2002) identified that the following aspects of school culture are associated with enhanced student feelings of school membership and reduced academic and behavioral difficulties: student relations marked by mutual trust and respect, minimal school emphasis on ability learning goal structures, a strong school emphasis on task-focused learning goals, and a strong school emphasis on academic pursuits. The non-predictive value of parental attachment needs to be explored too. In the study, new hypothesis arises that trait emotional efficacy may be a moderator variable between parental attachment and school attachment. In line with parental attachment, parental involvement in school can also be looked into in relation to school attachment.

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