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ATTACHMENT STYLES AND GENDER ROLES: CONTRIBUTIONS TO PROBLEM SOLVING COMMUNICATION IN DATING COUPLES

By

Jennie Ann Leskela

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ABSTRACT

ATTACHMENT STYLES AND GENDER ROLES:
CONTRIBUTIONS TO PROBLEM SOLVING COMMUNICATION IN
DATING COUPLES

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In an effort to expand the research on couple functioning in close relationships, this study adopted Bowlby's attachment theory as a framework for identifying predisposing factors in couple communication patterns. Initial studies have suggested that attachment style, developed in infancy, continues into adulthood. Furthermore, prior research has found attachment style differences in dating and married couples play a role in couple interaction and relationship functioning. The purpose of this study was to examine the contribution of adult attachment styles to specific problem solving communication exhibited by dating couples. This study (a) examined the relationship of participants' attachment styles to their problem solving communication; (b) explored the extent to which sex and gender role affects the relationship of attachment style and problem solving communication; and (c) identified couple's conjoint attachment style-related contributions to their problem solving communication. Forty couples completed both attachment style and gender role measures, and then participated in an audiotaped problem solving task designed to measure problem solving communication styles. Data analyses examined individual participant differences in attachment style, gender role, and problem solving communication styles. Finally, the contributions of couple attachment style pairings to problem solving communication outcomes was examined. Limitations of the study and implications for further research and counseling were discussed.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Research on close relationships is a relevant societal issue (Holmes & Boon, 1990). Increasing incidents of domestic violence and divorce rates highlight the need for more information on couple functioning and interaction (Miller, 1991; Weitzman, 1985). Theory and research in this area has received increasing attention in the past decade with a recent influx of studies. Research has consistently indicated that effective communication patterns relate to couple satisfaction (Billings, 1979; Koren & Carlton, 1980; Lopez, 1993; Margolin & Wampold, 1981; Rusbult, Johnson, & Morrow, 1986; Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1991; White, 1989). Despite the best intentions, all partners in close relationships eventually communicate ineffectively and experience relationship conflict. Research further indicates that distressed couples exhibit more negative problem solving communication patterns (Billings, 1979). Based on these results, additional information is needed regarding the specific couple interaction patterns that promote healthy functioning. One strategy for accomplishing this involves identifying factors in the early stages of relationship development that place couples at risk. If areas of incompatibility can be identified early, couples can address communication and interaction difficulties before they become locked into more severe, recurrent patterns of conflict (Holmes et al., 1990).

Currently, there has been a growing number of studies examining close relationships within the framework of Bowlby's attachment theory. This research demonstrates that one's adult attachment style affects couple interaction and functioning (Shaver & Hazan, 1993). This area of research provides a new approach in which love is conceptualized as an attachment process. Specifically, how an infant attaches to a primary caregiver may be similar to how an adult attaches to their dating and marital partner.

Information on factors that predispose adults to engage in specific positive or negative behaviors may provide useful information on distressed and non-distressed relationships. Future research in this area may help mental health professionals increase their understanding of close relationships and identify areas for prevention and therapeutic interventions for couple counseling.

Attachment theory developed from the work of John Bowlby (1969/1982) and Mary Ainsworth (1982). Hazan and Shaver (1987) used attachment theory as a framework for studying romantic relationships. They provided theoretical and empirical support for attachment style differences in adult intimate relationships. Hazan and Shaver proposed that affectional bonds developed in infancy between the infant and primary caregiver predict adult attachment styles. The specific attachment style from infancy is believed to be relatively enduring and manifests itself in the way adults think, feel, and behave in adult romantic relationships. Individuals endorsing different attachment styles reported differences in their descriptions of child/parent relationship histories, themselves, and others. Furthermore, individuals exhibiting attachment style differences reported different types of romantic love experiences. Hazan and Shaver demonstrated that the experience of adult romantic relationships is compatible with Bowlby's theory of attachment.

Hazan and Shaver's (1987) article generated numerous studies that replicated and extended their initial work on individual attachment style differences in romantic relationships. This literature indicates that attachment style differences in couples are related to type of commitment, conflict style resolution, degree of intimacy, level of self-disclosure, problem solving behavior, relationship satisfaction, self-esteem management, support-seeking and support-giving behaviors, trust, use of power tactics, and views on relationship quality (Bartholomew, 1990; Carnelley, Pietromonaco, & Jaffe, 1994; Collins & Read, 1990; Feeney & Noller, 1990; Feeney & Noller, 1991; Kobak & Hazan, 1991; Mikulincer & Erev, 1991; Mikulincer & Nachshon, 1991; Pistole, 1989; Pistole, 1993; Rothbard, Roberts, Leonard, & Eiden, 1993; Senchak & Leonard, 1992; Simpson, 1990;

Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan, 1992). These preliminary studies suggest that attachment style differences in dating and married couples play an important role in couple interaction and functioning.

Although these findings have promising implications for couple interaction and functioning, several conceptual weaknesses exist in the current literature. First, the majority of dating and marital relationship studies used the three category typology of secure, anxious, and avoidant based on Ainsworth's work (Ainsworth et al., 1978) and Hazan and Shaver's (1987) extension of the typology to adult functioning. Currently, Shaver and Hazan (1993) support Bartholomew's (1990) newer model of attachment styles which identifies two types of avoidant styles: dismissive and fearful. The introduction of a fourth attachment category provides for finer distinctions among the attachment styles.

Second, the literature reports inconsistent results regarding sex and gender role differences. Several studies suggest that sex and/or gender role may moderate the relationship of attachment style and relationship functioning. Collins and Read (1990) reported that for women, their partner's comfort with closeness predicted relationship satisfaction. For men, relationship satisfaction related to their partner's level of anxiety about abandonment. Both partners were less satisfied with the relationship when the male had an avoidant attachment style and the female had an anxious attachment style. Simpson (1990) reported that males with an avoidant attachment style experienced less emotional distress after relationship termination. Males reported a decreased level of satisfaction when the females exhibited an anxious attachment style. Simpson, Rholes, and Nelligan (1992) examined how adult attachment style moderated behavior in couples when the female member was confronted with an anxiety provoking situation. Feeney, Noller, and Patty (1993) reported that adolescent females with an avoidant attachment style and males with an anxious/ambivalent (preoccupied) attachment style were less likely to report involvement in sexual intercourse. Several studies reported that men identified as avoidant and women identified as preoccupied (anxious) experienced lower levels of relationship

satisfaction (Fiala & Pietromonaco, 1991; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Pietromonaco & Carnelley, 1994) and higher levels of relationship conflict and ambivalence (Fiala & Pietromonaco, 1991; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994). Further studies need to clarify a) if the reported male/female differences in relationship functioning are related to sex and/or gender role; and b) the inter-relationships of sex, gender role, attachment styles, and relationship functioning.

Third, the conjoint contribution of each partner's attachment style to relationship functioning has been largely overlooked. Most studies have examined the effect of each partner's attachment style separately. Further research in this area may support Kirkpatrick and Davis' (1994) argument that specific attachment styles are not "universally good or bad." Instead, different attachment pairings may result in successful relationship experiences.

Fourth, efforts to examine the relationship of adult attachment styles to dyadic functioning has generally relied on self-reports. Memory recall and self-report are both vulnerable to distortions. With regard to problem solving differences in particular, several studies asked the couples to recall or imagine a conflict or problem (e.g. Fiala & Pietromonaco, 1991; Pistole, 1989). Other studies asked the couple to identify their own problem (e.g. Kobak & Hazan, 1991; Rothbard et al., 1993). Recalling a problem is different from experiencing it directly. How one perceives what they would do may be different from what they would actually do. Furthermore, when couples are given a choice of problem identification, they may identify a problem that most likely has been rehearsed by numerous discussions about the concern. Research employing in-vivo methods for observing spontaneous couple interaction is needed. Direct observation may provide new information on couple's problem solving communication.

Problem Statement

There is a need for more controlled research studies on the impact of attachment style on couple interaction that extends beyond the realm of self-report. To enhance the

current research base, future studies need to use the four category attachment style typology while concurrently examining the influence of sex and gender role as moderating variables. Examining the role of attachment styles and their interaction with sex and gender role to specific problem solving communications may elaborate our understanding of problematic couple functioning.

The purpose of this study is to examine the contribution of adult attachment styles to specific problem solving communication exhibited by dating couples. This study will (a) examine the relationship of participants' attachment styles to their in vivo problem solving communication; (b) explore the extent to which sex and gender role affects the relationship of attachment style and problem solving communication; and (c) identify couple's conjoint attachment style-related contributions to their problem solving communication.

Should support be found for the hypotheses, greater attention can be given to considering the issues of sex, gender role, and individual and conjoint couple attachment style differences when working with couples in counseling settings. Information on predisposing factors and early relationship functioning will be helpful in identifying treatment interventions and preventive methods. A lack of support for the hypotheses would suggest that specific attachment style combinations and/or gender role do not predict actual problem-solving communications. In this case, other variables related to differences in couple interaction and functioning may need to be explored. Furthermore, if attachment style differences only reflect gender role differences, we only need to understand gender role and not pursue attachment style differences further.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

This chapter will focus on ten areas of related research including: (a) Bowlby's attachment theory; (b) Ainsworth's empirical work; (c) conceptualization and measurement of adult attachment; (d) individual differences in adult attachment style; (e) adult attachment and relationship outcome; (f) adult attachment and relationship process; (g) attachment style, sex, and gender role; (h) attachment style and problem solving; (i) attachment style and conjoint interaction; and (j) sex/gender role and couple communication and functioning.

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory developed from the joint work of John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Bretherton, 1992). The theory proposes an ethological approach to personality development which is based on ideas from cybernetics, information processing, developmental psychology, and psychoanalysis (Bretherton, 1992). Attachment theory explains the role that infant-caregiver emotional bond plays throughout the course of one's life. Bowlby's classic trilogy on attachment, separation, and loss (1969/1982, 1973, 1980) provided the theoretical explanations of how parental availability and responsiveness provides a sense of security which guides the child's development. When the infant is threatened, he/she innately seeks proximity with his/her primary attachment figure. How this figure responds to this proximity-seeking shapes the nature of the infant-caregiver attachment bond. From these early attachment experiences, the child develops internal representations of self and others that guide his or her future expectations and behaviors in relationships. Bowlby refers to this internal representation as "internal working models." Ainsworth provided the empirical support for Bowlby's ideas via her controlled observational studies of mother-infant interaction (Ainsworth, 1967;

Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Ainsworth, 1982). She proposed that the mother's accessibility and responsiveness to an infant's behavioral cues related to the formation of different attachment styles (Ainsworth et al., 1991). Currently, attachment theory and research is receiving renewed interest and is being applied to adult development.

Theoretical Foundations

Bowlby's attachment theory developed from his early research on the impact of maternal separation and inadequate maternal care on orphaned infants and juvenile delinquents. He developed the connection between early parental deprivation and loss with later childhood emotional disturbances. Initially, Bowlby noted that infant primates and infants and young children demonstrated similar distressed reactions when separated from their primary caregiver. Due to the similar behavioral responses, Bowlby concluded that the nature of early attachment bonds was innate and internally motivated and that these bonds had evolutionary significance (Bowlby, 1988). Bowlby hypothesized that attachment results from a biologically-driven system designed to ensure the protection and care for the infant. He proposed that attachment is a drive related behavioral system similar to the drive behavior of feeding, mating, and exploration. The attachment system tends to be activated during periods of stress and enhances the likelihood of survival and reproduction of the species (Bowlby, 1979).

Key Assumptions

The attachment process includes three defining features: secure base, safe haven, and proximity seeking and maintenance behaviors. The theory assumes that when an attachment figure is available and responsive (secure base), the child is more likely to engage in exploratory behavior with others in his or her environment. The nearness of the caregiver provides a safe haven in which to return if the infant feels threatened during exploration activities. Infants seek proximity and protest separation from the caregiver when they need the assurance of security and safety (proximity seeking and maintenance) (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1979; Bowlby, 1988; Shaver & Hazan, 1993). Bowlby

stated that the concept of secure base continues into adulthood. An adult shows the same patterns from infancy of moving away and maintaining contact with those he/she loves (Bowlby, 1979).

In addition, the child exhibits emotional reactions when separated from his or her primary caregiver. These reactions are designed to reestablish proximity. The first reaction is protest which involves crying, active searching, and resistance to other's soothing. If such reactions are unsuccessful in restoring contact with the caregiver, a subsequent reaction is despair in which the infant exhibits passivity and sadness. If these affective reactions are unsuccessful on restoring proximity with the caregiver, the final reaction is emotional detachment which is an active, defensive disregard for the primary caregiver upon return (Bowlby, 1979). The child demonstrates protest to bring the primary caregiver near. The despair reaction helps the child avoid physical exhaustion. Detachment allows for the return to normal activities. Bowlby hypothesized that these innate attachment behaviors and feelings are genetically determined and promote physical maintenance with the primary caregiver. Once proximity is achieved, the child can return to exploratory or feeding behaviors.

The attachment process develops over a two to three year period. At the completion, the child and primary caregiver form a goal-corrected partnership. At this point, the child is able to maintain mental representations of the primary caregiver and is more capable of understanding the caregiver's point of view. The relationship takes on new goals with the addition of the child's verbal communication and cognitive advances (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1979, 1982; Hazan & Shaver, 1994).

Internal Working Model. Bowlby's theory not only explains the development of infants and children but also explains how early attachment experiences affect the behavior of adolescents and adults (Bowlby, 1988). Bowlby's construct of "internal working models" explains how children develop views of themselves and other important individuals in their lives that operate outside of conscious awareness. The internal working

model refers to the beliefs and expectations about whether the primary caretaker is caring, responsive, and available and whether one perceives him or herself as competent and lovable. Furthermore, internal working models help the child recognize the absence and return of the primary attachment figure. These working models, initially developed in the context of the relationship with the primary caregiver, are subsequently applied to other relationships in the child's life. Bowlby believed that internal working models of self and others play an important part in determining and regulating a person's behavior, expectations, feelings, and perceptions about relationships across the life span.

Ainsworth's Empirical Support

The pioneering research conducted by Ainsworth further supports Bowlby's work on infant attachment behaviors (Ainsworth, 1967; Ainsworth et al., 1978; Ainsworth, 1982). She and her colleagues observed mother and child interactions within the first year of the infant's life using a standardized observational research paradigm called the "Strange Situation." This methodology involved eliciting and monitoring the child's attachment behaviors and the mother's responsiveness to the child through repeated separations from and reunions with the mother and through observed interactions with a stranger. Furthermore, she hoped to activate the child's exploration system by using toys in the environment. Results of these investigations identified individual differences within these attachment relationships. Ainsworth identified three distinct styles of mother/child attachment which included secure, anxious/ambivalent and avoidant.

Patterns of Attachment. The "Strange Situation" studies revealed three distinct patterns of mother-infant attachment behavior. The secure child explored the environment, experienced distress when separated from mother, maintained contact with her upon reunion, and appeared readily comforted by her. His or her caregiver was observed to be warm, sensitive, consistently available, and responsive. The anxious/ambivalent child appeared difficult to comfort after separation, distressed prior to separation, and preoccupied with the mother's availability. His or her caregiver was frequently

unpredictable, inconsistent, sometimes unresponsive and intrusive. The avoidant child focused his or her attention on other objects in their environment, exhibited little distress upon separation, and presented as unresponsive to mother. His or her caregiver was often observed to be emotionally unavailable, rejecting, hostile, and rigid. Ainsworth concluded that the mother's responsiveness to her child's signals, behaviors, and needs during the first year of life related to differing attachment styles (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Hazan & Shaver, 1994; Karen, 1994; Shaver & Hazan, 1993).

Continuity of Attachment Styles

Although Bowlby's and Ainsworth's work focused on child development, they believed that attachment was a life long process. Bowlby (1988) stated that in families where care giving arrangements were stable, attachment styles developed in childhood, and once established, tended to persist throughout the lifespan. Furthermore, earlier attachment patterns are then imposed onto new relationships.

Parkes (1972) and Weiss (1982) were the first to provide support for the continuity of attachment into adulthood. Parkes' empirical research demonstrated similarities between the child's attachment process and the bereavement process in grieving adults. Weiss argued that adults established relationships in a manner similar to how an infant attaches to a primary caregiver. He noted, however, differences between infant and adult attachment dynamics. First, adult attachments develop in reciprocal relationships while child attachments involve a caretaker relationship. Second, adult attachment is not as easily overwhelmed as it is in childhood. Adults are able to attend to other relationships and concerns despite threats to the relationship with the primary attachment figure. Third, the adult's attachment relationship usually involves a sexual relationship. In conclusion, Bowlby's and Ainsworth's theoretical assumptions and the empirical work of Parkes and Weiss provided the conceptual foundation for extending attachment theory to adult development. Current research and methodological advancements have enhanced attachment and adult development further.

Conceptualization and Measurement of Adult Attachment

Three Group Categorization of Adult Attachment Styles

Hazan and Shaver (1987) were the first to examine adult romantic relationships based on attachment theory. The major goal of their initial study was to apply Ainsworth's et al. (1978) attachment style categories to adult romantic relationships. A second goal was to explore Bowlby's idea that one's adult relationship styles consists of mental models of self and relationship developed from childhood. Finally, they explored the possibility that differences in early parent-child relationships, as identified by Ainsworth et al's. (1978) three attachment styles, predicted differences in adult romantic attachment styles. (See also Shaver & Hazan, 1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1988; Shaver & Hazan, 1993; Shaver, Hazan, & Bradshaw, 1988). Through this research, Hazan and Shaver developed the first self-report measure of adult attachment styles in romantic relationships (See Table 1). The measure translated Ainsworth's et al. (1978) infant attachment style categories (secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant) into three paragraphs describing adult romantic relationships and asked respondents to indicate which paragraph was most descriptive of their adult intimate relationships. Results supported their initial hypotheses. Proportions of the three attachment categories were stable across the three studies. Participants' self-classifications were as follows: 56% secure, 20% anxious/ambivalent, and 23-25% avoidant. The distribution was similar for Ainsworth's attachment style category proportions (62% secure, 23% avoidant, and 15% anxious/ambivalent). Individuals with different attachment styles reported different beliefs about romantic love, love experiences, and descriptions of childhood relationships with parents, self, and others.

Since its development, Hazan and Shaver's self-categorization has received much criticism. The first criticism related to it being a discrete, categorical measure. The second criticism related to respondents being forced to accept an entire description that may not accurately reflect themselves and their relationships (Collins et al., 1990). Other researchers changed the measure into rating scales designed for correlational research.

Table 1. Hazan and Shaver's Attachment Style Inventory

Which of the following best describes how you feel about close relationships?

Secure

I find it relatively easy to get close to others and am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't often worry about being abandoned or about someone getting too close to me.

Avoidant

I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others; I find it difficult to trust them completely, difficult to allow myself to depend on them. I am nervous when anyone gets too close, and often, love partners want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.

Anxious/Ambivalent

I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me or won't want to stay with me. I want to merge completely with another person, and this desire sometimes scares people away.

First, Levy and Davis (1988) added a Likert-type scale to each of Hazan and Shaver's three attachment style paragraph descriptions asking participants how similar they were or weren't to each description. Collins and Read (1990), Simpson (1990), and Mikulincer, Florian and Tolmacz (1990) formed multi-item scales by decomposing Hazan and Shaver's original paragraph descriptions into a larger set of item statements, factor analyzing the results, and identifying dimensions underlying the attachment items. Collins and Read (1990) added additional attachment dimensions to the original descriptions and factor analyzed them, producing three dimensions, respectively labeled "close", "depend" and "anxiety". A discriminant function analysis suggested the possibility of two types of anxious participants. Simpson's (1990) results from using factor analysis indicated that two or three dimensions underlie attachment style differences. Mikulincer et al. (1990) added a Likert-type scale to 15 items of Hazan and Shaver's (1987) measure for concurrent validity. From a sample of 80 subjects, only five mismatches resulted from the two instrument comparisons. This approach attempted to overcome the problem of assuming that the three adult attachment styles were mutually exclusive and moved the measure beyond the forced-choice classification.

Shaver and Hazan (1993) concluded from this research that two dimensions underlie their measure: one dimension reflecting the level of expressed comfort with interpersonal closeness and dependency; the other tapping the degree of tension or worry about distance and separateness in these relationships.

Four Group Categorization of Adult Attachment Styles

In other research, Bartholomew and Horowitz proposed a four-category typology of adult attachment styles (Bartholomew 1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). This model examined attachment style on two dimensions: view of self and view of others. This is based on Bowlby's internal working models of self and other (perception of attachment figures' availability and their own view of worthiness in receiving support and

love). These dimensions result in four attachment styles: secure, preoccupied, dismissive, and fearful.

Bartholomew (1990) argued that the avoidant group consists of fearful and dismissing adults, and that adult avoidance developed from parental rejection. She stated that

> Adverse experiences result in negative models of others that are hypothesized to mediate adult avoidance of relationships. Unlike children, adults differ in their conscious awareness of unfulfilled attachment needs" (p. 173).

The distinction between dismissive and fearful styles relates to two differing views of self. The dismissive style includes a positive view of self while minimizing the need for close relationships. Dismissive individuals view independence as more important than close relationships. The fearful style involves a view of self that is undeserving of love and support while avoiding close relationships for fear of rejection. Fearful individuals turn to others for validation of their self worth. The dismissive and fearful styles both have a negative view of others. Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) provided empirical support for the four group rationale and developed a single item categorical self-report measure based on four attachment styles similar to Hazan and Shaver's measure. Griffin and Bartholomew (1994) examined the validity of the two dimensions (view of self and view of others) hypothesized to underlie the proposed four attachment styles. Based on five different measures of assessment, their results indicated that the self and other dimensions of attachment had construct, discriminant, and predictive validity.

Brennan, Shaver, and Tobey (1991) compared Hazan and Shaver's (1987) three category model with Bartholomew's (1990) four category model. Results from this study indicated that the same two dimensions underlie both the three and four category models. In comparing the three and four category scales, most secure participants classified themselves as secure on both scales. However, some of Hazan and Shaver's secure participants classified themselves as dismissive on Bartholomew's scale. Participants

classifying themselves as anxious-ambivalent on Hazan and Shaver's scale distributed themselves into Bartholomew's fearful and preoccupied categories. Hazan and Shaver's avoidant participants distributed themselves into Bartholomew's fearful and dismissive categories. The results indicated that Hazan and Shaver's measure may have forced participants to misclassify themselves. The use of Bartholomew's four attachment style typology provided finer attachment style distinctions based on the two dimensions: view of self and view of other. These results support the use of the four category typology.

Summary

In their review of the extant literature, Shaver and Hazan (1993) supported the use of Bartholomew's four attachment styles. Self-report measures for adult attachment styles remain in the preliminary phases of development. Future self-report measures based on the four-group taxonomy need to be assessed for reliability and validity.

Individual Differences in Adult Attachment Styles

Shaver and Hazan (1993) support Bartholomew's (1990) newer model of four adult attachment styles. Research describes the four attachment style categories as follows:

Secure Adults

Secure adults are comfortable with intimacy and autonomy. They adopt a positive view of self and others (Bartholomew et al., 1991). Secure attachment includes comfort with closeness and minimal levels of jealousy (Shaver et al., 1993; Mikulincer & Erev, 1991). Secure adults report love experiences that are happy, friendly, trusting, and supportive. They are able to accept and support their partner despite faults. Their relationships are believed to be more enduring. This style includes a positive view of self and other. Secure adults report positive childhood family memories with loving, available, and responsive parenting (Kobak & Sceery, 1988).

Preoccupied Adults

Preoccupied adults are overly concerned with their relationships. They have a negative view of self and a positive view of others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). The

adult with this style exhibits mood lability, partner obsession, and extreme jealousy (Shaver et al., 1993; Mikulincer et al., 1991). They believe it is easy to fall in love quite often, however, they rarely find true love. They report that few other people are as willing to commit themselves to long term relations. This style includes a negative view of self and a positive view of others. Preoccupied adults report negative childhood family memories which include inconsistent parenting, lack of parental supportiveness, and role reversal (Feeney et al., 1990; Kobak et al., 1988).

Avoidant Adults

Avoidant adults (anxious avoidant, dismissive, and fearful) are fearful of intimacy. They exhibit difficulty with closeness and reliance on others. The adult with this style reports the lowest incidence of positive relationships (Shaver et al., 1993). Avoidant adults often report the experience of important childhood separations from their mothers (Feeney et al., 1990), poor childhood memory recall, and lack of parental love (Kobak et al., 1988).

Dismissive avoidant. Adults with a dismissive attachment style dismiss the importance of intimacy. They are frequently counterdependent in their relationships (Bartholomew et al., 1991; Mikulincer et al., 1991). This style includes a positive view of self and a negative view of others. Dismissive adults expect a partner to be unavailable and non-responsive (Bartholomew et al., 1991).

Fearful avoidant. Adults with a fearful attachment style are fearful of intimacy and are more likely to be socially avoidant in their relationships. This style includes a negative view of self and others. The fearful adult fears attachment and expects his or her partner to be rejecting (Bartholomew et al., 1991).

Adult Attachment and Relationship Outcome

Hazan and Shaver's (1987) results generated numerous replications and extensions of attachment theory as a framework for researching adult romantic relationships. Initial studies incorporated Hazan and Shaver's (1987) measure to examine romantic love.

Several studies used the original categorical measure to examine group differences in couples.

Two studies examined the utility of attachment style as a predictor of adult romantic relationships with an international population. Feeney and Noller (1990) replicated Hazan and Shaver's (1987) measure with undergraduate students from the University of Queensland, Australia. Results indicated that secure participants exhibited higher levels of self-esteem than insecure participants, avoidant participants idealized their partners less than anxious/ambivalent participants, and anxious/ambivalent participants exhibited extreme forms of love. Mikulincer and Nachshon (1991) administered a Hebrew translation of Hazan and Shaver's (1987) measure to undergraduate students at Bar-Ilan University in Israel. Their results suggested that the different attachment groups may have different working models that guide social behaviors. Secure and anxious/ambivalent participants exhibited higher levels of self-disclosure. For both studies, the proportions of attachment style category distributions were comparable to those observed in Hazan and Shaver's (1987) American samples (54-63% secure, 22-31% avoidant, and 15% anxious/ambivalent).

Several studies used the original Hazan and Shaver (1987) categorical measure to examine relationship functioning and satisfaction. These self-report studies provided preliminary support for the applicability of examining adult attachment styles within a romantic relationship model. Hazan and Shaver (1990) examined the possibility that love and work in adulthood are similar to attachment and exploration of childhood. Securely attached participants reported a positive and confident work approach. Anxious/ambivalent participants indicated a fear of rejection for poor work performance and worries about romantic relationships interfering with work. Avoidant participants used work as a way to avoid social interactions outside of work. Feeney and Noller (1991) examined attachment style differences in verbal descriptions of dating partners. Secure participants emphasized positive relationship characteristics. Anxious participants exhibited a demanding,

overinvolved relationship style in which they idealized their partner. Avoidant participants exhibited low levels of emotional intensity and greater relationship distance. Pistole (1989; 1991) conducted two studies on adult attachment style and relationship functioning. The first study revealed that securely attached participants reported higher relationship satisfaction and exhibited mutually focused conflict strategies. Anxious/ambivalent participants complied with their partner's wishes more than did avoidant participants. The second study revealed that secure and anxious respondents reported higher levels of comfort with self-disclosure than did avoidant respondents.

Several early studies modified or changed the original Hazan and Shaver measure to assess attachment style differences. Simpson's (1990) correlational results indicated that secure participants reported greater relationship satisfaction, relationship interdependence, commitment, trust, and positive emotions. In a six month follow-up, avoidant participants reported the least emotional distress following relationship break-up. Mikulincer and Erev (1991) reported that secure participants achieved relationship intimacy and had partners who shared similar relationship views. Anxious participants valued passionate love, however, they failed to experience secure love. Avoidant participants desired intimacy less and perceived less intimacy and commitment in their partners. Feeney and Noller (1992) examined the relationship between attachment style and the process of relationship dissolution. Results indicated that avoidant adults reported the highest levels of relationship dissolution and least distress over these losses. Anxious-ambivalent adults reported the highest levels of surprise and upset over the relationship dissolution and exhibited the highest levels of involvement in a new relationship.

Summary

Early studies of attachment style differences were replicated with international populations (Feeney & Noller, 1990; Mikulincer & Nachshon, 1991). Several studies used the categorical Hazan and Shaver (1987) original attachment style measure to assess group differences. Group differences were observed with regard to attitudes towards

friends and family, conflict resolution patterns, emotional regulation, self-disclosure patterns, trust level, and work styles (Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Feeney & Noller, 1991; Pistole, 1989; Pistole, 1991). Several subsequent studies addressed the initial criticisms of the Hazan and Shaver's (1987) categorical measure by developing and employing continuous measures of adult attachment styles. These investigations also observed attachment style differences in beliefs about human nature, commitment, emotional experiences, expressiveness, instrumentality, perception of others, relationship dissolution, relationship satisfaction, self-esteem, styles of loving, and trust (Collins & Read, 1990; Feeney & Noller, 1992; Mikulincer & Erev, 1991; Simpson, 1990). The early studies suggested that attachment style plays a role in couple interaction and functioning. Much of this work used the three-group instead of the four-group categorization of adult attachment styles. As both theory and subsequent research indicate, the four group categorization provides a finer delineation of adult attachment styles. In addition, the early studies used primarily correlational designs which precluded cause-effect interpretations.

Adult Attachment and Relationship Process

More recently, several studies have examined links between adult attachment styles and the relationship processes with more sophisticated instruments and research designs. Some of these studies have also employed participant pools other than undergraduate dating couples. Kobak and Hazan (1991) used the original Hazan and Shaver (1987) measure and videotaped married couple interactions. The study examined if partner's attachment security was related to emotion regulation during problem solving and confiding behaviors. Results indicated that insecure partners exhibited negative affect and secure partners exhibited greater constructive management of emotions and marital adjustment.

Simpson, Rholes, and Nelligan (1992) employed an experimental design and a continuous measure of adult attachment orientation to investigate whether attachment style moderated the relationship of anxiety to spontaneous behavior (support-seeking and support giving) in dating couples. The researchers unobtrusively videotaped undergraduate

dating couples while the female member waited her turn to participate in an anxiety provoking activity. Secure women sought support from their partner as their anxiety increased while avoidant women distanced from their partners. At lower levels of anxiety, more avoidant women sought support from their partners than secure women. Secure men offered more support than avoidant men. These results are, however, only applicable to female participants with a secure or avoidant attachment styles due to sampling limitations.

Rothbard, Roberts, Leonard, and Eiden (1993) used Bartholomew's four attachment style categories. They used the Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ) which is a 30-item measure developed from Hazan and Shaver's (1987) categorical descriptions, Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) categorical descriptions, and Collins and Read's (1990) dimensions of close, depend, and anxiety. Married couples completed the RSQ, and then participated in a 15 minute videotaped naturalistic discussion of a couple-selected current, unresolved marital problem. Results demonstrated that husband and wife attachment style differences were related to actual couple behaviors during a problem solving discussion. The attachment style measure used in this study (RSQ) included two attachment dimensions which accounted for significant amounts of variance in the couple's problem solving behaviors. This observed relationship persisted even after marital satisfaction and marital aggression were statistically controlled. Results suggested that avoidant husbands exhibited hostility and detachment during the conflict discussion and their wives exhibited defensiveness. Secure husbands exhibited more reflective listening and their wives exhibited less defensiveness. Results suggested that husbands' attachment style and problem solving behavior style may have influenced their wives' responsivity. Specifically, fearful husbands' wives exhibited low levels of disagreement and validation of their partner's position. Preoccupied husbands' wives exhibited the highest levels of disagreement. Dismissive husbands' wives exhibited high levels of validation.

Pistole, Clark, and Tubbs (1995) examined the relationship of adult attachment styles and relationship investment. Based on Hazan and Shaver's (1987) three group

attachment style model, attachment style differences were expected regarding relationship satisfaction, rewards, costs, investment, alternatives, and commitment. As hypothesized, securely attached individuals reported greater relationship satisfaction, fewer costs, and greater commitment than the insecure groups. The avoidantly attached individual reported the lowest level of relationship investment while the anxious-ambivalently attached individual reported the highest relationship cost (negative relationship behavior). Based on the results, problematic relationships may be more evident for the insecure individual due to decreased relationship commitment, investment and negative relationship perceptions.

Summary

Later studies began addressing the criticisms related to the original Hazan and Shaver (1987) measure by using continuous measures to assess attachment styles. Several used experimental designs and naturalistic observation. However, only one study used the Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) four category typology. Results indicated that attachment style played a role in dating and married couple's functioning and interactions. Secure participants report more enduring, satisfying, and less problematic relationships, greater levels of commitment, and more effective affect regulation; avoidant participants report less intense, more distant love relationships with lower levels of relationship investment, and exhibited more hostility and detachment during conflict discussions; and anxious participants report more frequent and less satisfying love relationships.

Attachment Style, Sex, and Gender Role

The literature on adult attachment style reveals inconsistent results regarding sex and gender role differences. Several recent studies suggest that sex may moderate the influence of attachment style on relationship functioning. Collins and Read (1990) indicated that both partners were less satisfied with the relationship when the male was avoidant and when the female was anxious/ambivalent. Simpson (1990) reported sex differences in a longitudinal investigation of dating couples. Avoidant males reported less emotional distress following a relationship termination. Males reported a decreased level of

satisfaction when the female exhibited an anxious attachment style. Senchak and Leonard (1992) reported sex and attachment style differences in newlywed problem solving behavior. Insecure husbands in couple pairings with a secure wife exhibited a low frequency of problem solving behaviors. Anxious husbands reported shorter premarital relationships.

Cohn, Silver, Cowan, Cowan, and Pearson (1992) examined attachment differences in marital satisfaction and observed couple interaction. Post hoc findings that examined couples' joint attachment classifications, including insecure-insecure, insecure-secure, and secure-secure dyads, suggested that insecure women married to secure men reported more positive relationships than insecure women married to insecure men. These authors suggested that the husband's early attachment experiences had a greater influence on couple functioning than did the wife's early attachment experiences. They raised the possibility that the husband's secure attachment style may help transform an insecure wife's attachment style to a secure model. These results should be cautiously interpreted due to the low number of insecure men and an overall low sample size.

Scharfe and Bartholomew (1995) examined the relationship between individual attachment style differences based on Bartholomew's four category model and the use of accommodation strategies among young couples. Accommodation strategies were defined as constructive responses to potentially destructive behavior exhibited by a romantic partner. Results indicated that a secure attachment was positively associated with the use of constructive strategies which included active discussion of the problem for men and passive waiting for an improvement in the partner's behavior for women. A secure attachment was negatively associated with destructive strategies which, for both men and women, included leaving or threatening to leave the relationship, for men only, also included ignoring the problem or partner. These results suggested that a secure attachment style may lead individuals to respond to threatening partner behavior with constructive, accommodating behaviors. Conversely, fearfulness was positively associated with destructive responses of

ignoring the problem and leaving or threatening to leave the relationship for men. Fearful men also exhibited a negative association with discussing the problem. Associations for preoccupied and dismissive were less consistent. Finally, there was minimal support that the partner's attachment style predicted one's use of accommodation independent of individual attachment style. However, the partners of fearful and preoccupied males discussed problems less often than other attachment styles. Partners of anxious females threatened to leave or terminated the relationship more often than did partners of individuals with other attachment styles. Finally, male and female anxiety related to an increase in destructive relationship behaviors for their partners.

A few studies assessed attachment styles and sex differences with sex as one of the independent variables. In these studies, sex and not gender role was considered. Feeney, Noller, and Patty (1993) examined attachment style and sex differences among undergraduate dating couples. In comparing male and female participants from all three attachment style groups, female avoidants and male anxious/ambivalents (preoccupied) were the least likely to report involvement in sexual intercourse. This finding supports the joint influence of attachment style and sex on relationship functioning.

Fiala and Pietromonaco (1991) examined how internal working models of others influenced how individuals perceive and respond in romantic relationships. They asked secure, preoccupied, and avoidant men and women to read about and imagine a relationship with a partner displaying one of three attachment style behaviors. This was the first study that directly examined the role of sex as a moderating variable. Individuals conforming to stereotypic gender roles (i.e. avoidant men and preoccupied women) experienced the most negative feelings about themselves. And, stereotypic men (avoidant) saw themselves in a future relationship with a stereotypic female (preoccupied). Avoidant females did not see themselves in a relationship with a preoccupied male. A preoccupied female fits the prescribed gender role for women, however, the same behavior in a male does not fit the prescribed gender role and hence may have been unacceptable to these females. Avoidant

women were less positive about a future relationship with an avoidant partner than were secure or preoccupied woman. Results suggested that the relationship between internal working models of others and emotional reactions and perceptions about imagined relationships are moderated by sex and partner's attachment behavior.

Kirkpatrick and Davis (1994) examined male/female attachment style pairings, the role of each partner's attachment style on relationship satisfaction, commitment, and conflict and the role that attachment style plays in predicting of relationship break-up. Males and females rated the relationship negatively when the female was anxious. When the male was avoidant, the male partner rated the relationship negatively. Avoidant men reported a stable relationship at the time of the first follow-up despite the avoidant males' negative rating of the relationship. Anxious women reported stable relationships at the time of the second follow-up despite their negative relationships.

Summary

Based on the Hazan and Shaver (1987) measure, the distribution of attachment styles appears to be independent of sex (Brennan, Shaver & Tobey, 1991; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Levy & Davis, 1988). Only one study using Bartholomew's four category typology of adult attachment style demonstrated sex differences (Brennan, Shaver & Tobey, 1991). In this study, there were proportionally more males in the dismissive category and more females in the fearful category. Kunce and Shaver (1994) subsequently compared Hazan and Shaver's three category model and Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) four category model of adult attachment styles. These investigators reported no sex differences in the self reports of attachment style using either measure.

Still, evidence exists that respondents' sex may moderate how attachment style affect relationship perceptions and behaviors. Based on the reviewed literature of sex differences and attachment styles, both partners were less satisfied when the male had an avoidant attachment style and the female had an anxious attachment style (Collins & Read, 1990; Fiala & Pietromonaco, 1991; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Simpson, 1990).

Avoidant males reported less emotional distress following relationship termination (Simpson, 1990) and a greater likelihood that they would marry an anxious female (Fiala & Pietromonaco, 1991). Avoidant women retracted from emotional support when anxious (Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan, 1992) and reported that they were less likely to participate in sexual intercourse (Feeney, Noller, & Patty, 1993). Anxious men reported the lowest amount of relationship stability (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994); shorter premarital relationship lengths (Senchak & Leonard, 1992); and that they were less likely to participate in sexual intercourse (Feeney, Noller, & Patty, 1993). Anxious women reported the highest levels of relationship stability. Insecure men paired with secure wives exhibited the lowest frequencies of problem solving behaviors (Senchak & Leonard, 1992). Insecure women married to secure men reported more positive relationships than insecure women married to insecure men (Cohn et al., 1992). Secure women used their partner for support when anxious and secure men offered more support to their partners than avoidant men (Simpson et al., 1992). Stereotypic gender role behavior exhibited in avoidant males and anxious females resulted in negative relationship experiences for both partners. Secure attachment styles in males and females generated the highest levels of relationship satisfaction.

In conclusion, preliminary results suggest that sex and/or gender role may moderate the influence of adult attachment styles on relationship functioning. Stereotypical gender role behavior appears to present itself in certain attachment styles (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Feeney, 1994). This is evidenced in stereotypical avoidant men and stereotypical anxious women. For example, avoidant men are prone to distancing behavior in relationships which is considered to be a stereotypically masculine behavior. Anxious females are prone to being preoccupied with their relationships which is considered to be a stereotypically feminine behavior (Fiala & Pietromonaco, 1991; Pistole, 1994).

Several criticisms are noted with the current studies that examined sex and gender role. Few of the studies used Bartholomew's four attachment style typology. Several studies were not able to compare the three groups adequately due to small sample sizes for

one of the three attachment style groups. Finally, most studies examined sex and not gender role. What remains unclear is whether it is sex or gender role that moderates the attachment style influence on relationship functioning. Sex may not moderate attachment style effects on relationship functioning when gender role differences are controlled.

Attachment Style and Problem Solving

Several studies examined participants' problem solving as a dependent variable when examining adult attachment style differences in romantic couples. Levy and Davis (1988) reported that the secure style was positively correlated with constructive approaches such as compromising and integrating conflict styles. The anxious/ambivalent style was positively correlated with a dominating style. The avoidant style was negatively correlated with compromising and integrating conflict styles. Pistole (1989) reported that secure participants used a strategy that was mutually focused while anxious/ambivalent participants reported a strategy that focused on the other's perspective. Secure participants applied constructive conflict resolution styles and anxious ambivalent and avoidant adults applied negative approaches to problem solving.

Two studies asked couples to identify their own problems to discuss with their partner. Kobak and Hazan (1991) videotaped marital couples discussing a problem that the couple selected. Husbands with positive expectations of their wives' availability exhibited less rejection and more support. More rejection was exhibited when wives described their husband as less psychologically available and when they relied less on their husbands. Rothbard, Roberts, Leonard, and Eiden (1991) videotaped couples engaging in discussion of a current marital conflict. These authors compared couples who differed with regard to husbands' aggressive status (aggressive and nonaggressive). Attachment style dimensions accounted for significant variance in problem solving behavior after marital satisfaction and marital aggression were controlled. Avoidant husbands and wives exhibited an increase of attack and a decrease of reflective listening and attentiveness during these discussions. Secure husbands scored the highest on reflective listening whereas their wives scored the

lowest on defensive behavior. Fearful avoidant husbands' wives scored the lowest on disagree/disapprove and validation of partner's position. Preoccupied husbands' wives scored the highest on disagree/disapprove. Dismissive husbands' wives scored highest on validation of partner's position. Husbands' and wives' attachment styles were independently related to actual behaviors during a problem solving interaction.

Summary

The literature indicates that significant, meaningful differences in problem solving behavior are associated with adult attachment style differences in dating and married couples. Three of the four studies were based on Hazan and Shaver's three category attachment style typology. Results from those studies indicated that secure attachment styles were related to more constructive and effective problem solving behaviors and that insecure styles exhibited less effective problem solving behavior and greater conflict. When using an alternate attachment style measure based on the four category attachment style typology, similar results were obtained. One observed difference involved the interaction between the dismissive husbands' wives' behavior. Within these pairings, the wife was more validating of her partner's position. This may have been a positive problem solving behavior or it may have been a way to increase the husband's involvement.

The studies relied on self-report of conflict styles, recalling or imagining a problem, or identifying a problem to discuss. These behaviors may provide preliminary information on problem solving behavior; however, they may not reflect actual problem-solving behavior. Recalling or imagining about a problem is different from experiencing it. Furthermore, identifying a problem may result in couples selecting a problem that is "safe" and possibly rehearsed. Current studies have neglected direct observation of spontaneous couple problem-solving communication.

Attachment Style and Conjoint Interaction

The conjoint contribution of each partner's attachment style to relationship functioning has been largely overlooked. More specifically, studies have generally not

examined how the internal working models of others influence the emotional reactions, relationship perceptions, and subsequent behavior of the relationship partner. Several studies briefly examined attachment style dyadic matching. For example, Collins and Read (1990) reported stable dating relationships for secure-secure partner matching. Simpson (1990) reported that anxious men were involved with insecure females and avoidant men were paired with anxious women.

Fiala and Pietromonaco's (1991) research demonstrated dyadic attachment style differences in mental representations when participants imagined a relationship with a secure, anxious, or avoidant partner. When participants, regardless of attachment style, imagined a relationship with a secure partner, they reported more positive feelings than when they imagined a relationship with a preoccupied or avoidant partner. Participants reported the most negative feelings after imagining a relationship with an avoidant partner. In general, secure participants were more positive about their future relationships. All participants reported greater perceived conflict when imagining a relationship with a preoccupied or avoidant partner. Insecure participants responded more favorably when imagining they were paired with a dissimilar insecure partner (i.e. avoidant participant was more favorable about a preoccupied partner than an avoidant partner). The results provided evidence that participants of different attachments styles reported different emotional reactions when imagining a romantic relationship.

Several studies examined differences in couple interactions in married and dating couples with similar and dissimilar attachment styles. Cohn, Silver, Cowan, Cowan, and Pearson (1992) examined attachment differences in marital satisfaction and observed couple interaction. Insecure females married to secure men reported more positive and less conflictual relationships. Insecure-insecure dyads exhibited more anger and conflict than the other dyad combinations and were perceived as less well functioning than were either the secure-secure or the secure-insecure couple. The results suggested that when at least one of the partner's has a secure attachment style, less negative couple interaction is

reported. A secure partner may buffer negative effects of a mate's insecure attachment style.

Senchak and Leonard (1992) examined attachment style differences and interpersonal functioning in newlywed couples. Results indicated that partners tended to marry based on attachment similarity. However, both secure and insecure partners were more likely to marry a secure partner. This may have related to the greater sample number of secure participants. Findings suggested that secure-secure couples reported better overall marital adjustment than insecure couples or mixed couples. Insecure attachment style similarity did not lead to better marital adjustment. Insecure couples reported more negative partner conflict resolution behavior than did secure couples. Couples in which the husband reported an ambivalent attachment style had shorter premarital relationships than did couples in which the husband had a secure or avoidant attachment style. Reported sex differences indicated that wives reported more intimacy and evaluated their husbands more favorably regardless of couple type. Results suggested that it is the nature of the pairing instead of attachment style pairing similarity that related to couple functioning. Couples in which both partners were secure reported better overall marital adjustment than insecure couples or mixed couples.

Kirkpatrick and Davis's (1994) large scale survey of undergraduate dating couples indicated an over-representation of secure couples and an absence of avoidant-avoidant and anxious-anxious couples. Their results need to be interpreted with caution since there was an underrepresentation of anxious and avoidant adults. There was no evidence of any interactions between the individual partner's attachment style in predicting the relationship ratings. In couples with an anxious female, both partners rated the relationship negatively on satisfaction, viability, and conflict ambivalence. In couples with an avoidant male, only men rated the relationship negatively in all relationship dimensions. The female partners of the avoidant males, however, reported greater passion and less conflict than those females paired with an anxious male. These ratings were given regardless of the female partner's

attachment style. In examining the dating relationship at Time 2, the relationships that received the highest negative ratings at Time 1 (avoidant men and anxious women) described their relationships as stable as the Time 1 secure subjects. Anxious men and avoidant women reported the highest break-up rates over time. The results indicated that relationship rating differences related to attachment style pairings, stage of the relationship, and sex.

Feeney (1994) examined the relationship between attachment style and relationship satisfaction across the marital life cycle. Her study examined the influence of each individual partner's attachment style and the conjoint interaction of participants' attachment styles. In addition, she assessed whether communication variables (mutuality, coercion, destructive process, and post conflict distress) mediated the relationship between attachment and relationship satisfaction. Secure persons (high in comfort with closeness and low in anxiety) were more often paired with secure partners. The secure-secure couple pairing reported higher levels of satisfaction for both husbands and wives. Satisfaction was negatively correlated with anxiety for both spouses. This effect was primarily noted when the husband was uncomfortable with closeness and the wife reported increased anxiety. Examination of attachment style pairings indicated that a problematic combination in marriages of short duration were couples wherein the husband reported low scores with comfort and the wife reported high anxiety. Among wives, the relationship between attachment and relationship satisfaction was largely mediated by communication patterns, yet among husbands only partially so. The communication pattern of mutuality (open and constructive communication and lack of avoidance and withdrawal) was the strongest correlate of relationship satisfaction.

Feeney, Noller, and Callan (1994) used a longitudinal design to examine concurrent relations between participants' and their partners' attachment style and communication patterns and marital satisfaction. Couples completed interaction diaries for a two year period. Attachment style was based on self report measures of comfort with closeness and

anxiety over abandonment. Husbands scoring higher on comfort with closeness demonstrated more constructive patterns of communication. These couples reported higher levels of recognition, involvement, disclosure, and satisfaction with their communication. Husbands scoring higher on anxiety reported lower levels of self-disclosure in their marriages. Wives scoring higher on the anxiety scale exhibited decreased couple involvement and satisfaction with communication and increased marital conflict and domination of the partner. For both husbands and wives, anxiety related to conflict patterns of coercion, withdrawal, feelings of guilt and hurt, and lack of mutual expression and understanding. Anxiety about attachment related to negative and destructive patterns of communication. Relationship satisfaction and anxiety were negatively correlated. Husbands and wives both reported that husbands' discomfort with closeness and wives' anxiety over abandonment were associated with negative relationship outcomes. The results demonstrated differences in communication patterns and relationship satisfaction based on dyadic attachment style differences among couples in established relationships.

Summary

In examining types of dyadic attachment style pairings, the literature has indicated a predominance of secure-secure pairings and a relative absence of anxious-anxious and avoidant-avoidant couples. Reasons for the absence of similar insecure pairings may relate to a violation of expectations. The avoidant individual expects his or her partner to be clingy and demanding while the anxious individual expects their partner to be distant and withdrawn. Therefore, to meet these expectations, they choose partners with dissimilar insecure attachment styles. The interlocking expectations of avoidant and anxious individuals are in line with consistent findings that avoidant individuals tend to couple with anxious partners instead of with same attachment style partners (Collins & Read, 1990; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Simpson, 1990). The avoidant-anxious attachment pairing may also be perceived as more acceptable since it is intertwined with the culturally stereotypical behavioral patterns for men and women.

Overall, in examining both partners' attachment styles with the dyadic relationship, insecure-insecure dyads reported the highest levels of anger and conflict as compared to the secure-secure dyads. More specifically, avoidant men and preoccupied women reported the lowest relationship satisfaction and highest level of conflict and ambivalence (Fiala & Pietromonaco, 1991). Secure-secure partners reported the highest levels of stability and relationship adjustment as compared to insecure couples or mixed (i.e., secure-insecure) couples. Most studies, however, overlooked the conjoint contribution that individual attachment style may play in relationship functioning. In the studies that did examine the conjoint attachment, most used Hazan and Shaver's (1987) three category typology or Collins and Read's (1990) three attachment style dimensions to measure attachment style. Both Feeney (1994) and Feeney et al. (1994) used two factor-analytically-derived scales to measure attachment, comfort with closeness and anxiety over relationships. Preliminary results provided initial support for the role that conjoint attachment style pairings play in couple functioning. The use of the three category attachment style model instead of the four category model, small sample sizes for the anxious and avoidant categories, and minimal emphasis on the interaction of the couple's attachment styles limit the conclusions that can be drawn from these studies.

Sex/Gender Role and Couple Communication and Functioning

Attachment style appears to affect the type of problem solving style an individual exhibits. Previous studies have found that sex and/or gender role appears to moderate the relationship of attachment style and dyadic behavior. This study addresses a gap in the literature which will hopefully clarify relationships among all four variables: attachment style, sex, gender role, and problem solving communication. One final area of research will be presented that provides support for this line of inquiry-- the relationship between sex/gender role and problem solving communication in couples.

There is confusion and ambiguity in the literature about the labeling and meaning of the terms sex and gender role. The research in the area of male and female differences used

biological sex and societal gender roles interchangeably. Sex is the biological term of being born male or female. Gender role refers to the psychological phenomenon of behaviors, expectations and roles of the societal definitions of masculinity and femininity (Mintz & O'Neil, 1990; Winstead & Derlega, 1993). During the past two decades, research on sex and gender role differences has increased. In the studies that used sex of the participant as the independent variable, fewer differences were found than expected. The amount of variance accounted for by sex was often small. When differences related to sex were found, the characteristic of the specific task was found to be a critical factor in eliciting or suppressing sex differences (Deaux, 1984; Maccoby, 1990). Maccoby (1990) reported that the research on sex differences has become more methodologically sophisticated over the last 15 years. Despite the changes in research design and analyses, similar conclusions regarding sex differences remain constant. There were still moderate sex differences in performance on tests of mathematical and spatial abilities, however, previously reported sex differences in verbal abilities had decreased when the sex differences were analyzed with more sophisticated methodologies and research designs . Overall, the results indicated that sex differences in personality traits did not differ.

With the limitations of sex as an independent variable, subsequent research began to examine gender role differences (Bem, 1974). Gender role was assessed as a continuous variable ranging from high masculinity to high femininity. Research supported that masculinity and femininity predicted differences in instrumental and expressive domains. And, research supported that gender role stereotypes exist and relate to judgment and evaluations of males and females.

Whereas research in the area of male and female sex differences is beyond the scope of this paper, sex differences on intellectual performance and personality traits are rarely found (Maccoby, 1990). When male and female differences are reported, these differences are influenced by the cultural stereotypes of gender role and their resulting discriminatory behavior. Despite the findings of gender role differences, the research remains fragmented.

Further research needs to clarify the role of gender role differences by examining the influence of individual choices that males and females make, and how these choices are influenced by the stereotypes and discriminatory behavior that may affect the decision-making process (encouraging some choices and discouraging others) (Deaux, 1984). Based on the current research, the present study will test the hypotheses that male and female differences in the problem solving communication patterns of dating couples are related to gender role and not sex.

The psychological literature has noted and described the different socialization processes impacting men and women (Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982). Men are socialized to be emotionally inhibited, assertive, powerful, independent and to compare sexuality with intimacy, manliness, and self esteem. Women are socialized to be emotional, nurturing and to direct their sense of worth and achievement through affiliation with others (Kaplan, 1979; Gilbert, 1987). These different processes in socialization may create male and female differences in couple interaction and functioning. Recent theories of women's development suggest that these differences relate to the themes of separateness (focus on independence in relationships) and connectedness (focus on emotional intimacy in relationships) (Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982). Women's developmental theory proposes that men define themselves through themes of separateness whereas women define themselves through themes of connectedness in relationships (Gilligan, 1982). These different self definitions result in different relationship expectations and behaviors for men and women. Lang-Takac and Osterweil (1992) found empirical support for this theory indicating that men are more emotionally differentiated from others and independent whereas women are more empathic and desired higher intimacy. From these results, one can speculate that males may be more attuned to individual goals whereas women may be more attuned to relationship maintenance. This gender role difference may explain differences noted in relationship process variables for men and women.

Several studies have examined the role of sex, gender role and problem solving communication patterns, conflict resolution, and decision making styles. Sayers and Baucom (1991) examined the role of gender-stereotypic behavior in distressed couple's communication. Higher levels of femininity among women in distressed marriages correlated with greater negativity in the marital interactions. Femininity levels in males were less related to communication patterns; however, men's femininity was related to a tendency to terminate fewer negative interactions in comparison with the females. Masculinity was not predictive of communication pattern differences between men and women. The results were interpreted as suggesting that spouses in distressed marriages with higher levels of femininity may take more responsibility for ensuring that conflictual issues are addressed in the relationship. This supports socialization theory assumptions that women may focus more on maintaining connectedness in the relationship as demonstrated by engaging in the discussion of negative, emotionally laden topics during problem solving discussions.

White (1989) examined conflict-resolution patterns in couples. In marriages where either the male or female partner expressed marital dissatisfaction, men were more likely to exhibit a coercive style of conflict resolution. Women exhibited an affiliative style of interaction when either they or their spouses were unhappy. Males and females responded differently to marital dissatisfaction in that males sought distance and females sought connection. Heavey, Layne, and Christensen (1993) reported that women were more demanding and men were more withdrawing during conflictual discussion regarding wive's and not husband's issues. Furthermore, when couples exhibited the gender-stereotyped roles of females demanding and males withdrawing, the females reported higher relationship dissatisfaction. Rusbult, Johnson, and Morrow (1986) reported that women demonstrated engaging and loyalty (waiting for conditions to improve) behaviors whereas men tended to not engage in interpersonal issues during problem solving.

Lamke, Sollie, Durbin, and Fitzpatrick (1994) examined the relationships among masculinity, femininity, and relationship satisfaction in dating couples. Individuals who identified with feminine traits described themselves as being comfortable in engaging in emotionally supportive behaviors in intimate relationships (expressive competence). Individuals who identified with masculine traits described themselves as being comfortable in initiating behaviors that involved discussing negative thoughts and feelings (instrumental competence). For both males and females, relationship satisfaction related to identifying oneself as capable of expressive competence and perceiving one's partner as feminine. This study provides support for the view that femininity indirectly influences relationship satisfaction and expressive competence (stereotypically feminine traits) and that perceptions of one's partner as feminine directly influences dating relationship satisfaction.

A final article indirectly relevant to the discussion of sex/gender role and problem solving, and directly relevant to this study because of its use of the same problem-solving communication task is Grotevant and Cooper's (1985) study of the concepts of individuality and connectedness within family relationships. Individuality was defined as verbal behavior that reflects separateness and self-assertion, and operationalized as in verbal expressions that distinguished self from others and that clarified one's own viewpoint. Connectedness was defined as verbal behavior that reflected mutuality and permeability, and operationalized as verbal expressions of sensitivity and respect for the other's viewpoint and of openness and responsiveness to these viewpoints. Their study explored how these concepts were demonstrated through the family's communication process. Their findings suggested that both individuality and connectedness are important predictors of individual problem-solving competence. Despite the sex differences noted in these variables, additional research suggested that healthy relationships need a balance between individuality and connectedness (Feeney & Noller, 1991; Grotevant & Cooper, 1985; Markman, Silvern, Clements, & Kraft-Hanak, 1993). Current research indicated that individuals with different attachment styles tended to exhibit tendencies toward extreme

individuality or extreme connectedness (Feeney & Noller, 1991; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Pistole, 1994). Since a balance of the two concepts is desired, an absence of this balance in relationships may explain problems in relationship functioning that the research has uncovered.

In conclusion, the research reviewed in this section provides support for the view that sex and/or gender role influences communication patterns, conflict resolution, and problem solving behavior. Lamke et al. (1994) demonstrated that gender role influenced relationship satisfaction in dating couples. In addition, the research on sex, gender role and problem solving patterns and style supports the view that men seek distance during conflict resolution and problem solving whereas women attempt to maintain communication and attend to the relationship (Heavey, Layne, & Christenson, 1993; Sayers & Baucom, 1991; White, 1989). Although the research reviewed for this section indicated that male and female differences in self definitions, communication patterns, conflict resolution style, problem solving patterns, and decision making styles affect relationship behavior, the relative contributions of sex versus gender role differences were not clarified. Other research suggests that despite sex differences in certain task specific areas, sex differences in relationship functioning are actually related to stereotypical gender role behaviors (i.e., masculinity and femininity) of couple participants. This study attempted to clarify the relationship between sex and gender role and relationship functioning, and specifically problem solving behavior.

A final point is that the research on couple functioning highlighted that men tend to focus on independent behaviors (separateness) within the relationship whereas women tend to focus on relationship maintenance (connectedness). This different focus within the relationship creates problems with closeness-distance regulation in couple communication and interactions. Pistole (1994) proposed that attachment theory may be one way to gain further understanding of this behavior. Individuals differ in their desires for closeness and distance in relationships. This difference is exaggerated further during times of increased

anxiety. Pistole suggested that these differences are demonstrated in the attachment style categories. The individual with an avoidant attachment style (fearful and dismissive) seeks distance during times of stress whereas an individual with a preoccupied attachment style seeks increased closeness. This suggests that sex and gender role differences may only be one part of the explanation for differences in couple communication, functioning, and relationship satisfaction.

Summary and Limitations

Attachment theory provides a new framework within which to examine dating and marital couple functioning and interaction. Hazan and Shaver (1987) provided theoretical and empirical support for attachment style differences in adult intimate relationships. Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) provided theoretical and empirical support for the existence of four adult attachment styles instead of the three styles that were initially proposed. Their four group model includes secure, preoccupied, dismissive, and fearful styles.

Numerous studies have replicated and extended the initial work on individual attachment style differences in romantic relationships. Preliminary studies suggested that attachment style plays a role in several areas of dating and marital couples interaction and functioning. Later studies used improved adult attachment measures and more sophisticated research designs. The studies continued to be problematic since they did not use Bartholomew's four category typology. Only recently have researchers implemented in vivo methods to assess attachment style and couple functioning.

The literature has yielded inconsistent results regarding the relationship of sex and gender role and attachment style to couple interactions. Few studies have specifically examined and controlled for sex or gender role influences. Stereotypical gender role behaviors are present in the male dismissive adult and the female preoccupied adult. Future research needs to control for sex and gender role while examining the affects of attachment style differences on relationship processes and outcomes.

Few studies have examined the conjoint contribution of each partner's attachment style to romantic couple functioning. Future research needs to clarify the conjoint effects of attachment styles in couple pairings on relationship behaviors.

A study that concurrently examines participants' sex, gender role, and attachment style will expand our overall understanding of the individual and conjoint roles that each variable plays in the role of couple functioning. Examining couples' conjoint attachment style contributions and clarifying the role of sex and gender role differences as moderators of couple communication patterns will extend and clarify and enhance the current research on adult attachment style differences in romantic couples.

Definitions

Adult Attachment Styles

In this study, Shaver and Hazan's (1993) and Bartholomew's (1990) adult attachment styles categories are used and defined as follows:

Secure adults are comfortable with intimacy and autonomy. They adopt a positive view of self and others. Secure attachment includes comfort with both closeness and separateness. Secure adults report positive childhood family memories with loving and available parents.

Preoccupied adults (anxious/ambivalent, anxious resistant) are preoccupied with relationships. They have a negative view of self and a positive view of others. Preoccupied attachment includes obsession, excessive dependency, and extreme jealousy. Preoccupied adults report negative childhood family memories which include inconsistent parenting, lack of parental support, and role reversal.

Avoidant adults (anxious avoidant, dismissive, and fearful) are fearful of intimacy. They exhibit difficulty with closeness and reliance on others. Avoidant adults report childhood separation from their mother, poor childhood memory recall, and lack of parental love. This study divides the avoidant into two distinct categories of dismissive and fearful attachment styles. Dismissive avoidant adults dismiss intimacy and they are counterdependent in their relationships. This style includes a positive view of self and a negative view of others. They deny the need for attachment. Dismissive adults expect the partner to be unavailable and non-responsive. Fearful avoidant adults are fearful of intimacy and socially avoidant. This style includes a negative view of self and others. The fearful adult fears attachment and expects their partner to be rejecting

Dating Relationship

In this study, dating relationship is defined as a heterosexual couple that has been dating for at least one month.

Problem Solving Communication

In this study, Grotevant and Cooper's (1985) communication behavior will be used to identify varying styles of problem solving communication. The problem solving styles are defined as follows:

> Self Assertion involves direct suggestions. The participants displays awareness of their own point of view and accept responsibility for communicating it clearly.
>
> Permeability involves acknowledgment, requests for information, agreement, making relevant comment(s), and compliance with requests for action. Participants express responsiveness to the views of others.
>
> Mutuality involves indirect suggestion, initiation of compromise, statements of other's feelings, and answer to requests for information. Participants show sensitivity and respects for others views.
>
> Separateness involves requests for action, direct disagreement, indirect disagreement, and irrelevant comment. Participants express distinctiveness of self from others.

Sex and Gender Role

In this study, sex refers to the biological and physiological differences between males and females. It does not refer to psychological differences between males and females. Gender role refers to an individual's endorsement of psychologically feminine and masculine characteristics created by societal and cultural influences.

Hypotheses

There is continuing need to understand the factors involved in couple interaction and functioning. Attachment theory provides a new framework for exploring these issues further. Specifically, attachment theory provides a framework for understanding the effect that gender role behavior and adult attachment styles may have on problem solving communication in dating couples. As a result of these investigations, a number of unanswered questions and literature gaps will be explored further. The following hypotheses will be investigated in this study:

Relationships among attachment styles, sex, gender role and problem solving communication

The first four hypotheses address how the individual participants' attachment styles affect their problem solving communication and explore how sex and gender role influence this relationship.

Hypothesis 1: Controlling for gender role variation, there will be a significant relationship between individual attachment style and problem solving communication. Hypothesis 1a: Secure and dismissive individuals will exhibit higher scores on self-assertion than preoccupied or fearful individuals. Self-assertion involves making direct suggestions, displaying an awareness of one's point of view and accepting responsibility for communicating it clearly. Individuals who exhibit higher scores on self-assertion need to feel confident in themselves. The secure and dismissive participant are more likely to have this level of confidence due to their positive view of self. Hypothesis 1b: Secure and preoccupied individuals will exhibit higher scores on permeability than dismissive or fearful individuals. Secure and preoccupied individuals have a positive model of others. Permeability refers to communications and behaviors that support a relationship partner. Hypothesis 1c: Secure individuals will exhibit the highest score on mutuality relative to individuals in the other attachment style categories. Mutuality involves showing sensitivity and respect of other's viewpoints. Due to a positive view of self and other, secure individuals will be more empathic and better able to attend to other's thoughts and feelings than will insecure individuals. Hypothesis 1d: Dismissive individuals will exhibit the highest scores on separateness relative to individuals in the other attachment style categories. The dismissive individual has a positive view of self with a low regard for others. They value self sufficiency and are more likely to make separate statements which create a distinction between themselves and others than secure, preoccupied, and fearful individuals.

Hypothesis 2: When gender role differences are controlled, sex will not be significantly related to problem solving communication.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a significant relationship between gender role and problem solving communication. Hypothesis 3a: Individuals scoring higher on the masculinity scale will exhibit higher scores on self assertion and separateness. The reviewed literature supports the view that masculinity is related to greater emphasis on individuation in relationships. Hypothesis 3b: Individuals scoring higher on the femininity scales will score higher on permeability and mutuality. The reviewed literature supports the view that femininity is related to greater emphasis on maintaining connection in relationships.

Hypothesis 4: Attachment style and gender role will interact to affect problem solving behavior. Hypothesis 4a: Secure and dismissive individuals with high masculinity scores will score higher on self-assertion and separateness than secure and dismissive individuals with a high femininity score. Hypothesis 4b: Secure and preoccupied individuals with high femininity scores will score higher on permeability than dismissive or fearful individuals with a high masculinity score. Secure and preoccupied attachment styles exhibit a positive view of others and femininity relates to a greater emphasis on connection in relationships. Permeability involves a responsiveness to the views of others in a relationship. Relative to their peers in other groups, dismissive and fearful individuals with higher masculinity scores will score the lowest on permeability. Dismissive and fearful attachment styles have a negative view of others and masculinity scores relate to a greater emphasis on individuality in relationships. Hypothesis 4c: Secure individuals with high femininity scores will score higher on mutuality than will secure individuals with a high masculinity score. Hypothesis 4d: Dismissive individuals with high masculinity scores will score higher on separateness than will dismissive individuals with high femininity scores.

Relationship between couple's conjoint attachment style and problem solving behavior

The final hypothesis addresses how the couple's conjoint attachment style influences problem solving communication.

Hypothesis 5: There will be a significant relationship between conjoint attachment style and how participants' rate their overall problem solving effectiveness. Hypothesis 5a: The secure/secure couples will receive the highest scores on couple's overall problem solving effectiveness. Hypothesis 5b: The secure/secure couples will receive the highest scores on rater's overall problem solving effectiveness.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Participants

Students enrolled in College of Education classes at Michigan State University were asked to voluntarily participate in this study. Presentations for recruitment were administered to 12 undergraduate courses and one graduate course. For phase one, students were asked to attend a data collection session where they completed three questionnaires. As an incentive for participation, each student received extra course credit points. During phase one, 188 students volunteered to participate and 157 students attended the data collection sessions.

Table 2 contains descriptive demographic information of the sample from phase one. The sample included 156 (30 men and 126 women) participants. One student did not correctly complete the inventories and was thus dropped from the study. The sample consisted primarily of seniors (54%) and juniors (21%) with a mean age of 21 (SD=1.88). Participants were predominantly Caucasian (74%) and never married (99%). Attachment style self classifications were as follows: secure (N=82, 53%), preoccupied (N=17, 11%), fearful (N=42, 27%), and dismissive (N=15, 10%). These frequencies are comparable to other studies using the Bartholomew Relationship Questionnaire with college samples (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Duggan & Brennan, 1994; Kunce & Shaver, 1994; Lopez, Gover, Leskela, Sauer, Schirmer, & Wyssmann, 1995; Pistole, 1994).

Sixty-seven percent of the overall sample indicated they were currently in a dating relationship. Of this group, participant's attachment style self classifications were as follows: secure (60%), preoccupied (13%), fearful (24%), and dismissive (3%). Dating participants indicated they had known their partner for slightly less than three years

Table 2. Sample Demographic Information - Phase 1

Variable							
Overall Response Rate		**#**					
Signed up for Phase 1		188					
Attended Phase 1		157 (one participant did not identify attachment style; N=156)					
Sex and Attachment Style	**Total**	**%**	**Male**	**%**	**Female**	**%**	
Secure	82	53%	11	37%	71	56%	
Preoccupied	17	11%	4	13%	13	10%	
Fearful	42	27%	11	37%	31	25%	
Dismissive	15	10%	4	13%	11	9%	
Total	156		30	19%	126	81%	
Age	**Mean**		**Standard Deviation**				
	21		1.88				
Year in College	**Total**		**%**				
Freshman	10		6%				
Sophomore	26		17%				
Junior	32		21%				
Senior	85		54%				
Other	3		2%				
Ethnicity	**Total**		**%**				
African American	29		19%				
Asian American	6		4%				
Caucasian/White	116		74%				
Hispanic/Latino	3		2%				
Native American	1		1%				
Other	1		1%				
Marital Status	**Total**		**%**				
Married	0		0%				
Divorced	1		1%				
Currently in a Dating Relationship	**Total**	**%**	**Male**	**%**	**Female**	**%**	
Secure	58	60%	8	47%	50	57%	
Preoccupied	13	13%	3	18%	10	11%	
Fearful	23	24%	4	24%	19	22%	
Dismissive	10	3%	2	12%	8	9%	
Total	104	67%	17	58%	87	69%	
Volunteered for Phase 2	**Total**	**%**	**Male**	**%**	**Female**	**%**	
Secure	42	71%	5	50%	37	76%	
Preoccupied	7	12%	3	30%	4	8%	
Fearful	6	10%	1	10%	5	10%	
Dismissive	4	7%	1	10%	3	6%	
Total	59		10		49		
Length of Time Knew Dating Partner (months)							
	Mean		**Sample Deviation**				
Secure	36.1		26.3				
Preoccupied	43		31.3				
Fearful	20.1		17.7				
Dismissive	31.8		28.7				
Total	33.1		26.2				

Table 2. (continued)

Variable										
Length of Time of Dating Relationship (months)										
	Mean		Sample Deviation							
Secure	21.9		17.7							
Preoccupied	31.2		23.5							
Fearful	14		14.9							
Dismissive	20.9		20.1							
Total	21.3		18.6							
Seriousness of Dating Relationship (1=not at all, very casual; 5=very serious)										
	Mean		Sample Deviation							
Secure	4.5		1.0							
Preoccupied	4.4		.73							
Fearful	3.9		1.2							
Dismissive	3.6		1.3							
Total	4.3		1.0							
Satisfied with this Relationship (1=not at all; 5=very satisfied)										
	Mean		Sample Deviation							
Secure	4.4		.75							
Preoccupied	3.9		1.1							
Fearful	4		1.0							
Dismissive	3.7		1.2							
Total	4.2		.93							
Exclusivity of Dating Relationship										
	Exclusive		Not Exclusive							
	#	%	#	%						
Secure	56	97%	2	3%						
Preoccupied	12	92%	1	8%						
Fearful	19	83%	4	17%						
Dismissive	7	70%	3	30%						
Total	94	90%	10	10%						
Parents' Marital Status										
	Married		Separated		Divorced		Mother Deceased		Father Deceased	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Secure	58	70%	3	4%	17	21%	1	1%	3	4%
Preoccupied	12	71%	0	0%	5	29%	0	0%	0	0%
Fearful	30	71%	2	5%	7	17%	2	5%	1	2%
Dismissive	9	71%	1	7%	4	27%	0	0%	1	7%
Total	109	68%	6	4%	33	21%	3	2%	5	3%
Quality of Parents' Marriage										
	Very Poor		Poor		Average		Good		Very Good	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Secure	6	8%	9	12%	12	15%	14	18%	37	47%
Preoccupied	3	18%	2	12%	3	18%	6	35%	3	18%
Fearful	1	3%	3	8%	15	38%	9	23%	12	30%
Dismissive	2	13%	1	7%	2	13%	2	13%	8	53%
Total	12	8%	15	1%	32	21%	31	21%	60	40%

(mean=33.1 months; SD=26.2) with preoccupied participants indicating the longest time period (mean=43; SD=31.3) and fearful participant indicating the shortest time period (mean=20.1; SD=17.7). Dating participants reported they had dated their current partner for slightly less than two years (mean=21.3 months; SD=18.6) with preoccupied partners reporting the longest time period (mean=31.2; SD=23.5) and fearful participants indicating the shortest time period (mean=14; SD=14.9). Kirkpatrick and Davis (1994) reported a similar finding regarding preoccupied partners reporting the longest term relationships. One could, however, hypothesize that secure subjects would have demonstrated the greatest length of time in a dating relationship. The unidentified partner's attachment style may be a factor influencing this result. Participants in dating relationships indicated that their relationships were serious (mean=4.3; SD=1.0) in which they were satisfied (mean=4.2; SD=.93). Secure participants reported the highest degree of seriousness (mean=4.5; SD=1.0) and satisfaction (mean=4.4, SD=.75). Dismissive participants reported the lowest degree of seriousness (mean=3.6; SD=1.3) and satisfaction with the relationship (mean=3.7; SD=1.2). In examining the overall parental status of the participants, 68% reported that their parents were still married and 25% reported their parents were divorced or separated. Sixty-one percent described their parents marriage as good to very good.

The packet for phase one included a form recruiting participation for phase two of the study. Students in a heterosexual dating relationship of at least one month in duration were eligible. From the original dating sample, 57% volunteered to participated in phase two which resulted in a total of 60 participants. Several participants indicated they could not participate in phase two since their partner resided outside of the immediate area. On the basis of responses to Bartholomew's Relationship Questionnaire, ten individuals from each attachment group were to be chosen to participate in the second part of the study. The 60 participants, who volunteered to participate in the second phase, divided as follows: four dismissive, six fearful, eight preoccupied, and 42 secure participants. From this

sample, 40 participants in heterosexual dating relationships were selected to complete the second part of the study. Sampling decisions included recruiting all students in the dismissive, fearful, and preoccupied categories to allow for a diverse sample. Three of the students from this group indicated that their partners lived outside of the immediate area and were added to an alternate list. In identifying the remainder of the participants for phase two, males with a secure attachment styles and minority students were identified first followed by a random selection from the females with a secure attachment style. The sample included 3 dismissive, 4 fearful, 8 preoccupied, and 30 secure participants. Five additional secure participants were scheduled for phase two to allow for no-shows, audio equipment difficulties, and unusable data packets. Participants were contacted by telephone to schedule a data collection session for phase two.

Forty-two students agreed to schedule a data collection session for phase two. Two males (one identifying as preoccupied and the other identifying as dismissive) indicated that their girlfriends ended their relationship and they were unable to participate in phase two. Six secure female participants stated they were unable to participate since their boyfriends were not able to attend or did not want to attend phase two. Three secure participants (two females and one male) did not return phone messages. One secure female provided an incorrect phone number. The final scheduled sample for phase two included: four fearful (one male and three females), seven preoccupied (two males and five females), two dismissive females, and 29 secure (three males and 26 females). Six students did not show for their scheduled data collection time (one male with a fearful attachment style and five females with a secure attachment style). Two females with a secure attachment styles canceled their scheduled time due to scheduling conflicts and they were unable to reschedule. To address the subject attrition, participants were asked to volunteer friends that may be interested in participating in the project. In addition, participants were recruited from another education undergraduate course. Seven new couples were added to the study. Forty-two couples participated in the project and forty couples were used for data

analyses. Final sampling decisions included discarding one packet for incomplete information and randomly discarding one of the secure-secure couple packets since that category had the highest number of couples.

During the second part of the study (phase two), 80 participants (40 couples) were asked to complete three questionnaires. The partner that was not originally recruited from a class also completed a demographic/background form. Both participants from the seven couples that did not participate in phase one completed the demographic/background form and the three questionnaires. Immediately following the completion of the inventories, each couple participated in a twenty-minute audiotaped problem solving task. Following the task, each participant completed two questions on joint problem solving. Couples participating in the second part of the study were entered in a drawing for four $25.00 awards. Informed consent forms (See Appendices A and C) were completed by all students participating in this study.

Procedures

An overview and stated purpose of the study were introduced at the start of the semester to each class from which participants were initially recruited. Students were informed that the study would examine relationship beliefs and problem solving communication in dating couples. Students selected an administration time to attend for the first phase of the study. During phase one, participants were provided with an introduction letter explaining the purpose of the study, requesting participation, explaining informed consent, and assuring confidentiality (See Appendix A). In addition, individuals received a request for participation in phase two (See Appendix B). After both forms were completed, participants were given a demographic/background form, Bartholomew's Relationship Questionnaire, and Simpson's Adult Attachment Style Inventory. Participants completed the packet in 10-15 minutes.

Following completion of phase one, participants' attachment style was identified via their responses to Bartholomew's Relationship Questionnaire. Participants were contacted

by phone to schedule phase two of the study. Reminder letters were mailed one week in advance and phone calls were made the day before the couple participated in phase two.

During phase two, the couple was initially placed in separate rooms while they completed the following: informed consent for audiotaping (See Appendix C), Bartholomew's Relationship Questionnaire, Simpson's Adult Attachment Style Inventory, and Bem's Sex Role Inventory. The partner that did not attend phase one also completed the demographic/background form. The couple jointly completed the 20 minute Couple Interaction Task. After the couple was escorted to a private room, the proctor read the task and alerted the couple to the 20 minute time limit. A written form of the task was left with the couple. The proctor started the tape recorder. They were told that the proctor would knock on the door to provide a five minute warning. Following completion of the task, the couple completed two questions about the task. A short oral debriefing followed the completion of phase two.

Instruments

This study included a demographic and background information form; two self-report measures of adult attachment (Bartholomew's Relationship Questionnaire; Simpson Adult Attachment Style Inventory); one self-report measure of gender role (Bem Sex Role Inventory); and an in vivo problem solving communication task (Couple Interaction Task).

Demographic and Background Information Form

Participants were asked to provide the following demographic information: sex, age, year in college, ethnicity, and marital or dating status. In addition to demographic information, this form inquired about the following: length of time partners knew each other; length of time dating current partner; seriousness of relationship; relationship satisfaction; exclusivity of relationship; parents' marital status; and quality of parents' marriage (See Appendix D).

Attachment Style

Two instruments were used to assess adult attachment styles in this study.

Bartholomew's Relationship Questionnaire (BRQ) is a self-report, categorical measure of the four adult attachment styles (identified by Bartholomew, 1990 and Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). The measure is a adapted from Hazan and Shaver's (1987) original measure. Participants are asked to select one of four descriptive paragraphs that best describe their feelings about closeness or intimacy in romantic relationships. The four paragraphs represented adult versions of Ainsworth's three attachment styles: secure, anxious, and avoidant with the avoidant category divided into two styles, dismissive and fearful. Paragraph one represented the secure attachment style; paragraph two represented the dismissive attachment style; paragraph three represented the preoccupied attachment style; and paragraph four represented the fearful attachment style (See Appendix E).

Scharfe and Bartholomew (1994a, 1994b) reported that the BRQ self-classification demonstrated moderate stability over an eight month period and a two year period with test-retest correlations by attachment style group ranging from .49 to .71, and from .30 to .67, respectively. In this present study, stability was examined over a one month time period. The overall rate of attachment style rating change was 22%. Due to the low sample size for dismissive, fearful, and preoccupied participants, the attachment style categories were collapsed into an insecure category. Secure subjects changed self ratings 4.2%. Insecure participants attachment style rate of change was 58%, with 71% of the insecure participants changing to one of the other three insecure categories (See Table 3). The latter group's overall rate of change was comparable to that observed by previous studies (Baldwin & Fehr, 1992; Pistole, 1989).

The BRQ has some problematic properties. The single item forced choice measure results in participants responding to mutually exclusive categories. Differences in individual variability is overlooked. Hence, a second continuously scaled attachment style inventory (Simpson's Adult Attachment Style Inventory) was used in this study as a way to examine the concurrent validity of self-reported attachment style classification. Thirty six

Table 3. Attachment Style Rate of Change

	Number Changed	Rate of Change	Total Subjects
Secure*	1	4.2%	24
Insecure**	7	58%	12
Men	2	33%	6
Women	6	20%	30
Total	8	22%	36

***Changed to an insecure category**
****Two insecure categories changed to a secure category and five insecure categories changed to one of the other three insecure categories.**

subjects completed the BRQ during phase one and again one month later during phase two. Baldwin and Fehr (1992) recommended that due to the instability of attachment style classification findings, subjects need to classify themselves at the time of the experimental session. Data analysis used the BRQ at phase two during the problem solving session of data collection.

Simpson's Adult Attachment Style Inventory (S-AAS; Simpson, 1990; Simpson et al., 1992) is a 13-item continuous measure of adult attachment styles (See Appendix F). The S-AAS decomposed Hazan and Shaver's (1987) attachment style descriptions into 13 individual sentences. The participant answers each sentence on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1= Strongly disagree and 7 = Strongly agree). Three sentences were changed to a negative direction to avoid acquiescence response biases. The S-AAS contains two factor-analytically-derived subscales: avoidance/security and anxiety. Higher scores represent greater attachment related avoidance and anxiety, respectively. Simpson et al. (1992) reported Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients of .81 for the avoidance/secure scale and Cronbach alphas ranging from .58 to .61 for the anxiety subscale. Lopez, Gover, Leskela, Sauer, Schirmer, and Wyssman (1995) reported Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients of .83 for the avoidance/secure scale and .70 for the anxiety scale. In the present study, obtained Cronbach alphas for phase one avoidance/secure and anxiety scores were .73 and .83 respectively, and alphas for phase two avoidance/secure and anxiety scores were .86 and .82 respectively.

Test-retest scores of S-AAS subscale scores between phase one and phase two (one month apart) were computed to assess their temporal stability. In examining the relationship between the subscales, there was a high positive correlation between the avoidant/secure phase one and phase two scales ($r=.79$, $p<.01$) and between the anxiety phase one and phase two scales ($r=.86$, $p<.01$). There was a moderate positive correlation between anxiety phase one and avoidant/secure phase two ($r=.43$, $p<.01$), and a negligible correlation between the two subscales (anxiety and avoidant/secure) when compared in the

same time frame. This indicated that participants who were identified as anxious during phase one were less secure (more avoidant) during phase two. Over a one month period, anxiety about one's relationship may erode one's sense of security in the relationship (See Table 4).

A one way ANOVA was computed to examine the relationship between the BRQ and the S-AAS. The S-AAS is a self-reported continuously scaled attachment style inventory that was used in this study to provide concurrent validation of the BRQ which is a self-reported, categorical attachment style inventory. In addition, the S-AAS was used to measure adult attachment styles for some of the regression analyses in this study. Highly significant differences were found for the avoidant/secure subscale, $F(3, 76) = 28.34$, $p<.0001$. Scheffe post hoc tests revealed four significant pair-wise group differences for the BRQ. Based on mean scores (See Table 5), significant group differences were found. Results indicated that fearful and dismissive respondents scored higher on the avoidant/secure subscale (higher avoidance) than did secure and preoccupied respondents. Significant differences were found on the anxiety subscale, $F(3, 76) = 8.04$, $p<.0001$. Scheffe post hoc tests revealed four significant pair-wise group differences for the BRQ. Based on the mean scores (See Table 5), significant group differences were found. Results indicated that fearful and preoccupied respondents scored higher on the anxiety subscale than did secure and dismissive respondents. Taken together, these results indicated that the attachment style self-classifications derived from the BRQ categorical measure were consistent with the dimensional scores supplied by the continuous indices on adult attachment orientation.

Gender Role

Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem, 1974) was used to assess gender role differences in this study. The BSRI measures an individual's endorsement of gender role attributes. Initially, femininity and masculinity were conceptualized as opposite ends of a

Table 4. Intercorrelations of Simpson's Adult Attachment Style Inventory at Phase 1 and Phase 2

	Advsec	Anxiety	Advsec(2)	Anxiety(2)
Advsec		.19	.79**	.20
Anxiety			.44**	.86**
Advsec(2)				.21

Note: Avdsec=Avoidance/Security; Advsec (2)=Avoidance/Security, time 2; Anxiety (2)=Anxiety, time 2.

*** - Signif. LE .05 ** - Signif. LE .01 (2-tailed)**

Table 5. Means on Simpson's Adult Attachment Style Inventory Subscales by Attachment Style Self-Classification

BRQ	Avoidant/Secure			Anxiety		
	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n
Secure	20.88	5.3	49	12.86	3.7	49
Dismissive	34.60	8.9	10	12.70	3.9	10
Preoccupied	22.88	3.1	8	18.75	4.8	8
Fearful	33.77	5.5	13	18.23	6.9	13

single continuum. Bem (1974, 1977) argued that masculinity and femininity are two separate dimensions. Furthermore, an individual could identify as having both masculine and feminine characteristics. Hiller and Philliber (1985) argued that the BSRI also measures two clusters of personality traits, assertiveness and sensitivity. Spence and Helmreich (1981) argued that the BSRI measured self images of instrumental and expressive personality traits associated with masculine and feminine traits, respectively. Despite the debate regarding the BSRI, the inventory has been used extensively in the literature to measure gender role orientation. Bieger (1985) stated that the instrument is a valuable research measure.

Bem (1974) reported internal consistencies, based on coefficient alpha, ranging from .70 to .86. Masculinity and femininity scores are free to vary independently. Two samples indicated that they are empirically independent. Bem reported that test-retest reliability ranged from .89 to .93 over a one month period. Hiller and Philliber (1985) indicated that the BSRI correlated with education, age, occupational sex type, housework participation, and attitudes about who should do housework and earn income. Ballad-Reisch and Elton (1992) re-assessed the reliability and validity of the BSRI. Cronbach alpha for the masculinity subscale was .89 and for the feminine subscale was .86. These researchers concluded that the factor structure of the BSRI was reliable. In addition, the researchers concluded that the BSRI measures differing personality characteristics but these characteristics may be better described as instrumental and expressive.

The BSRI is a self-report inventory consisting of 60 attributes. The respondents indicate how well each attribute describes them based on a 7-point scale. The scale ranges from 1 (never or almost never true) to 7 (always or almost always true). Twenty attributes reflect the cultural view of masculinity, 20 reflect the cultural view of femininity, and 20 are desirable for both (neutral fillers) (Bem, 1984). The attributes were judged to be most desirable for one sex or the other in the American culture (Bem, 1977). Each respondent receives two scores, one on the masculinity scale and one on the femininity scale.

Androgynous scores are derived from the two subscales, masculinity and femininity. Bem developed the BSRI with data from a college student population. In the present study, obtained Cronbach alphas for the masculinity and femininity scores were .90 and .78, respectively.

Problem Solving Task (CIT)

Watzlawick (1966) stated that direct questioning is often an ineffective means of obtaining information on behavioral functioning. Furthermore, "significance lies not only in the content of communication, but mainly in the specific process of communication" (p. 256). Based on these ideas, this study obtained information on problem solving communication in couples with a spontaneous problem solving task.

Grotevant and Cooper (1985) adapted the Family Intervention Task from Watzlawick's (1966) Plan Something Together Task. This task was originally part of a Structured Family Interview designed to observe the process of family communication patterns and to shorten the time required to identify family interaction patterns. Grotevant and Cooper (1985) used this task to elicit the expression and coordination of viewpoints from all family members on a particular topic. They believed that the task would elicit statements that suggested individuality (suggestions or disagreements about activities) and connectedness (agreements, questions, or initiation of compromises about activities) from the individual family members. The task avoided focusing on family differences and, therefore, encouraged power sharing and mutual decision making. Generalization of findings were interpreted with caution since communication was observed during only one task.

For this study, the Plan Something Together Task/ Family Intervention Task was modified for use with dating couples and referred to as the Couple Interaction Task (CIT). Condon, Cooper, and Grotevant (1984) described the directions as follows: The proctor told the couple that they have two weeks and unlimited funds to spend on a vacation together. Their task was to plan (within a 20 minute time limit) a day-by-day itinerary for

the vacation. They were asked to write down the location and activities planned for each day (See Appendix H), and told that their interaction would be tape recorded. The proctor provided the following instructions:

> I have a problem that I would like you to solve together. I would like you to imagine that you have two weeks and unlimited funds available for a [couple] vacation. Your job will be to plan the vacation day-by-day. Here is a sheet of paper with 14 spaces, one for each day of the two weeks. In the left-hand column of each space, I would like you to record the geographic location of each day's activity. In the right-hand column of each space, list the specific activity or activities planned for each day. You will have 20 minutes to make your decisions. When you are ready, I will turn on the tape recorder and go in the other room. [I will knock at the door to let you know that you have 5 minutes remaining to complete the task]. (p.8).

The proctor answered any questions and left a copy of the task with the couple. The tape recorder was turned on. After 15 minutes, the couple was alerted to the fact that only five minutes remained to complete the task.

The coding of the audiotapes was based on a system developed by Grotevant and Cooper (1985). This system was based on developmental and clinical research and on principles of speech and conversation analysis. Condon, Cooper and Grotevant (1984) described this system in detail. In an earlier family project of 444 participants, family interaction was coded with 14 communication categories. Based on factor analyses, the results indicated that the 14 communication categories loaded on four constructs: self-assertion, separateness, mutuality, and permeability.

Grotevant and Cooper's (1985) results demonstrated sex differences for adolescent males and females. Males made more requests for information and females provided more answers to requests for information. Correlations were computed between problem solving communication behaviors and identity exploration ratings for adolescents. For

male adolescents, direct suggestions and expressed separateness with their fathers were positively correlated with identity exploration. Female adolescents who rated higher on identity exploration exhibited more indirect suggestions with their fathers. Female adolescents' identity exploration was negatively related with expressed mutuality toward their mothers. The adolescent females' higher identity exploration was positively associated with indirect suggestions and negatively associated with direct suggestions. Grotevant and Cooper concluded that adolescents who scored the highest in role taking skill interacted with at least one parent in a relationship characterized by a co-occurrence of permeability and separateness. Adolescents with low scores on identity exploration and role taking skill exhibited low levels of disagreement and high degrees of permeability.

Three transcriptionists transcribed the audiotapes (See Appendix I for Transcript Format and Appendix J for Transcript Guidelines). Four raters blind to the hypotheses and individual attachment styles coded the audiotapes (See Appendix K for Audiotape Coding Manual). Two teams of two raters each rated 20 of the 40 audiotapes. Before the raters coded the transcript, the speech was divided into codable chunks. Each chunk was numbered serially. Condon, Cooper, and Grotevant (1984) defined a chunk as "all independent clauses together with any dependent clauses that are connected to it" (p. 13). The first 300 utterances were coded. Cooper, Grotevant, and Condon (1982) reported that the correlation between the first 300 utterances and the entire session ranged from .54 and .88. This suggested that the first 300 utterances were sufficiently representative of the whole task. If the couple finished early and there were fewer than 300 utterances, the entire tape was coded.

Raters coded the chunks into one of 14 categories. The 14 categories fell under the headings of the four main constructs: self-assertion (direct suggestion); permeability (acknowledgment, request for information, agreement, relevant comment, compliance with request for action); mutuality (indirect suggestion, initiation of compromise, statement of others feelings, answer to request for information); and separateness (request for action,

direct disagreement, indirect disagreement, and irrelevant comment). Scores on the four categories were obtained by summing the recorded frequencies in each specific category (See Appendices L, M, and N for coding sheets).

Interrater Reliability. The raters attended a two hour training session prior to rating the transcripts. Each rater coded a sample transcript. Correspondence scores were completed for each team of raters. In the case of any coding discrepancies for any of the 300 utterances, a third rater made a final decision. Grotevant and Cooper (1985) reported interrater reliabilities exceeding .75 for all the but three categories (initiates compromise, acknowledgment, and agreement). The reliability results for those three categories were as follows: initiates compromise, .52; acknowledgment, .64; and agreement, .72.

For this study, the raters' sample transcript was compared to the project coordinator's coded transcript. After their two hour training session, the reliability results were as follows: Rater A, .75; Rater B, .62; Rater C, .69; and Rater D, .64. Each rater exhibited consistency in the errors they exhibited. Extensive feedback on the problematic areas was provided in verbal and written form for each rater. Reliability results were examined a second time. The raters completed a second transcript which was compared to the project coordinator's coded transcript. The following reliability results were obtained: Rater A, .77; Rater B, .62; Rater C, .76, and Rater D, .67. Extensive feedback on the areas that differed from the project coordinator's coded transcript were provided in written form for each rater. Reliability results were obtained for each team of raters at the end of the coding process. Each team coded 20 transcripts based on coding 300 utterances per transcript with 14 CIT categories. Eleven transcripts had less that 300 responses ranging from 112 to 299 responses. Both teams obtained interrater reliability results of .58.

Generalizability of findings need to be interpreted with caution since the couple was observed in one communication task. In addition, the task was designed to focus on power sharing patterns during a problem solving discussion.

One additional component was included in the overall CIT procedure. Following the problem-solving discussion, each partner individually answered two additional questions: "How successful were you and your partner in completing this task?" and "How stressful did you find this task?" Comparisons were made regarding each partner's individual and the couple's conjoint responses to their effectiveness in completing the problem solving task and regarding their views on the stressfulness of the task (See Appendix O). In addition, the raters independently answered the question on problem solving effectiveness and indicated how effective they viewed the couple's ability to complete the task (See Appendix P).

Research Hypotheses

The results of the data analyses were expected to confirm a relationship between attachment style and problem solving communication in couples and to show that this relationship was moderated by gender role. Specifically, a participant's individual attachment style was expected to affect the style of problem solving communication pattern he/she exhibited in an in vivo couple interaction task. Gender role, and not sex, was expected to influence the problem solving communication patterns. Couples' conjoint attachment style-related contributions were expected to influence problem solving communication patterns with certain attachment style combinations scoring higher and other attachment style combinations scoring lower on a composite problem solving score.

Data Analysis

1. For each of the appropriate demographic and background variables, the following descriptive statistics were computed: mean, standard deviation, and range.
2. To measure internal consistency, Cronbach alpha was computed for the continuously-scaled instruments used in this study.
3. Other reliability analyses included the following: interrater reliabilities for the CIT were compared with those reported by Grotevant and Cooper (1985); test-retest scores on the Simpson for 36 participants between phase one and phase two were computed; and

attachment style rate of change scores for the BRQ for 36 participants between phase one and phase two.

4. Correlation matrices were computed to examine interrelationships among the following variables: sex, attachment style, Bem masculinity and femininity scores, length of time since met dating partner, relationship length, relationship satisfaction, relationship seriousness, parents marital status, quality of parents marriage, CIT scores, overall problem solving score for couples, and overall problem solving score for raters.

5. Relationship history variables that significantly correlated with CIT scores were used as covariates in subsequent analysis.

6. An ANOVA was computed to examine the relationship between the Bartholomew Relationship Questionnaire and the Simpson Adult Attachment Inventory. The Simpson Adult Attachment Inventory is a continuously scaled attachment style inventory that was used in this study as a way to check the validity of Bartholomew's Relationship Questionnaire which is a self-reported, categorical attachment style inventory.

7. The first step of data analyses examined individual participant differences. Four ANCOVA's included sex and attachment style as the independent variables, Bem femininity and masculinity scores as covariates, and individual CIT scores as the dependent variables. Four relationships were analyzed regarding individual participant relationship behavior: a) covariates and CIT scores; b) sex and attachment style and CIT scores while controlling for Bem femininity and masculinity scores; and c) gender role and attachment style interaction. In addition, a regression analyses was used to assess if the Bem masculinity and femininity scores moderated the attachment style-CIT relationships.

8. The second stage of data analyses examined the couple scores. An ANCOVA included couple attachment style pair group as the independent variable; male Bem femininity and masculinity scores and female Bem femininity and masculinity scores as the covariate; and couple average rating regarding problem solving effectiveness, rater average rating regarding problem solving effectiveness, and the couple's combined scores on the

mutuality scale (problem solving communication category) as the dependent variables. Two relationships were analyzed: a) covariate (Bem femininity and masculinity scores) and the dependent variables; b) attachment style pair groupings and dependent variables while controlling for Bem femininity and masculinity scores.

9. Post hoc analyses explored whether male and female problem solving effectiveness scores differentially correlated with individual's attachment styles.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Descriptive Statistics

For the following descriptive statistics, there were two missing values and no invalid responses for the respondent sample. For the two missing values, the average scale score was substituted. Descriptive statistics for the demographic and background variables in the study are reported in Table 6.

The overall sample from phase two included the following Ns and frequencies of attachment style self classifications: secure (N=49, 61%), preoccupied (N=8, 10%), fearful (N=13, 16%), and dismissive (N=10, 13%). These frequencies are comparable to other samples with a college sample using the Bartholomew Relationship Questionnaire (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Duggan & Brennan, 1994; Kunce & Shaver, 1994; Lopez, Gover, Leskela, Sauer, Schirmer, & Wyssmann, 1995; Pistole, 1994). Forty dating couples participated in phase two of this study (40 men, 40 women; mean age=21.9). The sample consisted primarily of seniors (53.8%); participants were predominantly Caucasian (87.5%) and never married (97.5%). Almost all participants in the sample (97.5%) reported that their current dating relationship was exclusive.

Participants indicated they had known their dating partner for 33.3 months (SD=25.6) with preoccupied participants indicating the longest time period (mean=40.3, SD=33.1) and fearful participants indicating the shortest time period (mean=27.4, SD=23.2). Dating participants reported they had dated their current partner for 25.6 months (SD=21.8) with preoccupied partners reporting the longest time period (mean=36.3, SD=27.6) and fearful participants indicating the shortest time period (mean=23.2, SD=23.1). One-half of the sample reported they had been dating for more than two years. Dating partners indicated that this was a serious relationship (mean=4.5,

Table 6. Sample Demographic Information - Phase 2

Variable						
Sex and Attachment Style	**Total**	**%**	**Male**	**%**	**Female**	**%**
Secure	49	61%	22	53%	27	68%
Preoccupied	8	10%	4	5%	4	10%
Fearful	13	16%	7	18%	6	15%
Dismissive	10	13%	7	18%	3	8%
Total	80		40		40	
Age	**Mean**		**SD**		**Range**	
	21.9		3.1		21	
Year in College	**Total**		**%**			
Freshman	5		6.3%			
Sophomore	9		11.3%			
Junior	8		10%			
Senior	43		53.8%			
Other	15		18.8%			
Ethnicity	**Total**		**%**			
African American	1		1.3%			
Asian American	5		6.3%			
Caucasian/White	70		87.5%			
Hispanic/Latino	1		1.3%			
Other	3		3.8%			
Marital Status	**Total**		**%**			
Married	0		0%			
Divorced	2		2.5%			
Single/Never Married	78		97.5%			
Length of Time Knew Dating Partner (months)						
	Mean		**SD**		**Range**	
Secure	33.6		24.4		94	
Preoccupied	40.3		33.1		92	
Fearful	27.4		23.2		75	
Dismissive	33.5		30.2		90	
Total	33.3		25.6		94	
Length of Time of Dating Relationship (months)						
	Mean		**SD**		**Range**	
Secure	23.7		19.4		71	
Preoccupied	36.3		27.6		68	
Fearful	23.2		23.1		83	
Dismissive	29.3		26.5		77	
Total	25.6		21.8		83	
Seriousness of Dating Relationship (1=not at all, very casual; 5=very serious, committed)						
	Mean		**SD**		**Range**	
Secure	4.5		.71		2	
Preoccupied	5		0		0	
Fearful	4.5		.78		2	
Dismissive	4.4		.70		2	
Male	4.5		.72		2	
Female	4.6		.68		2	
Total	4.5		.69		2	

Table 6. (continued)

Variable

Satisfied with this Relationship (1=not at all; 5=very satisfied)

	Mean	SD	Range
Secure	4.6	.65	2
Preoccupied	4.8	.46	1
Fearful	4.2	.93	2
Dismissive	4.4	.88	2
Male	4.4	.74	2
Female	4.6	.71	2
Total	4.5	.73	2

Exclusivity of Dating Relationship

	Exclusive		Not Exclusive	
	#	%	#	%
Secure	48	98.8%	1	1.25%
Preoccupied	8	100%	0	0%
Fearful	12	98.8%	1	1.25%
Dismissive	10	100%	0	0%
Total	78	97.5%	2	2.5%

Parents' Marital Status

	Married		Separated		Divorced		Mother Deceased		Father Deceased	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Secure	34	43%	0	0%	14	18%	1	1%	1*	1.3%
Preoccupied	6	8%	0	0%	2	3%	0	0%	0	0%
Fearful	7	9%	0	0%	6	8%	0	0%	0	0%
Dismissive	7	9%	0	0%	2	3%	0	0%	1	1.3%
Total	54	68%	0	0%	24	30%	1	1%	2	2.6%

*One participant's parents divorced and the father was deceased.

Age at Parent's Divorce

	Mean	SD	Total
Secure	10	5.2	14
Preoccupied	17	0	2
Fearful	5.5	3.8	6
Dismissive	13	5.7	2
Total	9.96	5.5	24

Quality of Parents' Marriage

	Very Poor		Poor		Average		Good		Very Good	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Secure	1	1%	9	11%	14	18%	9	11%	16	20%
Preoccupied	1	1%	1	1%	1	1%	2	3%	3	4%
Fearful	4	5%	3	4%	1	1%	4	5%	1	1%
Dismissive	0	0%	1	1%	3	4%	4	5%	2	3%
Total	6	8%	14	18%	19	24%	19	24%	22	28%

SD=.69) in which they were satisfied (mean=4.5, SD=.73). Preoccupied participants reported the highest degree of seriousness (mean=5, SD=0) and satisfaction (mean=4.8, SD=.46). Dismissive participants reported the lowest degree of seriousness (mean=4.4, SD=.70) and satisfaction with the relationship (mean=4.1, SD=.88). In examining the overall parental status of the participants, 68% reported that their parents were still married. Secure participants reported the highest degree of parental marital stability (43%) as compared to the insecure attachment groups. Thirty percent of the overall sample reported that their parents were divorced. Fifty-one percent of the entire sample described their parents marriage as good to very good and 26% described their parent's marriage as poor to very poor.

Correlational Findings

CIT Scores

The Pearson intercorrelations among all the key demographic and research variables are reported in Table 7. Three variables correlated significantly with CIT permeability scores. There was a modest positive correlation between 'permeability' and 'separateness' (r=.24, p<.05). This indicated that participants that exhibited more permeability statements exhibited more statements of separateness. There was a similar relationship between 'permeability' and 'femininity' (r=.24, p<.05). This was an expected relationship based on Hypotheses 3b. Individuals scoring higher on the femininity scale were expected to obtain a higher permeability score. Finally, there was a moderate positive correlation between 'permeability' and 'Simpson's anxiety subscale' (r=.28, p<.05). This relationship was expected based on Hypothesis 1b. Preoccupied individuals (those scoring higher on Simpson's anxiety subscale) were expected to obtain a higher permeability score.

There was a modest negative correlation between 'separateness' and 'length of dating relationship' (r=-.24, p<.05). This indicated that participants that reported longer term relationships obtained lower scores on separateness.

A modest positive correlation was found between 'self-assertion' and 'Simpson's

Table 7. Intercorrelation of Demographic and Research Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1 Mutuality													
2 Permeabilty	.10												
3 Rater's Prob Solv	.31	.15											
4 Couple Prob Solv	.21	.25	.62										
5 Separateness	-.02	.24*	-.29	.07									
6 Femininity	-.15	.24*	.10	.36*	-.07								
7 Length Dating	.01	-.04	.32*	.28	-.25*	.06							
8 Masculinity	.19	-.01	-.16	.17	.14	-.24*	-.09						
9 Parent Marriage	-.20	-.05	.15	.16	-.09	.02	.11	.07					
10 Qual Parent Marr	.03	.01	-.00	-.18	.00	.03	-.02	-.03	-.59**				
11 Relationship Satisfaction	-.08	.16	.10	.42**	.07	.22	.24*	-.09	.04	-.02			
12 Self-Assertion	.07	.06	.19	.02	-.03	-.04	-.07	.11	-.03	.15	-.18		
13 Relationship Seriousness	-.13	.16	.25	.38*	.06	.17	.41**	-.03	.20	-.01	.61**	-.22	
14 Avoidant Security	.07	-.05	-.00	-.28	.16	-.52**	.04	.14	.01	-.02	-.41**	.22*	-.14
15 Anxiety	.11	.28*	.02	.22	.20	-.07	-.06	.14	.03	-.12	-.17	.03	-.05
16 Time Known Partner	.05	.01	.29	.27	-.19	.08	.88**	-.21	.08	-.01	.21	-.09	.37**
17 Couple's Stress Rating	.08	-.20	-.43	-.28	-.08	-.02	-.06	.14	-.32*	.23	-.47**	.04	-.36*
18 Ind Problem Solv	.04	.08	.22	.	-.02	.23*	.27*	.06	.12	-.09	.25*	-.02	.16
19 Ind Stress Rating	.19	-.09	-.33*	-.23	-.09	-.21	-.04	.10	-.23*	.08	-.29**	.13	-.31**
20 Male Problem Solving	.18	.21	-.32	.	.19	.35*	.20	.21	.22	-.18	.35*	-.03	.36*
21 Female Problem Solving	.20	.23	.83*	.	-.03	.33*	.31	.12	.10	-.15	.41**	.06	.33*
22 Male Stress Rating	.23	-.18	-.86*	-.23	-.05	-.05	-.03	.08	-.39*	.24	-.36*	.04	-.37*
23 Female Stres Rating	-.15	-.15	.32	-.25	-.09	.03	-.08	.15	-.11	.13	-.44**	.03	-.21
24 Combined Mutuality	.	.18	.07	.08	.02	-.08	-.02	.28	-.27	.20	.05	.17	-.05
25 Sex	-.30**	.17	-.14	.	.06	.41**	-.02	-.28*	-.09	.05	.12	-.05	.06

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; " . " is printed if a coefficient cannot be computed

Table 7. (continued)

Variable	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
15 Anxiety	.21											
16 Time Known Partner	.01	-.06										
17 Couple's Stress Rating	.14	.13	-.10									
18 Individual Problem Solving	-.23*	.04	.04	.								
19 Individual Stress Rating	.20	.23*	-.09	.	-.23*							
20 Male Problem Solving	-.25	.22	.16	-.32*	.	-.27						
21 Female Problem Solving	-.26	.18	.32*	-.21	.	-.16	.68**					
22 Male Stress Rating	.17	.17	-.04	.	-.27	.	-.27	-.16				
23 Female Stres Rating	.05	.03	-.14	.	-.27	.	-.27	-.19	.38*			
24 Combined Mutuality	.06	-.01	.06	.20	.04	.34*	.04	10	.34*	-.07		
25 Sex	-.08	-.04	.05	.	-.01	-.08	.	.	.	.	.	

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; " . " is printed if a coefficient cannot be computed

Table 7. (continued)

1, 2, 5, 12.Couple Interaction Task (CIT) was coded with four scores: (Mutuality, Permeability, Separateness, and Self-Assertion).

3. Overall problem solving score for raters was coded from the rater's mean scores (Rater's Problem Solving).

4. Overall problem solving scores for couples was coded from the couple's individual mean scores (Couple Problem Solving).

6,8. Bem was coded as masculinity and femininity scores (Masculinity, Femininity).

7. Relationship length ranged from 1 month to 84 months (Length Dating).

9. Parent's marital status was coded as (Parent's Marriage): 1=married; 2=separated; 3=divorced; 4=mother deceased; 5=father deceased.

10. Quality of parent's marriage was coded as (Quality Parent's Marriage): 1=very poor; 2=poor; 3=average; 4=good; 5=very good.

11. Relationship satisfaction was coded on a 5 point Likert-type scale (i.e., 1=not at all satisfied to 5=very satisfied) (Relationship Satisfaction).

13. Relationship seriousness was coded on a 5 point Likert-type scale (i.e., 1=not at all; very casual to 5=very serious; we're committed) (Relationship Seriousness).

14,15 Attachment style was coded with the Simpson Attachment Style Inventory Subscales, Avoidant/Secure and Anxiety, Phase two (Avoidant/Security, Anxiety).

16. Time since met dating partner ranged from 2 months to 96 months (Time Known Partner).

25. Sex was coded with male as '1' and female as '2' (Sex)

Post Hoc Variables

17. Overall stress rating for the CIT coded from the couple's mean scores was coded from the couple's individual mean scores (Couple's Stress Rating).

18. Individual problem solving score was coded on a 7 point Likert-type scale (i.e., 1=not at all successful to 7=very successful) (Individual Problem Solving).

19. Individual's stress rating for the CIT was coded on a 7 point Likert-type scale (i.e., 1=not at all stressful to 7=very stressful) (Individual Stress Rating).

20. Male's individual problem solving score was coded on a 7 point Likert-type scale (i.e., 1=not at all successful to 7=very successful) (Male Problem Solving).

21. Female's individual problem solving score was coded on a 7 point Likert-type scale (i.e., 1=not at all successful to 7=very successful) (Female Problem Solving).

22. Male's individual stress rating for the CIT was coded on a 7 point Likert-type scale (i.e., 1=not at all stressful to 7=very stressful) (Male Stress Rating).

23. Female's individual stress rating for the CIT was coded on a 7 point Likert-type scale (i.e., 1=not at all stressful to 7=very stressful) (Female Stress Rating).

24. Couple's combined mutuality score was coded from the couple's individual mutuality mean scores (Combined Mutuality).

Table 7. (continued)

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Range
1. Mutuality	80	9.63	2.73	14.75
2. Permeability	80	15.39	4.52	20.40
3. Rater's Problem Solving	40	4.59	.99	5.00
4. Couple Problem Solving	40	6.36	.88	.88
5. Separateness	80	2.43	1.48	6.75
6. Femininity	80	4.91	.59	3.05
7. Length Dating	80	25.55	21.79	83.00
8. Masculinity	80	5.21	.77	4.35
9. Parent Marriage	80	1.69	1.03	
10. Quality Parent's Marriage	80	3.46	1.27	
11. Relationship Satisfaction	80	4.46	.73	2.00
12. Self-Assertion	80	6.88	4.88	21.00
13. Relationship Seriousness	80	4.54	.69	2.00
14. Avoidant/ Security	80	24.89	8.18	39.00
15. Anxiety	80	14.30	5.06	28.00
16. Time Known Partner	80	33.26	25.61	94.00
17. Couple's Stress Rating	40	1.35	.50	.50
18. Individual Problem Solving	80	6.36	.96	5.00
19. Individual Stress Rating	80	1.35	.60	3.00
20. Male Problem Solving	40	6.38	.84	3.00
21. Female Problem Solving	40	6.35	1.08	5.00
22. Male Stress Rating	40	1.40	.67	3.00
23. Female Stress Rating	40	1.30	.52	2.00
24. Combined Mutuality	40	9.63	1.89	10.25

avoidant/security subscale' (r=.22, p<.05). This finding suggested that the more avoidant a participant is, the higher his or her score is on self-assertion.

The CIT variable, 'mutuality ' did not correlate with any expected variables (See Table 7). In particular, there was no correlation between 'Simpson's avoidant/security' and 'mutuality', or between 'femininity' and 'mutuality' scores. 'Mutuality' did correlate in a moderate direction with 'sex' (r=-.30, p<.05), indicating that men reported higher mutuality scores.

Overall Problem Solving Scores for Raters and Couples

'Rater's overall problem solving score' correlated in a moderate positive direction with 'length of time in a dating relationship' (r=.32, p<.05) suggesting that the increased length of time that a couple dated, the higher the rater's indicated the couple's effectiveness in completing the CIT. There was a moderate positive correlation between 'overall couple problem solving score' and 'femininity' (r=.36, p<.05). This relationship indicated that the higher participants scored on the femininity scales, the higher the couple rated their successfulness in completing the CIT. 'Overall couples' problem solving' moderately correlated with both 'seriousness' (r=.38, p<.05) and 'satisfaction' (r=.42, p<.01). These relationships indicated that couples who rated their overall problem solving on the CIT as more effective also exhibited higher scores on seriousness and satisfaction with their relationship.

Masculinity and Femininity

The predictor variables from the Bem inventory, 'masculinity' and 'femininity' were negatively correlated as expected (r=.-24, p<.05). A substantial negative correlation was found between 'femininity' and 'Simpson's avoidant/secure scale'(r=-.52, p<.01). This indicated that as one's score increased on the avoidant/secure scale (more avoidant), their score decreased on the femininity scale. 'Sex' was moderately correlated with both 'masculinity' (r=-.28, p<.05) and 'femininity' (r=.41, p<.01). These relationships

indicated that the males in the sample obtained generally higher masculinity scores whereas females obtained higher femininity scores. Both were expected relationships.

Demographic/Background Variables

Several demographic/background variables were intercorrelated. There was a moderate negative correlation between 'relationship satisfaction' and 'Simpson's avoidant/secure scale' (r=-.41, p<.01). This indicated that the higher a participant scored on the avoidant/secure scale (more avoidant), the less satisfied they reported to be in their dating relationship. There was a modest positive correlation between 'relationship satisfaction' and 'length of dating relationship' (r=.24, p<.05). This indicated that the longer a couple dated, the more satisfied they were with their relationship. Finally, there was a moderate positive correlation between 'relationship satisfaction' and 'relationship seriousness' (r=.61, p<.01). This indicated that the more an individual was satisfied in their dating relationship, the more an individual was serious about the relationship.

Relationship seriousness correlated with two additional variables. There was a moderate positive correlation between 'relationship seriousness' and 'length of dating relationship' (r=.41, p<.01). This indicated that the longer a couple dated, the more serious they were about their relationship.

A high positive correlation was obtained between 'length of dating relationship' and 'length of time a couple knew each other' (r=.88, p<.01). This finding indicated that the longer a couple knew each other, the longer they reported to be dating. Finally, as might be expected, there was a significant negative correlation existed 'quality of parent's marriage' and 'parent's marital status' (r=-.59, p<.01), indicating that participants from intact family households (i.e., both parents married and living together) rated their parents' marriage more positively than did students from divorced family backgrounds.

Research Hypotheses

Relationship Among Attachment Styles, Sex, Gender Role and Problem Solving Communication.

The first four hypotheses addressed how the individual participants' attachment styles affected their problem solving communication and explored how sex and gender role influenced this relationship. To restate hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4:

Hypothesis 1. Controlling for gender role variation, there will be a significant relationship between individual attachment style and problem solving communication. Hypothesis 1a - Secure and dismissive individuals will exhibit higher scores on self-assertion than preoccupied or fearful individuals. Hypothesis 1b - Secure and preoccupied individuals will exhibit higher scores on permeability than dismissive or fearful individuals. Hypothesis 1c - Secure individuals will exhibit the highest score on mutuality. Hypothesis 1d - Dismissive individuals will exhibit the highest scores on separateness.

Hypothesis 2. When gender role differences are controlled, sex will not be significantly related to problem solving communication.

Hypothesis 3. There will be a significant relationship between gender role and problem solving communication. Hypothesis 3a - Individuals scoring higher on the masculinity scale will exhibit higher scores on self-assertion and separateness. Hypothesis 3b - Individuals scoring higher on the femininity scales will score higher on permeability and mutuality.

Hypothesis 4. Attachment style and gender role will interact to affect problem solving behavior. Hypothesis 4a - Secure and dismissive individuals with high masculinity scores will score higher on self-assertion and separateness than secure and dismissive individuals with a high femininity score. Hypothesis 4b - Secure and preoccupied individuals with high femininity scores will score higher on permeability than dismissive or fearful individuals with a high masculinity score. Dismissive and fearful individuals with a higher masculinity score will score the lowest on permeability. Hypothesis 4c - Secure

individuals with high femininity scores will score higher on mutuality than secure individuals with a high masculinity score . Hypothesis 4d - Dismissive individuals with high masculinity scores will score higher on separateness than dismissive individuals with high femininity scores.

Relationship Between Couple's Conjoint Attachment Style and Problem Solving Behavior

Hypothesis five addressed how the couple's conjoint attachment style affected their problem solving effectiveness score. To restate: Hypothesis 5. There will be a significant relationship between conjoint attachment style and how participants' rate their problem solving effectiveness. Hypothesis 5a - The secure/secure couples will receive the highest score on couple's problem solving effectiveness. Hypothesis 5b - The secure/secure couples will receive the highest score on rater's problem solving effectiveness.

Data Analyses for the Main Hypotheses

Hypotheses 1-3

To test the first three hypotheses which examined individual participant differences, four ANCOVAs were conducted. Due to low male preoccupied cell sizes and low female dismissive and preoccupied cell sizes, the four groups were collapsed to two groups, secure and insecure. This resulted in an inability to analyze the following sub-hypotheses: 1a, 1b, and 1d. Prior to conducting the four ANCOVAs, a correlation matrix was conducted. Relationship history variables that significantly correlated with CIT variables were analyzed. The length of the couple's dating relationship was the only variable that correlated with any of the four CIT variables (separateness). For the ANCOVA with separateness as the dependent variable, length of dating relationship was added as a second covariate.

As reported in Tables 8 and 9, hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 were not supported. There were no significant CIT differences due to attachment style, even when gender role was controlled. Sex was, however, significant in predicting mutuality $F(1, 74) = 4.53$, $p<.05$

Table 8. Summary of the Analysis of Covariance Testing Hypotheses 1-3

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig of F
Mutuality by Attachment Style and Sex with Bem Gender Role as the Covariate					
FEMININITY	7.30	1	7.30	1.04	.31
MASCULINITY	14.55	1	14.55	2.07	.15
ATTACHMENT STYLE	4.31	1	4.31	.61	.44
SEX	31.81	1	31.81	4.53	.04*
ATTACHMENT STYLE BY SEX	1.67	1	1.67	.24	.63
Residual	519.74	74	7.02		
Permeability by Attachment Style and Sex with Bem Gender Role as the Covariate					
FEMININITY	100.29	1	100.29	5.12	.03*
MASCULINITY	4.89	1	4.89	.25	.62
ATTACHMENT STYLE	49.19	1	49.19	2.51	.12
SEX	10.46	1	10.46	.53	.47
ATTACHMENT STYLE BY SEX	3.35	1	3.35	.17	.68
Residual	1449.36	74	19.59		
Self-Assertion by Attachment Style and Sex with Bem Gender Role as the Covariate					
FEMININITY	.36	1	.36	.01	.91
MASCULINITY	19.10	1	19.10	.77	.38
ATTACHMENT STYLE	5.71	1	5.71	.23	.63
SEX	.41	1	.41	.02	.90
ATTACHMENT STYLE BY SEX	13.79	1	13.79	.55	.46
Residual	1840.97	74	24.88		
Separateness by Attachment Style and Sex with Bem Gender Role and Length of Dating Relationship as the Covariates.					
FEMININITY	.12	1	.12	.06	.81
MASCULINITY	2.19	1	2.19	1.08	.30
LENGTH OF DATING RELATIONSHIP	9.23	1	9.23	4.53	.04*
ATTACHMENT STYLE	6.78	1	6.78	3.33	.07
SEX	1.90	1	1.903	.93	.34
ATTACHMENT STYLE BY SEX	1.94	1	1.94	.95	.33
Residual	148.65	73	2.04		

Note. N=80

*$p<.05$.

Table 9. CIT Subscale Means by Attachment Style Group (Secure/Insecure) and Sex

Attachment Style	Mean	SD	n
Mutuality			
Secure	9.69	2.7	49
Insecure	9.55	2.9	31
Permeability			
Secure	15.12	4.5	49
Insecure	15.81	4.6	31
Self-Assertion			
Secure	6.61	5.0	49
Insecure	7.29	4.7	31
Separateness			
Secure	2.21	1.3	49
Insecure	2.77	1.7	31

Sex	Mean	SD	n
Mutuality			
Males	10.46	2.8	40
Females	8.81	2.4	40
Permeability			
Males	14.64	4.3	40
Females	16.14	4.6	40
Self-Assertion			
Males	7.10	.79	40
Females	6.65	.69	40
Separateness			
Males	2.33	1.4	40
Females	2.52	1.6	40

Attachment Style	Secure			Insecure		
Sex	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n
Mutuality						
Males	10.53	3.2	22	10.36	2.4	18
Females	9.00	1.9	27	8.42	3.2	13
Permeability						
Males	14.39	4.6	22	14.94	4.1	18
Females	15.72	4.4	27	17.02	5.1	13
Self-Assertion						
Males	7.23	5.4	22	6.94	4.6	18
Females	6.11	4.8	27	7.77	4.9	13
Separateness						
Males	1.95	1.2	22	2.79	1.5	18
Females	2.42	1.4	27	2.73	1.9	13

with males exhibiting higher scores than females. In addition, femininity scores significantly predicted permeability scores $F(1, 74) = 5.121$, $p<.05$. Including length of date as a second covariate to the ANCOVA for separateness (CIT dependent variable) did not result in any significant effects. Specifically, there were no significant differences on the separateness scale due to attachment style or sex when gender role and length of dating relationship were controlled. The effect for attachment security, however, approached significance $F(1, 73) = 3.33$, $p<.07$ with insecure participants reporting higher CIT separateness scores (mean=2.77) than did secure subjects (mean=2.21). Despite the lack of significant results, several means were in the hypothesized direction. As expected, secure participants scored higher on the mutuality scale than did insecure participants. Women scored higher than men on the permeability scale. Men scored higher on the self-assertion scale than did women. Additional hypothesized relationships could not be examined due to collapsed attachment style categories.

Hypothesis 4

To analyze the relationship regarding gender role and attachment style interaction, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to assess whether Bem masculinity and femininity scores moderated attachment style-CIT relationships (See Table 10). Due to low individual attachment cell size, attachment style categories were again collapsed, and only secure and insecure groups were compared. This resulted in an inability to analyze the following sub-hypotheses: 4a, 4b, and 4d. (Since the BRQ was used to measure attachment styles, appropriate dummy variables were created for this regression.)

Hypothesis 4 was not supported by the hierarchical multiple regression analysis. Specifically, gender role did not moderate any of the attachment style/CIT relationships for any of the four problem solving communication patterns of the CIT. Additionally, there was no significant interaction of gender role (femininity and masculinity) and attachment style (secure and insecure). There was one significant relationship from the hierarchical regression which was the relationship between femininity and the CIT dependent variable,

Table 10. Summary of the Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses of CIT Subscale Scores

Variable	Beta	R	Rsq	Change in Rsq	F	Sig of F
			Mutuality			
ATTACH STYLE	1.75	.03	.00	.00	.05	.82
FEMININITY	-.00	.18	.03	.03	2.50	.12
MASCULINITY	.18	.24	.06	.03	2.07	.15
AS X FEM	-.15	.24	.06	.00	.01	.91
AS X MAS	-1.56	.29	.08	.02	2.11	.15
			Permeability			
ATTACH STYLE	-.88	.08	.01	.01	.44	.51
FEMININITY	.37	.30	.09	.09	7.26	.01*
MASCULINITY	.15	.31	.09	.00	.21	.65
AS X FEM	-.69	.32	.10	.01	.72	.40
AS X MAS	-.41	.32	.10	.00	.15	.70
			Separateness			
ATTACH STYLE	-.86	.19	.03	.03	2.75	.10
FEMININITY	.09	.19	.03	.00	.00	1.00
MASCULINITY	.20	.22	.05	.02	1.27	.26
AS X FEM	-.49	.23	.05	.00	.28	.60
AS X MAS	-.58	.24	.06	.00	.28	.60
			Self-Assertion			
ATTACH STYLE	.79	.07	.05	.05	.36	.55
FEMININITY	.06	.07	.05	.00	.36	.90
MASCULINITY	.15	.12	.02	.01	.76	.39
AS X FEM	-.34	.13	.02	.00	.12	.74
AS X MAS	-.54	.14	.02	.00	.23	.63

Note:
*The variables were entered in the following order: ATTACHMENT STYLE, FEMININITY, MASCULINITY, INTERACTION1 (ATTACHMENT X FEMININITY), AND INTERACTION2 (ATTACHMENT X MASCULINITY).

*$p<.01$

N=80

permeability (See Figure 1). This result indicated that individuals with higher femininity scores exhibited higher permeability scores which provided support for hypothesis 3b.

Hypothesis 5

To test Hypothesis 5, a one-way ANCOVA was conducted. Three attachment style pair groupings were analyzed: secure/secure (pair 1), secure/insecure (pair 2), and insecure/insecure (pair 3). As reported in Tables 11 and 12, hypothesis 5 was not supported. There were no significant differences for any of the dependent variables due to conjoint attachment style even when gender role was controlled. Gender role (femininity) was significant in predicting couple's problem solving effectiveness score $F(1, 35) = 6.03$, $p<.05$. The gender role covariate was not significant in predicting rater's problem solving effectiveness scores or couple's combined mutuality score. Despite the lack of significant findings, the means were in the hypothesized direction. Secure pairs scored higher than secure/insecure and insecure pairs on all three dependent variables.

Post Hoc Analyses

To further explore the possible bases for these findings, several post hoc analyses were conducted. First, additional variables on how couple's viewed the CIT were added to the matrix. Bowlby indicated that one's attachment style is activated under stress. The couple had been asked how stressful they viewed the task and how successful they believed they completed the task. It was hoped that this could provide further insights on the couple's task performance. Second, hypotheses 1-3 were reanalyzed to assess if the insecure categories had been correctly collapsed due to the initial cell size. Insecure categories were recollapsed and subsequently reanalyzed. Third, as initially planned, post hoc testing was conducted to determine if female and male problem solving differences were related to different attachment styles. Fourth, since the data were collected with the couple as pairs, it was decided that further analyses were needed to explore possible couple differences in problem solving communication. Couple attachment style differences and couple gender role identity were examined. Finally, the individual masculinity and

Figure 1: Hierarchical Regression Scatterplot

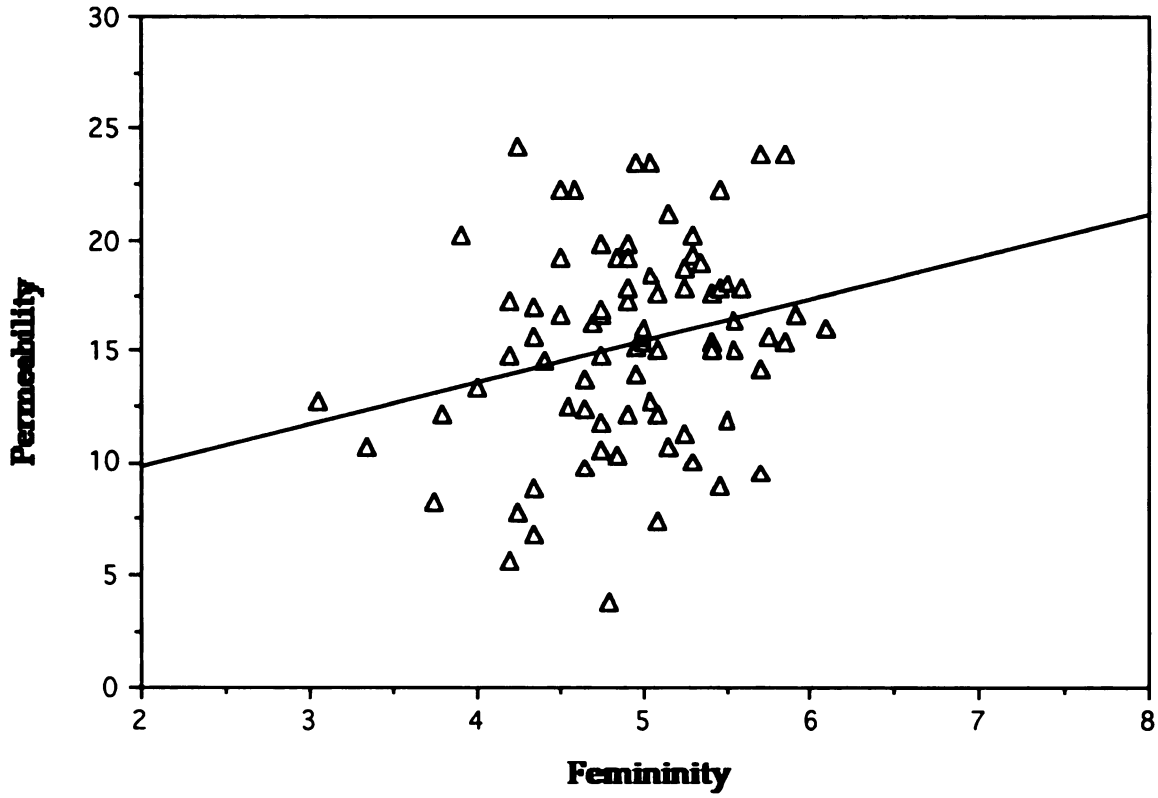


Table 11. Summary of the Analyses of Covariance of Couple's Combined Mutuality and Problem-Solving Effectiveness Scores and Rater's Problem-Solving Effectiveness Scores (Hypothesis 5)

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig of F
		Couple's Combined Mutuality Score			
FEMININITY	.66	1	.66	.19	.66
MASCULINITY	10.74	1	10.74	3.13	.09
PAIR	7.57	2	3.79	1.10	.34
Residual	120.15	35	3.43		
		Couple's Problem Solving Effectiveness Score			
FEMININITY	4.14	1	4.14	6.04	.02*
MASCULINITY	1.01	1	1.01	1.47	.23
PAIR	1.00	2	.50	.73	.49
Residual	24.01	35	.69		
		Rater's Problem Solving Effectiveness Score			
FEMININITY	.03	1	.03	.02	.88
MASCULINITY	.12	1	.12	.11	.74
PAIR	.86	2	.43	.40	.67
Residual	37.44	35	1.07		

N=40
*$p < .05$

Table 12. Couple Attachment Style Pair Means on Couple's Combined Mutuality and Problem Solving Effectiveness Scores and on Rater's Problem Solving Effectiveness Scores

Couple's Attachment Style Pair Group	Mean	SD	n
Couple's Combined Mutuality Score			
Secure/Secure	9.99	1.7	17
Secure/Insecure	9.37	2.1	15
Insecure/Insecure	9.38	1.9	8
Couple's Problem Solving Effectiveness Score			
Secure/Secure	6.59	.69	17
Secure/Insecure	6.10	1.04	15
Insecure/Insecure	6.38	.88	8
Problem Solving Effectiveness Score			
Secure/Secure	4.74	1.36	17
Secure/Insecure	4.57	.68	15
Insecure/Insecure	4.31	.46	8

femininity scores of the entire sample were examined to provide further information on the population used in this study.

Correlational Findings

To provide further clarification on how the couple viewed the CIT and how couples' mutually approached the task, three additional variables were added to the correlation matrix. These variables included individual problem solving score (how each partner viewed their successful completion of the task); stressfulness of the task (how each partner and how the couple together viewed the stressfulness of the task); and couple's combined mutuality score (how the couple jointly demonstrated sensitivity and respect for their partner during the problem solving discussion). Post hoc intercorrelations are reported in Table 7. In examining the relationships among successful task completion (problem solving score), stressfulness of the task, and couple's combined mutuality score, there were several interesting significant relationships.

Stress and Success Scores of the CIT. Male and female problem solving scores were substantially intercorrelated (r=.68, p<.01). Male and female ratings of CIT-related stress were moderately intercorrelated (r=.38, p<.01). Individual ratings on 'successful task completion of the CIT' and 'stress level of the CIT' were modestly correlated (r=-.23, p<.05). This relationship indicated that the higher individuals rated their successfulness in completing the CIT, the lower they rated the stressfulness of this task.

Femininity. There was a modest positive correlation between 'individual problem solving score' and the 'femininity scale' (r=.23, p<.05). This was similar for men (r=.35, p<.05) and women (r=.33, p<.05). This relationship indicated that the higher men and women rated their successfulness in completing the CIT, the higher they scored on the femininity scale.

Relationship Satisfaction. There was a moderate positive correlation between 'successfulness of completing the CIT' and 'satisfaction in the relationship' (r=.25, p<.01) for both men (r=.35, p<.05) and women (r=.41, p<.01). This indicated that for men and

women reporting higher levels of relationship satisfaction also reported greater success in completion of the CIT. There was a moderate negative correlation between 'stress level of the CIT' and 'satisfaction in the relationship'. Individual's stress level reports on the CIT (r= -.29, p<.01) for both men (r=-.36, p<.05) and women (r=-.44, p<.010) and the 'couple stress level score' (r=-.47, p<.01) correlated with 'relationship satisfaction in a negative direction. This indicated that for both men and women (individually and jointly) the higher their relationship satisfaction, the lower they rated the stress level of the CIT.

Relationship Seriousness. 'Relationship seriousness' correlated with both 'successfulness in completing the CIT' and 'stressfulness of the CIT'. Both men (r=.36, p<.05) and women (r=.33, p<.05) reported that the more serious and committed they were in their relationships, the more successful they rated their CIT performance. 'Stress level on the CIT' for males (r=-.37, p<.05) and couples (r=-.36, p<.05) correlated negatively with 'relationship seriousness'. This indicated that for males and couples that reported higher levels of seriousness and relationship commitment reported that they viewed the CIT as less stressful.

Attachment Style. 'Simpson's avoidant/secure subscale' correlated negatively with the 'individual success rating of the CIT' (r=-.23, p<.05). This indicated that individuals who scored in the avoidant direction reported lower levels of success in completing the CIT. 'Simpson's anxiety subscale' correlated positively with the 'stress rating of the CIT' (r=.23, p<.05). This indicated that individuals who scored higher on the anxiety scale rated the CIT as more stressful.

Demographic/Background Variables. 'Stress and success level ratings of the CIT correlated with several demographic/background variables. 'Success level' correlated positively with 'length of the dating relationship' (r=.27, p<.05). This relationship indicated that the longer a couple dated, the more successful they rated their performance on the CIT. 'Female's success ratings of the CIT were positively correlated with the 'length of time a couple knew each other' (r=.32, p<.05). This relationship indicated that females

that knew their dating partner longer rated the couple's performance on the CIT as more successful. Finally, there was a positive correlation between the 'couple's combined mutuality score' and 'stress level of the task' (r=.34, p<.05). This relationship indicated that the lower the couple rated the CIT as stressful, the lower the combined mutuality scale score.

Hypotheses 1-3 Re-Analyzed

Four post hoc ANCOVAs were conducted to analyze hypotheses 1-3 since the first ANCOVA did not provide support. Initially, dismissive, preoccupied, and fearful categories were collapsed due to insufficient cell size. Simpson's anxiety subscale was, however, noted to correlate with permeability (r=.28, p<.01) providing support for a relationship between attachment style and one of the CIT subscales. Theory supports the view that both preoccupied and fearful attachment styles should score high on Simpson's anxiety subscale. For this analysis, these two categories were collapsed to one category and the dismissive category was eliminated due to insufficient cell size. The insecure group (fearful and preoccupied; combined N=21) was compared to the secure group (N=49). Sex and attachment style were the independent variables, Bem femininity and masculinity scores were the covariates, and individual CIT scores were the dependent variables. Since length of dating relationship had a significant correlation with separateness, it was added as the second covariate for that dependent variable. Three relationships were analyzed regarding individual participant relationship behavior: a) covariates and CIT scores; b) sex and CIT scores while controlling for Bem femininity and masculinity scores and attachment style; and c) attachment style while controlling for Bem femininity and masculinity scores and sex.

Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 were not supported with the post hoc ANCOVA which was analyzed by eliminating the dismissive attachment category and collapsing the preoccupied and fearful attachment style categories (See Tables 13 and 14). There were no significant

Table 13 Summary of the Analysis of Covariance Testing Hypotheses 1-3 (Revised)

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig of F
Mutuality by Attachment Style (Secure, Preoccupied/Fearful) and Sex with Bem Gender Role as the Covariate					
FEMININITY	12.60	1	12.56	1.84	.18
MASCULINITY	8.40	1	8.40	1.23	.27
ATTACHMENT STYLE	2.71	1	2.71	.40	.53
SEX	18.33	1	18.33	2.68	.11
ATTACHMENT STYLE BY SEX	.18	1	.18	.03	.87
Residual	437.77	64	6.84		
Permeability by Attachment Style (Secure, Preoccupied/Fearful) and Sex with Bem Gender Role as the Covariate					
FEMININITY	70.53	1	70.53	3.32	.07
MASCULINITY	2.08	1	2.08	1.00	.76
ATTACHMENT STYLE	54.04	1	54.04	2.54	.12
SEX	21.30	1	21.30	1.00	.32
ATTACHMENT STYLE BY SEX	18.93	1	18.93	.89	.35
Residual	1361.53	64	21.27		
Self-Assertion by Attachment Style (Secure, Preoccupied/Fearful) and Sex with Bem Gender Role as the Covariate.					
FEMININITY	2.54	1	2.54	.11	.75
MASCULINITY	24.28	1	24.28	1.00	.32
ATTACHMENT STYLE	.01	1	.01	.00	.99
SEX	1.32	1	1.32	.05	.82
ATTACHMENT STYLE BY SEX	47.59	1	47.59	1.96	.17
Residual	1555.12	64	24.30		
Separateness by Attachment Style (Secure, Preoccupied/Fearful) and Sex with Bem Gender Role and Length of Dating Relationship as the Covariates.					
FEMININITY	.02	1	.02	.01	.92
MASCULINITY	.50	1	.50	.28	.60
LENGTH OF DATING	8.27	1	8.27	4.65	.04*
ATTACHMENT STYLE	3.89	1	3.89	2.19	.14
SEX	.13	1	.13	.07	.79
ATTACHMENT STYLE BY SEX	6.20	1	6.20	3.48	.07
Residual	112.06	63	1.78		

Note. N=80

*$p<.05$.

Table 14. CIT Subscale Means by (Revised) Attachment Style Group and Sex

Attachment Style	Mean	SD	n
Mutuality			
Secure	9.69	2.7	49
Preoccupied/Fearful	9.57	2.7	21
Permeability			
Secure	15.12	4.5	49
Preoccupied/Fearful	16.47	5.2	21
Self-Assertion			
Secure	6.61	5.0	49
Preoccupied/Fearful	6.67	4.6	21
Separateness			
Secure	2.21	1.3	49
Preoccupied/Fearful	2.67	1.5	21

Sex	Mean	SD	n
Mutuality			
Males	10.46	2.8	33
Females	8.93	2.3	37
Permeability			
Males	14.53	4.6	33
Females	16.14	4.7	37
Self-Assertion			
Males	6.61	4.9	33
Females	6.65	4.9	37
Separateness			
Males	2.31	1.4	33
Females	2.38	1.4	37

Attachment Style	Secure			Preoccupied/Fearful		
Sex	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n
Mutuality						
Males	10.53	3.2	22	10.32	2.0	11
Females	9.00	2.0	27	8.75	3.2	10
Permeability						
Males	14.39	4.6	22	14.82	5.0	11
Females	15.72	4.4	27	18.28	5.1	10
Self-Assertion						
Males	7.23	5.4	22	5.36	3.6	11
Females	6.11	4.8	27	8.10	5.3	10
Separateness						
Males	1.95	1.2	22	3.02	1.5	11
Females	2.42	1.4	27	2.28	1.5	10

CIT differences due to attachment style or sex even when gender role was controlled. Length of dating relationship was correlated with separateness and was a significant covariate $\underline{F}$ (1, 63) = 4.7, $p<.05$. When length of dating relationship was controlled, however, attachment style still was not significant in predicting CIT differences. Despite the lack of significant differences, several mean scores were in the hypothesized direction. Secure participants scored higher than insecure participants on the mutuality scale. In addition, women scored higher than men on the permeability scale.

Sex Differences and Problem Solving Effectiveness Scores

Post hoc analyses examined whether male and female problem solving effectiveness scores (successfulness in completing the CIT) were significantly related to participants' attachment styles. To test this post hoc analysis, one ANCOVA was conducted (See Tables 15-16). This included sex and attachment style as the independent variables, length of dating as the covariate and overall problem solving effectiveness as the dependent variable. Three relationships were analyzed regarding individual participant behavior: a) covariates and CIT problem solving effectiveness ; b) sex and problem solving effectiveness while controlling for length of dating relationship and attachment style; and c) attachment style while controlling for length of dating relationship and sex. Due to low insecure cell sizes, the four groups were collapsed to two groups: secure and insecure.

This post hoc analysis was not supported. There were no problem solving effectiveness differences due to attachment style or sex. Length of dating relationship correlated with problem solving effectiveness and was a significant covariate $\underline{F}$ (1, 75) = 6.06, $p<.02$. When this demographic variable was controlled, attachment style and sex were not significant predictors of problem-solving effectiveness. Despite the lack of significant differences, mean scores were in the expected direction with secure participants scoring higher on problem solving effectiveness than insecure participants.

Table 15. Analysis of Covariance of Overall Problem Solving Effectiveness by Attachment Style Group and Sex with Length of Dating Relationship as the Covariate

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig of F
LENGTH OF DATING	5.31	1	5.31	6.07	.02*
SEX	.05	1	.05	.05	.82
ATTACHMENT STYLE	1.57	1	1.57	1.79	.19
SEX BY ATTACHMENT STYLE	.06	1	.06	.07	.79
Residual	65.55	75	.87		

Note. N=80

*p<.05.

Table 16. Means of Overall Problem Solving Effectiveness by Attachment Style Group and Sex with Length of Dating Relationship as the Covariate

Attachment Style	Mean	SD	n
Secure	6.45	.98	49
Insecure	6.23	.92	21

Sex	Mean	SD	n
Males	6.38	.84	40
Females	6.35	1.20	40

Attachment Style	Secure			Insecure		
Sex	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n
Males	6.50	.80	22	6.22	.88	18
Females	6.41	1.12	27	6.23	1.01	13

Couple Analyses

Gender Role of the Couple. The previous data analyses examined individual differences on the CIT. Since the data on the CIT were collected with the couple as pairs, further analyses were required to examine couple differences on the CIT. In addition, the previous data analyses examined gender role as an independent variable for each individual. The conjoint contribution of gender role differences for the couple was overlooked. Finally, the CIT was examined further. Previous results from this study indicated a lack of individual differences on the CIT. The CIT is composed of four categories: mutuality, permeability, self-assertion, and separation. Each category is composed of individual responses that are related to each category (See Appendix I). The question that remained unanswered was whether differences occurring on the individual responses were canceling each other out when the average CIT category score was examined. To address this concern, individual statements was examined as a within-group factor to explore this issue further.

A series of four univariate tests on the CIT measures were used for this post hoc test. For these analyses, the within-group factors were sex of partner and individual responses for each of the CIT categories. The between-group factors were pair (attachment style of couple) and gender role of the pair. The dependent variables were the four CIT scores (mutuality, permeability, self-assertion, and separateness).

As reported in Tables 17-19, several significant results were found. First, relative to males in the sample, females exhibited a higher number of mutuality responses. Second, significant sex differences were observed with regard to types of individual statements made by participants during the CIT. Scheffe post hoc tests revealed five significant pair-wise group differences. Based on mean scores (See Tables 18 and 19), significant group differences supported that females exhibited a higher number of answer and indirect statements than initiation and statement of other's feelings. In addition, the interaction effect of sex by individual statements on mutuality scores approached significance ($p < .06$)

Table 17. Summary of the Univariate Analyses of CIT Subscale Scores by Attachment Style and Gender Role Group of the Couple

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig of F
		Mutuality			
Sex	179.17	1	179.17	5.74	.02*
Individual Statements	10798.86	3	3599.62	1.15	.00**
Attachment Style of Pair	51.67	2	25.84	.83	.43
Gender Role of the Pair	4.26	1	4.26	.14	.71
Sex By Individual Statements	239.41	3	79.80	2.56	.06
Pair By Sex	50.21	2	25.10	.80	.45
Gender Variation By Sex	17.49	1	17.49	.56	.46
Pair By Individual Statements	178.63	6	29.77	.95	.46
Gender Variation By Ind State	14.57	3	4.86	.16	.93
Pair by Gender Variation	41.43	2	20.72	.66	.52
Pair By Sex By Ind Statements	73.79	6	12.30	.39	.88
Gender Var By Sex By Ind Statements	44.82	3	14.94	.48	.70
Pair By Gender Variation By Sex	56.13	2	28.07	.90	.41
Pair By Gender Var By Ind Statements	88.66	6	14.76	.47	.83
Pair By Gen Var By Sex By Ind State	176.75	6	29.46	.94	.47
Residual	8496.59	272	31.24		
		Permeability			
Sex	17.52	1	17.52	.22	.64
Individual Statements	15259.54	4	3814.89	4.70	.00**
Attachment Style of Pair	121.76	2	60.88	.75	.47
Gender Role of the Pair	38.52	1	38.52	.47	.49
Sex By Individual Statements	946.06	4	236.51	2.91	.02*
Pair By Sex	117.88	2	58.94	.73	.49
Gender Variation By Sex	66.93	1	66.93	.82	.37
Pair By Individual Statements	476.61	8	59.58	.73	.66
Gender Variation By Ind State	191.95	4	47.99	.59	.67
Pair by Gender Variation	127.47	2	63.74	.78	.46
Pair By Sex By Ind Statements	484.47	8	60.56	.75	.65
Gender Var By Sex By Ind Statements	288.31	4	72.08	.89	.47
Pair By Gender Variation By Sex	103.47	2	51.73	.64	.53
Pair By Gender Var By Ind State	277.15	8	34.64	.43	.91
Pair By Gen Var By Sex By Ind State	790.03	8	98.75	1.22	.29
Residual	27610.72	340	81.21		

Table 17. (continued)

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig of F
	Self-Assertion				
Sex	.02	1	.02	.00	.99
Attachment Style of Pair	138.85	2	69.43	2.83	.07
Gender Role of the Pair	13.93	1	13.93	.57	.45
Pair By Sex	13.11	2	6.56	.27	.77
Gender Variation By Sex	3.90	1	3.90	.16	.69
Pair by Gender Variation	78.19	2	39.09	1.59	.21
Pair By Gender Variation By Sex	3.79	2	1.90	.08	.93
Residual	1669.32	68	25.55		
***Self-Assertion had only one individual statement.					
	Separateness				
Sex	1.67	1	1.67	.19	.66
Individual Statements	27.03	3	9.01	1.02	.38
Attachment Style of Pair	7.43	2	3.72	.42	.66
Gender Role of the Pair	5.02	1	5.02	.57	.45
Sex By Individual Statements	7.85	3	2.62	.30	.83
Pair By Sex	3.80	2	1.90	.22	.81
Gender Variation By Sex	9.76	1	9.76	1.11	.29
Pair By Individual Statements	29.20	6	4.87	.55	.77
Gender Variation By Ind State	36.90	3	12.30	1.40	.24
Pair by Gender Variation	2.73	2	1.37	.16	.86
Pair By Sex By Ind Statements	12.05	6	2.01	.23	.97
Gender Var By Sex By Ind Statements	8.39	3	2.80	.32	.81
Pair By Gender Variation By Sex	4.90	2	2.45	.28	.76
Pair By Gender Var By Ind Statements	30.42	6	5.07	.58	.75
Pair By Gen Var By Sex By Ind State	23.52	6	3.92	.45	.85
Residual	2394.75	272	8.80		

Note: N=40 Pairs
N=80 Individuals
*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$

Table 18. Means of CIT Subscale Scores by Attachment Style and Gender Role Group of the Couple

Gender Role	Mean	SD	count
Mutuality			
Femininity	10.0	1.19	88
Masculinity	9.5	11.40	232
Permeability			
Femininity	1.54	1.18	110
Masculinity	1.54	1.44	290
Self-Assertion			
Femininity	7.23	5.83	22
Masculinity	6.74	4.52	58
Separateness			
Femininity	2.05	1.88	88
Masculinity	2.57	3.19	232
Pair	**Mean**	**SD**	**count**
Mutuality			
Secure-Secure	9.99	1.18	136
Secure-Insecure	9.37	1.17	120
Insecure-Insecure	9.38	1.07	64
Permeability			
Secure-Secure	1.54	1.21	170
Secure-Insecure	1.50	14.52	150
Insecure-Insecure	16.01	1.53	80
Self-Assertion			
Secure-Secure	7.32	5.53	34
Secure-Insecure	5.60	3.70	30
Insecure-Insecure	8.31	5.08	16
Separateness			
Secure-Secure	2.20	2.35	136
Secure-Insecure	2.33	3.28	120
Insecure-Insecure	3.08	3.11	64

Table 19. Means of CIT Subscale Scores by Individual Statement and Sex

Individual Statement	Mean	SD	count
Mutuality			
Initiation	.31	.59	80
Statement	.46	1.43	80
Answers	13.40	6.93	80
Indirect	24.36	8.80	80
Permeability			
Agreement	11.08	5.47	80
Acknowledgment	11.86	5.67	80
Request	21.38	1.13	80
Relevant	31.69	14.48	80
Compliance	.95	1.38	80
Self-Assertion*			
Separateness			
Direct	2.23	2.15	80
Indirect	2.46	2.31	80
Request	2.61	2.38	80
Irrelevant	2.40	4.25	80

Sex	Mean	SD	count
Mutuality			
Males	8.81	1.05	160
Females	10.46	1.25	160
Permeability			
Males	16.14	1.39	200
Females	14.64	1.35	200
Self-Assertion			
Males	6.65	4.83	40
Females	7.10	4.98	40
Separateness			
Males	2.52	3.04	160
Females	2.33	2.74	160

Sex by Individual Statements	Mean	SD	count
Mutuality			
Female Initiation	.30	.65	40
Female Statement	.25	.59	40
Female Answers	15.60	7.68	40
Female Indirect	25.68	9.80	40
Male Initiation	.33	.53	40
Male Statement	.68	1.93	40
Male Answers	11.20	5.33	40
Male Indirect	23.05	7.58	40
Permeability			
Female Agreement	10.35	4.73	40
Female Acknowledgment	10.08	4.75	40
Female Request	19.38	9.43	40
Female Relevant	32.45	1.44	40
Female Compliance	.95	1.52	40
Male Agreement	11.80	6.09	40
Male Acknowledgment	13.65	5.99	40
Male Request	23.38	1.26	40
Male Relevant	30.93	1.48	40
Male Compliance	.95	1.24	40

*No Individual Statements for this Category.

with mean scores indicating that females made more answer and indirect statements than did males (See Figure 2). In examining the specific types of responses included in the mutuality category (initiation of compromise, statement of other's feelings, indirect suggestion, and answers request for information and validation), females were more likely than males to make more statements which involved responding to their partner's requests for information and validation (answer statements) and indirectly introducing solutions to tasks (indirect statements).

For the dependent variable permeability, there were two significant results. First, the effect for individual statements was significant which indicated differences among the five individual statements. Scheffe post hoc tests revealed nine significant pair-wise group differences. Individuals made more request and relevant responses than agreement, acknowledgment and compliance statements. Compliance statements had the lowest overall observed frequency score. Second, the interaction effect of sex by individual statements on permeability scores was significant which indicated sex differences among the five individual statements. In examining the specific types of responses included in the permeability category (agreement, acknowledgment, requesting information, providing relevant comments, and complying with requests for action) males made more request statements (seeking information, clarification and confirmation of opinions or decisions from the partner to then accomplish the task) than females and females made more relevant comments (factual statements) than males (See Figure 3).

For the dependent variable self-assertion, there were no significant between or within group effects observed. Attachment style of pair, however, approached significance. Insecure-insecure couples scored higher on self-assertion than did insecure-secure and secure-secure pairs. The largest difference was between the insecure-insecureand the insecure-secure pair. For the dependent variable separateness, there were no significant between or within group differences. Despite the lack of significant attachment style differences for couples, means were in the hypothesized

Figure 2. Mutuality: Sex by Individual Statements

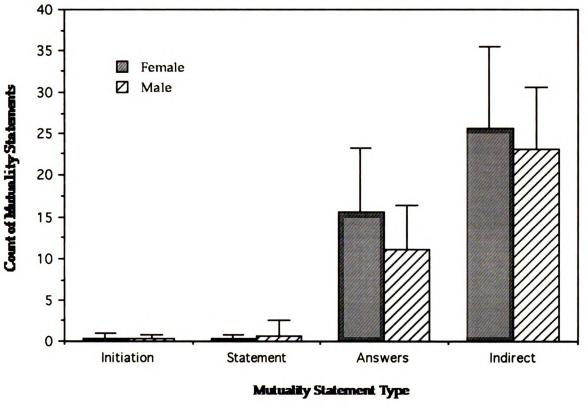
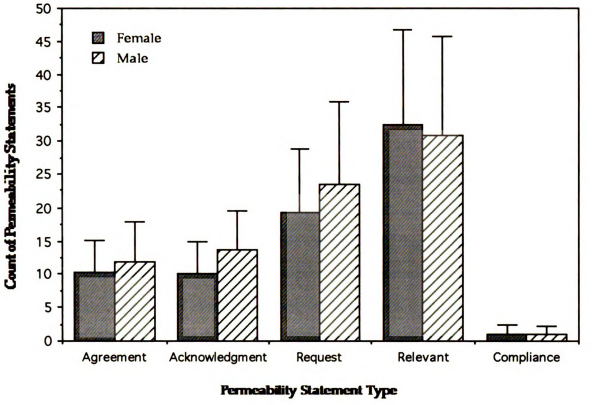


Figure 3. Permeability: Sex by Individual Statements



direction. Secure-secure couples scored the highest on mutuality and insecure-insecure couples scored the highest on separateness and self-assertion.

Connectedness/Individuality (Separateness). As previously discussed, women's development theory (Chodorow, 1978; Gilligan, 1982) suggests that in an intimate relationship, men define themselves through experiences of separateness in relationship with others whereas women define themselves through relational connectedness. In Grotevant and Cooper's (1985) study, connectedness was defined as mutuality and permeability and individuality was defined as self-assertion and separateness. In examining the CIT further, the categories of mutuality and permeability are similar to the concept of connectedness as defined by women's development theory. Mutuality includes sensitivity and respect for another's views and permeability includes an expression of responsiveness to the view of others. Both relate to an attention to the partner and maintenance of the relationship. The categories of self-assertion and separateness are similar to the concept of separateness (or as Grotevant and Cooper (1985) defined it as individuality). Self-assertion reflects an awareness of one's own point of view and separateness expresses a distinctiveness of self from others. Both relate to an attention to self and not the partner or the relationship. Based on these similarities, it was decided to change the CIT from four categories to two: connectedness and individuality (separateness) while examining possible differences related to attachment style of the couple, gender role of the couple and sex.

A series of two univariate tests on the CIT measures were used for this post hoc test. The within-group factors was sex within couple. The between-group factors were attachment style of the pair and gender role of the pair (combined individual gender role scores for the couple indicating that the couple was either more masculine or more feminine as a couple). The dependent variables were connectedness and individuality (separateness). The results from the MANOVAs are reported in Table 20 and 21. One significant result was found. Based on mean scores, females scored higher on the

Table 20. Summary of the Univariate Analyses for Connectedness and Individuality (Separateness) Scores

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig of F
	Connectedness				
Sex	1251.54	1	1251.54	58.10	.00*
Attachment Style of Pair	25.34	2	12.67	.59	.56
Gender Role of Pair	2.28	1	2.28	.11	.75
Pair By Sex	4.12	2	2.06	.10	.91
Gender Role of Pair By Sex	11.92	1	11.92	.55	.46
Pair By Gender Role of Pair	26.99	2	13.49	.63	.54
Pair By Gen Role of Pair By Sex	21.18	2	10.59	.49	.61
Residual	1464.77	68	21.54		
	Individuality (Separateness)				
Sex	.24	1	.24	.10	.75
Attachment Style of Pair	7.73	2	3.86	1.64	.20
Gender Role of Pair	2.70	1	2.70	1.14	.29
Pair By Sex	.26	2	.13	.05	.95
Gender Role of Pair By Sex	.73	1	.73	.31	.58
Pair By Gender Role of Pair	1.55	2	.77	.33	.72
Pair By Gen Role of Pair By Sex	1.62	2	.81	.34	.71
Residual	160.56	68	2.36		

N=40 Couples
N=80 Individuals
*$p < .01$

Table 21. Means of Connectedness and Individuality (Separateness) Scores by Attachment Style of the Couple, Gender Role of the Couple and Sex

Gender Role	Mean	SD	count
Connectedness			
Femininity	1.93	7.52	22
Masculinity	1.89	7.64	58
Individuality			
Femininity	3.08	1.66	22
Masculinity	3.40	1.46	58
Pair	**Mean**	**SD**	**count**
Connectedness			
Secure-Secure	1.92	7.55	34
Secure-Insecure	1.87	8.22	30
Insecure-Insecure	1.90	6.70	16
Individuality			
Secure-Secure	3.22	1.44	34
Secure-Insecure	2.99	1.50	30
Insecure-Insecure	4.13	1.49	16
Sex	**Mean**	**SD**	**count**
Connectedness			
Males	1.29	2.94	40
Females	25.10	5.55	40
Individuality			
Males	3.35	1.61	40
Females	3.29	1.42	40

connectedness measure. This finding is consistent with the women's development theory which presumes that relative to males, females are more focused on connectedness in an intimate relationship. Males and females exhibited near equal mean scores on individuality (separation) (See Table 21). Neither between-group factor (attachment style of pair and gender role of the pair) significantly predicted connectedness or individuality (separateness) scores. Despite the lack of significant attachment style differences for couples, means were in the expected direction. The secure-secure couple scored the highest on connectedness and the insecure-insecure couple scored the highest on individuality (separateness).

Individual Gender Roles of the Sample

One possibility for the study's unsupported research hypotheses was that the sample differed from the larger population in some significant way. It was hypothesized that a college age sample of males in longer term relationships may exhibit higher femininity scores than masculinity scores. If this was supported, it may provide insight into the lack of CIT individual differences. More specifically, males would be attending more to the relationship and their partner and not exhibiting stereotypical masculine relationship differences.

An ANOVA was used for this post hoc test. The within-group factors were sex and gender role categories of the individual participants category (masculinity and femininity). The individual participant category examined the relative strength of masculinity/femininity within the couple. The dependent variable was relative variation of masculinity and femininity of the group. The results are presented in Tables 22 and 23. There were three significant results. First, there was a significant effect due to individual gender role category which indicated that the entire sample was more masculine than feminine. Second, there was an interaction effect of sex and individual gender role categories (See Figure 4). Post hoc comparisons indicated three significant pairwise group differences: a) females had higher masculinity scores than males; b) males had higher femininity scores than females; and c) females' masculinity scores were higher than their

femininity scores. Within males, there were no gender role differences which indicated that males were not predominantly more masculine or feminine.

Table 22. Summary of the Analysis of Variance of the Relative Variation of Gender Role of the Group (Sample) by Gender Role of the Individual and Sex

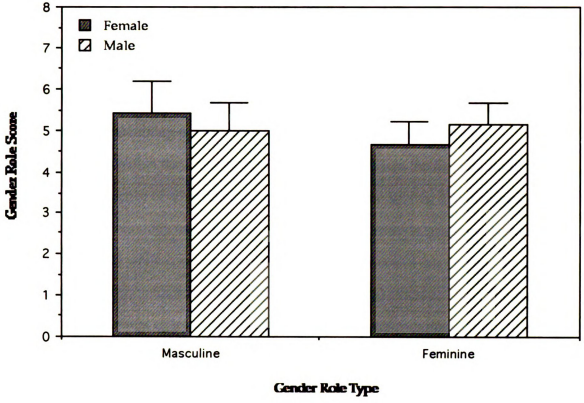
Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig of F
Sex	.02	1	.02	.05	.82
Individual Categories	3.48	1	3.48	8.30	.01*
Sex By Ind Categories	8.19	1	8.19	1.95	.00*
Residual	65.41	156	.42		

N=80
*$p < .01$

Table 23. Means of Relative Variation of Gender Role of the Group (Sample) by Gender Role of the Individual and Sex

Individual Categories	Mean	SD	n
Masculine	5.21	.77	80
Feminine	4.91	.59	80
Sex	**Mean**	**SD**	**n**
Male	5.07	.62	80
Female	5.05	.77	80
Sex By Ind Categories	**Mean**	**SD**	**n**
Male, Masculine	5.00	.69	40
Male, Feminine	5.15	.53	40
Female, Masculine	5.42	.79	40
Female, Feminine	4.68	.55	40

Figure 4. Individual Gender Role of Sample: Sex by Individual Categories



CHAPTER 5

Discussion

This present study attempted to expand research on couple functioning in close relationships by examining predisposing factors in couple's problem-solving communication. Within the framework of Bowlby's attachment theory, this study examined the influence of adult attachment styles on problem solving communication in dating couples. This study used the four category attachment style typology (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) while concurrently examining the influence of sex and gender role on problem-solving communication. In particular, this study (a) examined the relationship of participants' attachment styles to their in vivo problem solving communication; (b) explored the extent to which sex and gender role affected the relationship of attachment style and problem solving; and (c) identified couple's conjoint attachment style-related contributions to their problem solving communication.

Overall, the main hypotheses of this study were not statistically supported. However, the directionalities of correlational results and group means relevant to several hypotheses were in the expected direction. Post hoc testing provided support for the influence of sex and gender role on the various CIT scales. In addition, the results provided reliability and validity support for the attachment style instruments used for this study. The BRQ demonstrated moderate attachment stability over a one month period. Results were comparable to other samples (Baldwin & Fehr, 1992; Pistole, 1989; Scharfe & Bartholomew, 1994a; Scharfe & Bartholomew, 1994b). The S-AAS exhibited high test-retest scores over a one month period. Furthermore, the results of this study provided convergent validity for the BRQ, a self-report categorical attachment style inventory.

This chapter will discuss the observed interrelationships of individual attachment styles, sex and gender role, and couple's conjoint attachment styles on their problem

solving communication and behavior. First, observed relationships between individual participants' attachment style and their problem solving communication will be discussed, then, the observed relationships among sex, gender role, and attachment style and their problem solving communication relationship will be discussed, followed by observed relationships between couple's conjoint attachment styles and their problem solving behavior. A discussion of the limitations of the study, implications for practice and recommendations for future research will follow.

Individual Attachment Style and Problem Solving Communication.

By introducing an in vivo method for observing spontaneous couple interaction, this study attempted to examine whether individual attachment styles contributed to different styles of problem solving communication in dating couples. Patterns in the observed variable relationships from the correlational matrix suggested that participants with an anxious attachment orientation exhibited higher permeability scores (hypothesis 1b) indicating that they responded more to their partner during the problem solving exercise than would participants with an avoidant attachment style orientation. Based on attachment theory, individuals with a preoccupied or anxious style of attachment tend to focus on relationship maintenance due to an anxious fear of loss of security. They are described as overly concerned with their relationships and as tending to idealize their partner and oblige their partner's wishes (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Feeney & Noller, 1991; Pistole, 1989). In addition, participants with an anxious attachment orientation perceived the CIT as more stressful. This is not surprising in that they already approach the relationship with higher levels of anxiety than do persons with other attachment styles.

The correlational results further suggested that participants scoring higher on the avoidant attachment index exhibited higher scores on the self-assertion scale (hypothesis 1a) indicating that they focused on their own point of view and exhibited more direct suggestions as compared to the participant with a secure or avoidant attachment orientation. Attachment theory indicates that individuals with a dismissive or avoidant attachment style

expect their partner to be unavailable and non-responsive. They reportedly focus on meeting their own needs instead of focusing on their partner or on the relationship. In addition, participants with an avoidant attachment orientation reported lower levels of success in completing the CIT. As expected, the patterns in the observed variable relationships suggested that they also reported the lowest degree of relationship satisfaction and seriousness.

An unexpected pattern was that individuals scoring higher on the permeability scale also scored higher on the separateness scale. Participants expressing a responsiveness to the views of others also expressed a distinctiveness of self from others. Therefore, participants appeared to be able to focus on attachment and separation during the problem solving task. This same result was noted in the original completion of the Family Intervention Task (Grotevant & Cooper, 1984). In contrast, couples that dated for a longer period of time exhibited a pattern of lower CIT separateness scores and higher relationship satisfaction and relationship seriousness scores. These individuals made fewer distinctions between themselves and others in the problem solving communication patterns.

Despite the significant results from the correlational matrix, further analysis (analysis of covariance) did not provide additional support for the remaining hypotheses on the relationship between individual attachment style and problem solving communication even when gender role was controlled. Adding length of dating relationship as an additional covariate in the analysis of separateness did not clarify this relationship further. The CIT separateness scores, however, did register attachment style effects that approached significance, with insecure participants reporting higher CIT separateness scores than secure subjects (hypothesis 1d). This finding, along with the finding that individuals with an avoidant attachment orientation reported lower relationship seriousness and satisfaction, are in line with the results of previous studies which have found that avoidant individuals exhibited greater relationship distance and relationship detachment (Feeney & Noller, 1991; Rothbard, Roberts, Leonard, & Eiden, 1993). The mean scores for mutuality were in the

hypothesized direction with secure participants scoring higher than insecure participants (hypothesis 1c) supporting previous studies that secure individuals exhibited mutually focused conflict strategies and more reflective listening (Pistole, 1989; Pistole, 1991; Rothbard, Roberts, Leonard, & Eiden, 1993). Due to the nonsignificant statistical results, a post hoc analysis of covariance was conducted that recollapsed the insecure category (preoccupied and fearful were collapsed to one insecure category and the dismissive category was eliminated due to insufficient cell size). However, these analyses again did not reveal significant attachment style effects on problem solving communication.

In conclusion, patterns in the observed variable relationships suggested that participants with an anxious attachment orientation focused on their partner while viewing the CIT as stressful, whereas participants with an avoidant attachment orientation focused on their own point of view while reporting lower levels of success in completing the CIT. These findings suggest that participants' attachment styles may have been activated during the CIT. The results also suggest that insecure participants viewed themselves more individually during the problem solving exercise while secure participants focused more on their partner and conveyed respect for their partner's point of view. In addition, these preliminary results suggest that secure and insecure participants demonstrated expected problem solving behavior in this in vivo communication task. However, these interpretations are quite tentative as they are based on correlational findings and on tests of group differences that approached, but did not reach statistical significance.

The failure of participants' attachment style classification to predict their problem-solving communication may have been due to several reasons. First, there was a disproportionate representation of secure females from phase one who agreed to participate in phase two. Since the participants were from the College of Education, they were more likely to have been teacher education majors. Stereotypically, teacher education majors may be more "feminine" relative to the general population, possibly resulting in a sample more prone to individual conflict avoidance and instead focusing on relationship

maintenance. Second, length of dating relationship was higher than expected (mean=25.6 months) for a population of college dating couples. This may have resulted in a sample that was more representative of long-term, stable, committed dating couples than dating couples in general. Third, males and females that reported higher levels of relationship satisfaction, seriousness, and degree of commitment reported higher levels of success on the in vivo problem solving task (CIT). Couples rated their relationships as very serious and committed (mean=4.5; 5=very serious on the Likert scale for this item) and satisfied (mean=4.5; 5=very satisfied on the Likert scale for this item). These same individuals reported that the CIT was less stressful. These differences may have resulted in an interpersonally sensitive sample in which the couples approached the task with more refined problem solving skills. In addition, the CIT was noted to be relatively low in stress (mean=1.35; 1=not at all stressful). Participants' attachment styles may not have been sufficiently activated by the task used in this study due to the low stress rating. This hypothesis should be re-examined within a larger, more balanced sample that is sufficiently varied in regard to attachment style and length of dating experience. The task should be restructured to increase stress levels in order that each participant's attachment style is activated. Proposed ways to restructure the task will be discussed later in this chapter.

Sex, Gender Role, Attachment Style, and Problem Solving Communication.

This study also attempted to clarify the relationships of sex, gender role and attachment style to problem solving communication. Sex was not expected to relate to problem solving communication when gender role was controlled (hypothesis 2). It was expected that there would be a significant relationship between gender role and problem solving communication (hypothesis 3), and, that gender role and attachment style would interact to affect problem solving behavior (hypothesis 4).

A hierarchical multiple regression revealed that gender role did not moderate the attachment style/CIT relationship for any of the four CIT problem solving communication pattern (hypothesis 3). Results from the hierarchical regression, correlational analyses, and

ANCOVA of CIT scores indicated that females and individuals of both sexes with higher femininity scores were more responsive to the views of their partner (permeability) (hypothesis 4b). Lamke, Sollie, Durbin, and Fitzpatrick (1994) also found that individuals who identified with feminine traits described themselves as being comfortable in engaging in emotionally supportive behaviors in intimate relationships. The mean scores for males, however, suggested that they scored higher than females on self-assertion and mutuality suggesting that male participants were able to focus on themselves and their partner's view. Previous research has indicated that, relative to females, male participants tend to be more independent or to avoid engaging in interpersonal issues during problem solving discussions (Lang-Takac & Osterweil, 1992; Rusbult, Johnson, & Morrow, 1986). This unexpected pattern for male participants may possibly relate to both the male and female participants' report of higher scores on the successful completion of the problem solving task. The correlational matrix also indicated that participants with higher attachment related avoidance scored lower on the femininity scale. This finding is consistent with theoretical expectations and with prior research which has demonstrated that individuals with an adult avoidant attachment style seek interpersonal distance during times of stress (Pistole, 1994; Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan, 1992) and exhibit less focus on relationship connectedness (lower femininity scores). Finally, individuals with higher femininity scores reported higher scores on their successful completion of the CIT. This observed pattern from the variable relationships suggests that individuals with higher femininity scores, and females in general, (a) exhibited a communication style that was more focused and invested in the relationship task, and (b) viewed their performance as a couple as more successful.

Several post hoc analyses were conducted to further explore the relationships among attachment style, gender role, sex and problem solving communication. Overall, females made more statements in which they responded to their partner's requests for information and provided validation for their partner's responses (mutuality) as well as statements that involved sensitivity and respect for their partner's views (connectedness).

In regard to sex and individual gender role differences (and not couple gender role differences), females and individuals with higher femininity scores were more focused on the relationship by attending and validating their partner. These results suggested that individuals scoring higher on femininity reported more success on the problem solving task while exhibiting more statements that demonstrated relationship connectedness. This included showing validation, sensitivity and respect, and responsiveness for their partner's views. Moreover, females, regardless of gender role, were more responsive and validating of their partner than males. Previous research provides support for these findings. White (1989), for example, found that females exhibited an affiliative style of interaction with their partner. Lamke, Sollie, Durbin, and Fitzpatrick (1994) reported that individuals who identified with feminine traits engaged in emotionally supportive behaviors in intimate relationships. The results for males were less conclusive. In this study, males made more requests for specific behaviors to occur and were more task oriented (permeability). Rusbult, Johnson, and Morrow (1986) also found that men tended not to engage in interpersonal issues during problem solving discussions.

The lack of significant support for several of the hypotheses regarding the relationships of sex, gender role and attachment style to problem solving communication may be partially explained by a final post hoc analysis. An ANOVA was used to examine the individual gender role of the sample. The gender role description, based on within couple analyses of the sample, was contrary to expectations: females had higher masculine scores than males; males had higher feminine scores than females; and females were overall more masculine than feminine. The opposite gender role differences may have resulted in several altering possibilities. For example, males may have responded more to their partner and to the relationship. This may have created decreased disagreements regarding the task. Based on this unexpected finding, it is recommended that these hypotheses be reexamined with a more diverse sample in regards to gender role differences.

Couple's Conjoint Attachment Style and Problem Solving Behavior.

This study also examined the conjoint contribution of each partner's attachment style to relationship functioning, a largely neglected area in the extant literature. The majority of previous studies examined the effect of each partner's attachment style separately. This study examined three different attachment style couple pair groups which included secure-secure, secure-insecure, and insecure-insecure couple pairings. Results from a one way ANCOVA indicated that there were no significant conjoint couple attachment style differences for the couples' average rating regarding problem solving effectiveness, on rater's average rating of problem solving effectiveness, or on the couple's combined scores on the mutuality scale, even when gender role was controlled. Nonetheless, the means were in the hypothesized direction, with secure-secure couples scoring higher than secure-insecure and insecure-insecure couples on all three dependent variables.

It is important to note here some findings for the correlational analyses. In particular, the longer a couple dated, the more successful they rated their CIT performance. In addition, the lower the couple rated the CIT as stressful, the lower their combined mutuality score. The first result suggested that couples that have been together longer view themselves as more successful. They may have had more practice in approaching and resolving problem-solving tasks. The second result suggested that when the communication task was perceived as less stressful, couples demonstrated a decreased need for sensitivity and respect for their partner's views. One possible interpretation of these findings is that couples have less of a need to work together when the issue or task is perceived as non-stressful.

A post hoc MANOVA examined whether the attachment style of the couple and gender role of the couple related to differences in problem solving communication. One finding that approached significance indicated that insecure-insecure couples scored higher on self-assertiveness than did insecure-secure and secure-secure pairs. This finding

suggests that insecure-insecure couples focused more on expressing their individual point of view versus responding to their partner. Indeed, connectedness and individuality means were in hypothesized directions with secure-secure couples scoring the highest on mutuality and connectedness and insecure-insecure couples scoring the highest on individuality (separateness and self-assertion).

Previous studies have reported that secure-secure couple pairings reported better overall marital adjustments (Senchak & Leonard, 1992) and relationship satisfaction (Feeney, 1994). The current results suggest that secure dyads showed more respect to each other during the problem solving task and perceived themselves as more successful while engaging in this task. Inspection of group means also indicated that secure-secure couple pairs attended more to relationship maintenance during problem solving behavior while insecure-insecure pairs focused more on individuality. This may begin to explain the different reports on relationship adjustment and satisfaction based on the different attachment style pairings. For example, if one of the couples in the insecure-insecure couple pairing has a preoccupied attachment style while the other partner has a dismissive attachment style, focusing on individuality will increase the level of anxiety for the preoccupied partner due to fears related to loss of attachment. The increased level of anxiety may cause the preoccupied partner to become demanding and clingy which will cause the dismissive partner to distance further, thus creating more anxiety for the preoccupied partner (Pistole, 1994). This results in a "vicious cycle" in which each partner's attempts to manage his or her discomfort with contrasting methods of distance regulation, thus resulting in less relationship satisfaction. The secure-secure couple pairs are better able to manage distance regulation, as they focus directly on problem solving and relationship maintenance, as well as the need for both individuality and connectedness to occur within the relationship. These factors may relate to higher reports of relationship satisfaction for the secure couple.

Limitations of the Study.

Several methodological limitations likely affected the findings of the present study and thus constrain the interpretability and generalizability of obtained results. These limitations will be explored in greater detail

CIT Limitations. The Couple Intervention Task was adapted form Grotevant and Cooper's (1985) Family Intervention Task and Watzlawick's (1966) Plan Something Together Task. This task was constructed to permit observation of communication patterns and to identify interaction patterns. Although steps were taken to implement the task as previously described, there were several limitations with the CIT that may have affected the results of this study. First, there is a question as to whether the CIT was perceived as a sufficiently stressful task by the participants due to the low rating on the stress level question (mean=1.35 on a 7 point Likert scale where 1=not at all stressful to 7=very stressful). Participants provided their responses to the CIT success and stress questions in front of their partner which may have also resulted in less reliable answers. If this task was perceived as not stressful or one of low stress, the participant's attachment style may not have been activated fully. Based on the results of this study, a low stress task still produced results that were generally in the hypothesized direction suggesting that a task with a higher stress level may produce significant results.

A second concern was that many couples planned unrealistic vacations in which they visited a different location or country daily without providing adequate time for transportation. Several couples finished the task in less than the allotted 20 minutes. These approaches may have helped the couples decrease the stress level of the task and create a situation where compromising strategies were not necessary. Future research using the CIT should require that the planned vacation be realistic and that the couple use the entire 20 minutes to complete the task.

Another issue that may have affected the study was the original Family Intervention Task required that a family plan a vacation together. The CIT required that the couple plan

a vacation together. It is possible that unmarried couples may have experienced anxiety regarding the overnight nature of the task. It is undetermined if this was more difficult for new couples creating a difference when comparing couples with various lengths of dating.

The coding process for the CIT was unable to consider nonverbal communication and voice inflection, which may have affected coding reliability. Humor, sarcasm, anger, and other emotional tones may have been overlooked. Statements may have been incorrectly understood and coded in incorrect categories. In light of the fact that interrater reliabilites were only marginally acceptable, the raters may indeed have had difficulty coding the transcripts without access to nonverbal communication and voice inflection. The study attempted to compensate for this concern by having a third rater make final decisions on any coding differences.

Finally, couples were aware of the audiotaped process and at times made comments in this regard. One concern is they may have been self-conscious in their interactions presenting less realistic views of their communication styles. Example comments for the couples included "this is easy for us," "don't appear assertive," and "I am suppose to forget the recorder." Couples may have interacted differently without the audiotaping resulting in a more realistic problem solving discussion. It would be desirable to use videotaping in future research.

Sampling Limitations Given that the study used a non-randomly selected college sample, the present findings may not be generalizable to other young adult populations. All subjects were enrolled in College of Education classes. College major was not assessed, however, it is possible that the sample may have been unique in that the majority were teacher education majors which may possibly draw more "feminine" persons relative to the general population. This resulted in an unbalanced representation of gender during phase one.

Phase two involved a self-selected sample in which most subjects self-classified their adult attachment style as secure. This resulted in an overrepresentation of secure

females volunteering for phase two. This may have limited the generalizability of the sample since the college population is more balanced in terms of gender and attachment styles. The advantage of the current sampling procedure as compared to other studies was that males did participate since their female partner brought them to phase two of the study.

Performance on the CIT may have been unintentionally influenced by partner differences with respect to whether one or the other was the original study "volunteer." More specifically, the partner-recruited member of the couple may have been more willing to defer to his/her partner since it was the partner's suggestions and efforts to participate in the research project. The overrepresentation of secure females volunteering for phase two resulted in the female partner more often being the "lead partner" in the CIT. It is possible that the male more often deferred more often to the female based on this dynamic. This could explain the unexpected gender role differences in that the males were more feminine and the females were more masculine in comparison to their partner. The couple may communicate differently if the other partner volunteered to participate in a communication task or if the couple decided to participate jointly.

Additional limitations of sampling involved the lack of adequate representation in each of the three insecure attachment style groups resulted in the collapsing the three categories into a combined insecure category. Feeney et al. (1994) stated that this remains a problem in couple research since many insecure subjects are underrepresented in dating relationships or are reluctant to expose their relationship for research purposes. Another reason for the low number of insecure participants may have been that insecure individuals may describe themselves as insecure until they became involved in a long term dating relationship, and, once so involved, may feel more secure and classify themselves as secure. Regardless as to the reasons for the limited sampling, the study was unable to assess for differences among the four attachment style groups and the different conjoint attachment style pairings.

More specifically, the college sample for this study may represent a particular type of student and dating couple. The majority of students were seniors and juniors who had been dating an average of 25.6 months. The average length of dating was longer than expected. This may have affected the findings in that the sample may have been more representative of long-term, stable, committed dating couples rather than dating couples in general. It is possible that these dating couples may have resolved early relationship communication difficulties due to the length of time they were together. Therefore, they were more successful in negotiating this task and experienced the task as unstressful. A replication of this study is recommended within a larger, more diverse sample that is sufficiently varied with respect to length of dating relationship, attachment style pairings, ethnicity, age, and education level. Sampling from a general population which has greater ethnic and cultural diversity would be useful. Thus far, few studies on adult attachment have focused on special populations.

Other Limitations. The quasi-experimental design of the study and its reliance on correlational analyses does not permit cause-effect conclusions to be derived.

Implications for Practice

Bowlby's attachment theory has been a useful conceptual framework for the therapist. Byng-Hall (1995) stated that the therapist provides a temporary secure base for the client. The client uses the secure base to explore and solve problems. Satterfield and Lyddon (1995) highlighted that clients with different working models of attachment will evaluate the counseling relationship and their personal relationships differently. The therapist needs to be aware of the individual differences in attachment behavior and how this may impact relationship difficulties. Specifically, attachment theory provides the therapist with a way to conceptualize problematic functioning in couple relationships. Pistole (1993) argued that attachment theory helps the therapist understand distance/regulation issues leading to the withdrawal/anxiety behaviors. As clients better understand their attachment styles as well as those of their partners, they can view their

current relationship concerns from a new perspective. The couple can begin to clarify what is possibly triggering the relationship disturbances without placing blame on each other. The therapist can begin to help the couple regulate distance and intimacy issues more effectively and increase felt security in themselves and in their relationship. Both changes will help the couple develop more satisfying relationships. For example, the therapist can clarify how the preoccupied partner's intense focus on an avoidant partner can create even more distance in the relationship. Partner's expectations and differing needs can be identified. The therapist can help the couple meet each other's differing needs and relationship expectations regarding closeness and distance.

This current study encourages continued support for applying attachment theory to the therapeutic process. The therapist may find attachment theory useful in helping couples address problematic communication patterns, understand relationship dynamics, and address distance-regulations issues within the relationship. Attachment theory also may be useful in the areas of premarital counseling and preventive work.

Recommendations for Future Research

The present study attempted to examine the contributions of individuals' and couple's attachment styles to their specific problem solving communication. The study explored the extent to which sex and gender role affects the relationship of attachment style and problem solving communication. Although the main hypotheses were not supported, the means were in the hypothesized direction suggesting that secure individuals and secure-secure couple pairings exhibited more successful relationship problem solving communication styles. This area of research is in the preliminary stages of development and will require further refinement and study. This initial study provides support for continued research in the area of attachment theory and couple functioning while continuing to clarify the influence of respondents' sex and gender role as possible moderating variables.

Despite the usefulness of applying Bowlby's attachment theory to furthering our understanding of couple problem-solving communication patterns, this theory may not be the most parsimonious framework to efficiently predict these patterns. Future researchers should also consider other theories to explain differences in couple functioning. For example, Bowen's (1978) intergenerational model of family dynamics emphasizes the need for individuals to adequately differentiate themselves from their families of origin in order to successfully develop their individual expression of self and their capacities for autonomous intimacy with others. Adults who have not adequately differentiated themselves from their own parents are likely to "project" their lack of differentiation to their own children, thus contributing to their children's later problem solving difficulties in close adult relationships.

In addition to considering attachment theory along with other possible theories to explain couple communication pattern differences, the following recommendations may also be helpful for future research. Investigators should continue examining the role that attachment style differences play in couple functioning since previous research has generally overlooked these relationships. Efforts to examine the relationship of adult attachment styles to dyadic functioning has generally relied on self-report measures. This study attempted to address both issues by using in vivo methods and audiotaping. Results suggested that audiotaping may overlook the contributions of nonverbal behavior. Videotaping is recommended to capture the finer details of communication. In addition, by employing both tape transcripts and the videotape to code the couple's communication, interrater reliability may be greatly enhanced.

According to Bowlby (1979), the attachment system tends to be activated during periods of stress. For this study, it is likely that the CIT was not perceived as a sufficiently stressful task by the participants. Consequently, there remains doubt as to whether the participant's attachment style was appropriately activated during the problem solving discussion. Future studies should employ a more stressful task in order to activate each

participant's attachment system such as introducing a stimulus event that couples find stressful. Being mindful of research ethics, this may be limited to the couple's discussing this event "as if it happened." Scenarios could include couple discussions involving questioning the relationship commitment; observing one's partner flirting with an attractive stranger; or discovering that one's partner lied. Simpson, Rholes, and Nelligan's (1992) creative use of an experimental situation for increased anxiety for one member of a dating couple may provide a framework for future research. They unobtrusively videotaped a female in a waiting room after she was informed that she would soon be engaged in an activity that would provoke anxiety in most people. She was subsequently observed as she interacted with her male partner during the waiting period. If the CIT is used again, researchers should establish parameters for the task where the couple establishes realistic travel plans within the required time frame. This will increase the likelihood that the participant's will find the task more stressful.

The contribution of conjoint couple attachment pairings needs to be examined further. Kirkpatrick and Davis (1994) argued that specific attachment styles are not "universally good or bad." Instead, different attachment pairings may result in successful relationship experiences. Previous research found a predominance of secure-secure pairings and a relative absence of anxious-anxious and avoidant-avoidant couples and that avoidant individuals tend to couple with anxious partners (Collins & Read, 1990; Simpson, 1990; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994). The interactive affect of these attachment pairings has been largely overlooked. This study attempted to clarify the contribution of conjoint couple attachment pairings by using Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) four category typology. The original plan was to examine the differences among the different possible attachment style couple pairings (e.g., secure-secure, secure-preoccupied, secure-fearful, secure-dismissive, preoccupied-fearful, preoccupied-dismissive, preoccupied-preoccupied, dismissive-fearful, dismissive-dismissive, and fearful-fearful attachment style pairings). Due to the limited number of insecure attachment styles in the present sample, this could

not be accomplished and the sample was collapsed to form three different couple attachment pairings (secure-secure, secure-insecure, and insecure-insecure). Further research on couple functioning within secure-secure, insecure-secure, and insecure-insecure couples as well as within all the different possible attachment style couple pairings is needed. In particular, it would be desirable to explore whether, in insecure-secure couples (e.g., secure individual coupled with a preoccupied individual), the secure partner may provide the relationship skills to help the insecure partner cope with anxiety regarding closeness and distance regulation thus allowing for higher relationship satisfaction and success.

Future studies should also employ larger, more diverse samples or explore alternative sampling methods to increase the number of insecure participants. Subsequent studies should also gather information from a more diverse population. This may include sampling from other than college populations such as recruiting participants through newspaper solicitations (as Hazan and Shaver (1987) initially did) or sampling from a mental health outpatient clinic or employee assistance program at a university or corporation. These sampling refinements should provide a greater opportunity to examine the four stage model of attachment for individual and couple differences in couple interactions.

Researchers should explore more specific areas of relationship functioning such as differences in stages of relationship development. It is possible that attachment style differences affect relationship functioning differently at various relationship stages. For example, an individual with a preoccupied attachment style may experience more difficulty during the initial stages of a relationship, however, as the relationship moves toward the committed phase, this individual may become more secure and less clingy and demanding. Attachment style differences may be especially influential on relationship functioning during significant life transitions such as when a couple experiences pregnancy, loss of a parent, physical illness, job change/relocation, etc. Future research could clarify these possible relationship developmental changes and transitions further.

Finally, investigators should consider using qualitative methods to explore communication patterns within couples that vary with respect to their attachment styles. Couple functioning and communication is a complex phenomenon, involving both verbal and nonverbal communication. Qualitative methods could generate additional information about the couple that may be limited by quantitative methodology. This, along with the other recommendations, will provide an opportunity to further explore the relationship of the individuals' attachment style and the couple's conjoint attachment style-related contributions to their problem solving communication style and their overall relationship functioning. In conclusion, attachment research opens a new and exciting arena in which to understand couple interaction and functioning and should be pursued further.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Request for Participation and Participation Consent Form

Dear student:

Thank you for your expressed interest in my study of the relationship experiences of college students. This research is being conducted by Jennie Leskela, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Special Education here at Michigan State University.

The purpose of this research is to learn more about relationship beliefs and problem solving communication patterns in dating couples. If you choose to participate, you will be given a packet containing three brief self-report questionnaires to complete. The first questionnaire will solicit important background information; the second and third questionnaires will ask questions regarding attitudes and feelings about close relationships. I expect that it will take you between 5-10 minutes to complete the questionnaires contained in the survey packet. I do not anticipate that your participation will result in any physical or emotional risk to you. As a benefit for your participation you will receive some extra credit points from your instructor.

Please know that your responses to this survey will be kept completely confidential. Do not put your name on the questionnaires. Code numbers will be assigned to your names. The primary researcher, Jennie Leskela, will be the only person that has access to the code number and names. The code numbers and names will be destroyed after the study is completed. Information will only be presented in aggregate form and not by individual results.

Your participation in this survey is strictly on a volunteer basis. You are free to withdraw your consent and to stop participation at any time without penalty to you. If you decide to participate, read the brief statement below and print and sign your name, and enter today's date on the appropriate lines. I appreciate your participation in this project. This form will be kept separate from your survey responses. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask the survey administrator or to call Jennie Leskela at 353-4734.

I agree to participate in the survey directed by Jennie Leskela. I understand the nature of the project, the nature of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I can terminate my participation at any time without penalty.

_____	_____	_____
PRINT your name here	SIGN your name here	Today's date

APPENDIX B

Request for Participation
Phase 2

Dear student:

This study will be conducted in two phases. You are completing Phase 1. After Phase 1, 40 couples will be selected to participate in Phase 2. Phase 2 will involve the completion of three brief questionnaires; two on couple attitudes and feelings and one on description of self. Following the completion of the surveys, couples will be privately audiotaped for 20 minutes while they are engaged in a structured communication task.

I expect that it will take 30-40 minutes to complete the questionnaires and the couple communication task. I do not anticipate that your participation will result in any physical or emotional risk to you. There is the possibility that disagreements between you and your partner about how to complete the task may occur. As a benefit for your participation you and your partner will be entered in a drawing. Four $25.00 prizes will be awarded. Winners will be contacted following the completion of data collection.

Your participation in this survey is strictly on a volunteer basis. If you are in a heterosexual dating relationship for at least one month and you are interested in participating with your partner in Phase 2 of this study, please sign below and indicate a phone number where you can be contacted to schedule your conjoint participation in Phase 2.

_____	_____	_____
PRINT your name	SIGN your name	Phone number

APPENDIX C

Request for Participation and Participation Consent Form

Phase 2

Dear student:

Thank you for your expressed interest in completing Phase 2 of my study of the relationship experiences of college students. This research is being conducted by Jennie Leskela, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Special Education here at Michigan State University.

The purpose of this research is to learn more about relationship beliefs and problem solving communication patterns in dating couples. If you choose to participate, you will be given a packet containing three self-report questionnaires to complete on couple attitudes and feelings and description of self. This will take 5-10 minutes to complete. Following, you and your partner will participate in a 20 minute private audiotaped interaction on your responses to a communication task. I do not anticipate that your participation will result in any physical or emotional risk to you. However, disagreements between you and your partner about how to complete the task may occur. As a benefit for your participation you and your partner will be entered in a drawing. Four $25.00 prizes will be awarded. Winners will be contacted following the completion of data collection.

Please know that your responses to this survey will be kept completely confidential. Do not put your name on the questionnaires. This way your name cannot be connected to any of your answers and your confidentiality can be assured. Code numbers will be assigned to your names. The primary researcher, Jennie Leskela, will be the only person that has access to the code number and names. The code numbers and names will be destroyed after the study is completed. Information will only be presented in aggregate form and not by individual results.

Your participation in this survey is strictly on a volunteer basis. You are free to withdraw your consent, to stop participation, and withdraw your audiotape at any time without penalty to you. If you decide to participate, read the brief statement below and print and sign your name, and enter today's date on the appropriate lines. I appreciate your participation in this project. This form will be kept separate from your survey responses. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask the survey administrator or to call Jennie Leskela at 353-4734.

I agree to participate in the survey directed by Jennie Leskela. I understand the nature of the project, the nature of my participation, that my participation is voluntary, and that I can terminate my participation at any time without penalty.

_____	_____	_____
PRINT your name here	SIGN your name here	Today's date

APPENDIX D

I.D. Number_____

Demographic and Background Information

Thank you for deciding to participate in my project. The following questions ask about your background. Please circle the appropriate number under each of the items below or enter the correct information on the blank spaces that are provided.

1. Your sex:
   (1) Male
   (2) Female
2. Your current age: _____
3. Your year in college:
   (1) Freshman
   (2) Sophomore
   (3) Junior
   (4) Senior
   (5) Other _____
   please describe
4. Your ethnic/racial background:
   (1) African-American
   (2) Asian-American
   (3) Caucasian/White
   (4) Hispanic/Latino
   (5) Other _____
   please describe
5. Are you currently married? (If yes, skip to question 13)
   (1) Yes (2) No
6. Have you ever been married?
   (1) Yes (2) No
7. Are you in a dating relationship? (If no, skip to question 13)
   (1) Yes (2) No
8. How long have you known your dating partner? _____
9. How long have you and your partner been dating? _____
10. How serious do you consider this relationship?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all; very casual				very serious; we're committed

11. How satisfied are you with this relationship?

1	2	3	4	5
not at all satisfied				very satisfied

12. Are you currently dating anyone else, that is anyone other than the person you referred to in questions 7-11? (1) Yes (2) No
13. What is your (biological or adoptive) parents' current marital status?
   (1) married and still living together
   (2) separated
   (3) divorced (indicate <u>your</u> age at time of parents' divorce: _____)
   (4) mother deceased (<u>your</u> age at time of mother's death: _____)
   (5) father deceased (<u>your</u> age at time of father's death: _____)
14. The quality of my parent's marriage is/was (if deceased or divorced:
   (1) very poor
   (2) poor
   (3) average
   (4) good
   (5) very good

APPENDIX E

BRQ

Directions: Please read each of the descriptive paragraphs below and place a checkmark next to the one that best describes how you feel about close relationships.

Most descriptive of me (Check one)

1. It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on others and having others depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me----------> 1. _____

2. I am comfortable without close relationships. It is very important for me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me------> 2. _____

3. I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them----------> 3. _____

4. I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others----------> 4. _____

APPENDIX F

S-ASS

Directions: Using the scale adjacent to each of the items below, indicate (by circling the appropriate number) to what extent the item describes how you have typically felt toward romantic partners in general.

	Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree
1. I find it relatively easy to get close to others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I'm not very comfortable having to depend on other people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I'm comfortable having others depend on me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I rarely worry about being abandoned by others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I don't like people getting to close to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I'm somewhat uncomfortable being too close to others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I find it difficult to trust others completely	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I'm nervous whenever anyone gets too close to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Others often want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Others are often reluctant to get as close as I would like	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. I often worry that my partner (s) don't really love me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I rarely worry about my partner (s) leaving me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I often want to merge with others, and this desire sometimes scares them away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX G

BSRI

Instructions: In this inventory, you will be presented with sixty personality characteristics. You are to use those characteristics in order to describe yourself. That is, you are to indicate, on a scale from 1 to 7, how true of you these various characteristics are. Please do not leave any characteristic unmarked.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never or almost never true	Usually not true	Sometimes but infrequently true	Occasionally true	Often true	Usually true	Always or almost true

_____	1. Self-reliant	_____	31. Makes decisions easily
_____	2. Yielding	_____	32. Compassionate
_____	3. Helpful	_____	33. Sincere
_____	4. Defends own beliefs	_____	34. Self-sufficient
_____	5. Cheerful	_____	35. Eager to soothe hurt feelings
_____	6. Moody	_____	36. Conceited
_____	7. Independent	_____	37. Dominant
_____	8. Shy	_____	38. Soft-spoken
_____	9. Conscientious	_____	39. Likable
_____	10. Athletic	_____	40. Masculine
_____	11. Affectionate	_____	41. Warm
_____	12. Theatrical	_____	42. Solemn
_____	13. Assertive	_____	43. Willing to take a stand
_____	14. Flatterable	_____	44. Tender
_____	15. Happy	_____	45. Friendly
_____	16. Has strong personality	_____	46. Aggressive
_____	17. Loyal	_____	47. Gullible
_____	18. Unpredictable	_____	48. Inefficient
_____	19. Forceful	_____	49. Acts as a leader
_____	20. Feminine	_____	50. Childlike
_____	21. Reliable	_____	51. Adaptable
_____	22. Analytical	_____	52. Individualistic
_____	23. Sympathetic	_____	53. Does not use harsh language
_____	24. Jealous	_____	54. Unsystematic
_____	25. Has leadership abilities	_____	55. Competitive
_____	26. Sensitive to the needs of others	_____	56. Loves children
_____	27. Truthful	_____	57. Tactful
_____	28. Willing to take risks	_____	58. Ambitious
_____	29. Understanding	_____	59. Gentle
_____	30. Secretive	_____	60. Conventional

APPENDIX H

Activity Planning Form

I.D. Number_____

	Geographic Location	**Activity**
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		

APPENDIX I

Transcript Format

CIT Transcription

Page _____ of _____

Transcribed by _____

I.D. Number_____

Male	Female
Okay	
	Let's go to Europe
Yes, let's go	
	Where should we go first?
	I would like to go to France

APPENDIX J

Transcriptionist Guidelines
(adapted from Condon, Cooper, & Grotevant, 1984)

1. Follow the format with single-space typing. Type exactly as dictated.

2. Complete following information: code number from tape, page numbers, and your name.

3. Male and female's comments are placed in the labeled column.

4. When the speaker changes, place the second speaker's dialogue in the appropriate column and begin on a new line.

5. If the speakers talk at the same time, speech overlap is placed on the same lines and underlined. With simultaneous speech, the exact timing is not important. Do not worry about exactly determining the points of overlap. The underlining indicates who started talking first and approximately where the overlap ends.

6. All utterances in the interaction are transcribed.

7. Coughs and sighs need not be transcribed.

8. Transcribe laughter as follows: (laughter).

9. Conversations between the couple and interviewer need not be transcribed.

10. Unintelligible speech represented by a question mark and underline: ?_____ when the couple is speaking at the same time.

11. Unintelligible speech which is <u>not</u> simultaneous is represented by a question mark and dashes: ?- - -.

12. Type long, run-on sentences as is.

13. Three periods... are used when speech trails off or when there is a long pause within sentences.

14. Use a question mark when a question is asked.

APPENDIX K

AUDIOTAPE CODING MANUAL

Abridged Family Discourse Training Manual
(adapted for couples from Condon, Cooper, and Grotevant, 1984)

1. PROBLEM SOLVING COMMUNICATION PATTERNS

*The first 300 chunks of verbal communication will be assigned into one of 14 categories. The 14 categories are categorized into 4 problem solving communication patterns.

Separateness	Permeability	Mutuality	Self Assertion
direct disagreement	agreement	initiation of compromise	direct suggestion
indirect disagreement	acknowledgment	statement of other's feelings	
requests for action	requests for info	indirect suggestion	
irrelevant comment	relevant comment	answers request for info/validation	
	compliance with request for action		

*The 4 problem solving categories are defined as follows:

Separateness: Ability to express differences between the self and others.
Willingness to accept responsibility for one's own feelings and thoughts.
Ability to communicate one's ideas clearly and directly and to differentiate them from others.

Permeability: Responsiveness or openness that an individual displays to the ideas of others.
When an individual gives permission and encouragement to others to develop a point of view.

Mutuality: Individual demonstrates respect for the beliefs, feelings, and ideas of others.

Self Assertion: Being aware of one's own point of view.
Taking responsibility for communicating point of view clearly.

2. CODING THE INTERACTION

***Move/Response**

The code is organized into three sections:

(a) Move function: Moves the conversation forward
Can be picked up and moved elsewhere without problem.

(b) Response: Responds to what was previously said

(c) Other

*Coding categories are noted in each of the three sections:

Move
irrelevant comment
suggests action or location directly
suggests action or location indirectly
requests information/validation
requests action
no clear move function

Response
initiates compromise
agrees-accepts-incorporate
disagrees directly
disagrees indirectly
answers requests for information/validation
complies with requests for action
acknowledgment
no clear reactive function

Other
relevant comment
mindreads/states other's feelings

*All chunks are assigned one category in the MOVE section and one category in the RESPONSE section (This may, however, mean that it is assigned to the NO CLEAR MOVE FUNCTION or NO CLEAR RESPONSE FUNCTION).

*A chunk is assigned to a code category be entering the letter which represents the speaker of the chunk (M=Male; F=Female) in the square on the code sheet representing the appropriate chunk (column) and corresponding chosen code category (row).

*The third section is the OTHER category. There are two other categories: RELEVANT COMMENT and MINDREADS/STATES OTHER'S FEELINGS. It is optional to code MINDREAD/STATES OTHER'S FEELINGS regardless of how it is coded in the MOVE and RESPONSE categories as long as it fits the requirements for Mindreading. The RELEVANT COMMENT category is different. A chunk can be coded RELEVANT COMMENT only if it has been assigned to both NO CLEAR MOVE FUNCTION and NO CLEAR RESPONSE FUNCTION.

*Code as No Clear Move Function and No Clear Response Function
-expressions like well, let's see, or uh which serve no purpose except floor holding or attention focusing.
-not a complete idea
-cannot understand the statement

*Code as Irrelevant Comment and No Clear Response Function
-statement not on task, not relevant to the discussion.

***Code High**

If a chunk has more than one move or response function, code high. The code categories are arranged according to hierarchy. Categories arranged spatially higher on the page represent stronger functions. Whenever we have to choose among functions, we choose the highest one. Example: **"Is there anymore coffee?** This is both an Irrelevant Comment and a Request for Information. It is scored as Irrelevant Comment since Irrelevant Comment is spatially higher in the code category hierarchical list. Example: **"Do you want to go to Aspen"?** This could be coded as Request for Information or Indirect Suggestion. If Aspen had not been previously mentioned, it is scored as Indirect Suggestion. If the partner answers **"Yes"**, the coder has to decide if this is an Agreement or Answer to Request for Information. If you coded the question as Indirect Suggestion, you would code the **"Yes"** as Agreement. If you coded the question as Request for Information, you would code the **"Yes"** as Answer to Request for Information.

***Complex Responses**

A single answer to a single question may be a long utterance and continue over several chunks. The long utterance contains only one RESPONSE category. First code the chunk as Answer to a Request. The remaining chunks of the lengthy answer are coded as Relevant Comments (other category). (Reminder: When Relevant Comment is used, the No Clear Move Function and No Clear Response Function were also used). Example: **"No/I don't want to go there./It's too cold./"** The first chunks coded as Disagrees/Challenges Other's Idea Directly (and No Clear Response in the MOVE category) and the next two chunks are coded as Relevant Comments.

In the case of Direct Disagreement, always code the Direct Disagreement, if there is a choice. Example: **"We shouldn't go there./I don't want to./It's too cold./"** The first and third chunks can be coded as Relevant Comment and the middle chunk can be coded as Disagree/Challenges Other's Idea Directly. Disagreements are the only case in which the first chunk of a response is not coded for the that response.

***Observer Coding**

You cannot determine what is going on in the participants' minds and you are not supposed to consider what a speaker might "really mean" or "really intend" by some remark. Instead, rely on your understanding of the verbal interaction.

When examining a chunk, describe to yourself what has occurred in the context. Translate your description into the categories. Consider whether the chunk has a MOVE or RESPONSE function or both. Remember that a MOVE function can be removed and place elsewhere where a RESPONSE function is context-bound.

***Checking Process**

1. Make sure every chunk has an entry in both the MOVE and RESPONSE categories.

2. Make sure that relevant comments have only NO CLEAR MOVE FUNCTION AND NO CLEAR RESPONSE FUNCTION in the MOVE and RESPONSE categories.

3. Make sure that each chunk has the same letter for all entries (M=Male and F=Female).

DICTIONARY

MOVE FUNCTIONS

1. IRRELEVANT COMMENT are clearly not related to the task or to the discussion that is directed toward completion of the task. If the remark is not understandable at all, it should be coded as No Clear Move Function.

Examples: What will we do after we finish with this project?
Did you bring your car in for repair today?

2. SUGGESTS ACTION OR LOCATION introduces an option of a location or activity for the vacation. They present possible solutions to the task. It can include a particular time, day, or sequence to the activities.

There are two kinds of Suggestions:
Suggests Action or Location Directly uses the personal pronouns I or me to express the speaker's responsibility for the proposal. Also coded as Direct Suggestions are commands with no pronoun. These include commands to write something down.

Examples: I want to go to California.
Go to a ballgame.
Put fly to New York.
To me, fishing is the best thing to do.

Suggests Action or Location Indirectly use first person plural pronouns such as we or us. Also included as Indirect Suggestions are those with the first person singular I but negative or indecisive verb forms, suggestions which name a place or activity alone with no pronouns or verbs and suggestions in the form of questions.

Examples: Let's go to California.
We could go to Yellowstone.
I wouldn't mind going to a ball game.
I guess New York would be interesting.
Hawaii.
How about flying to New York?
Do we want to ski?
Fishing would be fun.

3. REQUESTS INFORMATION/VALIDATION involves seeking information, clarification, confirmation, opinions, or decisions from the partner. The Request for Validation seeks confirmation of a statement while the Request for Information seeks input that is pertinent to the accomplishment of the task. They are usually in the form of questions.

Examples: All right?
Do you want to learn to ski? (provided that skiing has already been suggested)
How far is Yellowstone from San Francisco?
I wonder how long it takes to get there.
I wish I knew if we could fly there.

4. REQUESTS ACTION specifies some action which the speaker wants the hearer to perform or to refrain from performing, where the action is relevant to the ongoing discussion (not the pretend vacation). Usually, they pertain to the flow of talk or to the action of writing answers on the answer sheet. We require that a verb be present to specify the action requested or that a locative (there, here) be present to indicate that the speaker is requesting some action about where something is to be written on the answer sheet.

Examples: Write that down.
Be sure to get that
Would you read back what we already have?
Listen.
Wait a minute.
There, in that space.
First day, here.
We should write this down.

5. NO CLEAR MOVE FUNCTION is a catch-all category for chunks that do not exhibit any of the strong MOVE functions. Items with no understandable content or incomplete content due to interruption or trail-off are coded in the No Clear Move Function and the No Clear Response Function categories. Items with Response functions only are coded as No Clear Move Function. Many particles such as hey, well, uh, and you know are coded in this category if they are uttered separately from any more meaningful remarks and they have no clear function of their own.

Examples: Well, uh....
Of course, I'm also....
Let's see now.....
yeah. (where yeah has a purely response function as Agreement or Acknowledgment).
This is fun (where the chunk is being coded as Relevant Comment)

RESPONSE FUNCTIONS

1. INITIATES COMPROMISE functions to resolve disagreement about solutions to the task or about managing the task. Compromises should integrate ideas which were not originally associated. The ideas should be explicitly mentioned or referred to together as both or all, or they should be connected significantly by after or while. Compromises are attempts to console the partner. Compromises are usually Suggestions.

Example: We can go to the Bahamas and then we can go to Paris.
Well, do you want to do both?
We'll go there on our next vacation.
They have a nice golf course there. (Responds to partner who likes to golf after he/she says he/she does not want to go to Disneyworld).

Since Compromises are usually also Suggestions, they are usually also coded as Suggests Action or Location in the MOVE section.

2. AGREES/ACCEPTS/INCORPORATES OTHER'S IDEA is accepting a Suggestion. Agreements represent a "yes-vote" to the partner's proposal of a location or activity.

Example: Yeah.
Good idea
That'll be fun.
We'll have a great time there
I've always wanted to see the Florida Keys (in a response to a Suggestion of going to Florida).

3. DISAGREES/CHALLENGES OTHER'S IDEAS function primarily to prevent acceptance of a Suggestion. Most Disagreements are reasons or arguments for not accepting a particular Suggestion. These range from the fact that the partner doesn't want to go to a Suggested place or doesn't want to engage in a Suggested activity. Disagreements are reactions to previous Suggestions, factual statement, or Requests for Action.

There are two kinds of Disagreements:
Disagreements/Challenges Other's Idea Directly are distinguished by use of the first person singular pronoun I.

Example: I don't want to go to Egypt.
No.
I think that would be boring

Disagreements/Challenges Other's Idea Indirectly can be difficult to distinguish from Relevant Comments or simple Requests for Information. It is important to feel that the speaker is already assuming an answer to the question. This assumed answer must be a reason not to accept the Suggestion such that makes the Suggestion unfeasible. If the two are incompatible, then a Disagreement is involved.

Example: We're already doing too much.
Do you think two weeks will be long enough for all that?
Isn't it awfully far?

4. ANSWERS REQUEST FOR INFORMATION/VALIDATION include appropriate responses to Requests for Information, and, in some cases, they are responses to Requests for Validation. Usually Answers are factual statements.

Examples: It's not far.
It won't take more than four hours.
Yes.
About two hundred miles
Spain, is south of France.
No, it wouldn't

The major problem in coding Answers is to be sure that they should not be coded higher. They could also be Agreements or Disagreements.

5. COMPLIES WITH REQUEST FOR ACTION include an appropriate response to a Request for Action. It indicates performance of the action which has been Requested. Compliance requires a previous Request for Action. The most common way of indicating Compliance is the particle OK.

Examples: Got it. (response to a request to write something down).
OK
Let's see, First day: fly to Rio. (response to request to read back the plan).

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENT functions to affirm speaker's participation in the interaction. They respond positively to a speaker and to his or her ideas, but do not actually incorporate or Agree with those ideas. The simplest form is affirming that the message has been received. Acknowledgments may be responses to any kind of remark. They include positive particles like yeah, uh, huh, right, and sure, repetition of an utterance, and requests for information about what a person said, meant, thinks, feels, or wants.

Examples: That's an idea.
You can say where you want to go.
I get your point.
Rome (repeating).
Skiing? (repeating with question)
What do you think?
So you think we should spend three days there.

7. NO CLEAR RESPONSE FUNCTION included items with no understandable content or incomplete content due to interruption or trailing off and are coded in the No Clear Move Function. Items with MOVE function only are coded as No Clear Response Function. Many particle such as hey, well, uh, and you know are coded in this category if they are uttered separately from any more meaningful remarks and they have no clear function of their own.

Examples: Well, uh...
of course, I'm also
Let's see now.
Tahiti. (where Tahiti has the purely MOVE function of a Suggestion)
This is fun (where the chunk is being coded as Relevant Comment)

OTHER FUNCTION

1. RELEVANT COMMENT are usually factual statements, but their contents may vary due to the way they function in the Complex Response Convention. They are never questions, commands, or Suggestions. Relevant Comments are determined according to the functions they do not have. If a remark does not exhibit one of the MOVE or RESPONSE functions we have identified, yet it is still understandable and relevant to the task, then it is coded Relevant Comment.

Examples: This is fun.
Let's see, Egypt, we can probably make it in a few hours flying.
We'd probably fly American.

2. MINDREADING/STATES OTHER'S FEELINGS involves one person speaking for another person in the presence of that person and attributes to the other person ideas, desires, wishes, opinions, needs, choices, or suggestions which the person has not stated previously in the interaction. The expression should contain a proper name or a pronoun that refers to another person. (i.e., we, you).

Examples: We want to spend at least three days there.
You don't want to go antique shopping.
You think it will be boring.

SPECIAL RESPONSES

1. **Acknowledging Question**

Some Requests of Information have RESPONSE function which are validating or Acknowledging an individual. Example: What do you think, Bob? This is coded as Acknowledgment in the RESPONSE Portion and Requests Information/Validation in the MOVE Portion.

2. **Answering Questions with Questions**

Sometimes questions are responded to with questions that repeat or paraphrase the question asked. These questions are considered to be Acknowledging Questions. Some examples in response to the Request for Information Where do you want to go are:

Where? /Spain/

Where do I want to go?/Spain.?

In the above examples, the first chunk of each is coded as Requests Information/Validation in the MOVE section and as Acknowledgment in the Response. The second chunk in each is coded as Suggests Action or Location Indirectly in the MOVE section and Answers Request for Information/Validation in the RESPONSE section.

3. **Challenges**

Challenges are tests of an idea, usually in question form, that are meant to undermine the feasibility or adequacy of the idea in light of other facts. The major problem is distinguishing Challenges from Requests for Information or Relevant Comments that do not have the Disagreeing function. Do not code a Challenge unless you are reasonably certain that it is one.

4. **Checking Questions**

Checking questions are repetitions of what a person has said with question intonation. They function to make certain that a message was received correctly, and, therefore, they are Acknowledging the message.

5. **False Starts**

Always use the last start.

6. **Fragments**

Fragments can often accomplish functions even thought the utterances are incomplete. An example might be so, after the Bahamas, we go to.... In this case, the fragment functions as a Request for Information. We would not code as that unless we can tell whether a fragment has accomplished some function if it elicits the appropriate response for that function. Fragments are usually, however, coded as No Clear Response Function and No Clear Move Function.

7. **OK and Other Particles**

OK and other particles (yeah, uh huh, no, and sure) have many functions. Examine them in the appropriate context.

8. **Repeated Suggestions**

Repeated Suggestions may serve a variety of function and to keep matters simple, we code most of these as Relevant Comment. An example includes So, we're going to New York where it has just been decided that the couple will go to New York. Sometimes Suggestions are repeated with question intonation, in which case they are considered to be Checking Questions or Challenges if the tone is sarcastic.

The kinds of repeated Suggestions that are coded as Suggests Action or Location include:

1) Suggestion may be repeated several times by the speaker. As long as the Suggestion is repeated prior to Agreement, it can be coded as Suggests Action or Location.

2) Suggestions may be repeated as part of an elaboration of the initial Suggestion. They are coded as Suggests Action or Location.

3) Some couple may make major decisions before writing them down, then the writing process repeats the Suggestions. When a Suggestion is repeated in this situation, it may be concretized by being ordered somewhere of by specifying the time during which the Suggestion will be carried out. These are coded as Suggests Action or Location.

Example: Third day, fly to Switzerland
Then go to Germany

9. **Responses to Relevant Comments**

Code them as Acknowledgments.

10. **You know**

When you know occurs at the end of a statement, it is usually a Request for Validation. If you know occurs at the beginning or in the middle of a statement, we do not chunk and code it separately as a Request for Validation, since, in those positions, it usually serves a different function.

APPENDIX L

Sample Coding Sheet
(adapted from Condon, Cooper, and Grotevant, 1984)

INTERACTION CODE SHEET page ____ of ____ ID _____

Date Rated _____ Rater _____

Chunk 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13

I. Move

irrelevant comment

sug act or loc directly

sug act or loc indirectly

requests info/validation

requests action

no clear move function

II. Response

initiates compromise

agrees-accepts-incorporate

disagrees directly

disagrees indirectly

answers req for info/val

complies w/req for action

acknowledgment

no clear reactive function

III. Other

relevant comment

mind reads/dictates feeling

APPENDIX M

Sample Coding Sheet - 2
(adapted from Condon, Cooper, and Grotevant, 1984)

INTERACTION SHEET

Date scored_____ I.D. Number_____

	Female	Male
I. Move		
suggests action or location directly		
suggests action or location indirectly		
requests information/validation		
requests action		
irrelevant comment		
no clear move function		
II. Response		
agrees, accepts, incorporates ideas		
disagrees, conflicts directly		
disagrees, conflicts indirectly		
initiates compromise		
answers request for information/val		
complies with request for action		
acknowledgment		
no clear reactive function		
III. Other		
relevant comment		
mind reads/states other's feeling		

APPENDIX N

I.D. Number _____

Problem Solving Communication Totals

	Male	Female
Separateness		
direct disagreement		
indirect disagreement		
request for action		
irrelevant comment		
Total		
Permeability		
agreement		
acknowledgment		
requests for information		
relevant comment		
compliance with request for action		
Total		
Mutuality		
initiation of compromise		
statement of other's feelings		
answers to requests		
indirect suggestion		
Total		
Self-Assertion		
direct suggestion		
Total		

APPENDIX O

I.D. Number _____

Couple Problem Solving Rating Score

Thank you for your participation in this research project. Please respond to the following questions. Circle the correct response.

Circle the correct response.

1. Your sex: (1) male (2) female

2. How successful do you believe you and your partner were in completing this task?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all successful						Very successful

3. How stressful did you find this task?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all stressful						Very stressful

APPENDIX P

I.D. Number _____

Couple Problem Solving Rating Score (RATER)

1 How successful was this couple in completing this task.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all successful						Very successful

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