

1-1-2012

How Attachment Styles Moderate the Impact Social Network Members have upon Romantic Relationships

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HOW ATTACHMENT STYLES MODERATE THE INFLUENCE SOCIAL
NETWORK MEMBERS HAVE UPON ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

By

Jayne Kathryn Denson

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Science
in Psychology
in the Department of Psychology

Mississippi State, Mississippi

May 2012

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By

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NETWORK MEMBERS HAVE UPON ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

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SOCIAL NETWORK MEMBERS HAVE UPON ROMANTIC
RELATIONSHIPS

Pages in Study: 60

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Research has established that network members' opinions do impact romantic relationship outcomes. The present study examined whether attachment styles moderate the impact social network members have upon relationship satisfaction and commitment. Participants were primed to activate one of three attachment styles, and then read one of 6 vignettes describing a hypothetical relationship experiencing approval/disapproval from friends/family. After reading, participants completed measures to indicate how satisfied and committed they would be in the hypothetical relationship. Thus, the study employed a 3 (Type of opinion: approval, disapproval, no opinion) x 2 (Source of opinion: parent, friend) x 3 (Attachment prime: secure, anxious, avoidant) factorial design. Analyses revealed that supportive network opinions increase relationship satisfaction and commitment relative to relationships facing disapproval. However, the impact of disapproval was not significantly different from knowing nothing about the network's perception. No other effects emerged, perhaps due to the failure of the attachment prime.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research to the five individuals who truly understand what it took to accomplish this: Katie Collier, Lauren Colvin, Ben Fay, John MacArthur, and Ben Walker.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to give thanks and praise to my Heavenly father for His grace and blessings throughout the entire project. Without Him, this is nothing. I also thank my family for their never ending love and patience.

I thank Dr. Cliff McKinney for his advice and knowledge. I owe my deepest gratitude to Donna Barnes, Lynn Ware, and Chris Webb, who supported me on a daily basis, and Dr. Edward Manning, who gave me the encouragement to successfully complete my work.

Most importantly, though, I thank Dr. Deborah Eakin for her guidance throughout my undergraduate and graduate career, and Dr. Marty Giesen who has become a source of inspiration and who has impacted my future far more than he realizes.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Research examining romantic relationships suggests that couples do not function alone but rather develop within a social network (Allan, 2006). Although the impact of social networks has been a topic of relationships research for over 30 years, the need to better understand social network influence has increased among the research community within the past decade. In fact, some have argued that the future of relationship science lies in examining the social systems within which relationships develop (Reis, Collins, & Berscheid, 2000). Advocates of this “systems perspective” argue that studying networks is fundamental to the understanding of contemporary society and the role that personal relationships have within it (Allan, 2006).

Social networks impact the development of romantic relationships through support, opinions, and other avenues. In particular, opinions from network members can lead to the success or failure of romantic relationships. Specifically, research has shown that generally social network approval leads to more satisfying relationships while disapproval leads to less satisfying relationships, at least when that opinion comes from friends. Findings have been less consistent about the impact of parental opinion, particularly parental disapproval (Driscoll, Davis, & Lipetz, 1972; Felmlee, 2001). Thus research has yet to conclude what it is that makes an individual decide who they listen to for relationship appraisals. In the present study, I examined whether variations in attachment style can explain why people attend to different (i.e., positive and negative

opinions) from different sources (i.e., friends or family). I will begin with a review of the existing literature examining the impact social networks have on romantic relationships, including addressing the limitations. Then I will examine how attachment theory might play a role in determining the influence that network members possess.

Social Networks

Recently, Niehuis, Huston, and Rosenband (2006) formulated a model that captures the individual, dyadic, and network levels of influence on romantic relationship outcomes. This courtship-process model depicts how a relationship progresses from the initial meeting to marriage and how it is impacted by multiple levels of factors, including the social network. As can be seen in Figure 1, this model demonstrates just how important social networks are because they encompass most of the other processes within a relationship, except for the larger cultural framework within which the relationship exists. According to Niehuis et al., within the social network, a relationship starts with the stable qualities that each partner brings into the romantic relationship, such as attachment styles which result in working models, or schemas, about how to interact or what to expect in relationships (Hazan & Shaver 1987; Rholes, Simpson, Tran, Martin, & Friedman, 2007). These attributes then affect the course the relationship takes (i.e., the courtship process). The courtship process includes three classes of variables that predict relationship progression to advanced stages of commitment and the success of that committed relationship. They are (a) variables that define the progression of the relationship (e.g., length of courtship), (b) variables that describe the partners' interactions (e.g., conflict behaviors), and (c) variables reflecting the partners' cognitions about the relationship and their partner (e.g., evaluating "is this the right partner for

me?"). Each of these variables can be affected by the social network. For example, of particular interest to the present study is the effect of social networks on evaluations of the partner and the relationship.

The majority of romantic relationships develop out of introductions made by an individual's network members (e.g., friends, family, and acquaintances; Parks, 2007; Sprecher & Felmlee, 1992). After relationship initiation, social networks continue to impact the quality of the romantic relationship by providing information to the individual about the relationship or the romantic partner (Loving, 2006; Parks, 2007). This information can serve to support or undermine the relationship by affecting the evaluation an individual makes of his or her partner. For example, network members can explicitly tell the friend or family member how much they like the new partner to facilitate relationship growth.

Studies have shown that opinions from our network members are a major determinant of a wide array of relationship outcomes such as stability, satisfaction, commitment, and feelings of love (Bryant & Conger, 1999; Felmlee, 2001; Felmlee, Sprecher & Bassin, 1990; Leslie, Huston & Johnson, 1986; Sprecher & Felmlee, 1992). Positive opinions have the ability to strengthen romantic relationships while negative opinions can be detrimental. However, there have been some notable exceptions to the rule that greater social network approval leads to better relationship outcomes and disapproval leads to relationship demise. Findings are less consistent when it comes to the impact of disapproval (as opposed to approval) and the impact of parental opinion. I will review each in turn.

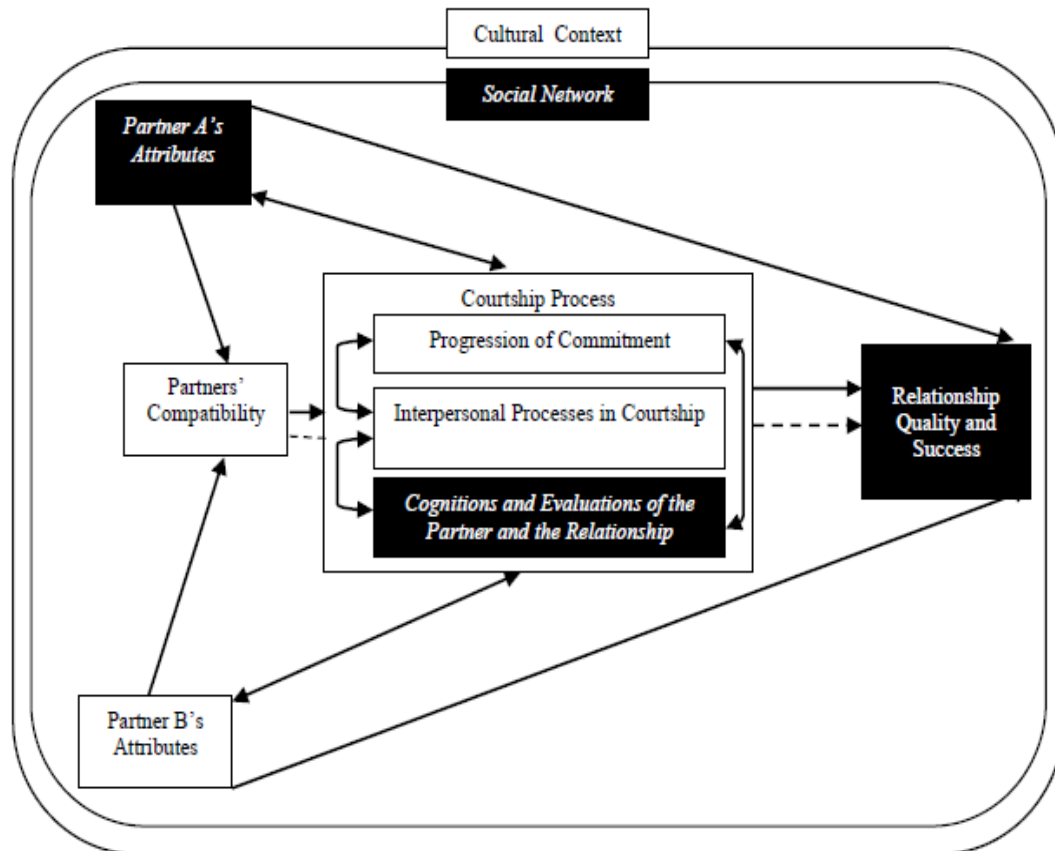


Figure 1. Courtship-process model

Type of Network Opinion

Research has shown that social networks play an integral role in all the stages of romantic relationships through their expression of approval for the couple (Sinclair & Wright, 2009). For premarital couples, Felmler et al. (1990) concluded that over a 3-month period, the amount of support received from network members negatively affected the breakup rate. Similarly, Lewis (1973) concluded that young adults whose parents supported their romantic relationship were more likely to continue to be involved in the relationship as compared to young adults whose parents showed little support. Other research finds that networks impact relationships even in the later stages, such as

marriage, and have demonstrated that positive support increased marital satisfaction and happiness (Bryant & Conger, 1999).

Across a range of studies it has been clearly demonstrated that social network support is a significant predictor of the stability of an individual's romantic relationship. There have been limitations, however, when it comes to the research on the role disapproval plays in how network members impact relationships. There have been discrepancies in the way various researchers have chosen to define disapproval. For example, Sprecher and Felmlee (1992) chose to use a single continuum by defining disapproval as the absence of support from network members. Other studies chose to operationalize disapproval as the presence of conflict between social network members and the partners involved in the relationship (Bryant, Conger, & Meehan, 2001). Although there have been difficulties in operationalizing network disapproval, the majority of research has been able to conclude that disapproval is a significant predictor of relationship instability (Felmlee, 2001; Felmlee et al., 1990; Sprecher & Felmlee, 1992).

Other studies, however, have found that disapproval can have a positive impact on romantic relationships (Driscoll et al., 1972). The idea of disapproving parents leading a couple to become more engrossed in each other is not a new topic when it comes to fiction. In fact, Driscoll and colleagues coined the term "Romeo and Juliet effect" when their research concluded that interference from the individual's parents was positively associated with a stronger feeling of romantic love for one's partner. Since that original study, however, few studies have managed to replicate the effect (e.g., Felmlee, 2001), and thus some have concluded that the Romeo and Juliet effect may be as fictitious as the

title's origin. However, there have been no exact replications and each of these studies has used different operationalizations, making comparisons difficult.

Source of Network Opinion

The discrepancies in previous research regarding type of opinion are not the only limitation in social network research. Different findings regarding the influential power of parent opinion versus friend opinion has added to the already conflicting results. Some research has found that parental opinion has no impact on relationship outcomes (Leslie et al., 1986). In other studies, relationship support from parents has been found to be a significant predictor of various relationship components such satisfaction and commitment (Bryant & Conger, 1999; Felmlee, 2001; Sprecher & Felmlee, 1992). Likewise, some have found that disapproval from one's parents leads to a weakening of the romantic relationship, putting it at risk for breakup (Sprecher & Felmlee, 1992). Conversely, those who have found the Romeo and Juliet effect have found it to exist only for parental opinions. Parental disapproval had a positive impact on love in romantic relationships (Driscoll et al., 1972) and increased the odds of couple members remaining in the relationship (Felmlee, 2001). No such effects have ever been found for friend disapproval.

In fact, a number of studies investigating the impact of friend opinion have fairly consistently found that more peer approval leads to better relationship outcomes, and disapproval carries the inverse consequences (Bryant & Conger, 1999; Parks, 2007; Sprecher & Felmlee, 2001). For instance, Etcheverry and Agnew (2004) demonstrated that friend approval was a stronger predictor of relationship commitment than parent opinion (Etcheverry, Le, & Charania, 2008; Sprecher & Felmlee, 1992). Likewise,

Sinclair and Wright (2009) found that approval by friends was a better predictor than parent opinion even at the early stages of relationship initiation, such that individuals were more attracted to the potential date approved by their friend. Overall, friend opinion has been established as a more consistent, and potentially stronger, predictor for relationship quality from initiation through termination.

Attachment Theory

In order to address discrepancies in the social network research regarding source and type of opinion, the potential factors that could affect decisions about whose opinion and which opinions are more influential should be examined. The courtship-process model highlights the fact that individual partner attributes can affect the relationship's progress. Studies have been able to relate different attachment orientations to an array of relationship outcomes such as relationship satisfaction, jealousy, self-disclosure, and overall pro-relationship behaviors (Collins, Cooper, Albino, & Allard, 2002). In the present study I sought to examine whether an individual's attachment style could moderate the impact of network opinions on relationship outcomes.

Proposed by Bowlby (1969), attachment theory contends that, in response to experiences with attachment figures, individuals develop mental representations of how close relationships are supposed to be (Madey & Rodgers, 2009; Rholes et al., 2007). Attachment styles during the infancy stage can predict behavior with romantic relationships in early adulthood (Simpson, Collins, Tran, & Haydon, 2007) and throughout one's adult life (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Hazan and Shaver (1987) found that adults in romantic relationships can demonstrate attachment styles in the same three distinctive categories originally

identified by Ainsworth and colleagues: secure, anxious, and avoidant. According to Madey and Rodgers (2009), the various attachment styles can lead an individual to develop certain cognitive and behavioral responses which affect relationship quality. These responses are called one's working model of attachment (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). These working models can guide what type of information one attends to -- if any -- regarding the state of one's romantic relationship (Bowlby, 1973; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). These working models lead those with secure attachments, as compared to insecure attachment, to have confidence in seeking support from close others, including appraisal support (i.e., information and opinions; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002).

Rholes et al. (2007) found that one of the consequences of these working models of attachment is that individuals with different attachment orientations tend to selectively attend to information in different ways. For example, individuals who possess an anxious attachment style seek out more relationship-relevant information, especially information that could indicate that a rejection was forthcoming, while avoidant individuals ignore that same type of information (Baldwin & Kay, 2003; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Therefore, depending on attachment style, an individual might listen to certain types of network opinions, might only listen to certain sources, or might decide to ignore such information. I will review the potential differences between each attachment style in turn.

Anxiously attached individuals often worry about being abandoned by others and worry about not receiving enough care and affection from friends and family (Cassidy & Berlin, 1994). Individuals who are anxiously attached view previous attachment figures as uncaring and untrustworthy, and are thus plagued by the need for security. The need for security leads them to constantly seek reassurance from their romantic partner, never

quite believing that they are truly loved and always feeling as if they are at risk of losing their partner. In their attempts to foresee a potential relationship loss, Rholes et al. (2007) found that anxiously attached individuals strive to gather as much relationship information as possible. In particular, anxious individuals are chronically seek out *negative* information about the relationship and partner in order to lessen the chance of them missing cues that signal they might be rejected. In some cases, anxious individuals may use negative information to strengthen their relationship (i.e., it gives them something to work through and make their relationship more durable (Rholes et al.)). Whatever the case, it would appear that the anxious individual's vigilance in looking for rejection cues might lead them to be particularly impacted by disapproving social network information more so than approving information.

The second insecure attachment style, avoidant attachment, is characterized by individuals believing that attachment figures will not readily be available or responsive when needed (Rholes et al., 2007). Constant rejection by attachment figures during childhood leads such individuals to feel the need to protect themselves from rejection. Rather than clinging to relationships and exhibiting hyper vigilance for rejection cues like anxious persons, avoidant attached individuals will distance themselves from relationship partners in both the emotional and physical sense in order to maintain independence and to alleviate the worry of being rejected. Baldwin and Kay (2003; see also Fraley, Garner, & Shaver, 2000) found that individuals with an avoidant orientation are better at ignoring relationship-threatening information than individuals who were anxiously attached. Rholes et al. also found that avoidant individuals have a limited interest in any information related to their relationship or partner. Therefore, avoidant individuals may

simply ignore network opinions regarding their relationships, and thereby escape the influence.

The third attachment style is secure attachment. Individuals who are securely attached have an absence of higher levels of anxiety and avoidance. Secure individuals are likely to show the dominant pattern with regard to social network influence and information seeking. Generally, they prefer relationship-enhancing information (approval) and attend to opinions that are positive regarding their intimate relationships from social network members (Baldwin & Kay, 2003; Fraley et al., 2000; Rholes et al., 2007). These approving opinions lead to improved relationship quality.

By examining these attachment styles, we can discern individual characteristics associated with each that help an individual decide what information they will attend to regarding their relationships. Accordingly, these attachment styles could affect whether people listen to negative (disapproval) or positive (approval) opinions from their social networks. Specifically, secure individuals seem to prefer positive information, whereas anxious individuals attend to negative information. In contrast, avoidant attached individuals avoid hearing either negative or positive opinions.

As for who an individual might listen to, research provides fewer insights. Denson, Colvin, and Sinclair (2010) found that anxiously attached individuals were more influenced by friend than parent opinions regarding their romantic relationship. In addition, they found that avoidant attached individuals were only influenced by friend and parent disapproval whereas secure individuals were equally influenced by both friends and parents. Other than Denson et al., there is little information on differences based on attachment styles regarding from whom one seeks information. However, if these attachment styles are rooted in parental relationships, it may be that those with

insecure attachment styles – if they listen to anyone – listen to friends over parents. Friends are voluntary relationships, and thus friends who have elected to engage in a friendship with someone who is anxious or avoidant might be perceived as more reliable than their parents. For secure persons, however, there is no reason to believe that friend and parent opinion should carry unequal weight. Although some studies have found friend opinion to be more influential than parent opinion, this finding could be due to friend opinion being a significant predictor for both secure and insecure attachment styles. However, differences regarding source might only appear in naturally-occurring attachment styles. Because I plan to manipulate attachment style, there may be no interactions with source. Attachment style was primed specific to the network member type (e.g., individuals will be primed to feel an insecure attachment to a friend in the friend condition). Thus, the moment a certain attachment orientation is activated, only type of information might matter. Ultimately, because the research has yet to address this question, hypotheses regarding source and attachment interactions are largely exploratory.

The Present Research

To investigate the effects of social network influence on relationship satisfaction and commitment, I used a factorial experimental design. My participants were undergraduate students enrolled in basic psychology courses. The study was conducted online using a scenario survey format. First, individuals were primed for one of three attachment styles (Bartz & Lydon, 2004; Finkel, Burnette, & Scissors, 2007). I used a priming task instead of using naturally occurring attachment styles because the majority of the population has a secure attachment. Therefore, by priming I could examine an

equal number of participants for every attachment styles. Following the attachment prime, participants read different paragraphs and decided which one corresponded to the relationship they had with either their parents or friends. This procedure served as my first manipulation check to establish the reliability of the priming methods. Then, participants read a vignette involving a new relationship partner; depending on condition, their parents or friends expressed approval or disapproval of the new partner. Follow up questions gauged the impact that the social network opinions had upon the hypothetical relationship by assessing the relationship between satisfaction and commitment. Participants then answered a short set of questions to make sure the scenario was adequately read and ended with another set of questions that served as my final manipulation check for my attachment primes.

The present study explored whether attachment styles moderate the impact of social network opinions, and thus potentially find when different sources (parent vs. friend) and type of opinion (approval vs. disapproval) might vary in their influence. I expected to find that attachment styles can predict who an individual will listen to and will also predict if an individual listens more to approving or disapproving opinions from network members. My hypotheses were:

H1: I hypothesized that approval by network members would be positively associated with relationship satisfaction, and commitment and perceived disapproval would be negatively associated with relationship satisfaction and commitment.

H2: I hypothesized that network approval would have a greater impact on relationship satisfaction and commitment for secure primed individuals than disapproval, whereas disapproval would have a greater impact for anxiously primed individuals.

Conversely, neither approval nor disapproval would impact relationship satisfaction and commitment for avoidant primed individuals.

H3: I expected that friend opinion would be more influential on relationship satisfaction and commitment than parental opinion. Friend approval was expected to lead to greater relationship satisfaction and commitment than parental approval. In contrast, I expected friend disapproval lead to lower relationship satisfaction and commitment than parental disapproval. The interaction of source of opinion with attachment style also was explored

CHAPTER II

METHODS

Participants

For the present study, I recruited 715 undergraduate students from Mississippi State University. Participants were recruited online from undergraduate psychology courses. They received either research credit or extra credit for participating in the online study. The majority of the sample was single (38.5%) followed by participants who were dating one person seriously (32.4%). The sample was 61% female and 38.7% male with an average age of 19.59 years ($SD = 2.72$). Participants in the sample were 61.5% Caucasian and 29.9% African-American.

Design

The study employed a 3 (Type of opinion: approval, disapproval, no opinion) x 2 (Source of opinion: parent, friend) x 3 (Attachment prime: secure, anxious, avoidant) factorial design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of eighteen conditions using a randomly generated internet identification code. Therefore, when participants looked at the current studies on the website only the condition to which they have been assigned appeared.

Materials and Procedure

Participants were recruited to participate in an online study using the PRP online survey program. The survey was listed among other studies available within the

Psychology Department in which the participant had the option to participate.

Participants were only able to see the condition they had been randomly assigned to based on their ID. Once the study had been selected, participants were presented with a consent form (see Appendix A). Upon giving consent they were granted access to the ten-section survey. The survey started with collecting basic demographic questions about the participant and then moved to the materials for the experimental survey which included different stimulus materials for attachment priming, then the social network opinion vignettes, and ended with the relationship quality questionnaires. Participants in the insecure conditions were given a brief question prompting them to write about a positive experience with a friend or parent in order to counter-act any lingering attachment insecurity prime effects (Appendix L). Debriefing information appeared at the survey's conclusion.

Demographics

Participants were asked a set of 5 questions concerning their demographics. These included questions about gender, age, race/ethnicity, origin, and relationship status (refer to Appendix B).

Network Members Information

Depending on the assigned condition, participants were prompted to answer questions about their parents/guardians or two friends. These questions included assessment to see how close the participants are to their parents/friends, how often they communicate, how often they see each other, how often they seek out their advice, how they help them make sense of their relationships, how often they get help from them, and initials or nicknames for the parents/friends (refer to Appendix C). The purpose of these

questions was to make sure the participants had certain people in mind while going through the study.

Attachment Prime

After providing basic information about their relationship with their friends/parents, participants were asked to keep these individuals in mind throughout the survey. Depending on which condition they had been assigned, participants were next primed for one of three attachment styles using the following materials:

Sentence Scrambles

Upon starting the survey, participants were instructed to complete two unrelated tasks to get them ready for the actual survey. This includes a previously established and reliable attachment priming method called the “Sentence Scrambles.” The sentences were originally developed by Finkel et al. (2007) for anxiety attachment or secure attachment. The sentences were changed to be oriented towards the three attachment styles by using words selected from scales of attachment styles (Hazan & Shaver, 1987) to create an avoidant condition. Additional sentences were also constructed to make up a list of ten words per attachment. Participants were to take a set of five words and eliminate one to make a sentence. This was the first method for priming the participants for the assigned attachment style. For example, for the secure condition participants had to unscramble a sentence that read “the boat was steady,” the anxious condition had the sentence “the boat was unsteady,” (Finkel et al.) and the avoidant condition had the sentence “the boat was unreliable” (refer to Appendix D for the entire list of sentences).

Writing Task

Participants were also prompted with the writing task developed by Bartz and Lydon (2004) to further activate attachment styles. Participants were instructed to write about a parent or friend for about 3 to 5 minutes. This was the second method for priming the participants for their assigned attachment style. For example, participants in the secure condition were asked to write about a relationship in which it was easy to get close to the other person and that they felt comfortable depending on them. Participants in the avoidant condition were asked to write about a relationship in which they were uncomfortable being too close to the other person and it was difficult to trust that person. Participants in the anxious condition were asked to write about a relationship in which the person was reluctant to get as close as they would have liked (refer to Appendix E for entire tasks). Two priming methods were employed because we wanted to make sure participants were fully enveloped in the assigned attachment style.

Relationship Vignettes

After completing the attachment priming measures, participants then read a scenario about the beginning of a new relationship with a hypothetical partner. Then the scenario, depending on condition, introduced either friends or parents and give the opinion of their friends or parents (approving, disapproval, or unable to obtain the opinion) about the new relationship partner. A sample scenario of the parent approval condition is listed below; all other scenarios can be found in Appendix F:

You sign up for an Internet Matching service and are sent a list of compatible matches. After looking at their profile information, you identify a man/women who you would like to at least meet. He/She seems compatible in many ways and he/she doesn't live too far away. After several email exchanges and then phone

calls, you finally meet him/her face-to-face, in a coffee-house. Although you have been warned that on-line "chemistry" doesn't always transfer to off-line chemistry, you feel attracted to him/her after the first meeting. The two of you take things slowly and continue phone calls and email exchanges, and wait another two weeks before meeting again in person, once again at a coffee house. After another month of phone conversations and meeting two more times for coffee, you both agree that the relationship might be worth developing. Although you are both very cautious about the future, you agree it's time to do something other than meet for coffee. You go on a "date", which includes dinner in a restaurant and a movie. Finding yourself even more attracted, you both decide it's time to meet family and friends. You begin by hosting a dinner and inviting your date and parents. The dinner goes well enough. Everyone seems to have a good time and the conversation is pleasant. A few days later, you talk to each of your parents, separately, and come to the conclusion that they really like your new date. Loudly and clearly, they point out that you are a perfect match for him/her and they would love to get together again.

The other scenarios changed according to the assigned condition.

Source of Opinion. This example shows the parent condition, but in the friend condition it was inviting “your date and friends” to dinner and it is friends who were spoken to later.

Type of Opinion. Also, this example shows the approval condition, but in the disapproval condition the last two sentences of the scenario read “A few days later, you talk to each of your parents, separately, and come to the conclusion that they really don’t like your new date. Loudly and clearly, they point out that you are not a good match for each other and they prefer you not to date him/her anymore.” There was also a no opinion scenario that ended after saying that “a few days later, you try to talk to each of your parents, separately, but can’t reach them. You are not sure whether they like your new date or not. Because you can’t get in touch with them, you will have to simply guess whether they think you are a perfect match or shouldn’t date any longer”.

Processing Questions

Participants then answered a short set of question following the scenarios to see how they would feel if that had happened to them. The questions include open-ended questions asking participants what are three things they would feel, think, and do following the occurrences in the scenario (refer to Appendix G).

Dependent Variables – Experimental Materials

To measure my dependent variables I used the following measures:

Relationship satisfaction. Hendrick’s (1988) Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS; refer to Appendix H) was used to examine relationship satisfaction. The RAS has good internal consistency, with an $\alpha = .86$. The seven items was worded in order to refer back to the scenario that the participant read. Sample items included: “How well do you think you would feel that your partner met your needs?” and “How good would you consider your relationship to be compared to most?” Participants used an 8-point Likert

format to answer the questions, ranging from *1 = definitely does not* to *8 = definitely does*.

Commitment to relationship. Lund's (1985; $\alpha=.90$) 9-item Commitment Scale (refer to Appendix I) was used to examine commitment to the hypothetical relationship. A sample item for this scale included "How likely would it be that you would avoid investing much into this relationship?" (reversed). Participants used an 8-point Likert format to answer the questions, ranging from *1=not at all* to *8=definitely*.

Manipulation Checks. Towards the end of the study, participants were given a set of 8 questions to make sure that the scenario was adequately read (refer to Appendix J). For example, "Was the scenario about your parents or your partner's parents?" (1 = my parents, 2 = my partner's parents) or "What was your partner's reaction?" (0 = very negative, 9 = very positive) Participants who got the answers wrong, for example if they said that the opinion was from their parents when it was from their friends, was not be included in the sample because they did not fully grasp the scenario and instructions.

Participants were also given questions to check and make sure the attachment priming worked correctly. The questionnaire included 3 items (*1 = strongly disagree*, *6 = strongly agree*) on which participants indicated how much they agreed or disagreed with each statement (see Appendix K). The question used to measure anxious attachment was "I sometimes find that my friends are reluctant to get as close as I would like." To measure avoidant attachment, we used the item "I find it difficult to trust my friends." Lastly, we used the item "I am comfortable depending on my friends and having them depend on me" to measure secure attachment. Items were taken from attachment scales

developed by Hazan and Shaver (1987) and were specific to network member type (e.g., friend or parent) depending on condition.

Lastly, participants conducted a short list of things that they like about their guardian or friend and imagined ways that person had helped them. This part of the study was to insure participants returned to being securely attached (refer to Appendix L).

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

The present study was a factorial survey which manipulated type of opinion, source of opinion, and attachment style to examine their effects on relationship commitment and satisfaction. Network approval was expected to lead to higher relationship satisfaction and commitment than network disapproval, particularly when these opinions came from friends. Also, it was predicted that securely attached individuals would be more affected by approval than disapproval, while anxiously attached individuals would be impacted more by disapproving than approving opinions. Avoidant individuals were predicted to not be affected by either approving or disapproving network opinions. These predictions were tested after an analysis of the manipulation checks that were designed to ensure that the priming was effective and that participants understood the vignette.

Manipulation Checks

Type of Opinion

Manipulation checks were employed to ensure that participants actually read the vignette and correctly interpreted the opinion they were told their parents or friends had about the hypothetical relationship partner. Specifically, an ANOVA was conducted using the opinion manipulation check item of “Based on your reading of the scenario provided earlier, how would you interpret the opinion of your parents of your

relationship?" ($1 = \text{very negative}$, $9 = \text{very positive}$) as the DV and type of opinion as the IV. The results indicated a significant difference among groups, $F(2, 698) = 200.67$, $p = .00$, $\eta_p^2 = .37$. Participants who were in the approval condition ($M = 7.32$; $SD = 1.86$) had the highest scores on the opinion manipulation check indicating they perceived the opinion to be more positive than those participants in the no opinion condition ($M = 5.16$; $SD = 2.19$) or in the disapproval condition ($M = 3.63$; $SD = 1.97$). Tukey's post hoc test confirmed that all means were significantly different from each other ($p < .001$).

Source of Opinion

Participants were also asked whether the scenario was about theirs or their partner's parents, or were asked whether the scenario was about theirs or their partner's friends? A total of 51 individuals who indicated the scenario were about their partner's parents or partner's friends were examined for potential elimination from the sample. Originally, the sample was composed of 715 participants and after examination of the manipulation check responses, I identified 148 participants as potential cuts due to a lack of understanding of the type of opinion (e.g., persons in the disapproval condition saying the opinion was positive) or source of opinion (i.e., parents or friends). After preliminary analysis, however, I discovered that the results did not change with the elimination of the individuals who failed either the opinion or source manipulation checks, so I continued to use the original sample of 715 participants for further analyses.

Attachment Style

Additional items were included to assess the effectiveness of the attachment style prime. A MANOVA was conducted to determine the role of Attachment Style on each of the individual manipulation checks to examine the strength of the attachment priming.

The results were significant at the multivariate level, $Wilks\Lambda = .97$, $F(6, 1418) = 3.77$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. At the univariate level, the item “I find it difficult to trust my friends completely,” which was used as the avoidant manipulation check, was significant, $F(2, 713) = 4.51$, $p = .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$). The item used as the secure manipulation check, “I am comfortable depending on my friends,” was also significant, $F(2, 713) = 3.81$, $p = .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$). Lastly, the item used as the anxious manipulation check, “I find that my friends are reluctant to get as close as I would like,” also was significant, $F(2, 713) = 7.67$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$). The item “I find it difficult to trust my friends completely,” which was used as the avoidant manipulation check, had a mean of 2.85 ($SD = 1.61$) for those in the avoidant condition, a mean of 2.41 ($SD = 1.54$) for anxious, and a mean of 2.57 ($SD = 1.63$) for secure. The item used as the secure manipulation check, “I am comfortable depending on my friends,” had a mean of 4.37 ($SD = 1.54$) for secure, a mean of 4.02 ($SD = 1.59$) for avoidant, and mean of 4.36 ($SD = 1.15$) for anxious. Lastly, the item used as the anxious manipulation check, “I find that my friends are reluctant to get as close as I would like,” had a mean of 2.53 ($SD = 1.53$) for anxious, a mean of 2.51 ($SD = 1.47$) for secure, and a mean of 3.02 ($SD = 1.71$) for avoidant. As shown in Table 1, Tukey’s post hoc tests revealed on the avoidant manipulation check that the anxious and avoidant conditions were significantly different ($p = .01$) while the anxious and secure ($p = .53$) and the avoidant and secure ($p = .13$) were not significantly different. As for the anxious manipulation check, anxious and avoidant ($p = >.001$) and avoidant and secure ($p = >.001$) conditions were significantly different while the anxious and secure conditions were not ($p = .98$). Lastly, the secure manipulation check revealed a different between the avoidant and secure condition ($p = .04$) and a significant difference on the anxious and avoidant ($p = .05$) and the anxious and secure conditions ($p = .99$).

Table 1

Manipulation check means across conditions

	Anxious	Secure	Avoidant
Anxious Condition	2.53	4.36	2.41
Secure Condition	2.51	4.37	2.57
Avoidant Condition	3.02	4.02	2.85

Therefore, the avoidant condition appeared to generally prime insecurity, but the anxious attachment prime failed. Analyses were run including the anxious condition and excluding the anxious condition. The results indicated that participants in the anxious condition were not significantly different than those in the control/secure condition. The anxious condition which included 243 participants was, therefore, eliminated from further analyses. All comparisons were then made between the secure and avoidant/insecure conditions with the remaining 472 participants.

Hypothesis Testing

In order to test the hypotheses, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted examining the impact of Type of Opinion (approval, disapproval, and no opinion), Source of Opinion (friend and parent), and Attachment Style (insecure/avoidant and secure) on relationship commitment and relationship satisfaction. The use of a MANOVA was justified because the two dependent variables (i.e., commitment and satisfaction) were highly correlated $r = .81$ ($p = >.001$). Tukey's post hoc tests were used to compare within conditions having more than two levels.

Type of Opinion

The multivariate tests revealed significant main effects for type of opinion, Wilks $\Lambda = .88$, $F(1, 467) = 14.61$, $p = >.001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. The univariate analyses showed that the main effect of opinion type was consistent on both dependent variables: commitment, $F(2, 467) = 25.09$, $p = >.001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$; satisfaction $F(2, 467) = 27.69$, $p = >.001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$. For relationship commitment, approval lead to the highest scores ($M = 5.52$; $SD = 0.74$), followed by no opinion ($M = 4.89$; $SD = .92$) and disapproval ($M = 4.69$; $SD = .94$). However, Tukey's post hoc analyses revealed that no opinion and disapproval means were not significantly different from one another. This is an interesting finding, however, because it is consistent with previous research (Bryant & Conger, 1999; Felmler et al., 1990; Lewis, 1973; Sinclair & Wright, 2009) indicating that approval matters more than disapproval for relationship outcomes. Relationship satisfaction followed the same pattern; approval conditions had significantly higher scores ($M = 5.77$; $SD = 1.06$), than the no opinion ($M = 5.07$; $SD = 1.03$) or disapproval conditions ($M = 4.83$; $SD = 1.13$), which were statistically equivalent to each other.

Attachment Styles

The interaction between type of opinion and attachment style was not significant, Wilks $\Lambda = .990$, $F(2, 467) = 1.18$, $p = .32$. A simple effects comparison showed that network member having either no ($M = 4.87$, $SD = 0.84$) or a disapproving opinion ($M = 4.88$, $SD = 1.02$) lead those in the avoidant/insecure condition to have similar scores on how committed they would feel to the relationship, as compared to the secure condition in which no opinion lead to higher commitment than disapproval ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 0.96$

for disapproval; $M = 4.91$, $SD = 0.92$ for no opinion). Figure 2 shows the means across these conditions on commitment and Figure 3 shows the means on satisfaction.

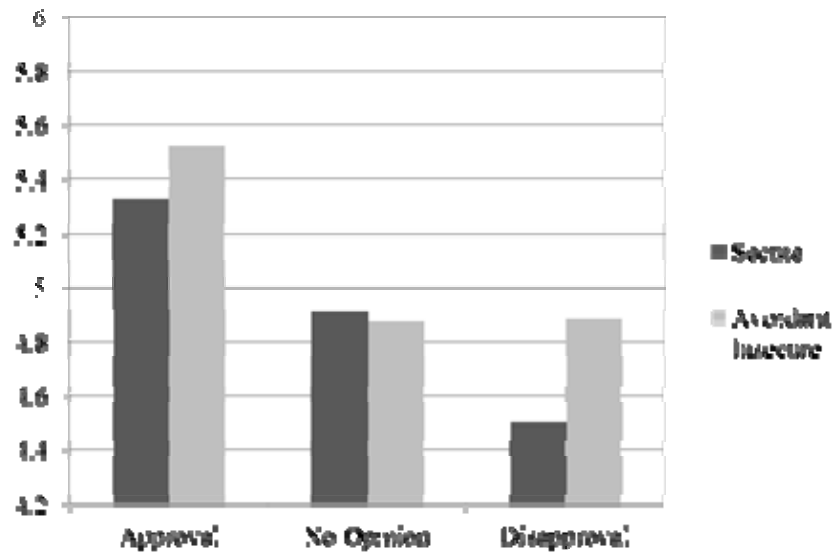


Figure 2. Type of opinion and attachment style means on commitment

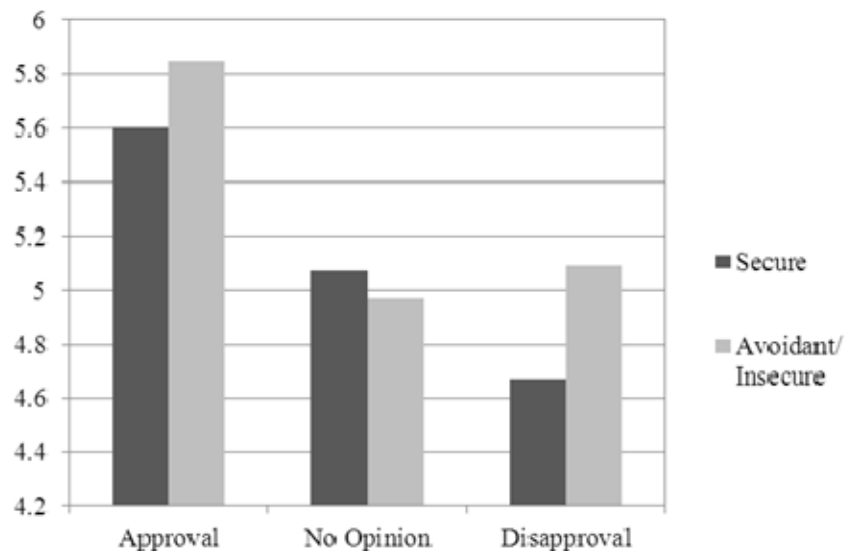


Figure 3. Type of opinion and attachment style means on satisfaction

Source of Opinion

A MANOVA was conducted to examine a possible interaction between source and type of opinion. The results were nonsignificant, $Wilks\Lambda = .99, F(2, 467) = .55, p = ns$. In addition, the 3-way interaction between type of opinion, source of opinion, and attachment style also was nonsignificant, $Wilks\Lambda = .99, F(2, 467) = .13, p = ns$. No other main effects or interactions were significant at the univariate or the multivariate level of analysis.

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Previous investigations into the effects of social network member opinions on romantic relationship success have found that approval from an individual's parents and friends impacts the overall success of their romantic relationship (Bryant & Conger, 1999; Felmlee, 2001; Felmlee et al., 1990; Lewis, 1973; Sinclair & Wright, 2009), particularly when that opinion comes from friends (Etcheverry & Agnew, 2008; Sprecher & Felmlee, 1992). As for disapproval, inconsistencies in the current literature (Driscoll et al., 1972) suggest that such opinions can impact relationships in a positive way, especially if from parents, whereas other studies have concluded that disapproval has negative consequences for relationships. Yet few studies have explored who might attend to different opinions and different social network members. The present study sought to investigate the role attachment styles play in predicting attending and reacting to different types of information from different sources. Network approval was expected to be positively associated with commitment and satisfaction whereas network disapproval would be negatively associated with commitment and satisfaction. The results of the study supported this first hypothesis; type of opinion did not impact relationship commitment and satisfaction. Social network approval led to higher levels of satisfaction and commitment than no opinion and disapproval. However, disapproval and no opinion conditions were not significantly different from one another in levels of satisfaction and commitment

For the second hypothesis, I expected that network approval would be more influential on satisfaction and commitment for individuals primed to be securely attached whereas network disapproval would be more influential for anxiously primed individuals. Also, I expected that network opinions would not impact commitment and satisfaction for avoidantly primed individuals. My second hypothesis was not supported; I did not find an interaction between type of opinion and attachment style. However, this null effect may have been due to the failure of the attachment prime to activate attachment orientations.

Lastly, I expected that friend opinions would have a greater impact on romantic relationships than parental opinions. My third hypothesis was not supported; the interaction between type and source of opinion was not significant. In addition, I found no support for an interaction between source of opinion, type of opinion, and attachment style. The lack of significant results, again, could be a result of inadequate attachment priming methods. I will address the priming and limitations first, before turning to interpretations and implications.

Caveats

Limitations in the present study could help explain the lack of significant results. The present study required that participants indicate how they believed they would feel about their hypothetical romantic relationship after hearing their social network's opinion of their partner. It is, therefore, possible that individuals believed network opinions would impact their romantic relationships differently than the opinions would actually affect relationships in the real world (Parks, 2007). For example, individuals in hypothetical scenarios do not seem to differentiate between hearing negative opinions of

friends and family members. Thus, individuals may be overestimating how much their parent's opinions or underestimating how much friend opinions would affect their romantic relationships.

The lack of difference between friend and parent opinion, however, might also be due to how the vignette was written. Because the vignettes tell the story of meeting the parents, they may imply that the parent approval is sought or desired. As such, participants may have inferred that opinion mattered because the hypothetical person was seeking it, regardless of source. Examinations using different vignettes that do not include meeting the parents might determine whether seeking approval from network members, as compared to simply receiving network opinions, influences the power different network members' possess. Research has shown that individuals are most likely to seek and value network opinions during periods of relational turbulence, such as when the relationship might move to "the next level" (Knobloch & Donovan-Kicken, 2006). Many surveys of dating college students that find that friend opinion is a better predictor than parent opinion may do so because they are sampling relationships that are not ready to face the "meet the parents" test. Perhaps future manipulations could involve the introduction to friends or parents as more accidental than intentional to see if this would impact the weight those opinions carried. In any case, more research should be conducted to see when and why different sources carry more influence.

Another limitation to the study involved use of the sentence scrambles employed to prime attachment styles. Some researchers have critiqued the use of primes. For example, Fiedler (2002) argued that the priming method might activate unintended mental structures instead of the intended mental structure, such as the participant being reminded of a particular incident in their life or person, and thus leading to unexpected

results or even activate opposite priming effects (Fiedler, 2002). Also, Glassman and Andersen (1999) found evidence that certain primes may induce single word effects instead of being processed at the sentence level. Although the primes used in the present study had been previously employed (e.g., Finkel et al., 2007), and the words included in the sentences were associated with the assigned attachment style (i.e., they were drawn from existing measures of adult attachment style intended to measure avoidance vs. anxiety), there is the possibility that the participants did not associate the particular attachment with their social network member who was hypothetically depicted in the scenario. Fiedler also found that priming effects may be weaker when the words refer to other individuals (i.e., he, she, their) compared to primes related to oneself. The sentences scrambles employed in the present study included words such as he and she, therefore it is possible that the sentences failed to prime the participant for the assigned attachment style. In the future, the sentence scramble primes could be improved by using the word “you” instead of he and she. For example, instead of using the sentence the child felt vulnerable, the sentence could be improved by having it read you feel vulnerable. Pilot studies should be conducted to establish the effectiveness of the sentence scrambles for activating attachment styles.

Denson et al. (2010) found that attachment styles can predict what opinions individuals listen to concerning their relationships. Yet, their correlational study utilized the participant’s naturally occurring attachment style involving people in actual, rather than hypothetical, relationships. In the future, perhaps additional research is needed that involves people in actual relationships and priming. If effective primes can be established, individuals’ relationship-specific attachment within their existing romantic relationship (or regarding their relationship with their friend/parent) could be examined to

see if it affects attention to negative vs. positive social network information. Ultimately, stronger manipulations of attachment styles are needed, and perhaps more salient relationship contexts – e.g., using a real relationship as opposed to a hypothetical one – could yield results more equivalent to those of Denson et al.

Previous research has found that possessing quality relationships are more important to individuals who are collectivistic opposed to individualistic (Cross & Madson, 1997; Iyengar & Brockner 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Another limitation is that the majority of our sample was from Mississippi which ranks high in degree of collectivism (Vandello & Cohen, 1999). In 2008, MacArthur and Sinclair found that individuals from states that rank high in degrees of collectivism are equally affected by parent and friend opinions regarding their romantic relationships. It is possible, therefore, that our lack of support for differences in source of opinion stem from the origin of the sample. In the future, a study should be conducted in a more individualistic area to see if attachment styles affect the influence friends and parents have on relationship satisfaction and commitment.

An additional drawback was that the online format of the study was mistakenly set to allow participants the chance to review or change their answers before they completed the survey. It is possible that participants went back and changed answers to questions after they had engaged in the task used to counter insecure attachment primes. This factor can be easily remedied in future studies by setting parameters that prohibit participants from reviewing responses.

Interpretation and Implications

Despite the limitations, the present study significantly contributes to the existing research on the impact network members have upon romantic relationships. Research has demonstrated that social networks have the power to impact relationship outcomes. Yet, there is a need to look deeper and find the underlying mechanisms that allow network members to possess such power. The present study sought to investigate why individuals attend to different types of opinions and different network members, and will hopefully inspire future investigations into various partner attributes that possibly guide which network members and what type of opinions relationship partners allow to influence their courtship process.

Research has already demonstrated that attachment styles guide what kind of information individuals choose to attend to (Rholes et al., 2007). Yet little is known as to how the attachment styles guide who individuals choose to let influence their romantic relationships. Should the present study lead to future investigations on the power of attachment styles and their influence on relationships, it would be conceivable that examining their attachment style could help partners involved in unsatisfying relationships find methods by which to enhance their relationship outcomes. For example, calling attention to the fact that an individual's attachment style guides them to focus on disapproving opinions could result in that individual not letting disapproving opinions harm their relationship in the future.

Further, the study sought to experimentally establish that network opinions affect relationship outcomes. The existing literature has typically been correlational in nature which leaves the question of whether opinions affect outcomes or if relationship outcomes affect network opinions. In the present study, I have established that network

opinions do have a cause-effect relationship with predicted relationship outcomes. Note, this does not mean that more satisfied relationships might garner more network support (in fact, a recent poster at the 2012 Society for Personality and Social Psychology conference established this was so, Etcheverry, Le, & Hoffman, 2012). However, having established a causal link, further investigations into what might mediate or moderate that link can be pursued. Beyond knowing that social network opinions have influence, it would be interesting to further explore why and how it is that these opinions carry weight. For instance, does approval reinforce positive illusions and other relationship-serving cognitions? What are the underlying processes of influence?

Importantly, the present study found that disapproval was not significantly different from receiving no opinion from an individual's social network member. Yet, one might assume that, just as approval makes an individual like someone more, disapproval would make an individual dislike someone. What research seems to be indicating, however, is that it is really approval - even just from one source - that helps the relationship more so than disapproval hurts (Wright & Sinclair, 2012). Although caution is needed when interpreting the lack of differences, disapproval appears to be equivalent to having no information from one's network. Previous research has mainly focused on establishing the effect approval and disapproval has upon relationships, assuming that disapproval is simply the lack of approval by network members. Yet no one has compared lack of opinion from network members to the presence of disapproval (or the presence of approval). At least we now have some evidence about the meaning and weight of disapproval relative to knowing nothing about one's social network opinions or perceiving that the network approves, rather than assuming disapproval = lack of approval.

Since the difference between receiving disapproving opinions and no opinions from network members was clarified, the unexpected lack of impact negative opinions had upon relationship outcomes was examined. When individuals receive opinions regarding their romantic partner, there is the possibility that hearing negative opinions leads one to simply disregard that opinion and not let it impact their relationship in the early stages. As the scenario depicted the beginning stages of a relationship, it is possible that individuals felt their social network members did not have enough information to adequately judge the romantic partner and, therefore, disapproving opinions had the same impact as network members having no opinion had upon relationship outcomes. Therefore, it would be useful to explore the impact disapproving opinions from network members have at various stages of romantic relationships.

In conclusion, although the power social networks have to influence romantic relationships is fairly well-established, I explored a cause-effect relationship which has been rarely experimentally tested. The need to better understand why individuals attend to different opinions and network members is important in order to grasp the actual power social networks possess. The present study will hopefully spark future investigations into attachment styles, and other individual qualities brought into relationships, that could help bolster social network research.

The study, therefore, adds to our understanding of how romantic relationships work, and ultimately can help enhance relationship outcomes. By understanding the impact friends and family members have upon relationships, individuals can better evaluate the opinions their network members possess and decide how important the opinions are when evaluating overall satisfaction and commitment to their partner.

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APPENDIX A
IRB APPROVAL EMAIL



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UNIVERSITY

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Administrative Offices
Animal Care and Use (IACUC)
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150F Hys 183 West, Suite 22
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October 5, 2010

Jayne Denson
804A University Drive
Starkville, MS 39759

RE: IRB Study #10-253: Experimental surveys testing the role of attachment styles in moderating the impact of social network influence on romantic relationships (SONA System Title: Internet Dating Study or Romantic Partner Study)

Dear Ms. Denson:

The above referenced project was reviewed and approved via administrative review on 10/5/2010 in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). Continuing review is not necessary for this project. However, any modification to the project must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation. Any failure to adhere to the approved protocol could result in suspension or termination of your project. The IRB reserves the right, at anytime during the project period, to observe you and the additional researchers on this project.

Please note that the MSU IRB is in the process of seeking accreditation for our human subjects protection program. As a result of these efforts, you will likely notice many changes in the IRB's policies and procedures in the coming months. These changes will be posted online at <http://www.orc.msstate.edu/human/aahrpp.php>. The first of these changes is the implementation of an approval stamp for consent forms. The approval stamp will assist in ensuring the IRB approved version of the consent form is used in the actual conduct of research. You must use copies of the stamped consent form for obtaining consent from participants.

Please refer to your IRB number (#10-253) when contacting our office regarding this application.

Thank you for your cooperation and good luck to you in conducting this research project. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at cwilliams@research.msstate.edu or call 662-325-6229.

Sincerely,

Christine Williams
IRB Compliance Administrator

cc: Colleen Sinclair (Advisor)
Kristine Jacquin (SONA)

Office of Regulatory Compliance & Safety • Post Office Box 6223 • Mississippi State, MS 39762

APPENDIX B
ONLINE SURVEY

Demographic Questions

1. What is your gender? _____
2. What is your age? _____
3. What is your race/ethnicity? _____
4. What state were you raised in (note: if born outside the United States, please specify country)? _____
5. What is your current romantic relationship status? _____

Network member questions

Parent condition

Later in this survey, you will read a hypothetical scenario involving your friends and a romantic partner. While reading this scenario, we want you to think about your friends and what you would think/feel about how they responded to your girl/boyfriend in the scenario.

In order to help you keep your friends in mind, we want you to tell us a little about them first, so that when you read the scenario to come you can really put yourself in the situation and imagine what it would be like when you heard what your friends thought of your romantic partner.

How CLOSE are you to your female parent/guardian?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extremely Distant | <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly Close |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very Distant | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Close |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Distant | <input type="checkbox"/> Very Close |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly Distant | <input type="checkbox"/> Extremely Close |

How often do you communicate with your female parent/guardian?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Never | <input type="checkbox"/> More than once a week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely | <input type="checkbox"/> Daily |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> More than once a day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 times a month | <input type="checkbox"/> More than once a day (we live together) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week | |

How often do you see your female parent/guardian in person?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Never | <input type="checkbox"/> More than once a week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rarely | <input type="checkbox"/> Daily |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> More than once a day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 times a month | <input type="checkbox"/> More than once a day (we live together) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week | |

What is your female parent's/guardian's initials, nickname or first name (no full names, please)? _____

How CLOSE are you to your male parent/guardians?

- Extremely Distant
- Very Distant
- Somewhat Distant
- Slightly Distant
- Slightly Close
- Somewhat Close
- Very Close
- Extremely Close

How often do you communicate with your male/guardian parent?

- Never
- Rarely
- Once a month
- 2-3 times a month
- More than once a week
- Daily
- More than once a day
- More than once a day (we live together)
- Once a week

How often do you see your male parent/guardian in person?

- Never
- Rarely
- Once a month
- 2-3 times a month
- More than once a week
- Daily
- More than once a day
- More than once a day (we live together)
- Once a week

What is your male parent's/guardian's initials, nickname or first name (no full names, please)? _____

How often do you seek out your female parent/guardian to give you advice?

- Never
- Rarely
- Once a month
- 2-3 times a month
- More than once a week
- Daily
- More than once a day
- More than once a day (we live together)
- Once a week

How often do you seek out your male parent/guardian to give you advice?

- Never
- Rarely, such as about once a year
- Infrequently, about 2-3 times a year
- Occasionally, such as about 4-8 times a year
- Often, approximately once a month
- Frequently, such as once a week
- Constantly, such at least once a day

How often do you seek out your female parent/guardian to help you make sense of your relationships?

- Never
- Rarely, such as about once a year
- Often, approximately once a month
- Frequently, such as once a week

- Infrequently, about 2-3 times a year
- Constantly, such at least once a day
- Occasionally, such as about 4-8 times a year

How often do you seek out your male parent/guardian to help you make sense of your relationships?

- Never
- Often, approximately once a month
- Rarely, such as about once a year
- Frequently, such as once a week
- Infrequently, about 2-3 times a year
- Constantly, such at least once a day
- Occasionally, such as about 4-8 times a year

If you were seeking a new romantic partner, how likely would you seek your female parent/guardian to help you?

- Definitely not: Highly Unlikely
- Maybe: Slightly Likely
- Probably not: Somewhat Unlikely
- Probably: Somewhat Likely
- Maybe not: Slightly Unlikely
- Definitely: Highly Likely
- Equally Unlikely & Likely

If you were seeking a new romantic partner, how likely would you seek your male parent/guardian to help you?

- Definitely not: Highly Unlikely
- Maybe: Slightly Likely
- Probably not: Somewhat Unlikely
- Probably: Somewhat Likely
- Maybe not: Slightly Unlikely
- Definitely: Highly Likely
- Equally Unlikely & Likely

Friend condition

Later in this survey, you will read a hypothetical scenario involving your friends and a romantic partner. While reading this scenario, we want you to think about your friends and what you would think/feel about how they responded to your girl/boyfriend in the scenario.

In order to help you keep your friends in mind, we want you to tell us a little about them first, so that when you read the scenario to come you can really put yourself in the situation and imagine what it would be like when you heard what your friends thought of your romantic partner.

How CLOSE are you to your FIRST friend?

- Extremely Distant
- Slightly Close
- Very Distant
- Somewhat Close
- Somewhat Distant
- Very Close
- Slightly Distant
- Extremely Close

How often do you communicate with your FIRST friend?

- Never
- Rarely
- Once a month
- 2-3 times a month
- Once a week
- More than once a week
- Daily
- More than once a day
- More than once a day (we live together)

How often do you see your FIRST friend in person?

- Never
- Rarely
- Once a month
- 2-3 times a month
- Once a week
- More than once a week
- Daily
- More than once a day
- More than once a day (we live together)

What is your FIRST friend's initials, nickname or first name (no full names, please)?

How CLOSE are you to your SECOND friend?

- Extremely Distant
- Very Distant
- Somewhat Distant
- Slightly Distant
- Slightly Close
- Somewhat Close
- Very Close
- Extremely Close

How often do you communicate with your SECOND friend?

- Never
- Rarely
- Once a month
- 2-3 times a month
- Once a week
- More than once a week
- Daily
- More than once a day
- More than once a day (we live together)

How often do you see your SECOND friend in person?

- Never
- Rarely
- Once a month
- 2-3 times a month
- Once a week
- More than once a week
- Daily
- More than once a day
- More than once a day (we live together)

What is your SECOND friend's initials, nickname or first name (no full names, please)?

How often do you seek out your FIRST friend to give you advice?

- Never
- Rarely
- Once a month
- 2-3 times a month
- More than once a week
- Daily
- More than once a day
- More than once a day (we live together)
- Once a week

How often do you seek out your SECOND friend to give you advice?

- Never
- Rarely, such as about once a year
- Infrequently, about 2-3 times a year
- Occasionally, such as about 4-8 times a year
- Often, approximately once a month
- Frequently, such as once a week
- Constantly, such at least once a day

How often do you seek out your FIRST friend to help you make sense of your relationships?

- Never
- Rarely, such as about once a year
- Infrequently, about 2-3 times a year
- Occasionally, such as about 4-8 times a year
- Often, approximately once a month
- Frequently, such as once a week
- Constantly, such at least once a day

How often do you seek out your SECOND friend to help you make sense of your relationships?

- Never
- Rarely, such as about once a year
- Infrequently, about 2-3 times a year
- Occasionally, such as about 4-8 times a year
- Often, approximately once a month
- Frequently, such as once a week
- Constantly, such at least once a day

If you were seeking a new romantic partner, how likely would you seek your FIRST friend to help you?

- Definitely not: Highly Unlikely
- Probably not: Somewhat Unlikely
- Maybe not: Slightly Unlikely
- Equally Unlikely & Likely
- Maybe: Slightly Likely
- Probably: Somewhat Likely
- Definitely: Highly Likely

If you were seeking a new romantic partner, how likely would you seek your SECOND friend to help you?

- Definitely not: Highly Unlikely
- Probably not: Somewhat Unlikely
- Maybe not: Slightly Unlikely
- Maybe: Slightly Likely
- Probably: Somewhat Likely
- Definitely: Highly Likely

Equally Unlikely & Likely

Sentence scrambles

Secure condition

Each line below contains five words. Your task is to mentally unscramble the words and to eliminate one of them in order to make a sentence. There is only one sensible 4-word sentence that can be created for each line. Please cross out the word that must be eliminated to make this sentence and write the correct sentence on the corresponding line.

- Example:** banana ate car the ~~he~~ He ate the banana
steady hands the was boat _____
he door walked the painted _____
was like sure she definitely _____
kitchen friend loyal her was _____
costume script she her wore _____
child protected today felt the _____
was reliable thought the mother _____
others the he to supported _____
signed the was wallet check _____
10. shiny devotion was their certain _____

Anxious condition

Each line below contains five words. Your task is to mentally unscramble the words and to eliminate one of them in order to make a sentence. There is only one sensible 4-word sentence that can be created for each line. Please cross out the word that must be eliminated to make this sentence and write the correct sentence on the corresponding line.

- Example:** banana ate car the ~~he~~ He ate the banana
unsteady hands the was boat _____
he door walked the painted _____
lacked like certainty she definitely _____
kitchen friend disloyal her was _____
costume script she her wore _____
child vulnerable today felt the _____
was unreliable thought the mother _____
others the he to disappointed _____
signed the was wallet check _____
shiny devotion was their uncertain _____

Avoidant condition

Each line below contains five words. Your task is to mentally unscramble the words and to eliminate one of them in order to make a sentence. There is only one sensible 4-word sentence that can be created for each line. Please cross out the word that must be eliminated to make this sentence and write the correct sentence on the corresponding line.

- Example:** banana ate car the ~~he~~ He ate the banana
the independence if wanted child _____
avoided he feelings close getting _____

shiny devotion was their unreliable _____
he door walked the painted _____
unstable hands the boat _____
uncomfortably like was close she _____
signed the was wallet check _____
kitchen friend undependable her was _____
preferred being tables he alone _____
10. costume script she her wore _____

Sentence scrambles key

Secure

The boat was steady

He painted the door

She was definitely sure

Her friend was loyal

She wore her costume

The child felt protected

The mother was reliable

He supported the others

The check was signed

Their devotion was certain

Anxious

The boat was unsteady

He painted the door

She definitely lacked certainty

Her friend was disloyal

She wore her costume

The child felt vulnerable

The mother was unreliable

He disappointed the others

Their devotion was uncertain

Avoidant

The child wanted independence

He avoided getting close

Their devotion was unreliable

He painted the door

The boat was unstable

She was uncomfortably close

The check was signed

Her friend was undependable

He preferred being alone

She wore her costume

Writing task

Parent - secure condition

Keeping the scenario in mind, please think about a relationship with a parent/guardian you have in which you have found that it was relatively easy to get close to the other person and you felt comfortable depending on the other person. In this relationship you didn't often worry about being abandoned by the other person and you didn't worry about the other person getting too close to you. Write about this relationship until you are instructed that time is up. Write about the parent/guardian that you have this relationship with. Please give an example of a time when you have felt this way about your parent/guardian. Generally, how do you feel about your parent/guardian?

Friend - secure condition

Keeping the scenario in mind, please think about a friendship you have had in which you have found that it was relatively easy to get close to the other person and you felt comfortable depending on the other person. In this friendship you didn't often worry about being abandoned by the other person and you didn't worry about the other person getting too close to you. Write about the friend that you have this relationship with. Please give an example of a time when you have felt this way about your friend. Generally, how do you feel about your friend?

Parent - avoidant condition

Keeping the scenario in mind, please think about a relationship with a parent/guardian you have in which you have found that you were somewhat uncomfortable being too close to the other person. In this relationship you found it was difficult to trust the other person completely and it was difficult to allow yourself to depend on the other person. In this relationship you felt yourself getting nervous when the other person tried to get too close to you and you felt that the other person wanted to be more intimate than you felt comfortable being. Write about the parent/guardian that you have this relationship with. Please give an example of a time when you have felt this way about your parent/guardian. Generally, how do you feel about your parent/guardian?

Friend - avoidant condition

Keeping the scenario in mind, please think about a friendship you have had in which you have found that you were somewhat uncomfortable being too close to the other person. In this friendship you found it was difficult to trust the other person completely and it was difficult to allow yourself to depend on the other person. In this friendship you felt yourself getting nervous when the other person tried to get too close to you and you felt that the other person wanted to be more intimate than you felt comfortable being. Write about the friend that you have this relationship with. Please give an example of a time when you have felt this way about your friend. Generally, how do you feel about your friend?

Parent - anxious condition

Keeping the scenario in mind, please think about a relationship you have had with a parent/guardian in which you have felt like the other person was reluctant to get as close

as you would have liked. In this relationship you worried that the other person didn't really like you, or love you, and you worried that they wouldn't want to stay with you. In this relationship you wanted to get very close to the other person but you worried that this would scare the other person away. Write about the parent/guardian that you have this relationship with. Please give an example of a time when you have felt this way about your parent/guardian. Generally, how do you feel about your parent/guardian?

Friend - anxious condition

Keeping the scenario in mind, please think about a friendship you have had in which you have felt like the other person was reluctant to get as close as you would have liked. In this friendship you worried that the other person didn't really like you, or love you, and you worried that they wouldn't want to stay with you. In this friendship you wanted to get very close to the other person but you worried that this would scare the other person away. Write about the friend that you have this relationship with. Please give an example of a time when you have felt this way about your friend. Generally, how do you feel about your friend?

Scenario

Parents – approval

You sign up for an Internet Matching service and are sent a list of compatible matches. After looking at their profile information, you identify a man/women who you would like to at least meet. He/She seems compatible in many ways and he/she doesn't live too far away. After several email exchanges and then phone calls, you finally meet him/her face-to-face, in a coffee-house. Although you have been warned that on-line "chemistry" doesn't always transfer to off-line chemistry, you feel attracted to him/her after the first meeting. The two of you take things slowly and continue phone calls and email exchanges, and wait another two weeks before meeting again in person, once again at a coffee house.

After another month of phone conversations and meeting two more times for coffee, you both agree that the relationship might be worth developing. Although you are both very cautious about the future, you agree it's time to do something other than meet for coffee. You go on a "date", which includes dinner in a restaurant and a movie. Finding yourself even more attracted, you both decide it's time to meet family and friends. You begin by hosting a dinner and inviting your date and parents. The dinner goes well enough.

Everyone seems to have a good time and the conversation is pleasant.

A few days later, you talk to each of your parents, separately, and come to the conclusion that they really like your new date. Loudly and clearly, they point out that you are a perfect match for him/her and they would love to get together again.

Friends – approval

You sign up for an Internet Matching service and are sent a list of compatible matches. After looking at their profile information, you identify a man/women who you would like to at least meet. He/She seems compatible in many ways and he/she doesn't live too far away. After several email exchanges and then phone calls, you finally meet him/her face-to-face, in a coffee-house. Although you have been warned that on-line "chemistry"

doesn't always transfer to off-line chemistry, you feel attracted to him/her after the first meeting. The two of you take things slowly and continue phone calls and email exchanges, and wait another two weeks before meeting again in person, once again at a coffee house.

After another month of phone conversations and meeting two more times for coffee, you both agree that the relationship might be worth developing. Although you are both very cautious about the future, you agree it's time to do something other than meet for coffee. You go on a "date", which includes dinner in a restaurant and a movie. Finding yourself even more attracted, you both decide it's time to meet family and friends. You begin by hosting a dinner and inviting your date and two of your friends. The dinner goes well enough. Everyone seems to have a good time and the conversation is pleasant.

A few days later, you talk to each of your friends, separately, and come to the conclusion that they really like your new date. Loudly and clearly, they point out that you are a perfect match for him/her and they would love to get together again.

Parents – disapproval

You sign up for an Internet Matching service and are sent a list of compatible matches. After looking at their profile information, you identify a man/women who you would like to at least meet. He/She seems compatible in many ways and he/she doesn't live too far away. After several email exchanges and then phone calls, you finally meet him/her face-to-face, in a coffee-house. Although you have been warned that on-line "chemistry" doesn't always transfer to off-line chemistry, you feel attracted to him/her after the first meeting. The two of you take things slowly and continue phone calls and email exchanges, and wait another two weeks before meeting again in person, once again at a coffee house.

After another month of phone conversations and meeting two more times for coffee, you both agree that the relationship might be worth developing. Although you are both very cautious about the future, you agree it's time to do something other than meet for coffee. You go on a "date", which includes dinner in a restaurant and a movie. Finding yourself even more attracted, you both decide it's time to meet family and friends. You begin by hosting a dinner and inviting your date and your parents. The dinner goes well enough. Everyone seems to have a good time and the conversation is pleasant.

A few days later, you talk to each of your parents, separately, and come to the conclusion that they really don't like your new date. A few days later, you talk to each of your parents, separately, and come to the conclusion that they really like your new date. Loudly and clearly, they point out that you are not a good match for each other and they prefer you not to date him/her anymore.

Friends – disapproval

You sign up for an Internet Matching service and are sent a list of compatible matches. After looking at their profile information, you identify a man/women who you would like to at least meet. He/She seems compatible in many ways and he/she doesn't live too far away. After several email exchanges and then phone calls, you finally meet him/her face-to-face, in a coffee-house. Although you have been warned that on-line "chemistry" doesn't always transfer to off-line chemistry, you feel attracted to him/her after the first

meeting. The two of you take things slowly and continue phone calls and email exchanges, and wait another two weeks before meeting again in person, once again at a coffee house.

After another month of phone conversations and meeting two more times for coffee, you both agree that the relationship might be worth developing. Although you are both very cautious about the future, you agree it's time to do something other than meet for coffee. You go on a "date", which includes dinner in a restaurant and a movie. Finding yourself even more attracted, you both decide it's time to meet family and friends. You begin by hosting a dinner and inviting your date and two of your friends. The dinner goes well enough. Everyone seems to have a good time and the conversation is pleasant.

A few days later, you talk to each of your friends, separately, and come to the conclusion that they really like your new date. A few days later, you talk to each of your parents, separately, and come to the conclusion that they really like your new date. Loudly and clearly, they point out that you are not a good match for each other and they prefer you not to date him/her anymore.

Parent – no opinion

You sign up for an Internet Matching service and are sent a list of compatible matches. After looking at their profile information, you identify a man/women who you would like to at least meet. He/She seems compatible in many ways and he/she doesn't live too far away. After several email exchanges and then phone calls, you finally meet him/her face-to-face, in a coffee-house. Although you have been warned that on-line "chemistry" doesn't always transfer to off-line chemistry, you feel attracted to him/her after the first meeting. The two of you take things slowly and continue phone calls and email exchanges, and wait another two weeks before meeting again in person, once again at a coffee house.

After another month of phone conversations and meeting two more times for coffee, you both agree that the relationship might be worth developing. Although you are both very cautious about the future, you agree it's time to do something other than meet for coffee. You go on a "date", which includes dinner in a restaurant and a movie. Finding yourself even more attracted, you both decide it's time to meet family and friends. You begin by hosting a dinner and inviting your date and parents. The dinner goes well enough.

Everyone seems to have a good time and the conversation is pleasant.

A few days later, you try to talk to each of your parents, separately, but can't reach them. You are not sure whether they like your new date or not. Because you can't get in touch with them, you will have to simply guess whether they think you are a perfect match or shouldn't date any longer.

Friend – no opinion

You sign up for an Internet Matching service and are sent a list of compatible matches. After looking at their profile information, you identify a man/women who you would like to at least meet. He/She seems compatible in many ways and he/she doesn't live too far away. After several email exchanges and then phone calls, you finally meet him/her face-to-face, in a coffee-house. Although you have been warned that on-line "chemistry" doesn't always transfer to off-line chemistry, you feel attracted to him/her after the first

meeting. The two of you take things slowly and continue phone calls and email exchanges, and wait another two weeks before meeting again in person, once again at a coffee house.

After another month of phone conversations and meeting two more times for coffee, you both agree that the relationship might be worth developing. Although you are both very cautious about the future, you agree it's time to do something other than meet for coffee. You go on a "date", which includes dinner in a restaurant and a movie. Finding yourself even more attracted, you both decide it's time to meet family and friends. You begin by hosting a dinner and inviting your date and parents. The dinner goes well enough.

Everyone seems to have a good time and the conversation is pleasant.

A few days later, you try to talk to each of your friends, separately, but can't reach them. You are not sure whether they like your new date or not. Because you can't get in touch with them, you will have to simply guess whether they think you are a perfect match or shouldn't date any longer.

Processing questions

Placing yourself in this scenario, please list five FEELINGS you would have about the situation described above. How would you feel in the situation (e.g., hurt, happy, confused, etc) _____

Placing yourself in the scenario, please list three THOUGHTS you would have about the situation. (e.g., "I would think their opinions were unreasonable," "I would wonder why," "I would think my relationship is stronger," "I would think about leaving my partner," etc.) _____

Putting yourself in the scenario, list three ACTIONS you might would take in the situation. (e.g., "Now I would talk to my parents even more," "I would avoid my parents," "I would take a break from my romantic partner," "I would get my another person's advice," etc.) _____

Relationship Assessment Scale

Putting yourself in this situation: How well do you think you would feel that your partner met your needs?

Definitely
Does Not 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Does
Definitely

Putting yourself in this situation: In general, how satisfied do you think you would feel with your romantic relationship?

Definitely
Does Not 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Does
Definitely

Putting yourself in this situation: How good would you consider your relationship to be compared to most?

Completely
Bad 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Good
Completely

Putting yourself in this situation: Do you think you would wish that you hadn't gotten into this romantic relationship?

Definitely
Does Not 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Does
Definitely

Putting yourself in this situation: How well would your relationship meet your original expectations?

Definitely
Does Not 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Does
Definitely

Putting yourself in this situation: How much do you think you would love your partner?

Not at All 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Completely

Putting yourself in this situation: How much do you think problems would strongly affect your relationship?

Constantly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Never

Lund Commitment Scale

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4
Not at all	Highly unlikely	Most unlikely	Unlikely	Neither more nor less likely	Likely	Most likely	Highly likely	Definitely

Putting yourself in this situation: How LIKELY would it be that your romantic relationship with the partner described in the scenario would be continue? _____

Putting yourself in this situation: How LIKELY would it be that you and your romantic partner would be together in 6 months? _____

Putting yourself in this situation: How LIKELY would it be that your relationship would be permanent? _____

Putting yourself in this situation: How LIKELY would it be that you would pursue single life? _____

Putting yourself in this situation: How LIKELY do you think it would be that you may decide to end this relationship sometime in the future? _____

Putting yourself in this situation, how hard would it be for you to end your relationship personally? _____

Putting yourself in this situation: How LIKELY would it be that you would view your partner as clearly part of your future plans? _____

Putting yourself in this situation: How LIKELY would it be that you would avoid investing much into this relationship? _____

Putting yourself in this situation: How LIKELY do you think it would be that you may not want to be with your partner in a few years? _____

Putting yourself in this situation: How LIKELY would it be that you would avoid making life-long plans for this relationship? _____

Scenario manipulation checks

Based on your reading of the scenario provided earlier, how would you interpret the opinion of your parents of your relationship?

Very Negative

Slightly Negative

Moderately Negative

Negative

- Neutral
- Positive
- Slightly Positive
- Moderately Positive
- Very Positive

Not applicable – no parent opinion provided

Based on your reading of the scenario provided earlier, how clear would you feel your parents were about their opinion?

- Very Negative
- Moderately Negative
- Slightly Negative
- Negative
- Neutral
- Positive
- Slightly Positive
- Moderately Positive
- Very Positive

Not applicable – no parent opinion provided

What was the status of the dating relationship described in the scenario (e.g., was it a new or long-term relationship)?

- Very New (less than a week)
- Moderately New (less than a month)
- Slightly New (less than 3 months)
- Average length (between 3-6 months)
- Slightly Long-term (between 6 months and 1 year)
- Moderately Long-term (more than 1 year)
- Very Long-term (more than 3 years)

Was the scenario about your parents or your partner's parents?

- My friends
- My partner's friends

What was your partner's reaction?

- Very Negative
- Moderately Negative
- Slightly Negative
- Negative
- Neutral
- Positive
- Slightly Positive
- Moderately Positive
- Very Positive

Not applicable – no parent opinion provided

Based on your reading of the scenario provided earlier, how much would you feel your parents were interfering (either positively or negatively) in your relationship?

- Not at all interfering
- Slightly interfering
- Somewhat interfering
- Strongly interfering
- Completely interfering

Not applicable – no parent opinion provided

Based on your reading of the scenario provided earlier, how definite would you feel your parents were about their opinion?

- Very Unsure
- Moderately Unsure
- Slightly Unsure
- Unsure
- Neutral
- Sure
- Slightly Sure
- Moderately Sure
- Very Sure

Not applicable – no parent opinion provided

Based on your reading of the scenario provided earlier, how much would you feel your parents' opinion was likely to change?

- Definitely likely to change
- Probably likely to change
- Somewhat likely to change
- Slightly likely to change
- Equal likelihood
- Slightly likely to stay the same
- Somewhat likely to stay the same
- Probably likely to stay the same
- Definitely likely to stay the same

Not applicable – no parent opinion provided

Attachment prime manipulation check

Parent condition

The following statements concern how you feel in your romantic relationships. We are interested in how you generally experience these relationships, not just in what is happening currently within these relationships. Respond to each statement by indicating how much you agree or disagree with it.

I am comfortable depending on my parents/guardians and having them depend on me.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly agree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately agree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree |

I find it difficult to trust my parents/guardians.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly agree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately agree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree |

I find that my parents/guardians are reluctant to get as close as I would like.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly agree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately agree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree |

Friend condition

The following statements concern how you feel in your romantic relationships. We are interested in how you generally experience these relationships, not just in what is happening currently within these relationships. Respond to each statement by indicating how much you agree or disagree with it.

I am comfortable depending on my friends and having them depend on me.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly agree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately agree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree |

I find it difficult to trust my friends.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly agree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately agree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree |

I find that my friends are reluctant to get as close as I would like.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree | <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly agree |
|--|---|

- Moderately disagree Moderately agree Slightly disagree
 Strongly agree

Return to secure attachment

Please conduct a short list of five-ten things that you like about your parents/guardians.
While doing this image ways that they have helped you in the past