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Social Connectedness among Emerging Adults in a State University in Western Visayas

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Abstract. Social connectedness plays a crucial role in the lives of emerging adults. Hence, social connectedness assessment is necessary to check their acquisition of the expected competencies. Anchored on Bowlby's attachment theory and Eysenck theory on nature and nurture, this study profiled the emerging adults' personality profile and extent of social connectedness in a state university in Western Visayas, Philippines, in terms of school, family, peer, and community relative to sex, academic program, birth order, and family structure. Utilizing the descriptive-correlational approach, a standardized personality inventory and an adapted social connectedness questionnaire were administered to 252 stratified randomly sampled emerging adults, using very great to very poor extent ratings. In data analysis, mean, standard deviation, frequency count, percentage, rank biserial, and eta correlation were employed. Overall, agreeableness has the highest rating. Emerging adults have great extent of social connectedness showing that they often feel cared, trusted, and respected by their professors, classmates, friends, family, and neighbors. Academic program and family structure had significant relationship with social connectedness, where education and science courses and those from intact families had higher rating than their counterparts. With these results, the theories are validated and a proposed enhancement personality development program is recommended to strengthen their social connectedness.

Keywords. Psychology, personality, social connectedness, descriptive-correlational, Philippine state university

1.0 Introduction

Emerging adults' social connections are significant in their development and employability [1,2]. The social connectedness of students from higher education institutions influences their prosocial motivation and behavior [3,4,5,6]. Also, it impacts their psychological and physical health outcomes [7]. A study among university college students in Turkey indicated that social connectedness indirectly but significantly influences their life satisfaction [8]. Additionally, connectedness is linked to a higher probability of graduating from college [9]. On the other hand, insufficient social connectedness adversely affects college students' motivation and academic success [10,11].

According to Jusri and Lechner [12], the emerging adults' personality traits influence their social connectedness. Positive psychological orientations, such as belief in oneself and others, are strongly linked to higher levels of social connectedness. Among the big five traits,

all except extraversion and openness are significantly associated with social integration among fellow students. Additionally, how emerging adults connect with and move away from others, or their social orientations is important for their relational and individual well-being. On the other hand, all five personality traits had no indirect relation to the quality of life through school connectedness, as found in Kim et al. [13].

Emerging adults in the Philippines experience varying levels of social connectedness. Thoppilan et al. [14] revealed that Filipino university students have a moderately high degree of school connectedness. College students at Philippine universities primarily interact with their peers and classmates, frequently engage with faculty, and occasionally connect with the college secretary, auxiliary personnel, dean and chairperson, organization members, guidance staff, and library staff [15]. Furthermore, these students displayed extreme levels of the big five personality traits, suggesting they are highly creative, focused on overcoming new challenges, detail-oriented, enjoy being the center of attention, relish meeting new people, and exhibit empathy and care for others [16].

In the local context of a State University in Western Visayas, counseling cases of students during counseling and follow-up sessions manifested family relational conflicts, feelings of social rejection, difficulty in goal setting, harder time making friends, struggle in peer interactions, and socially isolation [17]. Others mentioned a lack of motivation, family support, and difficulty connecting with faculty members. The issues mentioned propel the conduct of the study to make an assessment and design a tailored-fit program for the establishment of social connectedness and crystallization of personality traits among graduating emerging adults.

Numerous studies have explored social connectedness. Jusri and Lechner [12] stressed that effective social integration is crucial for university students' academic success and overall well-being. Likewise, Avcı [8] underscored the importance of enhancing university students' life satisfaction to foster a sense of belonging through social connectedness. Cleofas [15] discovered that college students in Philippine universities primarily interact with their peers and classmates and frequently engage with faculty. At the same time, Chinese students reported higher levels of social connectedness than American students [18]. However, limited literature examined the extent of multiple types of social connectedness in the four domains, such as family, school, peer, and community, and their association with demographics, particularly for graduating emerging adults in a state university in Western Visayas, Philippines. This is the research gap that this study would like to fill in.

Thus, this study profiled the personality traits of graduating emerging adults in a State University in Western Visayas during the academic year 2023-2024. Likewise, it assessed the extent of their social connectedness in terms of family, school, peer, and community relative to sex, academic program, birth order, and family structure. Also, it investigated the correlation between the demographics and their social connectedness. Lastly, the findings may serve as a basis for designing an enhanced personality development program.

2.0 Framework of the Study

The study of social connectedness was anchored in Bowlby's [19] attachment theory and Eysenck's [20] theory on nature and nurture. Bowlby's [19] attachment theory emphasizes the necessity for social connection at early ages for normal social and emotional development. Moreso, it stresses the importance of early childhood experiences and their vital role in shaping future emotional health, relationships, and behavior. This theory is rooted in the belief that infants are biologically wired to form an attachment, a mechanism that serves as a survival

strategy. Furthermore, this theory delved into the social and emotional responses of the primary caregiver, which provides the child with information about the world and other people, as well as how they view themselves as individuals. Individuals who receive support and affection from their caregivers are more likely to feel secure. Conversely, those who have encountered inconsistency or neglect from their caregivers are more prone to experiencing heightened anxiety regarding their parental relationships.

On the other hand, Eysenck's [20] theory considers both nature and nurture, combining biological, psychological, and social factors as determinants of behaviors. It asserts that an individual's personality is predominantly shaped by biological predispositions towards specific traits, alongside conditioning and socialization experiences during childhood. Both theories explain the establishment of social connections of emerging adults as early as childhood, where attachment with significant others is imperative, taking into consideration the four domains: family, school, peers, and community. These also explain the essential aspect of attachment, which varies according to sex, academic program, birth order, family structure, and personality traits.

3.0 Methods

This study employed the quantitative research design, particularly the descriptive-correlational approach. This design statistically described the personality and correlated the social connectedness and demographics. Particularly, the descriptive approach identified the personality traits of the emerging graduating students in terms of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Furthermore, it described their extent of social connectedness in the domains of family, school, peers, and community. Meanwhile, the correlational approach associated the social connectedness and their sex, academic program, birth order, and family structure. The respondents were the graduating emerging adults from a state university in Western Visayas during the academic year 2023-2024. They were proportionally determined using stratified random sampling and the fishbowl technique.

The instrument used in profiling the emerging adults' personality traits was the Big Five Inventory (BFI) by John and Srivastava's [21] in terms of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. The number of points goes from 1 to 5, with 1 (severely disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), and 5 (highly agree). Rammstedt [22] reported a self-peer convergent validity of .56 and a reliability of .85 employing Cronbach's alpha. However, to check the fitness of the questionnaire to the Filipino context, it was subjected again to pilot testing and yielded a reliable Cronbach's alpha score of .82. As John and Srivastava [21] stated, instructions for scoring the inventory were followed. All negatively keyed items were reversed.

Meanwhile, in assessing their social connectedness, a 25-item modified questionnaire adapted from Jose et al. [23] was employed. This was responded using very great to very poor extent ratings. It was validated and yielded a content validity ratio score of .78. It was subjected to pilot testing and yielded a reliable Cronbach's alpha score of .96.

In analyzing the data, the descriptive and correlational analyses were employed. The descriptive analysis determined the emerging adults' extent of social connectedness in the 4 domains and their personality traits using frequency count, percentage distribution, mean, and standard deviation. The correlational analysis was used to analyze the correlation between their extent of social connectedness and their sex, academic program, birth order, and family structure. The normality of the variable was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

Results indicated that the variable social connectedness [KS=0.105, p=0.000] was not normally distributed. Consequently, nonparametric statistics were employed for inferential analysis. The rank biserial correlation was used to ascertain the significant relationship between their sex, family structure, and social connectedness. Additionally, the eta correlation was utilized to determine the significant relationship between their academic program, birth order, and social connectedness. Lastly, The researcher ensured the ethical integrity of the study by adhering to the overarching principles of respect for persons, justice, and beneficence, as outlined in the guidelines established by the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB).

4.0 Results and Discussion

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the graduating emerging adults in a state university when grouped according to sex, academic program, birth order, and family structure. The foregoing result showed that in terms of sex, 29.4% (n=74) were male, and 70.6% (n=178) were female. This reflects the normal enrollment trend whereby females constitute most of the population. Courses offered at this State University are female career-oriented rather than male-oriented courses like maritime and criminology courses, which are not offered.

Regarding the academic program, nearly half, 46.4% (n=117), came from business and management, 37.7% (n=95) from education and sciences, and the remaining 15.9% (n=40) were agriculture and biosystem engineering. The enrolment of more emerging adults in business and management courses could be attributed to the stringent screening standards of education, engineering, and agriculture courses, making business and management courses their options.

In terms of birth order, 25.8% (n=65) were eldest, 40.9% (n=103) were middle, 28.2% (n=71) were youngest, and the remaining 5.2% (n=13) were only child. This shows that most of the respondents are middle children. This implies that middle children are sent by their parents or guardians to a free state university that offers quality education. Lastly, in terms of family structure, 89.3% (n=225) hailed from intact families, while the remaining 10.7% (n=27) were not intact. The graduating emerging adults were dominated by intact families.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Variable	f	%
Sex		
Male	74	29.4
Female	178	70.6
Academic Program		
Education & Sciences	95	37.7
Business & Management	117	46.4
Agriculture & Biosystem Engineering	40	15.9
Birth Order		
Eldest	65	25.8
Middle	103	40.9
Youngest	71	28.2
Only Child	13	5.2
Family Structure		
Intact	225	89.3
Not Intact	27	10.7
Total	252	100.0

Personality Profile of the Respondents

Data in tables 2A and 2B present the personality profile of graduating emerging adults in a state university in Western Visayas in terms of openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. The highest trait is agreeableness, followed by openness to experience, extraversion, conscientiousness, and neuroticism, which is the lowest.

Data revealed that the graduating emerging adults have high ratings in openness to experience. Meaning to say, they tend to be highly creative, insightful, and interested in exploring new things. These are potential characteristics of individuals who are responsive to life dynamics. The high rating could be ascribed to almost four years of engagement of emerging adults in curricular and co-curricular activities of the state university, which armors and drives them to embrace changes. Along with this, Arnett [24] described emerging adulthood as the stage of increased opportunities for exploration.

In contrast, Costa and McCrae [25] characterized individuals scoring high on openness to experience as those displaying heightened receptivity to feelings and emotions, a penchant for adventure, a vivid imagination, and a strong appreciation for art and beauty compared to individuals scoring low on openness to experience. Additionally, Rashid and Dar [26] expounded that emerging adults are more willing to consider multiple perspectives and embrace new experiences. They are more open to diversity, alternative lifestyles, and novel ideas. Lastly, Tus et al. [16] showed that the students' rating in openness to experience was extreme.

Regarding conscientiousness, graduating emerging adults rated average. Meaning, they tend to control their impulses, think before acting, and follow the norms. This implies that they somehow respect authority, follow the rules and regulations of the state university as stipulated in the student handbook, and adhere to the norms of the community. More likely, this may be related to maturity as adults. As Grohol [27] described, conscientiousness is the person's ability to regulate impulses and control to engage in goal-directed behaviors. This is confirmed by Tulin et al. [28], who state conscientious individuals seem reliable and trustworthy. The finding of this study aligns with Garcelan [29], who revealed that the college student's personality traits in terms of conscientiousness ranked 2 out of four domains.

For extraversion, the graduating emerging adults have average ratings. This indicates that they fall somewhere between the two extremes, introversion and extroversion and are called ambiversion, which means that they tend to be sociable and being alone. This implies that graduating emerging adults possess the ability to adapt to different life circumstances since they exhibit both introversion and extraversion facets. This does not support Tus et al.'s [16] finding, which stated that students' personality traits in terms of extraversion were at an extreme level. As Petric [30] elaborated, an ambivert finds moderate comfort in group settings and social interactions but also enjoys solitude away from crowds. They can navigate well within large groups yet also cope with social isolation.

Relative to agreeableness, the data reveal that emerging adults have high ratings. Meaning, they tend to have high empathy, maintain positive relationships, care for others, and value social harmony. The result could be attributed to the exposure of graduating emerging adults to agreeable people and their lived experiences of positive relationships with the school, family, peers, and community, as reflected in the results of the present study. The high rating for agreeableness is not supported by Tus et al. [16] which showed that the student's personality traits regarding agreeableness were at the extreme level.

Costa and McCrae [25] described people high in agreeableness as softhearted, trusting, generous, acquiescent, lenient, and good-natured. Soto [31] further asserted that individuals

with high levels of agreeableness are often more favorably regarded by their peers and experience more stable and fulfilling close relationships. Those scoring high in agreeableness find it easier to resolve conflicts, navigate relationship difficulties, and adapt to the needs of others [32].

Lastly, for neuroticism, graduating emerging adults rated average. This indicates that they tend to manifest a positive perspective of themselves and others and have normal ways of dealing with situations. This implies that despite the stress experienced by the graduating emerging adults brought by completing graduation requirements from the university, they were somehow able to cope with them. Similarly, Arnett [33] observed that a prevalent theme in theories of development from adolescence to young adulthood involves the acquisition of self-control and adherence to social norms.

The average rating is contrary to Tus et al. [16] which showed that the student's personality traits in terms of neuroticism were extreme. With this result, there is a need to integrate activities for the graduating emerging adults of the present study to manage their emotions more effectively, navigate challenging situations, and develop empathy and compassion for others.

Overall, the big five personality traits of graduating emerging adults of a state university have been crystallized, meaning their personality traits become apparent and are potentially dominant traits when they become adults. In this study, two personality traits, agreeableness and openness to experience are high. Moreover, being ambivert of emerging adults means they can adapt to different life circumstances since they exhibit both introversion and extraversion facets. This suggests positive educational, social-emotional, and career outcomes. However, conscientiousness and neuroticism are still developing and need enhancing and balancing. As Arnett [34] explained, personality in emerging adulthood, as in a group of undergraduate students, has not been finalized. Similarly, Hussain and Bhat [35] and Akram [36] confirmed that personality continues to evolve and develop during emerging adulthood, influenced by a combination of biological, psychological, and social factors.

The significant changes experienced by emerging adults in various areas, including personal identity, relationships, career development, and independence, imply the need for a state university to develop programs to enhance and balance the personality traits of graduating emerging adults. Thus, achieving their personal, academic, and career goals, along with the desire of the state university to produce quality graduates who are productive members of society.

Table 2A. Personality Profile of the Respondents

Variable	F	Percentage	Rank
Openness to experience	77	30.6	2
Conscientiousness	21	8.3	4
Extraversion	22	8.7	3
Agreeableness	116	46.0	1
Neuroticism	16	6.3	5
Total	252	100	

Table 2B. Personality Profile of the Respondents

Variable	M	SD	Interpretation
Openness to experience	3.59	0.43	High
Conscientiousness	3.37	0.46	Average
Extraversion	3.20	0.54	Average
Agreeableness	3.73	0.59	High
Neuroticism	3.11	0.49	Average

Extent of Social Connectedness of Graduating Emerging Adults

Data in table 3 reveal that the extent of social connectedness of graduating emerging adults is great ($M=4.18$, $SD=0.52$). The highest among the four domains is school ($M=4.42$, $SD=0.55$), followed by peer (4.20 , $SD=0.63$) and family ($M=4.14$, $SD=0.64$), and the lowest is community ($M=3.90$, $SD=0.83$). Male emerging adults ($M=4.21$, $SD=0.48$) from education and science courses ($M=4.30$, $SD=0.55$), youngest ($M=4.23$, $SD=0.41$), and hailed from intact families ($M=4.22$, $SD=0.51$) have very great extent ratings of social connectedness.

Generally, the overall rating of social connectedness indicates that graduating emerging adults in a state university often feel valued, cared for, trusted, and respected by their instructors/professors, classmates, friends, family, and neighbors. In their almost four years of stay at the state university, they have established and satisfied their need for a sense of place, respect, and belonging, which are essential as they face challenges beyond college life. As Baumeister [37] stated, forming and sustaining at least a minimum number of social connections is one of the most powerful, universal, and influential human drives. Frequent, effective, and pleasant interactions with a few other people are needed to satisfy this drive.

One factor largely influenced by the great social connectedness of emerging adults is their strong connections to the state university and their professors/instructors, as revealed in the present study, by which school connectedness got a very great extent rating. They regarded their instructors or professors as providers of education and individuals with whom personal bonds could be formed. Students viewed them as individuals who grasp, respect, and genuinely care about them.

Gentova and Madrigal [38] strengthened this by finding that teachers and students have a high degree of interrelatedness and a sense of belonging, where students can freely communicate with their teachers and easily connect with their classmates and peers. Furthermore, Meehan and Howells [39] pointed out that achieving a sense of connection with their university and a sense of purpose regarding their studies and career goals requires a blend of environmental, social, and cognitive factors for students in higher education.

Additionally, the great school connectedness could be attributed to the time most emerging adults spend at state universities, immersing themselves in curricular and co-curricular activities. According to student involvement theory, the greater the extent students engage in their college education, the higher their chances of success [40]. An "involved student" invests significant effort in studying, spends ample time on campus, actively participates in student organizations, and engages frequently with faculty members and peers. Cleofas [15] additionally discovered that college students in Philippine universities frequently interact with faculty and various administrative personnel, such as the college secretary, auxiliary staff, dean, chairperson, organization members, and guidance counselors.

Another factor that may account for why emerging adults reported a great extent of social connectedness is the influence of their peers, as reflected in the result, which showed a great extent of peer connectedness. This suggests that emerging adults can rely on their friends, feel embraced by their peers, derive satisfaction from their friendships, enjoy social activities, spend time together, sense a desire for communication and companionship from their peers, and perceive their friends as supportive. It underscores the growing significance of peers in the social lives of emerging adults, given that emerging adulthood represents the transitional phase between adolescence and early adulthood, during which peer influence is substantial. This is supported by Arnett [34], who stated that peers remain an important social group among emerging adults. However, the findings of the present study contradict Widnall et al. [41], who reported that students have low levels of peer connectedness.

As revealed in the present study, the emerging adults' bond with family members contributes to their great social connectedness. This suggests that emerging adults perceive themselves as able to discuss their concerns with their parents or significant others, seek their guidance, feel a sense of closeness, and believe that their parents care for and comprehend them. Thomas et al. [42] referenced Umberson et al. [43] in asserting that family relationships are a crucial source of social connection and influence for individuals across their lifespan.

Moreover, close family ties are extremely important to Filipinos, who are taught to believe that family members should be cared for and supported no matter what. While they attain independence from their parents and cultivate close relationships with partners, they sustain a sense of connection, unlike their Western peers, whose transition to emerging adulthood often involves separation from their family home [34].

The assessment of family connectedness corresponds with Arango et al. [44], suggesting that individuals who perceive a strong connection to their families experience increased support when facing interpersonal difficulties. Moreover, Steiner et al. [9] stated that having high levels of family connectedness increased the likelihood of graduating from college. However, this discovery contradicts the assertion made by Stone et al. [45], which suggests that family connectedness is the most robust and consistently protective aspect of connectedness.

Lastly, community connectedness has the lowest rating, as reflected in the present study. This could be attributed to emerging adults' characteristics of being self-focused [33]. Emerging adults are focused on their own goals and desire to explore the world with their own priorities. They tend to connect less to their neighbors and community. This means that the emerging adults in the present study are more focused on their personal priorities, such as completion of graduation requirements, and are considered secondary to exercising their social responsibility. Hence, they tend to be less connected with people in the community.

The overall rating of great social connectedness suggests that the graduating emerging adults in this study have developed feelings of belonging through their relationships with family, school, peers, and community. This indicates that they have established attachment to people they can count on as they face the challenges of emerging adulthood. Similarly, Wang et al. [18] revealed that Chinese students had higher levels of social connectedness. In Philippine universities, college students spend most of their interactions with their peers and classmates, often with faculty and sometimes with organization mates, guidance staff, and other academic community members [15].

The result implies that the state university in the present study provides its graduating emerging adults meaningful opportunities to effectively respond to the challenges within and beyond college life throughout their four years stay in the university. However, since the challenges of emerging adults include leaving school, departing from peers, entering the job market, gaining autonomy from parents while developing an intimate relationship with another person, social connectedness practices focusing on instilling social responsibility, family values, and students' engagement be more integrated into the curricular, co-curricular, social, and cultural activities of the university. This will maximize their positive educational, social-emotional, and career outcomes.

Table 3. Social Connectedness among Graduating Emerging Students

Variable	Family			School			Peer			Community			Social		
	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int
Sex															
Male	4.17	0.61	GE	4.43	0.49	VGE	4.17	0.62	GE	4.04	0.70	GE	4.21	0.48	VGE
Female	4.13	0.66	GE	4.41	0.57	VGE	4.21	0.64	GE	3.84	0.88	GE	4.17	0.54	GE
Academic Program															
E & S	4.51	0.56	VGE	4.51	0.56	VGE	4.33	0.58	VGE	4.05	0.82	GE	4.30	0.55	VGE
B & M	4.36	0.56	VGE	4.36	0.56	VGE	4.14	0.69	GE	3.82	0.87	GE	4.12	0.53	GE
A & BE	4.35	0.47	VGE	4.35	0.47	VGE	4.04	0.52	GE	3.77	0.73	GE	4.10	0.37	GE
Birth Order															
Eldest	4.16	0.58	GE	4.37	0.55	VGE	4.16	0.58	GE	3.77	0.92	GE	4.12	0.52	GE
Middle	4.19	0.73	GE	4.41	0.60	VGE	4.19	0.73	GE	3.92	0.80	GE	4.20	0.58	GE
Youngest	4.20	0.56	GE	4.47	0.44	VGE	4.20	0.56	GE	4.02	0.74	GE	4.23	0.41	VGE
Only Child	4.41	0.44	VGE	4.36	0.70	VGE	4.41	0.44	VGE	3.67	1.07	GE	4.11	0.61	GE
Family Structure															
Intact	3.95	0.78	GE	4.43	0.53	VGE	4.20	0.64	GE	3.95	0.78	GE	4.22	0.51	VGE
Not Intact	3.44	1.11	GE	4.28	0.68	VGE	4.17	0.60	GE	3.44	1.11	GE	3.90	0.58	GE
Whole	4.14	0.64	GE	4.42	0.55	VGE	4.20	0.63	GE	3.90	0.83	GE	4.18	0.52	GE

Relationship between Sex and Family Structure and Social Connectedness

Data in table 4 show the relationship between sex, family structure, and social connectedness. There was no significant relationship between sex and social connectedness [$r_s(250)=-0.022, p=0.723$]. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that sex does not influence the establishment of social connectedness among the graduating emerging adults, which may be attributed to the fact that humans are social beings regardless of sex. This result differs from the research conducted by Jones [7], which observed that male students exhibited a higher prevalence of feeling close to individuals at school than female students.

There was a significant relationship between family structure and social connectedness [$r_s(250)=0.184, p=0.003$]. Students from intact families have significantly higher social connectedness than non-intact families. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that family structure influences the social connectedness of graduating emerging adults. This means that graduating emerging adults of the present study are accepted, cared for, loved, and respected in the family. Consequently, they develop healthy social interactions with others. Consistent with this, Holt et al. [46] discovered that students who maintained stable and secure parental attachment exhibited notable improvements in their social competencies. Conversely, those with consistently low parental attachment experienced a decline in their emotional well-being. Similarly, Yoo and Córdova [47] found that attachment among emerging adults mediated the link between their sense of intimate safety with their parents and their social connectedness.

As the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine [48,49] explains, parents' physical and mental health influence a child's development through different pathways, such as biological and social characteristics, which expand outward to family characteristics, including family structure. As emphasized, positive relationships and connections within these channels could lead to optimal development in children [49].

Moreover, the overall functioning of the entire family is believed to indirectly impact the child development. This is because the caliber of interactions within specific family units, like parent-child relationships and co-parental dynamics, is presumed to be influenced, to some extent, by the broader family context [50]. Furthermore, living with an intact family may contribute to establishing their social connectedness. Alajmi [51] and Jena [52] indicated that

Filipino emerging adults have greater chances of showcasing their full potential through interpersonal relations because of their intact family background. With all these contentions and empirical evidence, it is safe to assume that emerging adults not living with intact families do not get the much-needed connection and familial relationships they need to reach their full potential.

The result of the present study is consistent with Ives and Castillo-Montoya [53], who found that family structure influences the ability of college students to engage properly in a social environment, especially in school. Furthermore, Guo [54] uncovered that a non-intact family structure was linked to reduced levels of maternal attachment, diminished peer attachment, and lower general self-efficacy. However, this finding is not in accordance with Shankari and Eagavalli [55], which revealed no significant influence on students' joint and nuclear family structure. These results show the importance of having an intact family for the educational, emotional, and social welfare of emerging adults.

Table 4. Relationship between Sex and Family Structure and Social Connectedness

Variable	r_s	df	p
Sex	-0.022	250	0.723
Family Structure	-.184**	250	0.003

Note: *correlation is significant when $p \leq 0.05$

Relationship between Birth Order and Academic Program and Social Connectedness

Data in table 5 reveal no significant relationship between birth order and social connectedness [$\eta=0.090$, $p=0.568$]. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that birth order does not influence the establishment of social connectedness among graduating emerging adults. This finding does not support the famous claim of Adler [56] that birth order may affect relationships in a wide variety of ways. It may influence how an individual forms a connection with other people. It can also affect how one behaves within the relationships. Moreover, Okada et al. [57] reported that later-born individuals exhibit greater prosocial experiences than college students. Conversely, both the "siblings as resources" and the "only child uniqueness" arguments propose that individuals without siblings may be less sociable due to either a deficiency in social skills or simply a lack of motivation or opportunities [58].

Meanwhile, there was a relationship between academic program and social connectedness [$\eta=0.174$, $p=0.021$]. Students from education and science courses have significantly higher social connectedness than others. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that the academic program influences the social connectedness of graduating emerging adults in this study. This could be attributed to the contents of their curriculum, which are geared toward people-oriented, which they have imbibed and enhanced through social and cultural activities offered by the state university. Along with this, Holland [59], in his theory on six personality types, disclosed that careers related to education are occupations with social components. People in a social category like to work with people, which involves social interactions.

As positioned by Esperanza and Bulusan [60], the students' degree programs can potentially elicit a strong acquisition of life skills. Through the formation that the school provides them, they become knowledgeable and skillful in terms of their specializations or expertise, as supported by Subasree et al. [61]. This means that their respective courses in college can effectively hone their relationship skills, which they can use in their future careers

and lives ahead. That is why the curriculum and social and cultural activities must be established and provided to them to develop their relationship skills, which they can utilize when they graduate and look for jobs [62,63].

The result is consistent with Ouano et al. [64], which found higher social connectedness among students in the social science and education programs than their counterparts in engineering. Also, Pahilanga et al. [65] found a relationship between the degree program and the life skills of emerging adults such as interpersonal relations and empathy with others.

This finding implies that the curriculum and social and cultural activities of the state university in this study are responsive in developing and strengthening the social relation skills of emerging adults. These relation skills are essential as they face the challenges of emerging adulthood, such as identity and career exploration, forming and navigating various types of relationships, taking responsibility for their own lives, setting goals, and envisioning their future.

Table 5. Relationship between the Birth Order and Academic Program and Social Connectedness

Variable	H	p
Birth Order	0.090	0.568
Academic Program	0.174*	0.021

Note: *correlation is significant when $p \leq 0.05$

Theoretically, it was posited that the establishment of social connections of emerging adults is imperative, taking into consideration the four domains: family, school, peers, and community. The extent to which they establish their social connectedness varies according to sex, academic program, birth order, family structure, and personality traits. The great extent of social connectedness of emerging adults, which is correlated with academic program and family structure, validates Bowlby's [19] attachment theory and Eysenck's [20] theory on nature and nurture. This means that the establishment and enhancement of social connectedness are influenced by external factors, which, in this case, are their family structure and academic program. Their family structure and academic program are potential factors in establishing and maintaining social connections. These findings support the endeavor of the state university to enhance and strengthen the curricular, co-curricular training, and social and cultural activities of these graduating emerging adults in preparation for their future careers and lives beyond the university.

5.0. Conclusion

The big five personality traits of graduating emerging adults of a state university aid in determining the quality of social connectedness they establish among individuals they associate with. The great extent of their social connectedness is influenced by external factors such as academic program and family structure. The quality of academic programs offered in institutions influences the social relationships and connections established by the students. Furthermore, the types of family structure the emerging adults have likewise determine the connections they build and maintain towards their peers, teachers, and community. The inclusion of other demographics may further explore the associations with social connectedness not only with emerging adults but with another group of adults that may bring about significant findings in future research. Thus, it is crucial to consider providing programs that elicit the students' prudent choice of academic program and family valuing to result in better social

connections.

6.0. Limitations of the Findings

The study included only the extent of social connectedness in the four social domains: family, school, peer, and community. Moreover, the demographics only involved their sex, academic program, birth order, and family structure. In terms of respondents, this was only limited to graduating emerging adults. Furthermore, only one campus of a state university in Western Visayas was sampled. Lastly, only the relationship among the demographics, social domains, and social connectedness was determined, but the relationship between the personality traits and social connectedness was not explored.

7.0. Practical Value of the Paper

The study focused on personality and social connectedness, which are considered important in emerging adults' lives, particularly in facing the challenges of emerging adulthood. The findings can be incorporated into the enhanced personality development program of the guidance office for the benefit of colleges and universities in the Philippines and other countries as well. Guidance counselors, psychologists, and other helping professionals can spearhead such activities to enhance and strengthen the social connectedness of emerging adults. Likewise, the findings can contribute to scientific knowledge by filling in the gap in literature.

8.0. Directions for Future Research

Given the limitations, the future researchers may conduct further studies on social connectedness, venturing into the same demographics or other variables to validate the claims of this study. They may also conduct studies using qualitative design to explore the lived experiences of these graduating emerging adults in terms of their establishment of social connections and how personality traits are associated with social connectedness. Aside from these, they may also conduct social connectedness studies in a larger scale, employing other degree programs to validate the claims of this study and add to the dearth of literature. Finally, studies are needed to test if connectedness across social domains has a lasting impact on graduating emerging adults' personality traits and if these two constructs are reciprocally related.

9.0. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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