Adult Attachment Styles And Their Relationship To Marital Satisfaction In Couples In First Marriages Of Seven (7) Years Or Longer

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ADULT ATTACHMENT STYLES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO MARITAL SATISFACTION IN COUPLES IN FIRST MARRIAGES OF SEVEN (7) YEARS OR LONGER

BY

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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I am very grateful to Fr. DeRosa for his guidance and support. I thank him for being himself - wise and uniquely compassionate.

I am very grateful to Dr. Brian Sweeney for his support, encouragement and generosity. He is an example of a true gentleman.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my sister, Shelly, who inspired me to keep at it, lifted me up when I was falling down, and reminded me that nobody does it in a straight line.
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of attachment style on marital satisfaction in couples that were married for seven years or more and were in first marriages. Specifically measured in this study was adult attachment style and marital satisfaction. Thirty couples completed a demographic survey, the Adult Attachment Scale (Collins & Read, 1990), and the Marital Satisfaction Scale (Roach, Frazier, & Bowden, 1981).

According to the United States Department of Commerce (1999), almost 1.2 million couples divorced in 1997. The median duration of marriage for divorcing couples in 1990 was 7.2 years, and most divorces occur within the first ten years of marriage.

Overwhelmingly, the existing research on marriage has studied relatively young couples. Most of the studies of adult attachment style use samples of college students or relatively young married couples to examine the relations between attachment and relationship quality. This has had a tendency to restrict the generalizability of the findings to both a young adult period of development as well as romantic/dating relationships more typical of this younger population.

The present investigation was undertaken to measure the attachment style and marital satisfaction of couples who are in first marriages and who have been married for
seven years or longer in order that the more seriously committed or longer-term love
relationships of married couples could be examined.

Background of the Problem

It may surprise some of us that the divorce rate declined for an eighth straight
year in 1998 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998). Perhaps this can be attributed to a sharp
increase in the age people are when they first get married over this same period (U.S.
Bureau of the Census, 1998). The older one gets, the wiser one is supposed to be.
Couples do not enter into a first marriage with expectations of divorce. Nonetheless,
about half of all first marriages are projected to end in divorce.

Despite the slowing divorce rate (National Marriage Project, 1999), Rogers and
Amato (1997) report that the level of satisfaction in intact first marriages has declined
since at least the mid-1970s. Satisfaction is by definition an attitude, which, like any
perception is subject to change over time, and especially in relation to significant life
experiences. Considering marriage satisfaction as an attitude as opposed to fixed
property or a fixed behavior state lets researchers study marriage along a continuum of
greater or lesser favorability at any given point in time (Roach et al, 1981).

It has been hypothesized that, on average, marital satisfaction most likely does not
follow a U-shaped curve over the course of a marriage, as was once believed by Rollins
and Feldman (1970). The U-shaped curve of marital quality assumes that the quality of
marriages vary with both duration of marriage and family stage, mean quality being
lower at the intermediate durations and stages than at the early and late ones. A common
explanation for this curve is that many marriages become less satisfactory when couples
have children but improve when the children leave the home. Studies by Vaillant and
Vaillant (1993) and Glenn (1998) suggest that marital satisfaction drops significantly over the first 10 years of marriage on average and then drops more gradually in the following decades.

In the 1990s, a vast number of papers were published on a wide variety of topics pertaining to marital satisfaction. The reasoning behind the study of marital satisfaction stems from its core functioning in individual and family well-being (Stack & Eshleman, 1998), from the benefits that society amasses when sturdy marriages are formed and maintained (Laub, Nagin, & Sampson, 1998), and from the need to develop empirically valid interventions for couples that prevent or alleviate marital discord (Baucom, Shoham, Mueser, Daiuto, & Stickle, 1998).

It is relatively certain that as long as individuals want to be in relationships, they will also want to be married. Marriage is considered a societal norm and a fundamental concept. Despite the gloomy news on marital satisfaction over time, this has not dampened the desire for people to seek marital partners.

Statement of the Problem

During the last decade, researchers have begun to study adult attachment within the realm of the marital relationship. There has been an increase in the amount of research on an individual spouse's characteristics and the way in which couples function in their marital relationships. This research attempts to address questions about how the experience of individuals' early in life are apparent in individuals' working models of relationships and subsequent interpersonal functioning in adulthood (Bowlby, 1969; Simpson & Rholes, 1998).
Self-reports of attachment style in adulthood or retrospective interview-based assessments of attachment to parents have been used to show that marital quality is greater to the extent that an individual, and that individual's partner, report secure versus avoidant or anxious ambivalent attachment styles (Feeney, Noller, & Callan, 1994).

Longitudinal links between attachment styles and subsequent relationship quality are beginning to be established (Klohnken & Bera, 1998), and the specific interpersonal behaviors that mediate this association are being pursued. Kobak and Hazan (1991), for example, showed that wives displayed more rejection during a problem-solving discussion to the extent that they described themselves as less reliant on their husband and that they described their husbands as less psychologically available to them.

Although theorizing about the role of attachment in adult relationships often outweighs the data and measurements used to test hypotheses, research in this area has improved rapidly in a relatively short period of time. Data from the research regarding attachment in adult relationships provide strong, conceptually guided evidence for how researchers can attempted to integrate individual-level variables and interpersonal processes to explain determinants of marital satisfaction (Bradbury, Fincham & Beach, 2000).

This research has paved the way for future study. The primary aim of this study was to explore the effects of attachment style on marital satisfaction. This study compared the similarity or non-similarity of attachment styles within couples who are in first marriages and have been married seven years or longer and investigated whether or not this contributed to their marital satisfaction.
Definition of Terms

Attachment Theory: For the purpose of this study, attachment theory is defined from Bowlby (1973) specifically as “confidence in the availability of attachment figures, or lack of it, is built up slowly during the years of immaturity — infancy, childhood, and adolescence — and that whatever expectations are developed during those years tend to persist relatively unchanged throughout the rest of life” (p. 202).

Adult Attachment: For the purpose of this study, adult attachment is defined as “the stable tendency of an adult individual to make substantial efforts to seek and maintain proximity to and contact with one or a few special individuals who provide the subjective potential for physical and psychological safety and security” (Sperling & Berman, 1994, p. 8).

Adult Attachment Styles: For the purpose of this study, adult attachment styles refers to the dimensions of “Close”, “Depend” and “Anxiety” measured and supported by Collins and Read (1990). These three dimensions of adult attachment are measured in the Adult Attachment Scale (Collins & Read, 1990) and indicate the extent to which an individual (a) is comfortable with closeness (Close), (b) feels he or she can depend on others (Depend), and (c) is anxious or fearful about being abandoned or unloved (Anxiety).

Marital Satisfaction: For the purpose of this study, marital satisfaction is defined as “an attitude of greater or lesser favorability towards one’s own marital relationship” (Roach et al, 1981, pp. 537) and is measured by the Marital Satisfaction Scale (Roach et al, 1981).
Hypotheses

1) Husbands who match their wives in adult attachment style will have higher
marital satisfaction scores than husbands who do not match their wives in adult
attachment styles.

2) Wives who match their husbands in adult attachment style will have higher
marital satisfaction scores than wives who do not match their husbands in adult
attachment styles.

3) Men will experience a higher level of marital satisfaction than women do.

4) Individuals with a history of marriage counseling experience greater marital
satisfaction.

Limitations

The limitations of this study are as follows:

1. This study was conducted shortly after September 11, 2001, when the country was
reeling from the most unprecedented event in its history. Dramatic times produce
dramatic emotions.

2. Subjects may be influenced by their spouse to answer the questions in a positive
manner.

3. Subjects may be influenced by their spouse not to answer the questions in the
survey at all.

4. Subjects may be influenced by their current state of mind (i.e., just had a marital
spat). Couples who may currently be in marriage counseling may have clouded
judgment.

There could be sampling bias because this is a self-selected group of participants.
CHAPTER II

Review of Related Literature

Attachment Theory

Research into the study of attachment began with the work of John Bowlby (1969) who noted the importance of attachment behaviors in infants. All roads of inquiry regarding attachment have their theoretical underpinnings in his work as he contributed the first formal statement of attachment theory.

His work, and that of his followers, resulted in the model known as attachment theory in which attachment between infant and mother and all other attachments are seen as psychological bonds in their own right and not as deriving from instinctual drives which the mother satisfies. Attachment is a primary motivational system, with its own workings and interface with other motivational systems (Bowlby, 1988).

Bowlby (1979) described his attachment theory as a way of conceptualizing the propensity of human beings to make strong affectional bonds to particular others and of explaining the many forms of emotional distress and personality disturbance to which unwilling separation and loss give rise. Some of the personality disturbances referred to by Bowlby include anxiety, anger, depression, and emotional detachment.

Basing attachment theory on an evolutionary-ethological approach, Bowlby conceptualized an “attachment behavioral system” - a homeostatic process that regulates infant proximity-seeking and contact-maintaining behaviors with one or a few specific
individuals who provide physical or psychological safety or security. According to Bowlby (1969, 1982a), the attachment system is an independent behavioral system, equivalent in function to other drive-behavioral systems such as eating, drinking and mating.

Stevenson-Hinde & Hinde (1990) support the notion that the model of attachment theory is an independent behavioral system. They argued that this implied that attachment theory is a biologically “pre-wired” behavioral control system that organizes and directs behaviors or activities to achieve specific set goals and which has survival value within the realm of evolutionary adaptedness. If it is universally accepted that man is a social being, then there must be a motivational system deeply embedded and in place to ensure that humans remain connected to one another.

Attachment behaviors are organized around specific attachment figures. The goal of organizing behaviors around specific attachment figures would be a feeling of security. The behaviors can be classified as those which result in a person attaining or retaining proximity to some other preferred individual, who is usually conceived as stronger and/or wiser (Bowlby, 1979). Interestingly, the development of the attachment system comes at the time of locomotion and object permanence. This makes good sense from an evolutionary standpoint in that it keeps the infant in close proximity to the caregiver while offering the infant the ability to explore new terrain and experiences under the watchful eye of the caregiver. The infant can then “explore from a secure base” (Ainsworth, 1967, p.297).

Crowell and Treboux (2001) described the “secure base” phenomenon in adult relationships and explored the connections between various domains from which attachment security is measured. The authors provide empirical evidence that addresses important questions for therapeutic work with
couples. Some of the questions they attempted to answer concerned issues such as what ways adult attachment differs from attachment between children and parents, what influences do past family history and past experiences have on current relationships, and what are the best attachment predictors of marital satisfaction and marital stability?

Although Bowlby focused primarily on infants and young children, he knew the importance of studying attachment processes in adulthood and argued that the basic functions of the attachment system continue to operate across the life span.

Whilst especially evident during early childhood, attachment behaviour is held to characterize human beings from the cradle to the grave...the particular patterns of attachment behaviour shown by an individual turn partly on his present age, sex, and circumstances and partly on the experiences he has had with attachment figures earlier in his life (Bowlby, 1979, pp. 129-130).

The laboratory procedure called the Strange Situation (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall, 1978) documents differing styles of attachment organization in infants on the basis of reunion behavior. After two brief separations from their mothers, infants were categorized as to the security of attachment. They are classified as Secure (B), Insecure-Avoidant (A) or Insecure-Anxious (C).

Clearly shown within the Strange Situation, attachment behaviors are triggered when the child becomes aware of the fact that the attachment figure/mother is not easily accessible. The child perceives something threatening in their immediate environment. When this occurs, the child will act in a way that will restore proximity. These are attachment behaviors. Once the proximity has been reestablished and the attachment restored, the child will resume his/her activity. Ainsworth (1985) continued to focus on
the study of attachment as a normal developmental process in infants and young children and examined attachment as a life-span concept.

Bowlby (1988) assumed that in order to activate and deactivate the attachment system effectively and efficiently, the child must develop internal working models of the attachment figure and of the self in interaction with the attachment figure. Working models appear to develop very early in the first months of life, particularly in the latter half of the first year. The key concept which Bowlby introduced to describe internal objects was that of ‘internal working models’, which are built up from repeated patterns of interpersonal experience.

A securely attached child will build up an internal working model of a responsive, reliable parent and of a self that is worthy of love and attention. The child will then take these assumptions and these feelings into later relationships along the road of life. An insecure child will build up an internal working model of an unresponsive, unreliable parent and of a self that is unworthy of love and hungry for attention. An insecure child takes into the world his or her assumptions of the world as a threatening and untrustworthy place.

The patterns that are formed and that are laid down in the mind are very difficult to change once they have become established in early life. They have been laid down in implicit memory. They are not available to conscious awareness because they are not memories of events – they are memories of schematic patterns formed from repeated past experiences and which influence present expectations and attitudes (Fonagy, 1999).

The internal working models could be described as displays of the implicit memory. Fonagy (1999) suggested that instead of arguing that fantasies are mental
representations of instinct -- an argument that requires infants to have fantasies about events they do not have the cognitive capacities to even imagine -- attachment theory proposes that infants have an innate tendency to place relationships at the center of their emotional worlds. That being said, attachment theory offers a much more sound explanation for the development of fantasy than the drive theory.

Attachment theory argues that infants internalize those relationships at the center of their worlds and thus build up patterns of those relationships to render them meaningful and predictable. Those patterns are carried forward with assumptions about the world and the relationships around us in later life. Fonagy (1999) theorizes that conscious and unconscious fantasy arise out of this "pattern building" and perhaps not out of some mental representations of instinct as supported by the drive theory.

Bowlby (1973) believed that working models of attachment are constructed gradually throughout infancy, childhood, and adolescence, after which they become relatively resistant to change. Thus, according to Bowlby's theory, the qualities of one's working models with regard to attachment must be associated with functioning in adult intimate relationships such as in marriages. But whether or not these working models of attachment, relatively resistant to change, can indeed change in adulthood, or how they change, has yet to be fully determined.

An internal working model is a representation in the mind that includes aspects of the self, the attachment figure and the affects that connect the two figures (Bowlby, 1973). The internal working models are based on prior history of attachment relationships plus the current interactions between the self and the attachment figure when the attachment behavioral system is activated.
According to Sperling & Berman (1994), when the attachment behavioral system is activated, this appears to allow for each individual to anticipate and plan (correctly or incorrectly) what the other person will do given a preceding set of actions and may draw out behaviors that are not accurate in terms of the current situation. It does not matter what the reality of the situation truly is – what matters most, what will influence a particular action or behavior, is the individual’s interpretation of what the reality is.

Adult Attachment

The quality of one’s working models with regard to attachment can be associated with functioning in adult intimate relationships such as marriage. Cohn, Silver, & Cowan (1992) suggest that the quality of earlier attachment relationships will have profound importance for interpersonal functioning in intimate adult relationships or marriages and have provided rich information for current and future research. Attachment theory has been proposed as an organizational framework for the study of close adult relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1994).

Researchers (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991, Feeney, 1996) have attempted to understand when adverse care-giving experiences do and do not lead to difficulty in close adult relationships and those mechanisms that might account for continuities and discontinuities between earlier parent-child relationships and marital functioning later in life.

Attachment style refers to particular internal working models of attachment that determine people’s behavioral responses to real or imagined separation from and reunion with their attachment figures (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). These internal working models are thought to be consistent across time and across relationships. While most theorists
would argue that they are direct outgrowths of initial attachment experiences, most theorists would not argue that they are immune to change (Klohnen & Bera, 1998, Simpson & Rholes, 1998).

Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy (1985) not only assessed adult attachment style but additionally developed an intriguing research protocol that sought to tap the attachment representational world of six-year-old children. Children were categorized on the basis of their completion of a story about a child who is facing a temporary separation from his or her parents. Using this tool, the researchers have found that there is continuity in attachment categories from infancy to age six.

Further longitudinal research has documented the continuity of the attachment system from 1 year to age 10. Children’s behavior at home, in school, in social settings can be predicted by their attachment styles (Sroufe, Egeland, & Kretuzer, 1990). A child’s attachment style is consistent with parenting characteristics and parental attachment style (Main et al, 1985).

Dorota and Sneddon (2001) investigated, assessed and provided social work intervention and treatment to a group of children identified as non-organic failure-to-thrive between 1977 and 1980. The authors have followed up these children and their families for the last twenty years. Their current paper examines the stability of an internal working model in a sample of individuals who had failure to thrive as children by comparing each individual’s adult attachment style with their childhood attachment to their mother. Findings suggest that when appropriate support and intervention is provided, or when different circumstances or relationships are experienced, internal working models can change.
Research to date has supported Bowlby’s ideas that early attachment experiences to the primary caregivers have implications for later development. Out-dated, inappropriate, inconsistent, or inflexible working models of attachment could be the basis for psychopathology (Bowlby, 1982a). Rutter (1985) supported this point and sited that significant disruptions in the parent-child bond as well as parenting characteristics that parallel separation (hostility, rejection, inconsistent responding) can have a detrimental impact on subsequent development.

Adult attachment relationships differ from those of infants and children in important ways. According to Sperling and Berman (1994), adult attachment is seen as the stable tendency of a person to make extensive strides to seek and maintain proximity to and contact with those individuals who provide a subjective potential for physical and psychological safety and security.

The love relationship is characterized by an emotional bond experienced with a specific adult partner who is experienced as a source of felt security (Bowlby, 1988). Attachment in adults does not invariably provide felt security (Ainsworth, 1989). There are many adults who have attachment relationships that incite significant anxiety or anger. These relationships may be maintained, however, because these adults believe that the attachment figures in their lives have the potential to provide felt security.

Differences in the ways in which feelings are adjusted and attachment styles modified are thought to reflect underlying differences in internal working models. Although the need for security is believed to be universal, people differ systematically in the way they cope with distress and regulate their feelings of security (Ainsworth et al., 1978).
This implies that the attachment system in adulthood will be activated whenever felt security is threatened so that, when adults are faced with events that they perceive as stressful or threatening, they will tend to desire or seek contact with significant others. This behavior can be considered a manifestation of the attachment behavioral system.

Romantic love is an attachment relationship that also includes sexual attraction and reciprocal caregiving (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Clearly, functioning adult marital or sexual relationships require reciprocity and interchange between care-giving and attachment roles. Attachment theory identifies important individual differences in adult attachment style that may influence the nature and quality of supportive exchanges between intimate partners (Collins & Feeney, 2000). The emotional experiences and styles that are bound up in attachment are those that are bound up in caregiving. Fear triggers caregiving responses just as it triggers attachment responses.

There is general consensus that adults exhibit stable characteristics in their intimate relationships, although these attachment styles may have changed from the childhood experience and may show more stability during adulthood (Shaver, Hazan, & Bradshaw, 1988). The relationship of different childhood attachments to the development of adult attachment as a single trait has not been clarified. When a child has an attachment relationship with both mother and father, does only one, both, or a synthesis of both determine the type of attachment relationship one forms in adult intimate relationships? And does this have any correlation with multiple adult partners or marriages a person may have?

Once formed, working models of attachments are expected to be relatively stable, to operate largely outside awareness, and to play an important role in guiding cognition,
emotion and behavior in attachment-relevant contexts (Bowlby, 1973; Collins & Read, 1994; Shaver, Collin, & Clark, 1996).

Recent research on adult attachment has focused on studying attachment within existing marital relationships. Research has now emphasized aspects of attachment theory in which internal working models of attachment both affect and are modified by current relationships.

Hazan and Shaver (1987) have used attachment theory as a framework for understanding adult love relationships. They suggest not only that early relationships have an impact on adult love relationships but that romantic love itself is a process of becoming attached that shares important similarities with child-caretaker attachment.

Kobak and Hazan (1991) have an understanding of working models as the product of the reciprocal interaction between individuals and their partners. The authors examined the relationship of adult attachment styles to specific interactions in married couples. What they discovered was that spouses with secure working models showed more constructive modulation of emotion and reported better marital adjustment. Their examination also noted that the husbands’ attachment security covaried with wives’ rejection during problem-solving tasks, and that wives’s security covaried with quality of husbands’ listening during a confiding task. Thus, a reciprocal interaction of working models and marital functioning was supported. Their data suggest that there are significant correlations between attachment security on the one hand, and marital interaction and marital quality on the other.

White and Berman (1991) conducted a study assessing both the attachment styles of married couples and the presence of attachment behaviors within their interactions.
Couples were asked to discuss a loving, vulnerable, or affectionate memory for five minutes. They were then placed in separate rooms for a short period and then reunited. After the reunion, the spouses repeated the sequence of discussion-separation-reunion, but were asked to discuss an area of conflict in the marriage. Videotapes of each person’s behaviors were rated for indicators of attachment. When couples in which both members had secure attachment styles were compared to those in which one or both of the members had an insecure attachment style, it was found that the couples with matched attachment styles had significantly higher marital satisfaction than those with mismatched attachment styles.

Another study investigated attachment styles and interpersonal functioning within couples. Senchak and Leonard (1992) asked newlywed couples to complete a three-item measure of adult attachment style and measures of marital intimacy, partners’ marital functioning and partners’ conflict resolution behaviors. Results showed that husbands and wives tended to possess similar attachment styles. It was the nature of the pairings, rather than their similarity that was associated with the marital adjustment variables. Couples in which one or both partners were securely attached evidenced better overall marital adjustment than couples in which one or both partners were insecurely attached.

Research findings generally reveal that attachment as an internal working model functions to organize the relational world of the individual as well as to regulate affective states. The concept of the attachment internal working model is central to understanding the psychodynamics of marriage (Feeney, 1999). Given that attachment styles are aspects of personality specifically concerned with interpersonal orientations in
relationships with significant others, it seems likely that they would be central
dimensions on which individuals select marital partners – for better or for worse.

Bowlby (1988) did not clearly explain the process of change in the nature of the
internal working model, nor does the concept of the internal working model explain why
the same person can have very different experiences in different relationships. Clinicians
have observed individuals who exhibit all the characteristics of an insecure attachment in
one relationship, but no longer exhibit those characteristics when they enter into another
relationship with a psychologically different partner. As such, the internal working
model may not be sufficient as an explanatory construct.

It is being suggested that interactional components must play a significant role in
activating and maintaining attachment-based interactions within close relationships.
Although researchers often discuss attachment as if individuals have only one attachment
style, theoretical accounts of attachment processes point out that individuals may
simultaneously hold multiple mental models of attachment (Baldwin & Fehr, 1995).

Psychologists have shown that an individual’s attachment style with one parent
does not necessarily predict his or her style with regard to the other parent (Baldwin,
Keelan, Fehr, Enns, & Koh-Rangarakoo, 1996) or his or her attachment style in relation to
a romantic partner (Baldwin & Fehr, 1995). It is likely that the situation is even more
complex because adults may have different working models for each of the different roles
they occupy – son, daughter, lover, friend.

Just as infants can be described as having a secure, anxious/ambivalent, or
avoidant attachment to a primary caregiver (Ainsworth et al, 1978), adults can be
similarly described in terms of their typical approach to close relationships. Hazan and
Shaver (1987) attempted to translate the typology developed by Ainsworth et al. (1978) into terms appropriate for adult relationships, resulting in three attachment descriptions. Respondents were asked to choose the description that best characterized them, thus categorizing themselves as secure, avoidant, or anxious. The authors reported that secure adults described their love relationships as happy and emphasized their ability to support and accept their partners despite their faults and had relationships that tended to last longer than either avoidant or ambivalent respondents.

Baldwin and Fehr (1995) examined the stability of attachment style ratings on the Hazan and Shaver (1987) single item attachment style scale in a number of data sets drawn over two years. Findings suggest that a substantial proportion of the subjects would change their attachment style rating in the interim. The authors proposed that the observed instability may reflect variability in the underlying construct, rather than lack of continuity in style or unreliability of measurement.

Collins and Read (1990) saw limitations to Hazan and Shaver’s (1987) discrete measure as well and developed a measure of their own which they believe captures more of the core structures that are thought to underlie differences in attachment styles. The authors point out that the most central theme underlying the nature of the infant-caretaker relationship is the child’s expectation that the caretaker will be available and emotionally responsive when needed. Both their Depend and Anxiety scales measure aspects of these expectations for adults – the extent to which an individual believes others can be depended on to be available when needed (Depend) and the extent to which an individual feels anxious about such things as being abandoned or unloved (Anxiety). The other most important component of the attachment organization is the desire for close contact
with the attachment figure and the child’s response to that. The third scale (Close) measures the extent to which an individual is comfortable with closeness and intimacy. The dimensions measured by Close, Depend, and Anxiety seem to address fundamental aspects of adult attachment that have important conceptual links to those thought to be central to infant attachment (Collins & Read, 1990).

**Adult Attachment Style and Marital Satisfaction**

Research has provided evidence for a link between adult attachment style and functioning in romantic relationships (Paley, Cox, Burchinal, & Payne, 1999). Although much is known about the behavioral patterns that differentiate couples in distressed and nondistressed marriages, less is known about what predisposes an adult to engage in conflictual or harmonious interactions with his or her partner. Many studies have attempted to correlate adult attachment styles with satisfaction in romantic relationships, married and otherwise (Feeney et al, 1994, Davila, Bradbury, Fincham, 1998, Feeney, 1999a, Feeney, 1994, Hazan & Saver, 1994, Jacob, 1999, Marcus, 1997, Rivera, 1999).

Pistole (1989) investigated adult attachment style in relation to conflict resolution and relationship satisfaction. She examined 147 undergraduate students and found that subjects with a secure attachment style reported higher levels of relationship satisfaction, and used more integrative and compromising conflict resolution strategies with their partners than did subjects with ambivalent or avoidant attachment styles.

Collins and Read (1990) found evidence for gender differences in the relationship between attachment styles and satisfaction. They found that the male subjects’ satisfaction was related to their comfort with closeness, whereas the female subjects’ satisfaction negatively related to their anxiety about relationships.
Simpson (1990) found that, for both men and women in dating couples, secure attachment style was positively correlated with scores on a relationship satisfaction measure, but anxious and avoidant attachment styles were negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction.

In their study of marital relationships, Kobak and Hazan (1991) found that husbands’ reports of their wives’ psychological availability were associated with both partners’ marital satisfaction, but that wives’ reports of their husbands’ psychological availability were associated only with their own satisfaction. They also found that marital partners with secure working models of attachment showed more constructive emotion regulation and maintenance of problem-solving communication tasks, and reported better marital adjustment.

Simpson, Rholes, and Nelligan (1992) examined the relationships between adult attachment styles, support-giving and support-seeking behaviors in spontaneous interactions of couples under a stressful condition. They found that more secure men tended to offer more support as their partners’ anxiety increased, whereas more avoidant men did not. Similarly, secure women sought more support from their partners as their level of anxiety increased, whereas more avoidant women sought less support, both physically and emotionally, as their anxiety level increased.

Cohn et al (1992) gave 27 married couples the Adult Attachment Interview and self-report measures of marital satisfaction. Each person was rated as either secure or insecure with respect to attachment. In addition to this, laboratory observations of the ways in which couples interacted with one another were rated. Contrary to the authors’ expectations, adult attachment classifications were not significantly associated with
reported marital satisfaction in either domain of secure or insecure attachment for husband and wife. However, it was discovered that that the laboratory observation ratings yielded differences for husbands. Husbands classified as “secure” appeared to be in better-functioning couples who engaged in more positive and fewer conflictual behaviors than husbands classified as “insecure.”

Feeney (1994) examined the influence of partner attachment in predicting satisfaction and the role of communication as possible mediators of the association between attachment and relationship satisfaction. The sample used in this study was 361 married couples. Results of the study show that wives’ satisfaction was associated primarily with low anxiety. Wives’ anxiety was also inversely related to their husbands’ satisfaction. In marriages of relatively short duration, the combination of an anxious wife and a husband low in comfort with closeness was associated with dissatisfaction.

Brennan and Shaver (1995) found that attachment style was related to relationship satisfaction in a group of university students involved in relationships. Subjects’ level of relationship satisfaction was related to their partner’s scores on a secure-to-avoidant attachment dimension, and to their own scores on all of the attachment measures that were used.

Carnelley, Pietromonaco, & Jaffe (1996) examined the associations among attachment, caregiving and relationship functioning in 36 married couples. Results showed that men and women generally evidenced caregiving characteristics similar to those of their parents, especially their same-sex parent; and individuals who reported giving more care to their partner evidenced less fearful-avoidant attachment.
Feeney (1996) tested the proposition that attachment and caregiving are central, interrelated components of adult love relationships. A sample of 229 married couples completed a questionnaire package for the purpose of assessing the association between attachment and caregiving styles and the implications of these variables for marital satisfaction. Results showed that marital satisfaction was higher for securely attached spouses, and for those whose partners reported more beneficial caregiving.

Marcus (1997) examined the associations among adult attachment style, couples' communication and relationship satisfaction in a sample of premarital and recently married couples. A total of 77 couples participated in the study and filled out a questionnaire packet that included the Adult Attachment Scale. The results indicated that both couples' attachment style and communication were found to be associated with relationship satisfaction. More specifically, couples in which both members had a “close” attachment style reported greater relationship satisfaction than couples in which one member was close and the other member was in the category of depend or anxiety.

Davila, et al (1998) drew data from two samples of married couples to test a hypothesis that negative affectivity mediates the association between attachment and marital satisfaction. In both samples, negative affectivity mediated the association between some aspects of attachment insecurity and marital dissatisfaction, although attachment also retained a direct association with marital satisfaction in a number of case.

Volling, Notaro, & Larsen (1998) examined the pairings of adult attachment styles with married couples raising children. Spouses in dual-secure marriages reported more love for their partner, less ambivalence about their relationships, were more integrated in their social networks, and felt more competent as parents than couples in
dual-insecure marriages. Differences in relationship dynamics were found in secure husband-avoidant wife pairings as well as secure wife-avoidant husband pairings.

Rivera (1999) conducted a study on whether a relationship exists between security of attachment and marital satisfaction. Subjects were 40 heterosexual couples ranging in ages from 20-46 years of age. Couples defined in this study as securely attached reported higher levels of marital satisfaction as compared to couples defined as insecurely attached. In addition, a significant relationship was found between husbands’ attachment security and marital satisfaction, yet no significant relationship was found for wives on these variables.

In a sample of 138 couples, Paley, et al (1999) examined whether individuals’ marital functioning related to both their own and their partner’s attachment style. Results indicated that neither husbands’ behavior nor perceptions related to their wives attachment style. However, wives of continuous-secure husbands exhibited more positive marital behavior than wives of dismissing and earned secure husbands. Findings in this study point out that attachment working models may account for both continuities and discontinuities between earlier caregiving experiences and functioning in adult relationships.

Jacob (1999) conducted a study to investigate patterns of attachment, perceptions of support and nonsupport in the context of personal striving in married individuals. Using 109 participants, she hypothesized that secure attachment would be related to support perceptions, marital satisfaction and well-being, whereas insecure attachment was hypothesized to be related to perceptions of nonsupport and distress. Using instruments such as the Attachment Styles Inventory, Dyadic Adjustment Scale and the
Mental Health Inventory, results revealed that spouses with secure attachment showed
more marital satisfaction, greater well-being and were less likely to experience distress
and perceived nonsupport as opposed to those with an insecure attachment.

Feeney (1999b) extended her previous research (Feeney, 1996) into the relations
among attachment style, emotional experience, and emotional control. Questionnaire
measures of these variables were completed by a broad sample of 238 married couples.
Continuous measures of attachment showed that insecure attachment (low comfort with
closeness; high anxiety over relationships) was related to greater control of emotion,
regardless of whether the emotion was partner-related or not. Insecure attachment was
associated with less frequent and intense positive emotion and with more frequent and
intense negative emotion.

Small (2000) examined the relationship between marital satisfaction and the type
of romantic attachment experienced in a marital relationship. Eighty-seven married
graduate business students completed the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, the Attachment
Level Inventory and the Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory, which measured
their marital satisfaction and romantic attachment to their spouse. The findings of this
study suggest that feelings of anxiety and ambivalence in regard to the marital
relationship are positively related to dissatisfaction.

Hibbard (2001) examined the relationship between attachment style, two major
life transitions (newlywed and emptynest) and marital adjustment across a twelve-year
period. Findings revealed that men and women with secure attachment styles had fewer
number of marriages, higher levels of marital satisfaction and less marital strain.
Bagley (2000) investigated the relationships among couple attachment configurations, attachment stability, and marital functioning. The results of this study suggest that attachment stability may be a stronger predictor of marital functioning than are couple attachment configurations. One hundred eighteen married couples took part in three periods of data collection for three years and each one being separated by a one-year interval. Findings showed that marital satisfaction and adaptive marital processes were positively related to the number of secure spouses in a couple and to the stability and security of individual attachment. For couples of mixed attachment (one secure/one insecure), wives' attachment was associated with positive marital functioning.

This study is an extension of the previous research focused on attachment style and marital satisfaction and attempts to examine the relationship between the two. There are two major differences between the present study and previous studies in this area. First, this study provides an opportunity to examine participants in more seriously committed or longer-term marriages as all participants were married for an average of 21.4 years. Secondly, the two instruments utilized in this study have not been previously used together to investigate the relationship between adult attachment styles and marital satisfaction.
CHAPTER III

Method

Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of attachment styles on marital satisfaction in couples who were married for seven years or more and were in first marriages. Specifically measured in this study was one continuous, primary dependent variable, which is marital satisfaction, and two categorical independent variables which are matching or non-matching attachment styles, and sex, which is husband or wife. This chapter describes the methods and procedures used in this study.

Subjects

The subjects for this study were sixty participants comprised of thirty married couples (i.e. 30 male and 30 female subjects). All were in first marriages that were of at least seven years in duration. The participants ranged in age from their mid 30’s to their mid 70’s with a mean age of 48.96. The couples reported being married an average of 21.4 years, with a range of 8 years to 54 years. The couples reported an average of 2.56 years together in the relationship before marriage.

The percentage of subjects who reported their religion as Catholic was 53.3%, those who reported their religion as Protestant was 25%, those who reported their religion as Jewish was 8.3%, and those who reported their religion as Other was 13.3%. The sample was highly educated with 30% of the subjects having graduated high school,
41.7% were college graduates, and 28.3% reported attending graduate school. Twenty
percent of the sample reported having a history of marital counseling.

Procedure

Married couples were recruited from the general population through a local
church and through advertisements in a local community.

One hundred couples were sent to their home address via the US Mail a letter of
introduction, four informed consent forms, two demographic surveys, two copies of two
questionnaires (the Adult Attachment Scale and the Marital Satisfaction Scale), and two
pre-paid, self-addressed stamped envelopes.

The subjects were instructed to complete the questionnaires separately, and not to
share their responses with each other. They were then instructed to mail their completed
packets back to the researcher in the self-addressed stamped envelopes provided to them.

Because the subjects completed the questionnaires in their own homes, there
could be no absolute assurances that there was no sharing of information beyond their
agreement not to do so. The researcher received sixty completed questionnaires (i.e., 30
couples) back, and the completed questionnaire packets were scored by this researcher.

Measures

Demographic information. Demographic information was obtained through a 7-
item self-report questionnaire (see Appendix D). The following characteristics were
identified: sex, age, religion, number of years married, length of relationship before
marriage, highest level of education completed, and history of marital counseling.

Adult Attachment Scale (AAS). Participants were asked to complete the revised
version of the Adult Attachment Scale (Collins & Read, 1990). This 18-item scale (see
Appendix E) contains three subscales that can be used to measure attachment-related anxiety and avoidance (Collins & Read, 1994). The AAS consists of three dimensions of adult attachment: the extent to which an individual; (a) is comfortable with closeness (Close); (b) feels he or she can depend on others (Depend); and (c) is anxious or fearful about being abandoned or unloved (Anxiety).

Correlational analyses of the three factors revealed a modest correlation between the Depend and Close factors ($r = .38$), a weak correlation between the Anxiety and Depend factors ($r = .24$), and virtually no correlation between the Anxiety and Close factors ($r = -.08$).

Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for the three dimensions were .75 (Depend), .72 (Anxiety), and .69 (Close), suggesting adequate internal consistency. Test-retest reliability coefficients (2-month interval) were .71 (Depend), .52 (Anxiety), and .68 (Close), and scores were stable over a 2-month period (Collins & Read, 1990).

To determine the relation among the AAS dimensions and Hazan and Shaver’s (1987) three attachment styles (i.e., secure, anxious-ambivalent, and avoidant), Collins & Read (1990) performed a cluster analysis on a sample of 113 participants who had completed the AAS. A three-cluster solution emerged. Corresponding to the secure attachment style, persons in Cluster 1 had high scores on Close and Depend and low scores on Anxiety. Cluster 2 contained high scores on Anxiety together with moderate scores on Close and Depend, which correspond well with an anxious-ambivalent attachment type. Finally, Cluster 3 consisted of persons with low scores on Close, Depend, and Anxiety, suggesting an avoidant style.
The dimensions measured by the AAS seem to have significant conceptual links to those thought to be fundamental to infant attachment. For example, the child’s expectation that the caretaker will be available and emotionally responsive is a central theme underlying the infant-caretaker relationship. Both the Depend and Anxiety dimensions seem to capture aspects of these expectations for adults. Another significant feature of infant attachment is the child’s desire for close contact with the caretaker. This feature seems to be measured by the Close scale.

The strength of the AAS is that it offers an assessment of adult attachment that measures dimensions of attachment not assessed by measures yielding categorical results, while at the same time maintaining clear conceptual links with attachment styles assessed in infants (Bradford & Lyddon, 1994).

Satterfield and Lyddon (1995) used a sample of first-time clients at a university counseling clinic to investigate the relation between client scores on the three AAS dimensions (depend, anxiety and close), and client ratings of the working alliance. The major finding in this study was that clients whose working models of attachment were characterized by a lack of trust in the availability of others (low Depend) were less likely to evaluate the working alliance in positive terms.

Morrison, Goodlin-Jones, & Urquiza (1997) sampled a group of community college students in the United States to assess attachment. Participants in their study completed the AAS and questionnaires derived from the Structural Analysis of Social Behavior (Benjamin & Friedrich, 1991). Their hypothesis that mental representations of relationships would differ among individuals with different types of attachment organization was supported by their data.
Harvey and Byrd (2000) investigated the relationship between university students’ perceptions of their family attachments and the styles in which their families attempted to deal with family troubles and crises. Attachment styles were assessed using the AAS. It was hypothesized that individuals with high levels of secure attachment would perceive their families as using more active coping strategies. The results of this study supported their hypothesis.

The Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS). This scale was developed by Roach, Frazier, and Bowden (1981). The Marital Satisfaction Scale (see Appendix F) was designed to measure the level satisfaction an individual has with his or her own marriage (Roach et., 1981). The authors’ definition of marital satisfaction is “an attitude of greater or lesser favorability towards one’s own marital relationship” (Roach et al, p. 537).

The MSS is a Likert-type scale of forty-eight items. Twenty-four items are phrased in the form of positive statements about the marriage, and twenty-four items are phrased in the form of negative statements. Reverse coding for the negative statements is necessary to score the test in order to accurately reflect marital satisfaction. Cronbach’s alpha, which considers all possible split halves, was .982 (Roach, et al, 1981). This measure provided an indication of very high internal consistency.

Research results indicate that the instrument has very high internal consistency, sufficient test- retest reliability and validity, and a low degree of contamination with social desirability. Because the items are designed to elicit opinion rather than facts about the relationship, the scale provides substantial global evaluation that is sensitive to changes in the relationship (Roach, Frazier, & Bowden, 1981).
Rivera (1999) conducted a study on whether a relationship exists between security of attachment and marital satisfaction. The subjects of this study consisted of 40 heterosexual couples ranging in ages from 20-46 years. Marital satisfaction was measured using the MSS. Couples that were defined as securely attached reported higher levels of marital satisfaction as compared to couples defined as insecurely attached. A significant relationship was found between husbands' attachment security and marital satisfaction. No significant relationship was found for wives on these variables.

Blum and Mehrabian (1999) administered the MSS and the Pleasantness-Arousalability-Dominance temperament scales to 166 married couples aged 20-85 years. Subjects with more pleasant and who had partners with more pleasant temperaments, were happier in their marriages. Weak results also showed individuals selected partners with temperaments similar to their own.

Lee and Kim (1997) investigated the affect of sex-role identity, social support, and daily stress on the marital satisfaction of working wives. The sample used in this study consisted of two hundred wives employed outside the home. The wives completed the MSS. Results were factor analyzed and compared among four sex-role identity groups. Results showed that the feminine and androgynous groups reported higher marital satisfaction scores than the masculine and undifferentiated groups. Social support was found to be an important variable for marital satisfaction for working wives.

A study examining the differences in the responses of husbands and wives to requests that varied with the type of emotional disclosure was undertaken by Shimanoff (1987). Forty married couples were administered the MSS, and five scenarios were written in which one spouse wanted assistance from the other to change an unacceptable
situation. Findings showed that of the husbands and wives that were satisfied in their marriages, they responded with equal willingness to comply and positiveness to requests that varied with the types of emotional disclosures.

Rouse and Roach (1984) examined the relationship between occupational interest similarity of husbands and wives and marital satisfaction within the context of Holland’s theory of vocational choice. Forty-four married couples completed the Vocational Preference Interest Inventory – IV and the Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS). Holland’s contention that greater congruence between one’s self and one’s environment leads to greater marital satisfaction was not supported.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analyses of the effect of attachment style on marital satisfaction in couples who are married seven years or more and are in first marriages was completed using SPSS 8.0 for Windows. A factorial ANOVA was performed. A factorial ANOVA is an appropriate measure as there is one continuous dependent variable (marital satisfaction) and two categorical independent variables (matching or non-matching attachment styles and sex which is husband or wife). The two key assumptions of the factorial ANOVA are (A) normality, and (B) homogeneity of variance (equal variance).

It is understood that factorial ANOVA is robust to violation of the assumption of normality as sample size (N) increases, therefore a sample size of 60 should be adequate. This adheres to the Central Limit Theorem that states data behave like a normal curve as the sample size increases to a group of 30 or more.

Homogeneity of variance suggests that the spread of scores on the dependent variable is similar for different groups. It is understood that factorial ANOVAs are
robust to violation of this assumption when the sample sizes within each group are approximately equal. Since the sample sizes within the groups are equal, then it is unlikely that there will be any concerns regarding the assumption of homogeneity of variance.
CHAPTER IV

Results

Demographic Variables

The demographic variables for the sixty subjects that completed the protocol for this study are as follows: There was an even split of males and females with 30 husbands and 30 wives. The subjects in the sample ranged in age from their mid 30’s to mid 70’s with a mean age of 48.96 years. The minimum number of years married was 8 years, the maximum number of years married was 54 years with a mean of 21.4 years. The number of years the couples were together before marriage were relatively brief with a mean of 2.67 years. A slight majority of this sample was Catholic (see Table 1).

The sample was highly educated (see Table 2). Everyone completed high school, 30% were high school graduates, 41.7% were college graduates, and 28.3% had attended graduate school. As noted from Table 3 below, 20% of the sample reported having a history of marriage counseling.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>61.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

History of Marriage Counseling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid No</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for age, number of years married, and number of years together prior to marriage are presented below in Table 4 for the sixty participants.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of Years Married</th>
<th>Number of Years Before Marriage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>48.9667</td>
<td>21.4000</td>
<td>2.6767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>9.6778</td>
<td>11.9167</td>
<td>1.7089</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistical Analysis

Analyses were completed using SPSS 8.0 for Windows. A factorial ANOVA was performed. A factorial ANOVA is an appropriate procedure for this analysis because a single dependent variable that is continuous (marital satisfaction) and two categorical independent variables (sex and adult attachment style) are present. Two key assumptions
of the factorial ANOVA are (A) normality, and (B) homogeneity of variance (equal variance).

It is well known that factorial ANOVA is robust to violation of the assumption of normality as sample size (N) increases, therefore a sample size of 60 should be adequate. This adheres to the Central Limit Theorem that states data behave like a normal curve when the sample is increased to 30 or more subjects.

Homogeneity of variance means that the spread of scores on the dependent variable is similar for different groups. It is believed that factorial ANOVAs are robust to violation of this assumption when the sample sizes within each group are approximately equal. Since the sample sizes within the groups are equal, then it is unlikely that there should be any concerns regarding the assumption of homogeneity of variance.

**Sex and adult attachment style on marital satisfaction.**

A factorial ANOVA with two categorical independent variables can determine if there are differences among the groups of the first factor — sex. This is referred to as the main effect of sex. It can also determine if there are statistically significant differences among the groups of the second factor — adult attachment style. This is referred to as the main effect of adult attachment style.

A factorial ANOVA can determine if there are statistically significant interaction effects between the categories of the first and the second factors. A significant interaction effect implies that there are significant differences between the groups of a given factor (such as between men and women) that only occur for a given group of the other factor (those who matched in adult attachment style or those who did not match in adult attachment style). This is referred to as the interaction term. In the context of this
research, there may or may not be significant differences between the men and women that occur only for those who matched in adult attachment style or the Match group/factor but not for those who did not match in adult attachment style or the No Match group/factor.

Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics for each of the variables in this study.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AAS</th>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Deviation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match</td>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>3.9717</td>
<td>.7017</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>4.1056</td>
<td>.4422</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.0386</td>
<td>.5820</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Match</td>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>3.9633</td>
<td>.4688</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>4.0183</td>
<td>.3911</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.9908</td>
<td>.4231</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>3.9683</td>
<td>.6099</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>4.0707</td>
<td>.4177</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.0195</td>
<td>.58209</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Dependent variable: Marital Satisfaction Score

The overall mean for the husbands was nearly identical to the overall mean for the wives. The overall mean for those who did not match in adult attachment style or no match was very similar to the overall mean for those who did match in adult attachment style or match.

The mean for wives who match in adult attachment style was slightly higher than the mean for husbands who match in attachment style. The mean for wives who did not
match (no match) in attachment style was slightly higher than the mean for husbands who did not match (no match) in attachment style.

The mean for husbands who match in attachment style was almost identical to the mean for husbands who did not match (no match) in attachment style. The mean for wives who match in attachment style was slightly higher than the mean for those who did not match (no match) in attachment style.

A Levene’s test indicates whether or not a test is meaningful and can be used to test the assumption of equal variances. A non-significant Levene’s test is desirable, which suggests that the variances of each of the groups are approximately equal. The Levene’s tests for these data were non-significant \( (F = 1.24^{3.56}, p = .30) \). This suggests that the assumption of equal variances was not violated.

Table 6 below shows the F test for the main effect of sex and the main effect of adult attachment style on the dependent variable of marital satisfaction.
Table 6

**Between-Subjects Effects of Sex and Adult Attachment Style**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Attachment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>.03287</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.03287</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>.734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEX</td>
<td>.128</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.128</td>
<td>.455</td>
<td>.503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>15.794</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>.282</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Computed using alpha = .05

Note that the F test was non-significant for the main effect of adult attachment style. This implies that overall, the difference between the match and the no match groups was not large enough to be statistically significant.

The F test was non-significant for the interaction term. This implies that there were no combinations of adult attachment style and sex that had a differential effect on marital satisfaction.
The effect of history of marital counseling on marital satisfaction.

Descriptive statistics for individuals with a history of marriage counseling versus no history of marriage counseling are presented below in Table 7 below.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>History of Counseling</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4.0781</td>
<td>.4842</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3.7850</td>
<td>.6150</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.0195</td>
<td>.5209</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Dependent variable: Marital Satisfaction Score

A Levene’s test indicates whether or not a test is meaningful and can be used to test the assumption of equal variances. A non-significant Levene’s test is desirable, which suggests that the variances of each of the groups are approximately equal. The Levene’s tests for these data were non-significant ($F = .956^{1.58}$, $p = .33$). This suggests that the assumption of equal variances was not violated.

The below table (Table 8) shows the F test for the main effect of “history of marriage counseling.” The F test for the main effect of history of marriage counseling was non-significant.
Table 8

Between-Subjects Effects of History of Marriage Counseling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>.262</td>
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</table>

Note. Computed using alpha = .05; Dependent variable: Marital Satisfaction Score

Results of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: Husbands who match their wives in adult attachment style will have higher marital satisfaction scores than husbands who do not match their wives in adult attachment style. This hypothesis was not supported by this research.

Hypothesis 2: Wives who match their husbands in adult attachment style will have higher marital satisfaction scores than wives who do not match their husbands in adult attachment style. This hypothesis was not supported by this research.

Hypothesis 3: Men experience a higher level of marital satisfaction than women. This hypothesis was not supported by this research.

Hypothesis 4: There were not significant differences between those who went through marital counseling and those who did not on marital satisfaction. Thus, the hypothesis that individuals with a history of marriage counseling experience greater marital satisfaction was not supported by this research.
Since the interaction term (sex and match and no match) was non-significant, the following conclusions can be drawn: There was no significant difference between men and women in the No Match group only. There was no significant difference between men and women in the Match group only. There was no significant difference between Match and No Match for the men only. There was no significant difference between Match and No Match for the women only.
CHAPTER V

Discussion

Summary of the Findings

The focus of this investigation was adult attachment styles and their relationship to marital satisfaction. Sixty individuals consisting of thirty married couples who were in first marriages of at least seven years duration completed a demographic survey, the Adult Attachment Scale (Collins & Read, 1990) which measures adult attachment dimensions and the Marital Satisfaction Scale (Roach et al., 1981) which measures marital satisfaction.

Self-reports of attachment style in adulthood or retrospective interview-based assessment of attachment to a parent have been used to show that marital quality is greater to the extent that an individual and the individual's spouse report secure versus avoidant or anxious or ambivalent attachment styles.

The scores on the Adult Attachment Scale (Collins & Read, 1990) indicated that the overall mean for those who matched in attachment style was very similar to the overall mean for those who did not match in attachment style. Of the total sample, almost half of the couples were matched in attachment styles and the other half was not matched in attachment style. Overall, the difference between the Match group and the No Match group was not statistically significant.
The majority of husbands and wives in this study were either Secure or Depend in their attachment styles. Only one husband and two wives reported Anxiety as their attachment style. These findings are similar to those in research by Senchak and Leonard (1992) who found that over 80% of their married sample were classified as securely attached.

Of the sixty respondents, only one individual reported a marital satisfaction rating less than 3.0 on the Marital Satisfaction Scale (Roach et al., 1981). This indicates that all but one individual in this study reported being satisfied in their marriage. The lowest levels of satisfaction were in the sexual category, and there were only three questions on the scale that were in that category. It is a very curious yet highly unlikely matter that of 30 couples, all but one-half of one couple would consider their marriage unsatisfactory - particularly when the mean duration for number of years married for the couples who participated in this study was 21.4 years. Vaillant and Vaillant (1993) and Glenn (1998) both reported evidence in studies supporting the belief that marriages do not improve at mid-term, that later years of marriage are not golden ones, and that over-all marital satisfaction is negatively related to the number of years married. The findings in this study do not support the evidence that marital satisfaction is negatively related to the number of years married.

Research in the domain of women and relationships suggests that in general, women report lower levels of marital satisfaction than men (Schumm, Webb, & Bollman, 1998, Huyck, 1991). Some of the reasons for this appear to be that relationships with men do not meet the expressive needs of women traditionally met through relationships with other women. Women tend to be the caretakers of husband, children, family and
home. This caregiving behavior tends to have a cost for women. Collins and Read (1990) found evidence for gender differences in the relationship between attachment style and satisfaction. The findings in this study do not support those findings, and the hypothesis that men experience a higher level of marital satisfaction was not supported by this study.

Marriage counseling is believed to have a positive effect on a relationship. Individuals having had a history of marriage counseling did not have a differential effect on marital satisfaction, thus the hypothesis that individuals with a history of marriage counseling experience greater marital satisfaction was not supported by this study.

This study indicates that there were no combinations of adult attachment styles in either husbands or wives that had a differential effect on marital satisfaction. No significant differences in marital satisfaction were noted between couples with similar attachment pairing and couples with dissimilar pairings. Thus, the hypotheses that husbands who match their wives in adult attachment style will have higher marital satisfaction scores than husbands who do not match their wives in adult attachment style, and wives who match their husbands in adult attachment style will have higher marital satisfaction scores than wives who do not match their husbands in adult attachment style was not supported in this study. Cohn, et al. (1992) reported similar findings to those in this study, and contrary to the authors' expectations, results indicate that marital satisfaction was not related to adult attachment style for either husbands or wives. Rivera (1999) found a significant relationship between husbands' attachment style and marital satisfaction, but did not find a significant relationship between wives' attachment style and marital satisfaction.
As discussed earlier, the two major differences between research conducted in the present study and previous research on adult attachment style and marital satisfaction is the length of time invested by couples in their marriages and the instruments used by the researcher to measure adult attachment style and marital satisfaction. Although the researcher considered that these two differences would contribute to significant findings, this was not the case.

There are a number of possible explanations for why there is a lack of significant findings to support the hypotheses in this study, and why there is a restriction of range of scores on the dependent variable of marriage satisfaction.

Limitations of the Study

The sample.

First, there is the issue of the sample itself used in the study. There could be sampling bias as a result of this being a self-selected group of participants. In addition, the recruitment of couples from a local church and community may have led to an oversampling of relatively well-functioning, well-educated, financially secure couples given that this community is populated with such people. All the individuals in the study appear very homogeneous. It is possible that such sampling bias limits generalizability.

Social desirability bias may have been an additional factor in the restriction of range of scores on the dependent variable. Self-report measures, such as the ones used in this study, are potentially more prone to social desirability responses. Perhaps the participants of the study had a tendency to give answers they felt were socially acceptable, and the participants wanted to appear as satisfied in their marriages as possible. Although the questionnaires were guaranteed to be confidential, some
participants may have been concerned about their identities being discovered. Given this concern, some subjects may have wanted to ensure that their marriages were pictured as happy, strong and secure. Self-report measures, such as the ones used in this study, are potentially more prone to social desirability responses.

Despite the notion that the participants have a guarantee of anonymity in the study, some of the participants may not have been convinced that that was truly going to be the case as the researcher and most participants reside in the same town. The point being that the questions asked in both the Adult Attachment Scale (Collins & Read, 1990) and the Marital Satisfaction Scale (Roach et al., 1981) are very sensitive and highly personal ones which touch upon inner thoughts and feelings about marriage and the ways in which the couples feel connected to their relationships. With the types of questions asked and the sensitive nature of the study’s topic, participants may not have wanted to risk exposing the most intimate details and negative feelings to a researcher – whom they may or may not have known directly or indirectly. The possibility of discovery may have affected the findings.

Because the design of this study required that the questionnaires be filled out in the home, there was no guarantee that spouses would not share their answers with one another. This was discussed in Chapter 1 as one of the potential limitations of the study. There was also no guarantee that the spouses would not have some sort of influence over the way in which the questions were answered. In light of this, one spouse could have had the potential to be influenced by the other spouse to answer the questions in a positive or favorable manner.
This sample consisted of couples who ranged in age from their mid 30’s to their mid 70’s with only 16.7% of the sample being under the age of forty. There were no newlyweds in this sample, and only one couple was married a minimum of 8 years. The mean for the number of years in the marriage was 21.4 years. This sample is basically a middle-aged sample of married couples consisting of individuals who have a substantial amount of time invested in their marriages. With that amount of time invested in their marriage and that this was a group of mature, well-educated individuals, one can make the assumptions that if these individuals were not satisfied in their relationship, they would: a) not disclose; or b) not continue to remain in an unsatisfactory relationship.

All the demographic data collected from the participants regarding religious affiliation resulted in participants having a religious affiliation with 53% being Catholic. It is more likely that having a church and religious affiliation would prevent you from seeking a divorce and may even assist in preventing someone from being unhappy in their marriage.

The instruments.

Both the Adult Attachment Scale (Collins & Read, 1990) and the Marital Satisfaction Scale (Roach et al., 1981) are considered to be high in both validity and reliability. The researcher is confident that these instruments have the capability of measuring what it is that they propose to be measuring and would reveal any statistical significance if it did indeed exist between adult attachment style and marital satisfaction for husbands and for wives.

The use of both of these instruments in one study to investigate a relationship between adult attachment style and marital satisfaction is unique to this research, though
a number of studies cited in this paper have used one or the other of these instruments to investigate adult attachment style and relationship satisfaction. The results of the majority of those studies report statistical significance and support for a number of hypotheses that those researchers put forth.

As with all human research, there is never total agreement on what precise behaviors, attitudes, and traits are actually measured. Once attachment shifts from observable behaviors in infancy and toddlers to mental representation in adulthood, the methods of assessing adult attachment style becomes quite challenging.

Research methodology to measure adult attachment patterns has employed Likert scales (Collins & Read, 1990), laboratory observations (Cohen et al., 1992, White & Berman, 1991), forced-choice measures (Hazan & Shaver, 1987), spousal descriptions (Feeney, et al., 1990), and lengthy interviews (Adult Attachment Interview, Main, et al., 1985). None of these methods has provided reliable assessments of adult attachment on a consistent basis.

It is possible that the methodological suggestions Cohn et al. (1992) to use multiple methods of assessment across different settings simultaneously to measure adult attachment may yield more data. This might be expected to provide a more sensitive index of the affective quality of the adult attachment relationship than do solely paper and pencil measures.

There is the conceptualization and measurement of marital satisfaction that implies a satisfying marriage is a relationship characterized by the lack of dissatisfaction. Literature often uses the term “non-distressed” when describing couples who are satisfactorily married. Factors that lead to marital distress may not be the simple inverse
of factors that lead to a satisfying relationship. Unique dimensions of a dissatisfying relationship may not have been evaluated by the marital satisfaction scale used in this study.

As a global measurement of marital satisfaction, the Marital Satisfaction Scale (Roach et al., 1981) has operationally defined the concept of marital satisfaction as a single dimension. Marital dissatisfaction reflects an evaluation of the marriage in which negative features are prominent and positive features are relatively non-existent, and marital satisfaction reflects an evaluation in which positive features are prominent and negative features are relatively non-existent.

This view that marital satisfaction can be measured as a single dimension has met with recent challenge. Fincham, Beach, & Kemp-Fincham (1997) argue that positive and negative evaluations in marriage can be conceptualized and measured as separate, although related, dimensions. They obtained data with a simple measure used to capture this two-dimensional conception of marital quality and found that the dimensions have different correlates and account for unique variance in reported marital behaviors and attributions.

With this new concept, not only would a two-dimensional measure allow a researcher to distinguish between couples who are satisfactorily married and those who are not satisfactorily married with a higher level of confidence, it would enable more detailed descriptions of change in marital satisfaction and the factors that account for these changes. This, in turn, would assist the mental health professional working with a married couple to understand the severity of how distressed the couple is as well as the potential causes for the distress experienced by the couple.
In addition, researchers should conceptualize and create a two-dimensional measure of marital satisfaction not only as a judgment made by spouses at one particular point in time but also as a course, curve, or “flight pattern” that would reflect the fluctuations in a marriage over time taken in multiple waves of data. This would offer a greater understanding of the dynamics in interaction over the course of a couples’ marriage.

Although the instruments used in this study are instruments that have been proven to be capable of assessing what it is that they propose to assess, these instruments are extremely sensitive and personal regarding the type of questions that they ask. Some of the potential subjects who did not participate in this study contacted the researcher. These individuals reported that the reason that did not participate was because they considered the questions asked in the AAS and the MSS too intimate and personal and that they would not be readily willing to share their responses in writing and for the purpose of scientific research despite guaranteed anonymity.

This leads to an issue of the return rate. One hundred couples who were in first marriages and have been married a minimum of seven years were sent the packets for the study. Thirty couples completed the questionnaires in the packets and returned them to the researcher. Although this can be considered a very high rate of return for survey research, there is the consideration to be made that, perhaps, only those couples who were in marriages that they were satisfied with completed and mailed the questionnaires.

If a person is in an unhappy marriage or is not satisfied in the marriage, he/she could choose not to comply with filling out the instruments. Reading the information and questions could bring up feelings and issues that perhaps have been dormant or that these
particular individuals have been unable to face or come to terms with. It is one thing to ignore something, one thing to keep something in a state of denial – it is quite another thing to sit down and answer some very serious questions about your affective state.

It might be that the missing questionnaires are linked to those individuals that are resigned to the fact that they not satisfied in their marriages and that it makes no difference what ways they attach to their spouse or what ways their spouse is attached to them. It might be easier to not respond to the study.

Perhaps completing these instruments and participating in this study may have only intensified their feelings of unhappiness. To have to examine that your marriage is an unhappy one, to have to read and answer questions that cut to the core of how you are living, or not living, the most intimate portion of your life, could be just too much to tolerate. It is quite possible that many of the couples did not want to stir up negative feelings about their marriages and filling out these instruments would do just that.


Although there are a number of explanations discussed above for why there is a lack of statistical significance to support the hypotheses in this study, and why there is a restriction of range of scores on the dependent variable of marital satisfaction, it is the opinion of this researcher that none of those explanations is as meaningful as that of September 11, 2001. At the time of this study, the United States experienced an unprecedented act of terror in that the World Trade Center, two 110 story buildings, were collapsed.

This study began just prior to the catastrophic events of September 11, 2001. The packets, which included a demographic survey and the two above mentioned instruments,
were mailed out to the participants of this study approximately four weeks after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. All Americans were still in the early stages of attempting to process what had happened, of trying to cope with the sense of loss, of beginning to feel the daily strains and stress of sadness and fear. The participants in this study all live in northern New Jersey, approximately twenty miles from New York City and the World Trade Center. A large percentage of the north Jersey workforce commutes into New York City for their jobs or ventures in to enjoy a recreational venue such as dinner and theater.

The sample in this study is highly educated and was taken from a middle to upper-middle socioeconomic strata. The financial district of New York City has close ties to the people of northern New Jersey. It is not unlikely that the events of September 11, 2001, triggered more intense feelings in this population as they were more deeply affected than a population, for example, from the mid-west. Of the 4,000 or so lives lost in the towers alone, approximately one third of those people lived in New Jersey. There are many people in this northern New Jersey area who know someone who died in the attack. It is fair to say that this population may have been affected by the tragedy.

September 11, 2001, is an extreme and obvious example that the attachment system in individuals was activated. It was noted that this occurred in the repeated experiences of people being so kind to each other in New York. This system is activated whenever felt security is threatened so that, when adults are faced with events that they perceive as stressful or threatening, they will tend to desire or seek contact with significant others. This behavior can be considered a manifestation of the attachment behavioral system. A universal, group manifestation of this took place after the terrorist
attacks. Americans came together in support of each other and of our country. Americans found a felt sense of security in other Americans.

What appears to have followed this date in history was that the American people began to “nest.” Many felt the need to be close and to remain in close proximity to our significant others. There were fears of traveling and the fears of chemical and biological warfare. The stresses of the threat of continued attacks and the fear of the unknown was taking a psychological toll. However, with this came a greater appreciation of the relationships people have in their lives. Thus all marriages may have seemed brighter as people held on tighter to the relationships they have.

It is therefore not surprising that the marital satisfaction scores in this sample would be uncharacteristically high. Only one male reported being unsatisfied in his 13-year marriage. And his score was a 2.8 on the Marital Satisfaction Scale indicating that he was not very unsatisfied in his marriage.

Research that exists on stressful life events and marital satisfaction is not bountiful and focuses primarily on special populations who have suffered specific traumas such as spousal abuse, life-threatening illnesses, and loss of a child. Thus, sample sizes are generally small, nonrandom, and may not generalize to a broader portion of the population. They do, however, offer a starting point from which to study the issue of traumatic life events and their impact on marital satisfaction and attachment. Even though a large amount of literature has demonstrated the powerful impact that stress has on individual distress, research has not systematically considered the issue of traumatic life stress and its possible role in marital well-being.
Recommended Future Research

In light of the possible influence that the September 11, 2001, tragedy had on the results of this current study, I would recommend that a future study be conducted using the same or a similar sample one year from now. Would similar results be gotten from a similar sample one year from now? And perhaps, the researcher would have found significance and more meaning if this study had been conducted as a time series study.

In addition, longitudinal studies of married couples could investigate whether or not distressing events, togetherness over time, life changes, or illnesses had an affect on marital satisfaction and adult attachment style. Although it has been noted in this paper that attachment styles are resistant to change over time, researchers could examine if they remained the same or if they changed and whether or not certain circumstances could have a significant impact on marital satisfaction.

It would be important to investigate linkages between adult attachment stance and marital functioning in specific contexts such as when spouses are seeking emotional support from one another or providing emotional support to one another or when couples are engaging in marital conflict. It may be that specific contexts would reveal more of a relationship between attachment style and marital satisfaction, and researchers could expect stronger links between the various adult attachment classifications and marital functioning.

A valid, reliable and universal method for assessing adult attachment and marital satisfaction needs to be developed. It is difficult to compare results of studies with such divergent means of data analysis. Considering the somewhat divergent findings in the research on attachment and its role within the marital relationship and the fact that the
relationship between these two concepts has great intuitive appeal, theoretical and methodological issues need to be explored further before it is possible to understand exactly how attachment evolves in adulthood, and how it is manifested in intimate relationships.

This study suggests a number of implications for individual and couples therapy. A person’s attachment history and current attachment style will have an influence on how the person expects significant others to behave in relationships. This includes their relationship with their therapist. Therapy is often influenced by clients’ early relationships with caregivers who were rejecting, unavailable, or inconsistent. According to attachment theory, such relationships create certain types of expectations, or internal working models, that are placed upon the therapist just as they are placed upon a spouse. Therapy involves a clinician providing an accepting, dependable and responsive relationship as a context in which patients can rework any negative expectations of others.

Therapy also involves an examination of how current interpersonal relationships and behaviors are influenced by prior experiences and expectations with early caregivers. It is of great importance for clinicians working with couples on relationship issues to not only explore early family relationships but also to examine how individuals have to come to understand and regard such attachment experiences.

A clinician should be aware that she or he needs to behave in a way that provides an environment in which a client can explore and change their problematic patterns of relating. A clinician needs to have an awareness of how the client expects the clinician to respond, and an awareness of their own tendency to respond in certain ways because of
their own attachment style. In addition to general working models of self and other, people develop working models of specific partners and relationships. And although people bring stable or unstable patterns of behavior into relationships, these patterns of behaviors are very likely to be adapted in response to their partner's attachment style.

The clinician needs not only to focus on the primary style of attachment of their clients, but also on how the two of them can come together to form a unique and therapeutic relationship of their own. Once this is established in the therapeutic relationship, the client would be better equipped to develop and navigate relationships in their lives more successfully or change the style of their attachment on their own if needed.

Attachment theory is a critical model for understanding the dynamics of the relationships we all share with one another. To fully understand adult love relationships and marriage, there needs to be better integration of attachment theory and research related to attachment theory into the study of adult love relationships and marriage. When one partner finds himself/herself in a negative emotional state, they are likely to turn to their partner for assistance in order to feel better. The degree to which partners are able to respond to each other in ways that each finds helpful is likely to influence how satisfied they are in their relationships.
References


Appendices
Appendix A

Oral Script for Study
Oral Script for Preliminary Recruitment of Subjects

The following oral script will be used to verbally request couples to initially agree to participate in my study and to obtain home addresses:

“Hello. I’m Melanie Whiteway, and I’m conducting a study for my doctoral dissertation in Clinical Psychology at Seton Hall University. The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of adult attachment styles on marital satisfaction in couples that are in first marriages and have been married at least seven years. Attachment styles refer to the ways in which individuals respond (securely, insecurely, fearfully, anxiously) to being separated from and reunited with those individuals with whom they are the most emotionally attached – to, for example, your spouse. I’m looking for volunteers, and I know that you and your husband/wife have been married for a number of years. It shouldn’t take more than 30 minutes of your time, participation is, of course, voluntary, and the information you provide will be anonymous and confidential….Thank you so much. May I please have your home mailing address so that I can send you a packet which will include the necessary information and materials in order for you to participate?”
Appendix B

Solicitation Letter
Solicitation Letter

Dear Couple:

My name is Melanie Whiteway, and I am conducting a study as part of my doctoral dissertation in the Clinical Psychology Program in the Department of Professional Psychology and Family Therapy at Seton Hall University in South Orange, NJ.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether couples who stay married seven years or longer match each other regarding type of attachment style and whether or not these types of attachment styles are related to marital satisfaction. Attachment styles refer to the ways in which individuals respond (securely, insecurely, fearfully, anxiously) to being separated from and reunited with those individuals with whom they are the most emotionally attached (i.e. a spouse). Your participation in this study should take no longer than 30 minutes.

You and your spouse’s participation will be very helpful to me in earning my degree. Also, it will make a contribution toward our understanding of married people like you.

If you and your spouse agree to participate, please sign and date the enclosed informed consent forms. There are two copies of the informed consent form for each of you. Return one copy each to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope marked “Consent Forms” which I have provided for you. Please keep the other signed consent forms for your records.

Enclosed you will also find two demographic surveys. There is one for each of you to complete. You will also find copies of two questionnaires called the “Adult Attachment Scale” and the “Marital Satisfaction Scale” with instructions on how to complete them. There is one copy each for you to complete. After completing the demographic survey and the two questionnaires, please mail them back to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope marked “Questionnaires” provided for you. Please resist the temptation to share your responses with your spouse.
Postage has already been paid, and you do not need to add any additional stamps for either of the two self-addressed stamped envelopes which I have provided for you.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree to participate, but decide to withdraw at any stage of the research, you are free to do so.

The responses you provide will be anonymous, with couples coded by number, not name. The signed and returned consent forms mailed back to this researcher in a separate envelope ensures that you and your spouse’s completed material will remain anonymous.

All of your responses to these inquires will be strictly confidential, and data will be securely stored in a locked cabinet to which only the researcher has access.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subject Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject’s privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the Office is (973) 275-2974.

Sincerely,

Melanie Whiteway
Appendix C

Letter of Consent
My name is Melanie Whiteway, and I am conducting a study as part of my
doctoral dissertation in the Clinical Psychology Program in the Department of
Professional Psychology and Family Therapy at Seton Hall University in South Orange,
NJ.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether couples who stay married seven
(7) years or longer match each other regarding type of attachment style and whether or
not these types of attachment styles are related to marital satisfaction. Attachment styles
refer to the ways in which individuals respond (securely, insecurely, fearfully, anxiously)
to being separated from and reunited with those individuals with whom they are the most
emotionally attached (i.e. a spouse). Your participation in this study should take no
longer than thirty (30) minutes.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will need to sign and date two
consent forms. I have signed and dated the informed consent forms as well. Please
return one of the signed and dated informed consent forms back to me in the self-
addressed stamped envelope marked “Consent Forms” provided for you. Please keep one
copy for your records.

In addition, you will need to complete a demographic survey and two
questionnaires entitled the “Adult Attachment Scale” and the “Marital Satisfaction Scale”
and return them to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope marked “Questionnaires”
which has also been provided for you.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree to participate, but decide to
withdraw at any stage of the research, you are free to do so without prejudice.

The responses you provide will be anonymous, with couples coded by number,
not name. The signed and returned consent forms mailed back to the researcher in a
separate envelope ensures that you and your spouse’s completed material will remain
anonymous.
All of your responses to these inquiries will be strictly confidential, and data will be securely stored in a locked cabinet which only the researcher has access to.

There are no known risks, either physical or psychological, associated with participation in this study.

There are no expected benefits for you in participating in this study, although your participation will make a contribution toward our understanding of married people like yourselves.

If you have any questions pertaining to this research or your participation in this research, or, if for any reason any aspect of participation should cause you concern, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time. I can be reached at 810 Seventh Avenue, 18th Fl., New York, NY 10019. My telephone number is (973) 723-9154.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subject Research (IRB). The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subject's privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the Office is (973) 275-2974.

I have read the material above, and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity, realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

Subject's Signature  Date

Melanie Whiteway  Date

APPROVED 10/4/21
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY IRB
Appendix D

Demographic Survey
Demographic Data

Please fill in the blanks and provide the below requested information.

1. Sex _______
2. Age _______
3. Religion    a) Protestant     b) Catholic     c) Jewish     d) Other _______
4. Number of years married _______
5. Length of your relationship before marriage _______
6. What is your highest level of education completed? a) Junior High ______ b) High School ______ c) College ______ d) Graduate School ______
7. Have you and your spouse ever been involved in marital counseling? a) Yes ______ b) No ______
Appendix E

Adult Attachment Scale
Adult Attachment Scale

Please read each statement and respond with the number that most closely describes your feelings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on others. ________
2. People are never there when you need them. ________
3. I am comfortable depending on others. ________
4. I know that others will be there when I need them. ________
5. I find it difficult to trust others completely. ________
6. I am not sure that I can always depend on others to be there when I need them. ________
7. I do not often worry about being abandoned. ________
8. I often worry that my partner does not really love me. ________
9. I find others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. ________
10. I often worry my partner will not want to stay with me. ________
11. I want to merge completely with another person. ________
12. My desire to merge sometimes scares people away. ________
13. I find it relatively easy to get close to others. ________
14. I do not often worry about someone getting too close to me. ________
15. I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others. ________
16. I am nervous when anyone gets too close. ________
17. I am comfortable having others depend on me. ________
18. Often, love partners want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being. ________
Appendix F

Marital Satisfaction Scale
### Marital Satisfaction Scale

Please read each statement and respond with the number that most closely describes your feelings about your spouse on that item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I know what my spouse expects of me in our marriage. _______
2. My spouse could make things easier for me if he/she tried. _______
3. I worry a lot about my marriage. _______
4. If I could start over again, I’d marry someone other than my present spouse. _______
5. I can always trust my spouse. _______
6. My life would seem empty without my marriage. _______
7. My marriage is too confining to suit me. _______
8. I feel that I am “in a rut” in my marriage. _______
9. I know where I stand with my spouse. _______
10. My marriage has a bad effect on my health. _______
11. I become upset, angry, or irritable because of things that occur in my marriage. _______
12. I feel competent and fully able to handle my marriage. _______
13. My present marriage is not one I would wish to remain in permanently. _______
14. I expect my marriage to give me increasing satisfaction the longer it continues. _______
15. I get discouraged trying to make my marriage work out. _______
16. I consider my marital situation to be as pleasant as it should be. _______
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
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</table>

17. My marriage gives me more real personal satisfaction than anything else I do. ______

18. I think my marriage gets more difficult for me each year. ______

19. My spouse gets me badly flustered and jittery. ______

20. My spouse gives me sufficient opportunity to express my opinions. ______

21. I have made a success of my marriage so far. ______

22. My spouse regards me as an equal. ______

23. I must look outside my marriage for those things that make life worthwhile and interesting. ______

24. Sex with my spouse has gotten better along the course of my marriage. ______

25. My marriage has “smothered” my personality. ______

26. The future of my marriage looks promising to me. ______

27. I am really interested in my spouse. ______

28. I get along well with my spouse. ______

29. I am afraid of losing my spouse through divorce. ______

30. My spouse makes unfair demands on my free time. ______

31. My spouse seems unreasonable in his/her dealings with me. ______

32. My marriage helps me toward the goals I have set for myself. ______

33. My spouse is willing to make helpful improvements in our relationship. ______

34. My marriage suffers from disagreement concerning matters of recreation. ______

35. Demonstrations of affection by me and my spouse are mutually acceptable. ______
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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36. An unhappy sexual relationship is a drawback in my marriage. _______

37. My spouse and I agree on what is right and proper conduct. _______

38. My spouse and I do not share the same philosophy of life. _______

39. My spouse and I enjoy several mutually satisfying outside interests together. _______

40. I sometimes wish I had not married my present spouse. _______

41. My present marriage is definitely unhappy. _______

42. I look forward to sexual activity with my spouse with pleasant anticipation. _______

43. My spouse lacks respect for me. _______

44. I have definite difficulty confiding in my spouse. _______

45. Most of the time my spouse understands the way I feel. _______

46. My spouse does not listen to what I have to say. _______

47. I frequently enjoy pleasant conversations with my spouse. _______

48. I am definitely satisfied with my marriage. _______