

**An Adult Attachment Theory Perspective on Romantic
Relationships in *The Fragrant Flower Blooms with Dignity* (2025)**

THESIS

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM MALANG
2026**

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THESIS

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2026**

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled **An Adult Attachment Theory Perspective on Romantic Relationships in *The Fragrant Flower Blooms with Dignity* (2025)** is my original work. I do not include any materials previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

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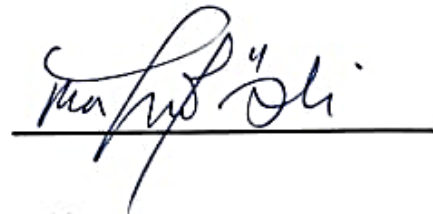
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MOTTO

إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا

So, surely with hardship comes ease.

(Q.S Al-Inssyirah 6)

It is not the difficulty that makes us afraid,

But the fear that makes it difficult

(Ali Bin Abi Thalib)

I have no regrets in meeting you, friend. Should the day ever come that we are not together, you will continue to shine like gold in my memories.

(Zhongli Genshin Impact)

DEDICATION

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Shalawat and salam may always be poured out to the Prophet Muhammad, S A W, the role model for all people.

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ABSTRACT

Pradana, Muhammad Diva Yoga (2026). An Adult Attachment Theory Perspective on Romantic Relationships in The Fragrant Flower Blooms with Dignity (2025). Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University, Malang.

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Keywords: Adult attachment, Anime

This study analyzes the adult attachment styles exhibited by the main characters in the anime *The Fragrant Flower Blooms with Dignity* (TFFBWD) and their influence on the development of their romantic relationships. This study aims to identify dominant adult attachment styles demonstrated by the main characters, Tsumugi Rintaro and Kaoruko Waguri, in their romantic relationship and to analyze how these attachment styles influence the dynamics of their relationship. This study uses Hazan and Shaver's Adult Attachment Theory as its primary theoretical framework. The method used is qualitative descriptive, with data consisting of dialogues, monologues, scenes, screenshots, and translated subtitles in the anime. The results of this study show that Tsumugi Rintaro predominantly exhibits anxious attachment, characterized by fear of rejection, insecurity, overthinking behavior, and a need for validation in romantic relationships. Meanwhile, Kaoruko Waguri consistently exhibits secure attachment through emotional openness, supportive responses, emotional stability, and honest communication. The interaction between anxious and secure attachment significantly influences the development of their romantic relationship.

البحث مستخلص

بر برادانا، محمد ديفا يوغا (2026). نظرة من منظور نظرية التعلق لدى البالغين على العلاقات الرومانسية في رواية «الزهرة العطرة تتفتح بكرامة» (2025). أطروحة. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية، مالانج المشرفة: الأستاذة الدكتورة حاجة موندي راهايو، ماجستير في الدراسات الإنسانية

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعلق لدى البالغين

تحلل هذه الدراسة أنماط التعلق لدى البالغين التي تظهرها الشخصيات الرئيسية في الأنمي «الزهرة وتأثيرها على تطور علاقاتهم العاطفية. وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى (TFFBWD) «العطرة تتفتح بكرامة تحديد أنماط التعلق السائدة لدى البالغين التي تظهرها الشخصيتان الرئيسيتان، تسوموجي رينتارو وكاوروكو واغوري، في علاقتهما العاطفية، وتحليل كيفية تأثير أنماط التعلق هذه على ديناميكيات علاقتهما. تستخدم هذه الدراسة نظرية التعلق لدى البالغين التي وضعها هازان وشافر كإطار نظري أساسي. وتستخدم الدراسة المنهج الوصفي النوعي، حيث تتكون البيانات من الحوارات والمونولوجات والمشاهد ولقطات الشاشة والترجمة المصاحبة للأنمي. وتظهر نتائج هذه الدراسة أن تسوموجي رينتارو يظهر في الغالب نمط التعلق القلق، الذي يتميز بالخوف من الرفض، وانعدام الأمان، والسلوك المفرط في التفكير، والحاجة إلى التقدير في العلاقات الرومانسية. في المقابل، تُظهر كاوروكو واغوري باستمرار نمط التعلق الآمن من خلال الانفتاح العاطفي، والاستجابات الداعمة، والاستقرار العاطفي، والتواصل الصادق. يؤثر التفاعل بين نمطي التعلق القلق والآمن بشكل كبير على تطور علاقتهما الرومانسية.

ABSTRAK

Pradana, Muhammad Diva Yoga (2026). Gaya Keterikatan Dewasa dalam Hubungan Romantis Tokoh Utama Anime *The Fragrant Flower Blooms with Dignity* (2025). Tesis. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Ilmu Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim, Malang.

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Keywords: Gaya ketertarikan dewasa, Anime

Penelitian mengenai hubungan romantis dalam karya populer Jepang dapat memberikan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam mengenai representasi perilaku dan keterikatan emosional antartokoh. Berdasarkan hal tersebut, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi gaya keterikatan orang dewasa yang ditunjukkan oleh Tsumugi Rintaro dan Kaoruko Waguri dalam anime *The Fragrant Flower Blooms with Dignity* (TFFBWD) serta menganalisis pengaruhnya terhadap perkembangan hubungan romantis mereka. Penelitian ini menggunakan Teori Keterikatan Dewasa Hazan dan Shaver sebagai kerangka teori utamanya. Metode yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif, dengan data yang terdiri dari dialog, monolog, adegan, tangkapan layar, dan terjemahan teks dalam anime tersebut. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Tsumugi Rintaro secara dominan menunjukkan keterikatan cemas, yang ditandai dengan rasa takut ditolak, rasa tidak aman, perilaku terlalu banyak berpikir, dan kebutuhan akan pengakuan dalam hubungan romantis. Sementara itu, Kaoruko Waguri secara konsisten menunjukkan ikatan aman melalui keterbukaan emosional, respons yang mendukung, stabilitas emosional, dan komunikasi yang jujur. Interaksi antara ikatan cemas dan ikatan aman secara signifikan memengaruhi perkembangan hubungan romantis mereka.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Research Background

Narrative media have long served as a space for representing human psychological experiences, including emotional conflicts, interpersonal dynamics, and identity formation. Initially, this form of representation was mostly studied through written literary works. In the development of modern media culture, the narrative function is no longer limited to verbal texts, but is also present in audiovisual media that combine stories, visuals, and emotional expressions.

One example is anime, which is a form of narrative audiovisual media. Anime represents strong psychological and relational dynamics through character development, storyline, dialogue, visual elements, lighting, and scene composition (Makhluf et al., 2025). Through these elements, anime not only provides entertainment but also builds meaning and emotion. Therefore, anime can be understood as a media text and cultural text that can be analyzed academically. This approach is also in line with anime studies, which broadens the understanding of anime as an object of cultural and media study, and affirms the relevance of anime research in a broader academic realm (Nurhasanah et al., 2025).

Anime is often understood by the general public as a form of moving images originating from Japan. Conceptually, anime is a form of animation, which is a visual medium that creates the illusion of movement through a sequence of images played back in rapid succession. Anime refers to animation originating from Japan, whether in the form of films, series, or short videos (Gama, 2024). In more specific terms, anime is defined as a form of Japanese animation that has specific cultural, visual, and aesthetic characteristics (Ashcraft, 2021).

One of the anime titles is *Kaoru Hana Wa Rin To Saku*, or in English, *The Fragrant Flower Blooms With Dignity* (2025), which is an adaptation of the manga of the same title. The story depicts the dynamic relationship between *Tsumugi Rintaro* and *Kaoruko Waguri* in a high school setting with different social backgrounds, showing the development of emotional closeness, inner conflict, and tension in the relationship between the main characters. The story is set in two neighboring high schools that are socially distinct: Chidori Public High School, a school with a low reputation whose students are often looked down upon, and Kikyo Private Academy Girls' *High School*, an elite school exclusively for girls. These two schools harbor a deep-seated hatred for each other due to the significant gap between them. Amidst the conflict is Tsumugi Rintaro, a Chidori student with a scary face but a sincere heart. Not many people know that he helps his family at their cake shop. His encounter with Kaoruko Waguri, a Kikyo student, changes him.

However, their relationship is not easy as they have to face the skeptical views of those around them. In terms of character and story development, this is very interesting to explore further from a psychological perspective.

In this context, adult attachment theory becomes a relevant theoretical framework for analyzing the representation of romantic relationships in this anime because it explains how adults build and maintain relationships and manage emotional responses to uncertainty and closeness in relationships. This approach allows research to not only describe relationships in general but also interpret the psychological dynamics underlying actions, dialogue, and emotional expressions, thereby bridging the study of anime and relationship psychology in academic research.

Romantic relationships are a form of interpersonal relationship that involves strong emotional closeness between two individuals. In human relationships, emotional attachment plays an important role in shaping how individuals form, maintain, and deal with separation in relationships. The basis for this concept comes from attachment theory, developed (Bowlby, 1973). Bowlby asserts that the emotional bond between a child and caregiver in early life becomes the prototype for interpersonal relationships in adulthood. This early bond forms what is called an internal working model, which is an emotional cognitive framework that influences how a person views themselves and others later in life.

Continuing Bowlby's ideas, Hazan and Shaver (1987) expanded this theory into the context of adult romantic relationships through the concept of Adult Attachment Theory. They identified three main attachment styles, namely *secure*, *anxious/ambivalent*, and *avoidant*. This concept describes how adults seek closeness, navigate intimacy, and respond to emotional stress within relationships. This framework provides a crucial basis for analyzing emotional behavior and relational dynamics, not only in the real world but also in fictional narratives. In the context of literary and cultural studies, this theory is not only applicable to psychological and relational research on humans but can also be applied to literary works and popular media such as films, novels, and anime.

Previous studies have demonstrated that attachment theory has been widely applied in various contexts, including interpersonal relationships, media studies, and audience engagement. Research by Isar et al., (2023) examined relationship patterns between fictional characters and revealed the complexity of emotional bonds represented in narrative texts. Similarly, (Yonanta et al., 2025) employed Bowlby's attachment theory and Jung's analytical psychology to investigate character development, finding that attachment-related experiences influenced the protagonist's tendency to reject and avoid interpersonal relationships. Beyond character analysis, attachment theory has also been applied to media audiences. Pimienta (2022) found that readers of manga can develop attachment relationships with fictional

characters that resemble human attachment processes. Likewise, Rain and Mar (2021) demonstrated that adult attachment dimensions, particularly attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance, influence the ways individuals engage with fictional characters in television series, films, and other narrative media. In a different context, Dewi and Suminar (2022) examined the relationship between adult attachment and celebrity worship among adult women, highlighting the role of attachment styles in shaping emotional investment toward media figures. Furthermore, Yang and Oshio (2025) expanded attachment research into the field of artificial intelligence, exploring whether AI can fulfill attachment functions similar to those provided by human relationships. Collectively, these studies confirm the broad applicability of attachment theory in understanding both real and mediated relationships. However, limited research has specifically examined the representation of adult attachment styles in romantic anime narratives.

Research on anime conducted by Marselana and Seruni (2024) aims to explore how the anime *Arte* presents the image and role of women in the 16th century through its main character. Another study using anime as its object was conducted by Nurhidayat and Nurfalah (2024) his study focuses on the *Naruto* episode “Pain Attack on Konoha Village” to analyze how moral messages are conveyed through symbols and character interactions. The research conducted by Faradilla and Ahmad (2023) purpose of this study is to identify and categorize the socio-cultural elements depicted in the anime

Attack on Titan, and to examine their relevance to representations of conditions in Japan and the modern world. Another study was conducted by Wati (2025), which aims to identify and analyze the moral values contained in Osamu Tezuka's classic anime Dororo, focusing on how the inner conflict and journey of the main character *Hyakkimaru* reflect Japanese humanity and morality after the war.

Based on previous studies, it appears that research on Attachment Theory has been applied more to classical works, social phenomena, or human relationships with virtual entities, while research on the representation of romantic attachment in contemporary anime is still very limited. There has been no research examining how adult attachment styles (adult attachment theory) are represented through the interactions of the main characters in modern anime, such as *The Fragrant Flower Blooms with Dignity* (2025), especially in the context of social class differences and the dynamics of teenage romantic relationships. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by applying a literary psychology approach based on attachment theory to reveal the emotional and rational dimensions of the main character textually and symbolically.

B. Problems of the study

1. What are the dominant adult attachment styles demonstrated by the main characters, Tsumugi Rintaro and Kaoruko Waguri, in their romantic relationship?
2. How do the adult attachment styles affect the romantic relationship of the main characters?

C. Significances of the study

This study offers an integrated theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this study contributes to interdisciplinary development between psychology and literary studies by applying Adult Attachment Theory to the analysis of anime, thereby reinforcing the understanding that anime can represent complex human relational dynamics and psychological realism. Practically, this study offers insights for researchers, writers, and anime creators in developing characters with deeper psychological dimensions, particularly in depicting emotional attachment and romantic relationships, and can serve as a reference for analyzing characters in literary works and narrative media.

D. Scope and Limitations

The focus of this study includes adult attachment styles and their effects on romantic relationships.

The scope of this study includes a discussion of adult attachment styles in the main characters of *The Fragrant Flower Blooms with Dignity*. This study uses Hazan and Shaver's adult attachment theory as the primary framework for identifying adult attachment styles and their influence on interactions that shape relationships. Additionally, this study analyzes several mise-en-scène elements, such as lighting, framing, character positioning, and visual composition, to support the interpretation.

This study has limitations in that it focuses only on the analysis of the two main characters, and it analyzes only scenes, dialogues, and visual representations related to the development of romantic relationships; thus, other aspects such as friendship, family background, or social issues occurring in the story are not discussed in depth.

Another limitation of this study concerns the language of the data source. *The Fragrant Flower Blooms with Dignity* is originally produced in Japanese, while the analysis in this study relies on the official English subtitles available in the anime. As a result, certain linguistic nuances, cultural expressions, or emotional meanings conveyed in the original Japanese dialogue may not be fully represented in the English translation. Although the subtitles provide sufficient context for analyzing the characters' attachment styles and relationship development, differences in translation choices may influence the interpretation of specific dialogues and interactions. Therefore, the findings of this study should be understood

in the context of the English-subtitled version used as the primary data source.

E. Definition of key terms

Attachment Theory: a psychological framework developed by John Bowlby (1969) that explains emotional bonds between individuals and their influence on behavior and personality.

Adult Attachment Theory: an extension of Bowlby's theory by Hazan and Shaver (1987) that identifies patterns of adult relationships.

Anime: Japanese animation that has specific cultural, visual, and aesthetic characteristics (Ashcraft, 2021)

Romantic Relationship: Romantic relationships are a form of interpersonal relationship that involves strong emotional closeness between two individuals

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Psychology Approach in Anime

A psychological approach to anime is used to interpret the inner experiences of characters, their motivations, emotional conflicts, and the construction of interpersonal relationships as visualized in anime narratives. Anime is not only visual entertainment, but it can also demonstrate that it contains complex psychological themes and can be analyzed. In research on resilience in Naruto anime, a psychological and narrative framework is used to examine character growth through trauma and life challenges, demonstrating that anime can function as a medium that contains psychological representations (Rosyidha & Rohmah, 2025).

Similarly, psychological approaches have been applied to animated narratives to examine characters' emotional experiences and behavioral motivations. Research conducted by Rahayu and Arrifah (2025), in their psychoanalytical analysis of Ian Lightfoot in *Onward* (2020), found that anxiety functions as a significant psychological force that influences character development and decision making. The study reveals that animated media can effectively represent complex psychological conditions and therefore provide a psychological analysis.

In his literary studies, Bressler (1999) asserts that characters in fiction can be analyzed like psychological individuals who have motives, emotional dynamics, and repetitive behavioral responses. Thus, psychology-based literary analysis does not stop at textual aspects, but also enters the realm of psychodynamics, motivation, and the formation of interpersonal meaning in stories.

This relevance is even stronger in the study of digital and popular media, including anime, because it is constructed through emotional expression, relationships, and experiences. According to Mannay (2015), Visual narrative media have the psychological capacity to shape affective engagement more responsively than conventional texts. This makes literary psychology highly relevant for analyzing the emotional and romantic dynamics of anime characters who interact through the visualization of emotions, dialogue, and representations of complex relationships.

B. Attachment Theory

Attachment is a biological and psychological system that develops through early interactions between children and their caregivers (Bowlby, 1973). This system functions to secure and maintain proximity to attachment figures. Bowlby argued that the quality of these early attachment experiences plays an important role in shaping an individual's emotional and social development throughout life. Through repeated interactions with caregivers, children

gradually develop expectations about themselves and others within interpersonal relationships. Internal working models guide how individuals interpret social interaction, evaluate their own worth, and perceive the availability and responsiveness of others (Bretherton, 1992).

According to Ainsworth et al. (1978) further strengthened the empirical basis of attachment styles through the Strange Situation Procedure, which identified three main attachment patterns in children: secure, anxious, and avoidant. Further research found that individuals with secure attachment tend to have adaptive emotional regulation, while insecure attachment correlates with relational anxiety, barriers to emotional closeness, and psychological defense strategies for managing relationships.

Attachment theory is widely used in cross-age relational studies because it provides a framework for interpreting stable and patterned emotional behavior, both in real relationships and fictional narratives. In the context of literature and media, relationships between characters can be analyzed as representations of attachment systems that demonstrate the need for closeness, sensitivity to rejection, emotional dependence, or avoidance of relationships. This makes the theory relevant as a basis for analyzing interpersonal relationships in anime.

C. Adult Attachment Theory

Adult attachment theory is an extension of Bowlby's theory to the realm of romantic and interpersonal relationships in adults. It was developed empirically by Hazan and Shaver (1987). They found that childhood attachment patterns reappear in romantic relationships and influence the need for closeness, anxiety about rejection, and how individuals respond to emotional conflict. An important contribution of this theory is the mapping of adult relationship styles that are consistent with early attachment patterns.

Hazan and Shaver did research in 1987 and found that there are three main types of adult attachment styles: secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant. These ways of attaching affect how people build emotional connections, handle disagreements with others, and keep their romantic relationships going. Adult attachment theory helps explain how people relate to each other and handle emotions in real life, as well as in stories about love and relationships.

Three types in adult attachment theory are used in character analysis. This is done not only at the narrative level, but also at the level of psychological mechanisms and emotional triggers that drive character actions in relationships.

1. Secure attachment

Secure attachment represents a relational pattern with adaptive emotional regulation, mature interpersonal reflective capacity, and a positive internal working model of oneself and others. Individuals with

this pattern feel more confident that they are worthy of love (positive self-model) and that others can be trusted as emotional support figures (positive other-model). The secure pattern is associated with a more stable ability to process stress through the regulation of the brain's systems for managing emotions, behavior, motivation, and memory. Longitudinal studies show that individuals with secure attachment have higher mentalizing capacity, which is the ability to understand one's own and others' emotional states without blaming anything.

In romantic relationships, secure individuals display a healthy and balanced pattern of closeness between intimacy and autonomy. They are able to communicate their emotional needs assertively without falling into dependence or avoidance. Conflict is not responded to as an existential threat, but rather as a space for relational negotiation. Their emotional resilience is also evident in how they process uncertainty; not through rumination or withdrawal, but through dialogical clarification and transactional solutions based on understanding the actions taken. In short, they do not manipulate to gain closeness, are not defensive when criticized, and have the capacity to apologize and forgive constructively.

The emotional triggers for this type have a relatively higher tolerance threshold than other types. Stress reactions only arise when there are consistent threats such as dishonesty, inconsistency in

commitment, or relational betrayal. However, unlike other styles, these triggers do not alter their self-esteem schema but rather encourage rational actions to find solutions. The visible impact of the secure style is the formation of stable, reciprocal, and growth-oriented relationships. In romantic dynamics research, secure attachment is a predictor of relationship satisfaction, long-term relationship duration, and post-conflict reconciliation ability.

2. Anxious/ambivalent attachment

Anxious/ambivalent attachment patterns are built from internal working models characterized by negative self-models and positive other-models, which means that individuals view themselves as not entirely worthy of love, while others are viewed as the main source of emotional validation. This pattern gives rise to a dependency orientation, not merely as a need for affection, but as a mechanism to compensate for internal discomfort that is channeled through interpersonal relationships. Psychodynamically, this anxiety is not only about the fear of losing a partner, but also about the fear of losing the emotional identity that they depend on in that relationship.

In a romantic context, anxious attachment displays a hyperactivation strategy, which is a response mechanism that magnifies the perception of relational threats even in the slightest signals. Messages that are not replied to quickly, changes in voice

intonation, or reduced attention are processed as indicators of implicit rejection. Relational ambiguity is the strongest trigger, as it creates a space for interpretation that is then filled with worry and cognitive rumination. Individuals often get caught up in repetitive validation, increased jealousy, and feelings of doubt.

To see the pattern of interaction, one can look at the intensity of closeness that tends to increase rapidly at the beginning of the relationship (emotional acceleration), accompanied by a constant need for communication, a tendency to idealize one's partner, and anxiety when there is emotional or physical distance. The relational impact of this pattern is the creation of asymmetrical dynamics, where the balance of the relationship leans toward the emotional needs of one party, triggering relational burnout in the partner if it is not mediated by healthy communication.

3. Avoidant attachment

Avoidant attachment is formed from a positive self-model but a negative other-model, which represents an internal schema that the self is sufficient and emotionally competent, while others are perceived as figures who are potentially demanding, restrictive, or disappointing. Therefore, this pattern leads individuals to extreme self-reliance, not in the sense of adaptive independence, but as a form of self-protection from emotional dependence. The avoidant pattern shows a tendency to

suppress emotional activation (affect suppression) as the dominant strategy in responding to intimacy or conflict.

In the romantic realm, avoidants display a deactivation strategy to a systematic response to reduce the intensity of closeness when the relationship itself begins to touch on deep emotional territory. They do not reject the relationship itself, but reject the vulnerability aspect of the relationship. Issues of commitment, relationship labels, discussions of feelings, or intense expressions of affection often become triggers because they are perceived as a threat to the ability to understand oneself. Instead of confronting these issues, avoidant individuals tend to use diversionary strategies such as focusing on routines, work, hobbies, or cognitive distancing through emotional rationalization.

Behaviors that occur include: difficulty sharing personal emotions, withdrawal when the relationship enters an intimate phase, a tendency to maintain an image of “not needing anyone,” and a preference for structured interactions over emotional ones. Relationally, this style often triggers an anxious-avoidant trap dynamic, whereby anxious partners pursue their partners more and more as they withdraw. The long-term consequences are relationships with minimal emotional depth, potentially sabotaging commitment, or relationships that survive structurally but lack emotional closeness.

In the context of literary and media research, adult attachment theory enables the systematic identification of character relational patterns, rather than merely descriptive ones. According to Mikulincer and Doron (2016), Attachment styles influence emotional communication, how characters show closeness, strategies for dealing with conflict, and responses to loss or rejection. Therefore, this theory is ideal as an analytical tool for reading romantic dynamics in anime, especially in complex and gradually developing relationships, as often found in romance-genre anime.

D. Anime Studies

Anime studies is a multidisciplinary field that treats anime as a cultural product, visual text, and narrative medium with distinctive emotional and semiotic structures. According to Backer (2023), anime is not only a popular form of entertainment but also a transnational cultural product that can be analyzed through media, cultural, identity, and psychological representation approaches. In an academic context, anime is viewed as a space for interaction between fictional characters and the audience's emotions, connected through visual, narrative, and affective experiences.

In contemporary academia, anime is no longer understood merely as a form of visual entertainment but as a cultural and narrative text that is open to critical interpretation. In this context, according to Bolton (2018), Through his book *"Interpreting Anime,"* he asserts that anime can be read and analyzed

interpretively in the same way as literary works or films. Bolton positions anime as a meaningful text constructed through the interaction of narrative, visual elements, characterization, and the ideological contexts that surround it.

Bulton emphasizes that meaning in anime is neither singular nor fixed but is produced through interpretative processes. Characters, dialogue, conflict, and interpersonal relationships are understood as textual elements that represent ideas, values, and social as well as psychological tensions. Consequently, anime provides a broad analytical space for examining emotional dynamics, identity formation, and relationships among characters. These are conveyed not only through verbal expression but also through visual symbolism and narrative structure.

In this study, romantic relationships in anime provide a rich subject for psychological analysis because they depict relationship development, jealousy, intimacy, emotional wounds, and intense relationship conflicts. According to Matsuda (2025) Viewers' emotional involvement with anime characters often stems from similarities in relational patterns and psychological experiences, making the application of interpersonal relationship theories such as adult attachment highly relevant and methodologically valid in anime romance research.

E. Mise en scene in anime

Although the concept of mise en scene initially developed in film studies to analyze spatial arrangement, actors, lighting, and visual composition, to date, there has been no theory that explicitly formulates mise en scene in the context of anime. However, the function of mise en scene analysis can still be adapted in anime studies by combining several specific theories, because there is no single theory in anime studies that specifically and comprehensively discusses visual space, character expression, emotional atmosphere, and psychological relationships.

1. The structure of visual meaning in anime

According to Lamarre (2009), anime should be viewed as a visual system that constructs meaning through the arrangement of images, space, and movement, rather than as a representation of reality as in film studies. One of Lamarre's concepts is the animetic interval, which is the distance or gap between visual layers that creates emotional tension through the relationship between movement and stillness. This concept emphasizes that the visual space in anime is affective or can express the emotional state and relationships of the characters.

In this study, Lamarre's theory is used to analyze the visual setting and the distance between characters. It also serves as the main visual framework that replaces the concept of film mise en scene and

adapts to the characteristics of anime as a constructed narrative medium.

2. Visuals and emotions

According to Napier (2005), anime builds the emotional experience of the audience through visual atmosphere, symbolism, and narrative space that is often metaphorical. Colors, lighting, and visual backgrounds in anime not only serve as aesthetic elements, but also as a means of expressing the inner state of the characters and the emotional tone of the story. This theory is used as emotional support, particularly to interpret colors, visual moods, and certain symbols that reinforce representations of anxiety, safety, and alienation by connecting visual moods with psychological meanings.

3. Character design and visual expression

In Cavallaro's (2010) perspective, he emphasizes the significance of character design in anime as the primary medium for conveying emotions and personality. Diverse facial expressions, gestures, and visuals serve as substitutes for real actors. In anime, characters are designed to directly display psychological conditions through visual forms. This is used to analyze facial expressions, gestures, and character postures as emotional responses.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

Research must be conducted properly. This means that scientific research requires scientific methods. In addition, research is a scientific study that seeks to obtain knowledge through problem-solving. According to (Creswell, 2017) Research methods are steps that must be taken by researchers to collect data or information and investigate the data or information obtained. Furthermore, research used theories, bases, assumptions, and principles. Then, this research method is divided into four parts: research design, data sources, data collection, and data analysis.

A. Research Design

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach with a research design based on existing theory. Hazan and Shaver's (1987) *Adult Attachment Theory* is used as the main conceptual basis from the outset of the study to identify and classify the patterns of adult attachment exhibited by the main characters in the anime *The Fragrant Flower Blooms with Dignity*. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to interpret the dynamics of relationships and emotional responses of characters in depth within a narrative and visual context, as stated by (Creswell, 2017). The analysis was conducted using the perspective of anime studies Bolton (2018), to read the narrative structure and characterization, as well as the use of mise

en scene in anime combines several theories through the visual approaches of Lamarre (2009), Napier (2005), and Cavallaro (2010) to identify emotional indicators through spatial composition, distance between characters, facial expressions, gestures, colors, and lighting.

B. Data Source

The source of this research is a TV anime series titled *The Fragrant Flower Blooms with Dignity*, which was released on July 13, 2025, and is adapted from a manga/comic of the same title. This anime was produced by the Japanese studio CloverWorks and released on the Netflix digital platform. The language used is Japanese, with English subtitles. This research focuses on the use of English subtitles in all 13 episodes of the anime. The primary data of this study were obtained from scenes, dialogues, monologues, screenshots, and translated subtitles in *The Fragrant Flower Blooms with Dignity*. The data focused on interactions that reflected adult attachment styles and the development of the romantic relationship between the main characters.

C. Data Collection

Data collection began with understanding Hazan and Shaver's adult attachment theory, which consists of secure attachment, anxious attachment, and avoidant attachment. After understanding the theory, the researcher watched all episodes of *The Fragrant Flower Blooms with Dignity* and read

the translated subtitles to understand the overall narrative and relationship development of the main characters. The researcher acknowledges that translation may involve shifts in meaning, nuance, or cultural expressions. Therefore, the analysis is limited to the interpretation of the English-subtitled version and does not claim to represent the exact linguistic meaning of the original Japanese dialogue. The researcher then collected data in the form of dialogues, monologues, screenshots, character expressions, and visual scenes that reflected attachment-related behavior and emotional responses. Furthermore, the researcher identified and categorized scenes that showed the development of attachment styles and their effects on the romantic relationship between the main characters

D. Data Analysis

The researcher begins by identifying scenes that contain indicators of adult attachment styles based on Hazan and Shaver's (1987) Adult Attachment Theory. Each selected scene is then analyzed in four stages. First, the researcher describes the context of the scene, including the narrative situation, interactions between characters, and relevant dialogue. Second, the researcher interprets the meaning of the scene to understand the emotional significance and relationship dynamics depicted. Third, the scene is analyzed using Adult Attachment Theory to identify the attachment styles demonstrated by the characters and to explain how this influences their behavior within the

relationship. Fourth, the visual elements of the scene are analyzed through the perspectives of Lamarre (2009), Napier (2005), and Cavallaro (2010), with a focus on character positioning, facial expressions, body language, visual atmosphere, color, lighting, and spatial composition. Through these stages, the research focuses on revealing how adult attachment styles are represented and how they shape the relationship of the main characters in a systematic and theoretical manner.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the research findings and discussion by identifying the adult attachment styles exhibited by the main characters and analyzing how these patterns influence the course of their romantic relationships in the anime. In presenting the data, uses abbreviations for the title *The Fragrant Flower Blooms with Dignity* as (TFFBWD) to facilitate reference. This section analyzes several data points presented through screenshots and specific frames to find an answer to the research question.

This romance slice-of-life anime tells the story of high school life, focusing on the two main characters, Tsumugi Rintaro and Kaoruko Waguri. Tsumugi Rintaro is a student at Chidori High School; his tall stature and blond hair lead people around him to view him as a delinquent. Chidori itself is an all-boys school where many students are troublemakers and not very academically inclined, while Kaoruko Waguri is a student at Kikyo High School who has many achievements and excels academically. Because of these differing backgrounds, the stigma surrounding their relationship becomes a major obstacle. Waguri and Rintaro's first meeting at Rintaro's bakery marks the beginning of their relationship. As the story unfolds, their relationship faces various emotional challenges, misunderstandings, and a process of mutual understanding. This anime serves as a relevant case study

for analyzing adult attachment styles and their influence on the development of the two main characters' romantic relationship.

A. Dominant adult attachment styles are demonstrated by the main characters, Tsumugi Rintaro and Kaoruko Waguri, in their romantic relationship.

1. Attachment Style of Tsumugi Rintaro

a. Anxious attachment to oneself

This scene in datum 1, takes place during Rintaro's first meaningful interaction with Waguri at his family's cake shop. Before this encounter, Rintaro had become accustomed to being avoided or misunderstood by others because of his intimidating appearance. As a result, he had little experience forming close relationships, particularly with girls. When Waguri unexpectedly approaches him and begins a conversation in a friendly manner, Rintaro appears surprised and unsure of how to respond. Rather than reacting confidently, he becomes confused and hesitant, as if he cannot believe that someone is genuinely interested in talking to him. This is evident in Rintaro's lack of experience in building close relationships, especially with the opposite gender. When Waguri started talking to him, Rintaro didn't respond with confidence but instead showed confusion, hesitation, and sensitivity to Waguri's reactions.

Datum 1



Figure 1. Rintaro couldn't believe that a woman had just spoken to him
TFFBWD (2025): Episode 1: (14:46)

Rintaro's tendency toward an anxious attachment style is evident in his negative self-perception, which stems from repeated social experiences that have shaped his internal working model. Early in the story, Rintaro is portrayed as someone who feels different and unaccepted by others because his appearance, which is considered intimidating, is often mistaken for that of a delinquent.

These experiences form a negative self-model, in which Rintaro views himself as unworthy of attention or affection from others. According to Hazan and Shaver (1978), individuals with an anxious attachment style generally have doubts about their own worth and are highly dependent on others' acceptance.

According to Lamarre (2009), Napier (2005), and Cavallaro (2010), the visual aspects in anime are significant in showing a character's

mental state. In this scene, Rintaro is by himself in his room, and the dark, closed-in look of the space shows how alone and lonely he feels. The lack of interaction with other characters makes him feel even more alone compared to the people around him. Napier (2005) says that anime often uses the environment around characters to show how they feel inside. So, the dark setting and lonely look of the picture show how unsure Rintaro feels about himself and how hard it is for him to accept who he is, which makes his self-doubt and anxious attachment even stronger.

b. Anxious attachment and fear of rejection

After Episode 3: While Rintaro is trying to study at the library to avoid having to retake his exams, he runs into Waguri, who is also studying with her friend. When they pass each other outside a situation in which Rintaro had previously been hesitant and lacked confidence, he finds the courage to ask for help directly, even though he's still afraid of being rejected. Waguri replies that she can tutor Rintaro.

Datum 2



Figure 2. Even Rintaro is still wondering if his outfit looks good or not.

TFFBWD (2025): Episode 4: (02:25)

In Episode 4, before meeting Waguri, Rintaro repeatedly questions whether his appearance and clothing are appropriate. Although the meeting has not yet occurred, he already worries about how Waguri might perceive him. Rintaro's anxious attachment tendencies become more pronounced, particularly as evidenced by his fear of rejection. This is evident from the very beginning of the episode, when Rintaro feels anxious ahead of his meeting with Waguri. He isn't just excited; he also displays excessive anxiety over simple things, such as whether his outfit is appropriate or not.

From an interpretive perspective, this behavior can be understood not merely as ordinary nervousness but as a form of anticipatory anxiety, that is, anxiety preceding social interaction that stems from a fear of

negative judgment. Within Hazan and Shaver's (1987) framework, individuals with an anxious attachment style tend to be highly sensitive to the possibility of rejection, even before the interaction takes place. Rintaro's excessive concern about his appearance demonstrates anticipatory anxiety, a condition in which individuals become preoccupied with possible negative evaluations before social interaction occurs.

According to Lamarre (2009), Napier (2005), and Cavallaro (2010), the way characters look and act in anime can show what they are feeling inside. In this scene, Rintaro keeps checking his clothes before he meets Waguri, showing that he cares about how he looks and how others might see him. His worried looks and unsure movements show that he feels insecure and self-conscious. Cavallaro (2010) says that how characters act and look helps the audience understand how emotions develop. So, Rintaro's focus on his looks shows how much he wants to be accepted and how scared he is of being judged badly, which helps explain his anxious attachment in the story.

Overall, Episode 4 reveals that Rintaro's fear of rejection does not merely arise in response to specific situations but rather reflects an emotional pattern. His anxiety before interactions, overthinking of minor details, and need for acceptance indicate that he constantly processes relationships through the lens of potential rejection. Thus, as an individual with an anxious attachment style, Rintaro demonstrates how this pattern

influences his behavior and emotional experiences as he builds a relationship with Waguri.

After Rintaro passed the exam thanks to Waguri, Waguri planned to celebrate with Rintaro by going somewhere, but his anxious attachment and fear of rejection still surfaced when they went to the aquarium. Will he be able to make Waguri happy, or will he end up disappointing her because he's a little nervous.

Datum 3



Figure 3. Rintaro was a little restless in the bathroom

TFFBWD (2025): Episode 8: (14:51)

During their aquarium date, Rintaro and Waguri spend time together enjoying various attractions and conversations. The outing progresses positively, and Waguri appears happy throughout the day. However, while briefly alone in the restroom, Rintaro begins reflecting on the date and

wonders whether Waguri is genuinely enjoying herself. Even though there are no signs of dissatisfaction from Waguri, he continues to worry about her feelings and questions whether he has made the experience enjoyable for her. This scene occurs at a stage when their relationship is becoming closer, yet Rintaro still struggles with uncertainty regarding how he is perceived by Waguri.

When Rintaro and Waguri went to the aquarium together, he demonstrated a pattern of anxious attachment. Although their interaction appeared positive and enjoyable on the surface, Rintaro was actually experiencing internal anxiety. This was evident in how he felt nervous throughout the trip, doubted his appearance, and wondered whether Waguri was truly enjoying their time together. Even while in the bathroom, Rintaro reflexively questioned Waguri's happiness, indicating that he was anticipating the possibility of rejection even though there were no clear signs of it.

From the perspective of adult attachment theory, this situation reflects a hyperactivation strategy, a pattern in which individuals with an anxious attachment style excessively monitor their partner's responses and interpret ambiguous situations as potential threats to the relationship. Rintaro's fear does not stem from Waguri but rather from a negative internal working model of himself, causing him to doubt his own worthiness in the relationship.

From the views of Lamarre (2009), Napier (2005), and Cavallaro (2010), the way characters are placed and arranged in space within anime can show emotions that go beyond what is said in dialogue. In this scene, Rintaro is by himself in the bathroom, thinking about his time spent with Waguri. Even though the date is going well, his brief time away from Waguri shows he's feeling worried and unsure inside. Napier (2005) says that anime often uses visual scenes to show a character's inner feelings and mental challenges. Rintaro's thoughtful look and quiet alone show that he often thinks about possible problems even when there's no real issue happening. These visual elements show his fear of being rejected and his need for comfort, which helps show that he has an anxious attachment.

Anxious attachment and emotional security

As Waguri's birthday approaches, Rintaro begins to think seriously about what gift to give her. Although he works at his family's cake shop and has easy access to various cakes, he feels that simply giving one of the shop's products would not be meaningful enough. He spends considerable time thinking about the most appropriate gift because he wants to express his feelings sincerely. This situation places Rintaro in an emotionally vulnerable position because he becomes concerned about how Waguri will evaluate his effort.

Datum 4



Figure 4. Rintaro is having trouble choosing a gift.

TFFBWD (2025): Episode 11: (01:54)

In this scene, Rintaro tries to prepare a birthday gift for Waguri, which represents the development of anxious attachment in the form of seeking reassurance. Rintaro decides to bake a cake himself; although it requires great effort and an intensive learning process, he is motivated not only by the desire to give a gift but also to gain emotional acceptance from Waguri. This action shows that Rintaro is beginning to express his feelings more actively, yet it remains rooted in anxiety about how he will be judged.

According to Hazan and Shaver (1987), individuals with an anxious attachment style tend to be highly sensitive to their partner's emotional acceptance or rejection within a relationship. This tendency is reflected in Rintaro's desire for the gift to be seen not merely as a formality, but as an expression that represents his feelings toward Waguri.

Instead of choosing a ready-made gift, he considered what would make Waguri happy and ultimately decided to bake a cake himself. This behavior demonstrates the emotional significance he attaches to Waguri's opinion and approval. His prolonged deliberation suggests that he is worried whether his effort will be appreciated and whether it will successfully convey his feelings. Therefore, this scene reflects Rintaro's need for certainty and acceptance from Waguri, which reinforces the portrayal of his dominant anxious attachment style.

According to Lamarre (2009), Napier (2005), and Cavallaro (2010), the visual aspects in anime can show how much a character cares about something and what's going on inside their mind. In this scene, Rintaro is in his family's bakery, surrounded by many cakes, but he looks unsure and is carefully considering which one to choose as a gift for Waguri. The bakery scene shows the choices he has, and his careful looks and slow thinking show how much he values Waguri's opinion. Cavallaro (2010) argues that characters' actions and visual settings in anime stories help illustrate how emotions develop. So, the way the scene is visually put together shows how sincere and emotionally open Rintaro is, which makes it clear he really wants to be accepted and feel safe in his relationship with Waguri.

Datum 5



Figure 5. Rintaro, while waiting for Waguri's opinion on the cake he gave her
TFFBWD (2025): Episode 11: (18:02)

After spending considerable time learning how to bake a special cake for Waguri's birthday, Rintaro finally presents the gift to her. However, the moment does not immediately bring him relief. Instead, he becomes preoccupied with waiting for Waguri's response and opinion regarding the cake. Because the gift is the result of his personal effort and carries emotional meaning.

This becomes even more apparent in the moment after the cake is given, when Rintaro displays high emotional tension while waiting for Waguri's response. He appears restless, uneasy, and constantly ponders the possible evaluation he will receive. In adult attachment theory, this condition is a hyperactivation strategy to seek emotional certainty through the partner's response. Rintaro not only hopes that Waguri likes the gift,

but also needs confirmation that he is accepted and valued in the relationship.

In this scene, Rintaro exhibits anxious attachment style through his strong need for reassurance and fear of negative judgment. After giving Waguri the cake, Rintaro does not immediately feel satisfied or relieved. Instead, he becomes uncertain about Waguri's response to his effort. According to Hazan and Shaver (1987), Rintaro's behavior reflects emotional instability stemming from a lack of self-confidence in his own efforts and a reliance on others' reactions for validation. His partner's acceptance and approval influence Rintaro's sense of security in the relationship.

According to Lamarre (2009), Napier (2005), and Cavallaro (2010), visual elements in anime play a crucial role in conveying emotional meaning and the development of relationships. In this scene, the interaction between Rintaro and Waguri becomes the primary visual focus as Rintaro gives her a cake he baked himself. Rintaro's nervous expression and hesitant gaze toward Waguri emphasize his emotional investment in her reaction, while Waguri's calm and joyful response creates a sense of warmth and acceptance. Napier (2005) argues that anime often communicates characters' psychological states through facial expressions and interpersonal interactions, while Cavallaro (2010) highlights the role of visual characterization in developing emotional bonds. Therefore, the

visual composition of this scene reinforces the significance of emotional validation in their relationship and highlights Rintaro's anxiety as he awaits Waguri's acceptance of his gift.

c. Regulated Anxious Attachment

This scene takes place after Rintaro and Waguri have spent a significant amount of time together and developed a closer emotional connection. While talking with Waguri, Rintaro begins to express his feelings more honestly than before. During the conversation, he admits that he does not want to feel lonely and wishes to spend more time with her. However, immediately after expressing these thoughts, he becomes flustered and starts apologizing, worrying that his words may have caused discomfort or created a misunderstanding.

Datum 6



Figure 6. Rintaro didn't want to be lonely and wanted to spend more time with Waguri

TFFBWD (2025): Episode 12: (20:18)

In this episode, Rintaro still exhibits anxious attachment, but in a more developed or regulated form. This is evident when he begins to express his feelings more openly, such as when he says he doesn't want to feel lonely and wants to spend more time with Waguri.

Although there is courage in expressing emotions, signs of anxiety remain clearly visible. After expressing his feelings, namely feeling panicked, apologizing for what he said, and showing concern that his statement might have a negative impact, this response reflects a fear of rejection. Additionally, the unintentional statement (*daisuki*) "I like you" indicates that the feeling is actually quite strong, though not yet fully under conscious control. It emerges spontaneously, yet is still accompanied by anxiety regarding how to handle the consequences.

This scene illustrates Rintaro's anxious attachment style through his fear of rejection, even as he becomes increasingly bold in expressing his feelings. Rintaro openly admits that he does not want to feel lonely and wants to spend more time with Waguri. From the perspective of Hazan and Shaver's (1987) Adult Attachment Theory, Rintaro still exhibits the anxious trait of fear of rejection, yet he has developed toward emotional openness even though that fear persists.

From the views of Lamarre (2009), Napier (2005), and Cavallaro (2010), the visual aspects in anime are not just about looks; they also show how characters feel and how they relate to each other. In this scene, Rintaro and Waguri are standing near each other, showing that their relationship is becoming more personal. However, Rintaro's nervous face, red cheeks, and slow, unsure movements stand in contrast to the deep emotional connection that has formed. Napier (2005) explains that anime often uses how characters look and move to show their feelings, and Cavallaro (2010) believes that how characters interact with each other helps show how their emotions change. So, the way this scene is put together shows how emotionally scared and unsure Rintaro is, which makes his need for closeness with Waguri even clearer, even though he's afraid of being rejected.

Datum 7



Figure 7. Rintaro, who honestly expressed his feelings to Waguri
TFFBWD (2025): Episode 13: (05:55)

After spending more time together and forming a close emotional bond, and picking up where the previous episode left off, in which Rintaro asked Waguri to meet him somewhere, Rintaro finally decided to confess his feelings to Waguri. At that moment, he honestly expressed how important Waguri was to him and told her that he liked her. Although he expressed his feelings sincerely, he appeared nervous and hesitant as he waited for her response. Meanwhile, Waguri listened attentively and responded positively, accepting his feelings and expressing her affection for him. This confession marked a significant turning point in their relationship as they transitioned from mutual attraction to an official romantic relationship.

This pattern in episode 13 because this scene takes place after the emotional tension created by Rintaro's accidental confession at the beach. Realizing that his feelings can no longer be ignored, Rintaro asks Waguri to meet him again so that he can properly explain what he meant and express his emotions honestly. During the conversation, he gathers the courage to tell Waguri how important she has become to him and admits his romantic feelings directly. Despite his determination, Rintaro remains nervous throughout the interaction and worries about how his confession might affect their relationship. He is particularly concerned that his feelings could create difficulties for Waguri, especially given the social barriers between their schools. Summoning all his courage, Rintaro expresses his feelings directly, but he remains afraid that his presence will disturb Waguri, especially regarding their relationship at school.

From the perspective of Adult Attachment Theory proposed by Hazan and Shaver (1987), this scene reveals Rintaro's dominant anxious attachment style. Although he has developed the confidence to form a relationship with Waguri, he still feels anxious when expressing his feelings because Waguri's response is very important to him. His nervousness before and during the confession reflects his fear of rejection as well as his sensitivity to the possibility of losing this important relationship. At the same time, his willingness to openly communicate his feelings demonstrates personal growth and a stronger sense of trust in

Waguri. Therefore, this scene shows that although Rintaro continues to exhibit characteristics of an anxious attachment style, he has become better able to express his emotional needs healthily.

According to Lamarre (2009), Napier (2005), and Cavallaro (2010), visual elements in anime help convey emotional meaning and the development of character relationships. In this scene, the close interaction between Rintaro and Waguri visually emphasizes the emotional bond that has developed throughout the story. Their mutual focus on one another and the absence of distractions in the surrounding environment direct the audience's attention to the significance of the scene. According to Napier (2005), anime often uses character expressions and interpersonal interactions to convey psychological states, while Cavallaro (2010) argues that visual representations contribute to the development of emotional relationships. Therefore, the visual composition of this scene highlights Rintaro's emotional uncertainty and the mutual affection between the two characters, reinforcing the significance of this moment in the story's conclusion regarding their relationship.

2. Attachment Style of Kaoruko Waguri

a. Open and positive secure attachment

After initially feeling surprised by Rintaro's appearance, Waguri chooses to return and interact with him. She even invites him to share cake

and initiates further conversation. Early in the story, Waguri demonstrates the key characteristics of secure attachment through her emotional openness and positive attitude toward Rintaro. She boldly initiates interaction without showing any fear of Rintaro's appearance.

Datum 8



Figure 8. Waguri invited Rintaro to eat some cake

TFFBWD (2025): Episode 1: (10:45)

In her initial interaction with Rintaro in Episode 1, Waguri demonstrated characteristics of secure attachment, as evidenced by how she initiated and responded to the interaction openly and without excessive anxiety. Waguri actively initiates interactions with Rintaro, even though she had previously avoided him due to being startled. She returns to see Rintaro and even treats him to a meal as a way of taking responsibility for improving the impression from their first meeting.

According to Hazan and Shaver (1987), individuals with secure attachment tend to be able to handle interpersonal situations in an honest and non-defensive manner. When Waguri exhibits a positive other-model, she tends to view people positively; this is evident in the fact that she is never influenced by the social stigma surrounding Rintaro, who is considered a delinquent.

According to napierarre (2009), Napier (2005), and Cavallaro (2010), visual elements serve to depict characters' emotions and interpersonal relationships. In this scene, Waguri willingly meets with Rintaro again following their previous encounter and invites him to enjoy some cake together. Her relaxed facial expression, friendly demeanor, and willingness to initiate conversation create a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Napier (2005) explains that anime often uses character interactions and expressions to communicate psychological states, while Cavallaro (2010) argues that visual representations of social interactions help depict the development of relationships. Therefore, Waguri's open attitude and positive engagement visually emphasize the early stages of relationship development at the beginning of the story

b. Secure attachment supports mutual growth

As her relationship with Rintaro grew, Waguri helped Rintaro when he was struggling with his studies; it was evident that she exhibited

characteristics of secure attachment, particularly through her supportive behavior and emotional openness.

Datum 9



Figure 9. Waguri asked why Rintaro didn't want to fail the exam

TFFBWD (2025): Episode 4: (06:00)

Waguri's willingness to help without hesitation or refusal indicates a lack of anxiety about closeness or concern regarding the interpersonal consequences of such interactions. She not only assists with academic matters but also pays attention to Rintaro's needs. When Waguri asked why he didn't want to fail the exam, Rintaro honestly replied that if he failed, he wouldn't be able to participate in the sports festival.

Because Waguri's concern can be interpreted as consistent supportive behavior, according to Hazan and Shaver (1987), individuals with secure attachment tend to feel comfortable giving and receiving

support, as they view relationships as a safe space rather than a source of threat.

According to Lamarre (2009), Napier (2005), and Cavallaro (2010), visual interactions reveal the nature of interpersonal relationships. In this scene, Waguri listens to Rintaro attentively and shows genuine concern by asking why Rintaro is studying so hard. Her calm expression and attentive interaction create an atmosphere of trust and support. These visual elements highlight Waguri's caring nature and reinforce the characteristics of a secure attachment reflected in her supportive behavior toward Rintaro.

c. Initiating Closeness: Kaoruko Waguri's Secure Attachment

Datum 10



Figure 10. Waguri invited Rintaro to go somewhere together
TFFBWD (2025): Episode 8: (08:55)

This scene takes place after Rintaro successfully passes his examinations with Waguri's help. Happy with his achievement, Waguri suggests that they celebrate together by going somewhere. She actively initiates the idea of visiting the aquarium and shows excitement about spending time with him outside their usual interactions. Unlike their earlier encounters, the conversation flows naturally and comfortably. This moment becomes an important step in the development of their relationship because it creates an opportunity for them to spend time together in a more personal setting and strengthen their emotional connection.

In this scene, Waguri's initiative in fostering closeness and comfort in interpersonal relationships is clearly evident. Waguri's first move indicates that her level of emotional openness is high. She does not hesitate to express her desires, even though the context is beginning to shift toward a more personal relationship, such as a date. Her ability to actively yet balancedly develop intimacy is evident when she suggests going to the aquarium to build a closer connection. The interactions she engages in reflect positive expectations toward the relationship, a belief that these interactions will go well. Her expressions of joy while anticipating the meeting, her cheerfulness upon meeting, and the shared photos indicate the presence of a positive role model.

In this scene, Waguri demonstrates the characteristics of a secure attachment by taking the initiative to establish an emotional connection with Rintaro. Instead of waiting for Rintaro to take the initiative, she openly suggests celebrating his success by visiting the aquarium. According to Hazan and Shaver (1987), individuals with secure attachments generally feel comfortable building close relationships and expressing their desires honestly. Waguri's initiative reflects her confidence in the relationship and her positive expectations regarding interpersonal interactions. She did not appear anxious while spending time alone with Rintaro; on the contrary, she welcomed the opportunity to strengthen their bond. Therefore, her behavior reinforces the description of a secure attachment style characterized by emotional openness, trust, and comfort in closeness.

According to Lamarre (2009), Napier (2005), and Cavallaro (2010), visual elements in anime help convey emotional connections between characters. In this scene, Waguri's nervous expression and her enthusiastic interaction with Rintaro create a warm and positive atmosphere. Her relaxed demeanor and active visual engagement emphasize how comfortable she feels spending time with him. These visual elements reinforce Waguri's emotional openness and support the portrayal of her secure attachment style.

d. Secure attachment in receiving gifts

On Waguri's birthday, Rintaro presents her with a cake that he personally baked after spending significant time learning and practicing how to make it. Upon receiving the gift, Waguri reacts positively and expresses genuine appreciation for his effort. Rather than focusing solely on the cake, she recognizes the sincerity and dedication behind the present.

Datum 11



Figure 11. Waguri praised the gift from Rintaro
TFFBWD (2025): Episode 12: (20:18)

The instance in which Waguri received a cake as a gift from Rintaro clearly demonstrates the characteristics of secure attachment, particularly emotional receptivity, appreciation, and a stable response to a partner's efforts. Waguri demonstrated the ability to accept attention and affection positively; she received the gift with a happy and appreciative expression and directly praised Rintaro's effort.

Waguri's response is an example of a positive self-model, where an individual feels worthy of receiving attention from others without feeling awkward or rejected. Within Hazan Shaver's (1987) framework, individuals with secure attachment are not only comfortable giving but also capable of receiving affection healthily.

According to Lamarre (2009), Napier (2005), and Cavallaro (2010), visual interactions in anime help convey emotions and the development of relationships. In this scene, Waguri's happy expression and her sincere appreciation upon receiving a gift from Rintaro create a warm atmosphere. Her positive reaction visually highlights acceptance and emotional openness, reinforcing the characteristics of a secure attachment reflected in her relationship with Rintaro.

e. Emotional Reciprocity: Kaoruko Waguri's Secure Attachment

This scene takes place after Rintaro decides to confront the feelings that he has gradually developed for Waguri. Following the events at the beach and the growing emotional closeness between them, Rintaro asks Waguri to meet him and openly expresses his feelings. Despite feeling nervous and uncertain about the outcome, he chooses to be honest about his emotions. As Rintaro confesses, Waguri listens carefully and responds sincerely. Rather than showing surprise or hesitation, she openly admits that she also has feeling for him. This moment marks a significant turning

point in the narrative because it transforms their relationship from mutual affection into a confirmed romantic relationship.

Datum 12



*Figure 12. Waguri accepted Rintaro's confession of love
TFFBWD (2025): Episode 13: (21:00)*

When Waguri responded honestly to Rintaro's declaration of love, it became clear that secure attachment was at play, particularly in terms of emotional reciprocity, openness, and stability in the face of intense emotional closeness. Waguri demonstrated complete emotional openness without ambivalence. She did not avoid the situation, nor did she feel fear, confusion, or try to escape. Instead, she directly expresses that she also has feelings for Rintaro.

Waguri's confidence in her feelings demonstrates emotional confidence, that is, a sense of certainty regarding her own emotions and the relationship they have built. She does not doubt the validity of her

emotions, nor does she need time or distance to withdraw. Thus, this indicates a healthy relationship due to a balance in giving and receiving. Waguri's response reflects the "positive-other" model, which involves trust in Rintaro as a partner. She does not express concern that these feelings will lead to negative consequences, but rather accepts them as a natural part of the relationship's development. According to Hazan Shaver's (1987) theory, the ability to express feelings clearly without excessive fear is a key indicator of secure attachment.

According to Lamarre (2009), Napier (2005), and Cavallaro (2010), the visuals in this scene help convey emotions and the development of the relationship. In this scene, Waguri's calm expression and her immediate response to Rintaro's confession create an atmosphere of trust and emotional security. Her willingness to openly express her feelings visually emphasizes mutual affection and acceptance. These visual elements reinforce the characteristics of a secure attachment, as reflected in her honest and emotionally open response.

Based on the findings above, Tsumugi Rintaro predominantly demonstrates anxious attachment through fear of rejection, excessive self-doubt, emotional insecurity, and a strong need for validation. In contrast, Kaoruko Waguri consistently exhibits secure attachment characterized by emotional openness, supportive behavior, trust, and stable communication. These attachment patterns become the foundation for

understanding how their interpersonal interactions shape the development of their romantic relationship, which is discussed in the following section.

B. Adult attachment styles affect the romantic relationship of the main characters.

After identifying the attachment styles exhibited by the two main characters, anxious attachment in Rintaro and secure attachment in Waguri. Based on the Hazan and Shaver (1987) framework, the subsequent analysis focuses on how these attachment styles influence the dynamics of the romantic relationship they build. The identification of attachment styles in the previous section serves not only as a psychological classification but also as a foundation for understanding the patterns of response, interaction, and the development of emotional closeness between the two characters.

1. First Encounter: Initial Perception and Formation of Relational Ground

After their initial meeting, Rintaro intends to return a cake that belongs to Waguri. During this process, he notices Waguri in an uncomfortable situation with two boys and instinctively intervenes to help her. Although his actions result in a minor injury, Waguri responds with appreciation and concern by tending to the wound on his forehead. The interaction creates an opportunity for both characters to engage in a more personal and meaningful conversation. Through this

moment, the emotional distance between them begins to decrease, and their relationship develops beyond a simple acquaintance.

Datum 13



*Figure 13. Waguri was helping to wipe the scar on Rintaro's forehead
TFFBWD (2025): Episode 1: (18:28)*

During their first meeting, Rintaro exhibited signs of anxious attachment through a negative self-model, the perception that he might be rejected or judged negatively. This was evident in his awkward reactions, his tendency to keep his distance, and his lack of confidence during their initial interaction. In contrast, Waguri demonstrated secure attachment through a positive other-model, that is, a tendency to view others positively without excessive bias. Although initially surprised, Waguri did not hold onto a negative view of Rintaro and instead sought to improve their interaction by meeting with him again.

This interaction produces an immediate effect by reinforcing the interaction and avoiding the creation of negative stigma toward others; consequently, a relationship that might have ended due to a negative first impression is able to develop further. From the perspective of Hazan and Shaver (1987), such a secure response facilitates the formation of early relational trust.

This psychological effect is reinforced through *mise en scène* that visually represents a shift in attitude. The physical distance between the characters at the start of their encounter indicates social boundaries and initial discomfort. Misaligned blocking reflects an interaction that is not yet stable. Framing that separates the characters' focus underscores that they are not yet in the same emotional relationship.

2. Study Request: From Hesitation to Emotional Safety

Datum 14



*Figure 14. Rintaro asked Waguri to teach him how to study
TFFBWD (2025): Episode 3: (11:14)*

In this scene, when Rintaro is unsure how to handle his exams, he accidentally runs into Waguri at the library. When Waguri comes over to greet him, Rintaro shares his academic struggles. Rintaro's anxious attachment triggers a fear of rejection, making him hesitant to ask for help. The request for help with studying is not merely an academic need but also a form of mutual support behavior, where he tries to reach out while still anticipating the possibility of being rejected.

Waguri, who has a secure attachment style, demonstrates supportive responsiveness, the ability to respond to others' needs openly and without negative judgment. This interaction yields a significant outcome: the establishment of emotional safety. Rintaro, who was initially anxious, begins to feel more comfortable interacting. Waguri serves as a secure base and a source of support that allows Rintaro to grow without pressure, and the relationship begins to evolve from formal interactions toward a more personal and supportive bond. Such secure responses can reduce anxiety-related behaviors in individuals with anxious attachment, thereby creating space for trust to develop.

From the perspective of Hazan and Shaver (1987), the interaction between Rintaro's anxious attachment and Waguri's secure attachment serves as a crucial foundation for the development of their romantic relationship. Initially, Rintaro hesitated to ask for help out of fear of

rejection and being seen as a burden. However, Waguri responded with openness and support, rather than judgment. Her secure attachment provided emotional reassurance that reduced Rintaro's anxiety and encouraged him to trust Waguri more. As a result, their relationship gradually evolved from a casual acquaintance into a mutually supportive emotional bond. This scene illustrates how secure attachment can foster a sense of emotional safety that helps individuals with anxious attachment feel more comfortable with interpersonal closeness and dependence.

The *mise-en-scène*, reinforced by the characters sitting side by side and close together, conveys a sense of equality in their interaction rather than a hierarchical relationship. The steady medium shot creates an impression of balance and natural interaction. The bright, natural lighting reinforces an atmosphere of safety, openness, and non-confrontation.

3. Emotional Tension within Growing Intimacy

After spending the day together at the aquarium, Rintaro and Waguri continue to enjoy various activities and conversations. Waguri appears cheerful and genuinely excited to spend time with Rintaro. She actively engages in their interactions, shares her thoughts, and expresses her enjoyment of the experience. Despite the positive atmosphere, Rintaro remains attentive to Waguri's reactions and often

wonders whether she is truly having a good time. At the end of the date, Rintaro notices Waguri's bright smile and realizes that she has genuinely enjoyed their time together. This moment becomes an important point because it provides emotional reassurance and develops them.

Datum 15



*Figure 15. Waguri is feeling happy today
TFFBWD (2025): Episode 8: (21:38)*

This scene illustrates how Rintaro's anxious attachment manifests as a tendency to scrutinize Waguri's reactions. Even though they're enjoying a positive moment together, he still can't help but wonder if Waguri is truly enjoying the time. In contrast, Waguri displays emotional stability, fully savoring the moment without showing any anxiety or doubt about their relationship.

From the perspective of Hazan and Shaver (1987), the interaction between Waguri's secure attachment and Rintaro's anxious

attachment contributes positively to the development of their romantic relationship. During their date at the aquarium, Waguri openly expressed her happiness and enjoyment while spending time with Rintaro. Her positive emotional response provided a sense of security and validation, which helped reduce Rintaro's tendency to worry about rejection. Consequently, the relationship flourished in a supportive environment where emotional intimacy could grow. This scene illustrates how Waguri's secure attachment fosters trust and comfort, thereby allowing Rintaro to gradually feel more confident in their relationship.

According to Lamarre (2009), Napier (2005), and Cavallaro (2010), the visual elements in this scene convey emotions and the development of the relationship between the characters. In this scene, Waguri's broad smile and cheerful expression visually convey her genuine happiness when she is with Rintaro. The dominant shades of purple and pink in the background create a warm and romantic atmosphere that emphasizes the emotional closeness between the characters. These visual elements reinforce the sense of comfort, affection, and growing closeness that characterizes their budding romantic relationship.

4. Gift Scene: Validation, Reassurance, and Emotional Regulation

After spending considerable effort learning how to bake a special cake, Rintaro finally gives the cake to Waguri as her birthday present. However, after giving the gift, he becomes increasingly anxious while waiting for her reaction. Instead of feeling confident, he continuously wonders whether the cake is good enough and whether Waguri truly likes it. Later that evening, Waguri shares her opinion and expresses genuine appreciation for his effort.

Datum 16



*Figure 16. Waguri is praising the cake Rintaro made
TFFBWD (2025): Episode 11: (19:22)*

Rintaro's character development reveals a need for validation of Waguri's emotional certainty. Rintaro's effort to bake and give a cake as a birthday gift is not just a routine gesture, but an attempt to seek acknowledgment of his feelings. The scene where he waits for

Waguri's response shows that his emotional stability depends on her acceptance.

After receiving the gift from Rintaro, Waguri tells him to wait until later that night to hear her opinion on the taste of the cake. Because Waguri has a secure attachment style, she appreciates Rintaro's effort; the scene described above shows how Waguri has formed an opinion about Rintaro's gift. According to Waguri, she has never tasted a cake like this before; she feels an emotional connection and warmth with every bite.

When Rintaro hears Waguri's opinion, his anxiety decreases, his trust in the relationship increases, and their emotional closeness deepens due to this validation. Additionally, the relationship becomes more stable due to the balance between Rintaro's needs and Waguri's response. A sense of being valued and accepted emerges, which is crucial for the development of a romantic relationship. According to Hazan Shaver (1987), such secure responses function as a regulatory mechanism that can reduce anxiety activation in individuals with an anxious attachment style.

The *mise-en-scène* elements in this scene reinforce the transition from anxiety to emotional calm. It begins with a close-up of Rintaro's face as he waits for a response, highlighting tension, anxiety, and high

expectations. His stiff body language and hesitant expression reveal an unstable internal state. Subsequently, after Waguri responds, the shift in her expression, becoming soft and warm, serves as a soothing visual focal point. According to Cavallaro's perspective, a character's visual expression in anime is a direct representation of their psychological state, and it demonstrates how emotional changes can be visualized gradually.

5. From anxiety to expressing feelings

This scene takes place shortly after the incident at the beach, where Rintaro unintentionally revealed his feelings for Waguri. Following that event, both characters become more aware of the emotions developing between them. As they sit together, an awkward atmosphere emerges because neither of them is completely sure how to address what happened. Rintaro becomes increasingly conscious of his confession and worries about how Waguri may have interpreted his words. At the same time, he is forced to wait for her response without knowing what she truly thinks. Despite the uncertainty, the two remain together and continue their interaction rather than avoiding each other.

Datum 17

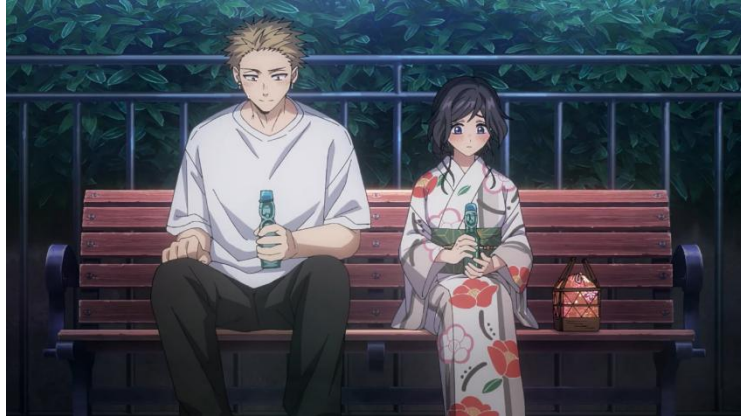


Figure 17. An awkward moment while sitting together

TFFBWD (2025): Episode 13: (05:13)

At this climax, Rintaro's anxious attachment style has developed, and he can manage his emotions well, even though he still experiences anxiety. Unlike the previous phase, which was dominated by a fear of rejection, he now remains anxious but chooses to face the risk of rejection head-on and express his feelings directly. On the other hand, Waguri, who has a secure attachment style, demonstrates acceptance and does not reject him ambivalently. The resulting interaction produces the most significant impact on the relationship: the formation of a mutual emotional commitment. Rintaro is no longer merely seeking validation but is actively building the relationship; Waguri is not just a stabilizing presence but also an emotionally equal partner; and the relationship evolves from the exploratory phase into a more stable one due to this commitment.

From the perspective of Hazan and Shaver (1987), this scene illustrates how the interaction between Rintaro's anxious attachment and Waguri's secure attachment influences the development of their romantic relationship by the end of the story. After inadvertently revealing his feelings, Rintaro becomes fixated on how Waguri might respond to his confession and is anxious about the uncertainty of her reaction. His worries reflect a fear of rejection and a need for certainty, typically associated with an anxious attachment style. However, despite the awkwardness and uncertainty, both Rintaro and Waguri remain committed. Their willingness to stay together and continue communicating allows the relationship to grow, rather than being disrupted by anxiety. Yet in the end, they both express their true feelings against different backgrounds.

The *mise-en-scène* in this scene serves as a visual representation of the characters' emotions. The framing that places Rintaro and Waguri in a balanced composition indicates that their relationship has reached emotional parity. The increasingly close physical distance represents the psychological closeness that has been established. Placing the climax at the end of the season is a common formula in romance-genre anime to evoke a sense of a happy ending.

Warm, stable lighting creates a safe and emotionally charged atmosphere. The minimal distortion or separation of frames indicates

the absence of any significant internal conflict. According to Lamarre, the arrangement of visual space reflects the relationships between characters. The visual atmosphere in anime reflects specific emotional states.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

This study analyzes the adult attachment styles of the two main characters in *The Fragrant Flower Blooms with Dignity*. It examines how these attachment styles influence the development of their romantic relationships. Using Hazan and Shaver's (1987) Adult Attachment Theory, supported by anime studies and visual analysis as outlined by Lamarre (2009), Napier (2005), and Cavallaro (2010), this study explores the characters' attachment patterns and the impact of these patterns on the development of their relationships. The findings indicate that attachment styles are not only reflected through dialogue and behavior but are also reinforced through visual elements such as expressions, interpersonal interactions, atmosphere, and background.

Regarding the first research question, the findings reveal that the two main characters demonstrate different dominant adult attachment styles. Tsumugi Rintaro predominantly exhibits an anxious attachment style, characterized by negative self-perception, fear of rejection, excessive concern about others' evaluations, a strong need for reassurance, and sensitivity toward emotional acceptance. These characteristics are consistently reflected in his interactions with Waguri throughout the story. In contrast, Kaoruko Waguri

predominantly demonstrates a secure attachment style, characterized by emotional openness, trust, supportive behavior, comfort with intimacy, and the ability to both give and receive affection healthily. Although Rintaro experiences significant anxiety in interpersonal situations, Waguri consistently approaches relationships with confidence and emotional stability.

The second research question, the findings reveal that adult attachment styles significantly influence the development of the romantic relationship between Rintaro and Waguri. Rintaro's anxious attachment affects the relationship through his fear of rejection, need for reassurance, emotional uncertainty, and tendency to overthink his interactions with Waguri. These characteristics frequently make him question his self-worth and his place within the relationship. However, Waguri's secure attachment positively influences the relationship by providing emotional support, acceptance, trust, and consistent reassurance. Her willingness to initiate interactions, support Rintaro's personal growth, appreciate his efforts, and openly express her feelings creates a sense of emotional safety that strengthens their bond. As the relationship develops, Rintaro gradually becomes more comfortable expressing his emotions and needs, while Waguri continues to foster intimacy through honest communication and emotional openness. Therefore, the interaction between Rintaro's anxious attachment and Waguri's secure

attachment contributes to the development of a healthier, more stable, and emotionally intimate romantic relationship.

B. Suggestions

Based on the findings of this study, several suggestions can be proposed. First, future researchers are encouraged to explore adult attachment styles using different attachment theories, such as Bartholomew and Horowitz's four-category attachment model, to provide broader perspectives on romantic relationship dynamics in literary and media texts. Future studies may also investigate other psychological aspects, such as interpersonal communication, emotional regulation, self-esteem, or relationship satisfaction, to gain a deeper understanding of character development and romantic relationships.

Second, future researchers may examine other anime, films, manga, or literary works that portray romantic relationships to compare how attachment styles are represented across different narratives and cultural contexts. Such studies can contribute to the growing body of research on the relationship between psychology and media narratives, particularly in understanding how fictional characters reflect human emotional experiences and interpersonal relationships.

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