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## **Matters of the Heart?: The Role of Risk Regulation, Attachment Style, Self-Monitoring and Self-Esteem in Romantic Relationships**

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Matters of the Heart?: The Role of Risk Regulation, Attachment Style, Self-Monitoring  
and Self-Esteem in Romantic Relationships

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### **Abstract**

In the context of romantic relationships, risk regulation refers to one's constant struggle to balance connecting with one's partner and protecting oneself from rejection (Murray, Holmes, & Collins, 2006). As previous research failed to directly assess the interrelationships between risk regulation, self-esteem, attachment style, and self-monitoring, the present study sought to determine how these constructs interconnect to affect patterns of connection and protection in romantic relationships. Results indicated that high and low self-monitors differ in levels of connection and protection in romantic relationships, specifically in terms of need to belong, and relationship anxiety. Attachment style also affected connection and protection patterns; specifically, preoccupied attachment was related to relationship anxiety, dependency, and need to belong, while dismissing attachment was related to relationship avoidance. Similarly, various combinations of attachment style, self-esteem, and self-monitoring predicted both connection factors (need to belong, dependency, and commitment) and protection factors (relationship anxiety and relationship avoidance).

Matters of the Heart?: The Role of Risk Regulation, Attachment Style, Self-Monitoring  
and Self-Esteem in Romantic Relationships

Romantic relationships come in all shapes and sizes. Moreover, the interactions between two partners can be as unique as the two partners are themselves. Each partner brings his or her own characteristics to a relationship, and these characteristics undoubtedly affect the relationship's core make-up. However, there are certain features of romantic relationships that are more globally reflected. Within any relationship, romantic in particular, there are patterns of give and take that tend to govern the behaviors of the partners. Considering the possible variation among all of these factors, it is easy to believe that no two relationships, much like their members, are exactly the same.

**Risk Regulation and Romantic Relationships**

In general, when making any decision, one considers his or her options. In terms of romantic relationships, one of the biggest decisions a person must make is just how vulnerable he or she is willing to become in the context of the relationship. On one hand, allowing oneself to be too vulnerable may open the door for hurt and rejection by one's partner; on the other, not being vulnerable enough may result in being rejected by one's partner due to a lack of felt connection. Thus, when involved in a romantic relationship, one is constantly working to maintain a comfortable balance between connection to his or her partner and the protection of oneself.

Murray, Holmes, and Collins (2006) adapted the risk regulation model by modifying it to explain the patterns of behaviors observed in romantic relationships. This model is based upon the basic idea that, within a romantic relationship, the primary

motivating behavioral factor is to avoid getting hurt. This protection is attained by minimizing the amount of dependence placed on one's partner and not allowing partners to gain the "upper hand" in relationships (Murray et al., 2006). However, this type of behavior is somewhat counterintuitive when one conceptualizes how those involved in a relationship ought to behave. Specifically, to create a successful relationship, partners need to risk a certain amount of dependence in order to create feelings of closeness and maintain satisfaction in their relationship (Murray et al., 2006). As such, relationship-promoting behaviors act to create a sense of relational closeness in order to promote relationship satisfaction; however, they also increase the risk associated with relationship involvement, both in terms of the likelihood and intensity of potential rejection (Murray et al., 2006). This dilemma creates the need for risk regulation in romantic relationships in order to satisfy personal needs for both connecting to one's partner and protecting oneself from harmful rejection.

According to Murray et al. (2006), the risk regulation model is formed around three contingency-based rule systems: appraisal, signaling, and dependence regulation. These rule systems allow one to gauge the risk of rejection and regulate one's behavior accordingly. Specifically, each individual system is based upon a simple if-then statement and is meant to help one increase feelings of assurance in one's relationship. Thus, based upon the risk of rejection, one may either increase self-protective or relationship-promoting behaviors accordingly. In the first stage of the model, the appraisal system operates on the rule "if dependent, then gauge acceptance or rejection" (Murray et al., 2006, p. 643). In the context of a romantic relationship, this system involves the individual determining the amount of his or her partner's regard, which

indexes the likelihood of acceptance versus rejection. If this evaluation indicates that one's partner is warm and receptive, then one would trust one's romantic partner more and, as a result, may become more dependent on the partner, inadvertently increasing his/her risk of rejection while promoting the well-being of the relationship overall (Murray et al., 2006). Thus, a positive outcome of this appraisal may indicate that one's partner perceives some features in oneself that are valuable (Murray et al., 2006).

To better understand the underlying features of the first stage of the risk regulation model, it is important to note the theory of need to belong, proposed by Baumeister and Leary (1997) to reflect a basic "desire" to form various social relationships and become attached to those individuals in some form or another. Those with a higher need to belong may be those who tend to become more dependent and, as a result, connect more deeply in relationships. In contrast, people who have lower needs to belong and are unattached tend to experience more negative psychological and physical problems, highlighting the importance of creating connections with other people (Baumeister & Leary, 1997). The care and compassion one receives from others may make an extensive positive impact on one's life, an impact that may be lacking and thereby creating some distress in the lives of those who tend to push others (in particular, specifically their romantic partners) away. As such, one's need to belong may underlie one's engagement in the risk regulation model with those higher in need to belong being especially sensitive to its effects. Moreover, the failure to meet one's need to belong may result in negative intrapersonal effects, such as lowered self-esteem. This supposition is addressed by the second stage of the risk regulation model.

In the second stage of the model, the signaling system is based upon the rule “if accepted or rejected, then internalize” (Murray et al., 2006, p. 644). This rule indicates that acceptance or rejection from one’s partner may affect the way one feels about him or herself at any given moment (i.e., one’s self-esteem). The signaling system is similar to the concept of a sociometer (Murray et al., 2006). Leary and Downs (1995) posit that the sociometer functions to gauge how our external interactions and internal self-esteem work to regulate one another. Specifically, when one experiences rejection, one’s self-esteem is lowered and thus one changes one’s behaviors accordingly by performing approval seeking behaviors in order to try and avoid future rejection or exclusion (Leary & Downs, 1995). Greater acceptance is related to a fuller sociometer and thus higher self-esteem; while greater rejection has the inverse relationship, creating an empty sociometer and lower self-esteem. Acceptance also may signal greater feelings of being valued by one’s partner, and, in turn, promote connection. In contrast, rejection has the opposite effect, yielding higher levels of self-protection (Murray et al., 2006).

Lastly, the dependence regulation system, also termed the behavioral response system, is grounded in the rule “if feeling accepted or rejected, then regulate dependence” (Murray et al., 2006, p. 644). According to this system, the experience of acceptance or rejection creates changes in dependence on one’s partner. When feeling more accepted, partners increase dependence on one another; on the other hand, when rejected, dependence decreases. This ensures that the amount of dependence placed on one’s partner is balanced with the acceptance and value exhibited by that partner (Murray et al., 2006). Dependence also may be indirectly influenced by one’s self-esteem as this may be a reflection of acceptance and rejection within the relationship. This notion is similar

to that of relational devaluation, or the idea that one partner may not view his or her relationship to be as valuable as the other partner would like (Leary, Springer, Negel, Ansell, & Evans, 1998). This devaluation may manifest as disassociation and could be accomplished by avoidance behaviors similar to those used to accomplish self-protection (Leary et al., 1998). The opposite may be true for connection behaviors, which manifest when one partner views the relationship as much more valuable and seeks to draw closer to his or her partner. However, more research is needed to validate this supposition.

In validating their theory, Murray, Derrick, Leder, and Holmes (2008) conducted a series of studies to determine the relationship between self-esteem and the risk regulation model, specifically connective and protective behavioral patterns. In general, they discovered that those with low self-esteem tend to exhibit higher self-protection goals and behaviors, while those with high self-esteem are more likely to exhibit more connective behaviors and goals (Murray et al., 2008). Those with high self-esteem may be more open to connection because they have a higher sense of self-worth and thus do not perceive rejection as an issue. However, those with low self-esteem are not as confident, and, as a result, they may anticipate being rejected in their relationships. This fear of rejection causes them to pull back and connect only minimally so that they can protect themselves from pain. In this manner, one's self-esteem level allows him or her to determine how much dependence is considered "safe" in a relationship (Murray et al., 2008). This study indicates that one's personality characteristics may impact his or her risk regulatory behaviors and suggests one's risk regulatory tendencies may somehow be uncovered by examining one's personality characteristics. As such, further research is



needed to determine what personality characteristics play a role in risk regulation in general. For instance, one's attachment style, may affect regulatory behavior patterns.

In a follow-up study, Murray, Leder, MacGregor, Holmes, Pinkus and Harris (2009) sought to determine whether or not self-esteem plays a role in relationship security, particularly in feeling "irreplaceable" to one's partner. Specifically, they proposed that higher feelings of being irreplaceable would likely make people feel more secure in their relationship's longevity and thus would foster dependence and closeness. Conversely, feeling replaceable would cause one to feel insecure in his or her relationship and create a need to protect oneself from potential rejection as the risk of rejection is likely higher. Findings showed that becoming irreplaceable to one's partner is a goal in most all romantic relationships, and it increases trust between partners (Murray, Leder et al., 2009). Moreover, high self-esteem individuals are more likely to feel irreplaceable than low self-esteem individuals. As a result, those with high self-esteem tend to believe that their partners are more accepting of them overall than do low self-esteem individuals. However, when their partners pointed out irreplaceable characteristics, low self-esteem, not high self-esteem, individuals reported being more trusting (Murray, Leder et al., 2009). For example, if one's partner made a comment regarding not being able to envision life without him or her, a low self-esteem individual would become much more trusting of his or her partner. This may be because high self-esteem individuals already believe that their partners view them as irreplaceable and thus do not experience any change in trust amounts. This evaluation of perceived partner acceptance seems to be highly contingent upon one's self-esteem level and may be a contributing factor to one's

relative level of connection or protection in relationships. Thus, further research is warranted to explore these interrelationships.

In a similar study exploring the impact of self-esteem on interpersonal relationships, Peterson and DeHart (2013) suggested that one's perception of his or her partner's commitment may be influential in the display of connection versus protection strategies. They were particularly interested in implicit self-esteem, which differs from explicit self-esteem in that it is generally unexpressed, and whether it can regulate the nonverbal behaviors exhibited in the face of relationship threat. To achieve this, they studied undergraduate college students who were already involved in a monogamous relationship. Peterson and DeHart's (2013) findings revealed those with high implicit self-esteem tended to exhibit less connection behaviors when they perceived that their partners were not highly committed to their relationships. However, those with low implicit self-esteem did not increase their connection behaviors when they felt their partners were highly committed to their relationships. As such, these results indicate that implicit self-esteem acts much like explicit self-esteem when partners are viewed as highly committed, affecting one's actions more directly, but when partner commitment is low, implicit self-esteem is much more covert (Peterson & DeHart, 2013). This may be related to one's internal gut instincts that can regulate one's behavior even when explicitly he or she may consider behaving differently. As such, more research is needed to more fully understand the relationship self-esteem and connection and protection factors, and also how state and trait self-esteem may affect these behaviors differently.

In a similar study, Cavallo, Fitzsimons, and Holmes (2010) proposed the risk regulation model may be a facet of a larger, more global regulatory system that operates

somewhat subconsciously. Specifically, they maintain that when one perceives a threat in a romantic situation, there are broad shifts that occur in terms of motivation, indicating the romantic risk regulation system may be a function of a broader approach/avoidance system (Cavallo et al., 2010). In general, one will approach a situation if one believes he or she will receive some sort of positive feedback. Similarly, one will avoid situations in which one feels he or she will receive some sort of negative feedback. These patterns may be seen globally in various settings, such as academics and the workplace. Thus, it seems logical to generalize these basic rules to one's romantic life as well. Nonetheless, romantic risk regulation may be a unique level of the overall regulatory system as it involves two people as opposed to the individual solely. For this reason, romantic risk regulation possesses its own set of "rules." These rules must account for both individuals involved in the relationship, and because of this, multiplies the possible factors contributing to regulation behavior by two. This could possibly create a more complex interaction between the two relationship partners, as they are individually governing their own behaviors while simultaneously creating a unique environment for their relationship as a result of these individual behaviors. Thus, further research is needed to more closely examine these interactions and those factors that contribute to differing patterns of risk regulation.

Murray, Aloni et al. (2009) sought to determine just what one may do to help oneself become more confident within a relationship. When one feels inferior to his or her partner or fears his or her partner doubts their relationship, the risk of rejection is heightened. To dissuade these feelings, one will generally try to invoke feelings of dependence in his or her partner, enlisting the help of a trust-insurance system (Murray,

Aloni et al., 2009). This dependency makes the individual seemingly indispensable to his or her partner and allows that individual to feel more comfortable in the status of the relationship. The researchers' results showed that the performance of these dependence-invoking acts actually did decrease partners' doubts about the relationship (Murray, Aloni et al., 2009). Those with low self-esteem were more likely to feel inferior to their partners when they compared themselves to their partners and, as such, were more likely to try to induce the dependency of their partners on themselves. Thus, the authors concluded that low self-esteem individuals need to know that their partners view them as valuable and accept them as fully as possible in order to feel comfortable in their relationships. Once low self-esteem individuals feel indispensable to their partners, they may be more apt to engage in relationship-promoting behaviors and decrease their engagement in self-protective behaviors. Overall, these findings provide additional support for the link between self-esteem and risk regulation and warrant further empirical attention with regard to relational outcomes

As those with low self-esteem may act in ways to harm the maintenance of their relationships due to a sense of relational devaluation, Marigold, Holmes, and Ross (2010) suggested that a reframing task may be integral in increasing such individual's feelings of value within a romantic relationship. Specifically, they showed that an abstract reframing intervention (ARI) may be helpful to those with low self-esteem who tend to self-protect and pull away from their partners at the slightest indication of trouble. The ARI involved having the participant recall compliments his or her partner had provided or moments in which his or her partner exhibited acceptance, acting as a buffer in the face of possible relationship threats. Results indicated that use of the ARI task decreased participants'

level of defensiveness and other negative behaviors, allowing those with low self-esteem to respond more positively to relationship threats (Marigold et al., 2010). Thus, the ARI task may be a positive way to put things into perspective for low self-esteem individuals, allowing them to engage in more relationship-promoting behaviors and strengthening their overall relationship. As such, this study provides insight into how low self-esteem individuals are able to connect in relationships, suggesting the need to further examine relational outcome differences across those with high versus low self-esteem.

In a similar study, Jaremka, Bunyan, Collins, and Sherman (2011) demonstrated how a self-affirmation task can help decrease the defensive self-protection behaviors those with low self-esteem exhibit in the face of relationship threats. According to the authors, self-affirmation addresses one's vulnerability at its origin and acts to stave off self-doubt. Thus, it ought to reduce psychological distancing and self-protective factors in low self-esteem individuals (Jaremka et al., 2011). These self-affirmation exercises may act as a self-esteem boost to low self-esteem individuals, allowing them to let their guards down. Moreover, this ought to produce a reduction in vulnerability, which may open these individuals up for connecting with their partners. Taken together, these results provide insight into the paradoxical manner in which risk regulation may operate for individuals with differing levels of self-esteem, which may not always be consistent, indicating that individuals with low self-esteem may connect more to their partners under certain circumstances. Thus, further research is warranted, as it may be that this variability is applicable in certain situations or may be explained by other personality characteristics.

### **Risk Regulation and Trust**

Risk regulation patterns and behaviors may be tied to an individual's personal tendencies to be either more or less trusting in general. Murray et al., (2011) sought to determine if self-protective factors are highly influenced by different types of trust present in a relationship by studying couples. Specifically, researchers were especially interested in impulsive trust, or one's instinctive trust system, which may influence self-protection regulation. According to their results, higher levels of impulsive trust generally signal that connecting to a partner is safe, while low levels of impulsive trust may be more indicative of avoidance or protective factors when one is cognitively loaded, or cannot take the time to more objectively and closely examine a given situation. This means that these individuals are trusting their automatic impulses, and acting on impulse rather than calculating their behavioral responses, revealing their more instinctual tendencies. Thus, when faced with a potentially rejecting partner, those with high levels of both impulsive trust and cognitive load are more likely to draw closer to their partners than those who with lower impulsive trust levels (Murray et al., 2011). This indicates that for cognitively taxed individuals, external factors do not weigh as heavily on risk regulative behaviors as they cannot spare the brainpower. Individuals who are inherently more trusting in general may be prone to connect more easily with their partners, while those individuals who are more skeptical or reluctant to trust may be more prone to self-protect.

In 2012, Murray, Lupien, and Seery sought to further study the importance of impulsive trust, suggesting that it may protect one from the negative effects of partner criticism, in addition to Murray et al.'s (2011) finding that impulsive trust triggers more connective behaviors. Researchers studied couples to determine the importance of

impulsive trust when faced with partner criticism within relationships. Results showed that individuals who are not impulsively trusting and are cognitively taxed are more likely to experience negative effects if their partners criticize them. However, high impulsively trusting people who are similarly cognitively taxed do not experience those same negative effects (Murray et al., 2012). Thus, it may be that those with higher levels of impulsive trust feel more secure in their relationships, clearly trust their partners more and, as a result, do not feel compelled to evaluate external factors. They take their partner's criticism at face value and do not see it as a sign of potential rejection. In contrast, those who are low in impulsive trust may have more reservations about their relationships inherently, and this can translate into their behaviors and trust patterns overall. Higher levels of impulsive trust may promote connection within relationships overall, thereby serving as a means of predicting possible connection within relationships.

As trust is clearly linked to risk regulation in general, Uysal, Lin and Bush (2012) studied the notion that trust and self-concealment likely create a give-and-take cycle in a romantic relationship. They studied college students already involved in a romantic relationship to uncover the relationship between trust and self-concealment. In general, results showed that partner concealment produces lower trust in a relationship, and similarly, lower trust produces higher reported partner concealment. Self-concealment also predicts levels of partner trust (Uysal et al., 2012). These results indicate that low levels of self-concealment and partner concealment in relationships can increase trust and thus increase connectedness within a given relationship. Self-concealment could indirectly affect the levels of connection and protection in a relationship. Self-

concealment may be an indirect means of self-protection, allowing one to only reveal what he or she is comfortable with, and altering this behavior may alter the foundation of a relationship. Future research may assess openness to connecting to one's partner, a factor possibly related to impulsive trust or the propensity to trust in general.

### **Risk Regulation and Attachment**

In their risk regulation model, Murray, Holmes, and Collins (2006) also noted a possible connection with some facets of attachment theory. One's self-biases and personal characteristics, in particular propensity to desire a relationship and ability to maintain a healthy relationship may impact one's employment of the risk regulation model. The defining characteristics of individuals with specific attachment styles may directly affect one's preferred level of connection and protection within a relationship (Murray et al., 2006). Specifically, Hazan and Shaver (1987) studied undergraduates to determine the general characteristics of the relationships of those with the various attachment styles. Researchers found that those with secure attachment styles tend to have happier, more trusting relationships; whereas those with avoidant attachment styles were found to be more fearful of intimacy. Furthermore, anxious and ambivalent attached people tend to have relationships marked by more jealousy and intense needs for the attention and affection they provided to their partners (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Behavioral patterns of relationship avoidance and anxiety may be one way to signify "protective" measures one can take defensively to prevent excessively connecting to one's partner, and as such, may be used to help identify individuals more prone to "protect" in general. Edenfield, Adams and Briehl (2012) used The Experiences in Close Relationship Inventory (ECR) to identify avoidance and anxiety levels related to



relationships to determine how those scores related to the four attachment styles. Results indicated that secure individuals had both low anxiety and low avoidance scores, while fearful individuals were their polar opposites, with high scores in both anxiety and avoidance. Preoccupied individuals had low avoidance scores but high anxiety scores, while dismissive individuals exhibited the opposite pattern, reporting low anxiety scores but high avoidance scores (Edenfield et al., 2012). As such, these results indicate that people with differing attachment styles experience relationships differently and, consequently, may exhibit differing behavioral patterns when engaged in those relationships. Thus, future research should seek to examine the behavioral patterns associated with each attachment style. Specifically, future research may be able to identify patterns of connection and protection related to specific attachment styles.

Given the need to address how attachment style differences are exhibited behaviorally, Bartz and Lydon (2008) sought to study how relationship anxiety can affect one's communal behaviors within the relationship by asking participants to imagine certain social interactions with important people in their lives and indicate what their behavior would be in response to such interactions. Researchers found that those people who are secure in attachment are more likely to follow what they termed to be a "communal script." According to Bartz and Lydon (2008), the communal script is a behavioral pattern in which one will do a favor for another that may entail some kind of personal sacrifice. This may reflect the level of comfort that the securely attached individuals have with their partners. In contrast, results showed that individuals with either an anxious-ambivalent or avoidant style of attachment feel much less comfortable engaging in the communal script (Bartz & Lydon, 2008). Moreover, these individuals

were not as selfless as the secure individuals as they were somewhat preoccupied with the reciprocity of their relationships, meaning they would perform favors for their partners, but would then stress about the implications of this act and fear that their partners would not reciprocate in turn. In fact, anxious-ambivalent and avoidant individuals were not comfortable even being on the receiving side of a favor, as when their partners performed a favor for them, they became even more anxious (Bartz & Lydon, 2008). Thus, the researchers speculated these acts may invoke more anxiety because of the expectation anxious-ambivalent individuals feel is now placed upon them.

Overall, the results of Bartz and Lydon's (2008) study denote the fact that the communal script behavioral patterns found in the secure individuals would likely be better at promoting connection in a relationship; whereas those with more insecure forms of attachment are likely to promote self-protection as their concern resolves around feelings of "indebtedness;" reflecting more selfish and self-preservation motivations. As such, their findings highlight the impact that attachment styles can have upon connection and protection patterns within romantic relationships. Thus, future research may more directly assess attachment style and the connection or protection patterns found within the relationships of individuals with differing attachment styles.

There may also be different relational outcomes among the various attachment styles, with individuals of one attachment style more prone to involvement in committed relationships, and exhibit high levels of "connection" patterns. Årseth, Kroger, Martinussen, and Bakken (2009) studied undergraduate women to determine if women who are more prone to be in a relationship are also more likely to exhibit a certain attachment style. Results showed that women who are considered intimates, (those who

are involved in a relationship currently, or have the capacity to enter into a committed relationship), are more likely to have secure attachment styles. According to Årseth et al. (2009), this may simply be a function of their likelihood to search for a relationship; an act that may not be as common for non-securely attached individuals. One limitation to this study, however, was the fact that the authors only studied women. Thus, more research is needed to explore whether this is also the case for men. Moreover, it may be that those with secure attachment styles are more prone to connect to their partners simply because of their inherent ability to form deeper, closer relationships. As such, these secure attachments ought to allow their relationships to be longer lasting and increase the likelihood that a secure individual will be in a relationship. In contrast, those with insecure attachment styles (i.e., fearful, dismissing-avoidant, or anxious-avoidant) may be more likely to engage in self-protect and draw away from their partners due to their inability to form healthy, well-rounded relationships. Given these interesting implications, empirical research is needed to address whether these relational outcomes are evidenced in those with differing attachment styles.

As risk regulation is mainly studied within the context of dating relationships, the long-term implications that risk regulation behavioral patterns, specifically long-term “protection” patterns may have upon relationships is not as extensively studied. Risk regulation patterns may not only affect shorter-term, dating relationships, but also continue to affect relationships even once a couple has entered marriage. Murray et al. (2013) speculated about the impact that heightened self-protection, (pulling away from one’s partner or not being fully open about oneself), may have when a relationship transitions from a simple dating relationship to marriage. Researchers studied newlyweds

to determine the impacts self-protection may have on relationship satisfaction. Results showed that being cautious is not a fatal weakness to a marriage in general; however, caution or self-protection exhibited in situations in which these behaviors are not necessary can have a significant impact on overall relationship satisfaction (Murray et al., 2013). Specifically, such behaviors create lower levels of relationship satisfaction for the partner exhibiting the self-protective behaviors and drawing away from the relationship (Murray et al., 2013).

Thus, self-protective behaviors, such as pulling away from one's partner or not fully disclosing certain aspects of oneself, which may not impact dating relationship quite as much, prove to be more influential once the relationship is taken to the next level. In fact, those who tend to engage in self-protective behaviors in their relationships may do more so in the context of a marriage because they feel that they have more to lose; however, by overly protecting themselves, they, in fact, may be creating an even more serious issue. Overall, these results indicate the need for connectedness in the maintenance of intimate relationships. Moreover, they show that it is important to discover one's preferred level of connection to one's partner and self-protection earlier in a relationship, and learn how to regulate these levels in light of creating more healthy relationships long-term, such as those created in the context of a marriage.

### **Self-Monitoring and Romantic Relationships**

Given the impact of individual differences in relationship outcomes, it may be important to consider how self-monitoring may relate to the risk regulation model. Specifically, self-monitoring is a personality characteristic related to how much one observes and regulates one's behaviors when immersed in various social situations

(Snyder, 1974). According to Synder, individuals may be characteristically classified as either a high self-monitor or a low self-monitor. High self-monitors regulate and adjust their behaviors much more freely and frequently in different social settings and thus have earned the nickname “social chameleons.” Low self-monitors, in contrast, tend to maintain fairly even expressions of behaviors no matter what social situation they are placed in and, due to this, may be viewed as rigid or unchangeable. Consequently, a high self-monitor may act completely differently around various groups of people, while a low self-monitor tends to continue to behave the same no matter who is present or where he or she is within a situational context.

As a person’s self-monitoring classification is clearly most salient when he or she is around other people, self-monitoring may significantly impact relationships, especially romantic pairings. Theoretically, Synder (1974) proposed self-monitors tend to act very differently in the context of romantic relationships as their social motivation differs greatly. This, while high self-monitors find it easy to initiate romantic relationships given their social nature and ability to remember superficial facts about individuals and fit in within any social circumstance. However, as they tend to focus on more external and superficial aspects of others (i.e. those they can use for social gain), they tend to lose interest in relational partners quickly as they get to know more about the person and realize their interests differ. Low self-monitors, on the other hand, tend to look for more meaningful connections with others, choosing to be around those who are similar to themselves in personality and worldview. As such, low self-monitors tend to have better, longer lasting romantic relationships. Moreover, in extrapolating from Synder’s theory, it may be that high self-monitors, as they tend to vary their social behavior to fit the

social circumstance, may encourage instability and dissatisfaction in their relationships; whereas low self-monitors, who exhibit stable behaviors, may nurture more healthy, secure relationships as their partner always knows what to expect.

As self-monitoring may significantly affect relationships, Snyder, Berscheid, and Glick (1985) sought to explore its possible relational impact during the initial, initiation phase. The researchers maintained that romantic relationships generally begin when one determines what is preferred in a partner and then finds someone who fulfills those requirements. In this light, a person's self-monitoring classification may impact what characteristics are desirable in a partner. As such, Snyder et al. (1985) proposed that self-monitoring may play a part in determining whether one places more weight on interior (personality) or exterior (appearance) factors when choosing a potential partner. To test this supposition, they studied the factors contributing to date initiation among undergraduate college men of varying self-monitoring levels. Their results revealed high self-monitors tended to focus more on exterior characteristics when evaluating potential partners, indicating they would sacrifice a positive personality to obtain a partner with a more favorable appearance (Snyder et al., 1985). Conversely, low self-monitors placed more emphasis on interior factors when evaluating potential partners, indicating they would choose a more positive personality over favorable appearance (Snyder et al., 1985).

Given the pattern of Snyder et al.'s (1985) results, indicating polar opposite tendencies in selecting potential mates, self-monitoring appears to be at work even before a relationship is established, and thus influences the genesis of a relationship. Moreover, this study showed that self-monitoring is a construct enmeshed with relationship

initiation, warranting further research to uncover the impact self-monitoring may have upon other aspects of relational functioning. Thus, for the purposes of the present study, it is of interest to see whether self-monitoring differences emerge in connection versus protection patterns, specifically in connecting to one's partner versus putting up walls to protect oneself from rejection.

As one's motivation for beginning a romantic relationship may be influenced by his or her self-monitoring categorization, Jones (1993) examined the connection between self-monitoring and both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for being in a relationship by studying the reasons undergraduates cite for participating in romantic relationships. According to Jones, extrinsic motivating factors are those that involve some type of outward reward, while intrinsic factors are more personal satisfaction for being in the relationship. Results of Jones's (1993) study revealed high self-monitors were more extrinsically motivated to be involved in a relationship, indicating they placed more emphasis on how they can benefit from a relationship. In contrast, low self-monitors were found to be intrinsically motivated, indicating they sought more internal gratification or personal satisfaction from their relationships, valuing their partner's trustworthiness, honesty, and loyalty over any social implications that are more valued by high self-monitors (Jones, 1993). Correspondingly, when ranking characteristics they preferred in their partners, high self-monitors ranked extrinsic factors as most important to them, while low self-monitors ranked more intrinsic factors as more important (Jones, 1993). Overall, the results of Jones' (1993) study suggest that high self-monitors are more focused on the external trappings of their romantic partners, such as how their social status may be affected by dating a physically desirable partner, while low self-

monitors are more focused on the internal aspects of relationships, selecting those who are a good personality match. Given the differing personal preferences and social motivations expressed by those with high versus low self-monitoring, it may be that both seek out partners who share their own self-monitoring style.

Exploring the idea that people seek out partners who reflect their own self-monitoring style, Norris and Zweigenhaft (1999) studied 38 couples involved in dating relationships of at least two months to determine how many partners actually matched in terms of self-monitoring classification. Results showed that partners' self-monitoring scores were positively correlated and couples were usually matched in terms of their self-monitoring identification, showing that high self-monitors were involved with other high self-monitors and low self-monitors were paired with other low self-monitors (Norris & Zweigenhaft, 1999). Given their results, Norris and Zweigenhaft suggested this similarity in self-monitoring style may be beneficial to the partners' compatibility, enhancing the likelihood of continuing their romantic relationship. Thus, when romantic couples share the same self-monitoring identification, the partners are more likely to have similar expectations for the relationship as they possess similar beliefs concerning what factors are most important in a romantic relationship. However, it also may be that high self-monitors may need to be in a relationship to feel as though they fit in and it is not so much the fact that they are looking for someone who matches their personality, but someone who behaves in the same manner they do as high self-monitors are fully invested in making the most out of any social situation. Thus, while low self-monitors are certainly looking for similar others personality-wise from a more long-term perspective,



high self-monitors may be seeking a partner who complements or enhances their social success (i.e., popularity).

As there is some indication that people may sometimes fake romantic interest in certain partners in order to obtain some secondary goal, Leck and Simpson (1999) studied whether there was a link between self-monitoring and feigning romantic interest, specifically if one group of self-monitors may be more skilled at feigning such interest. Results showed that high self-monitors were more capable of faking romantic interest, were more confident that they would be able to fake such interest, and also took more pleasure in the act of faking interest (Leck & Simpson, 1999). This may be due to the idea that some high self-monitors view dating as a way to climb the social ladder. Thus, by feigning romantic interest in and dating someone higher on the social ladder, they may obtain this goal. Also, by faking romantic interest, high self-monitors may be engaging in self-protective behavior as they are not being fully honest with their partners and are not allowing themselves to develop real feelings for other individuals, thereby lowering their risk of being hurt by the partner's potential rejection. Thus, further research may aid in uncovering the relationship between self-monitoring and propensity to either self-protect or connect within romantic relationships.

As self-monitoring appears to be figural during the initiation phase of a romantic relationships, it stands to reason to assume it is still at play even after a relationship is established, specifically in regard to commitment. Thus, in 1984, Snyder and Simpson studied undergraduate students to determine whether high and low self-monitors would choose a date partner based upon the partner's aptitude at performing a date activity or based upon the actual person he or she is dating. Specifically, they asked participants to

identify date activities they would enjoy and, of those, which activities their current partners were most proficient at. Moreover, they asked them to name/list one friend who was well skilled at each of the remaining activities. Then, participants were asked who they would like to go on a date with to engage in each of the identified activities (Snyder & Simpson, 1984). High self-monitors were shown to choose partners who were more skilled at given date activities even if this meant choosing a friend over their current dating partners. Low self-monitors, on the other hand, chose their partners based upon the person and not their skill levels at dating activities (Snyder & Simpson, 1984).

Snyder and Simpson's (1984) results suggest that high self-monitors would more likely substitute their current dating partners for a friend and also that they would be more willing to establish an intimate relationship with that friend when compared to low self-monitors. These preferences may imply that high self-monitors are more concerned with status, the special behavioral abilities and by extension the positive social perceptions of their dates, wanting to be with partners who excel at certain tasks. Also, high self-monitors may be less committed to their current partners, as they are more willing to date friends or anyone else who excels at the given task, demonstrating they are more interested in outward appearances than internal qualities. This is the exact opposite for low self-monitors who place quality over quantity and are more interested in the person than they are in their activity competencies.

Furthermore, Snyder and Simpson's (1984) revealed that high self-monitors generally have more dating partners than do low self-monitors. This may be due to the fact that low self-monitors tend to have longer lasting relationships than high self-monitors, essentially reducing the number of partners low self-monitors have. Snyder

and Simpson (1984) also showed that high self-monitors tend to have higher levels of initial intimacy in their relationships, with waning levels over time. In contrast, intimacy tends to increase throughout the relationships of low self-monitors, creating higher levels of intimacy in long-term relationships. In a study designed to replicate these findings, Norris and Zweigenhaft (1999) concluded that high self-monitors were less committed to their relationships than were low self-monitors as they were less optimistic at the prospect of marrying their partners. In particular, the trust factor of faith was found to be linked to self-monitoring, such that high self-monitors tended to have less faith in their partners' commitment to the relationship's longevity, indicating less commitment within the relationship overall (Norris & Zweigenhaft, 1999). As the aim of the present study is to determine whether there is a link between self-monitoring and the risk regulation model, it may be that low levels of relational commitment may indicate heightened self-protection, implying that high self-monitors may have a heightened level of self-protection, an implication that may be studied through future research.

One alternative measure of commitment to one's partner may be to determine how future oriented individuals are in terms of their relationships. Thus, Öner (2002) collected data from over one hundred undergraduate students to determine if self-monitoring was correlated with future time orientation, or positive views of the future of a relationship. Öner's results supported previous commitment research, indicating that Öner (2002) high self-monitors are less committal than low self-monitors in context of current romantic relationships. Moreover, low self-monitors were shown to have higher future time orientations for romantic relationships than did high self-monitors (Öner, 2002). This future orientation pattern also may be linked to the longer relationships of

low self-monitors as low self-monitors are oriented toward the future of their relationships, producing longer lasting relationships overall. As this pattern was the one supported by the research of Snyder and Simpson (1984) as well, it may be that low self-monitors exhibit more relationship-enhancing behaviors in the context of romantic relationships (i.e., behaviors that promote connection within relationships). As such, these behavioral differences need to be assessed further in future research.

In addition to behaviors that protect the individual versus enhance the relationship, self-monitoring also may influence the balance of power in romantic relationships. According to Oyamoto, Fuglestad, and Snyder (2010), equal power relationships create a feeling of closeness and higher intimacy levels for low self-monitors. Thus, when involved in a relationship wherein one partner holds more power than the other, low self-monitors tend to feel more distant from their partners and are motivated to work toward creating an equal power balance. In contrast, their results indicated high self-monitors tend to have relationships with a power imbalance wherein one partner holds more power than the other (Oyamoto et al., 2010). Unlike those with low self-monitoring, however, high self-monitors did not report lower levels of intimacy or feeling distant from their partners, indicating that the power imbalance was acceptable for them. Given this differential pattern of results, the researchers speculated high self-monitors may be attracted to a more dominant partner because he or she commands/holds more social power/status. As such, they stated these differences may be linked to the differences in important relationship features to each group of self-monitors, as proposed in earlier studies (e.g., Snyder et al., 1985). Thus, while high self-monitors are invested in attaining as much social favor and power as possible, low self-monitors are simply

concerned with the welfare of the relationship itself. Thus, further research is warranted to determine whether self-monitors differ in connection versus protection. For example, maintaining power imbalances in their relationships, especially ones in which the high self-monitor has more power than his or her partner, may be one way in which high self-monitors protect themselves from the pain of potential rejection. As such, this suggests that high self-monitors tend to promote self-protection within relationships, an idea that need further empirical examination.

For many people, dating eventually leads to a marital relationship or permanent union. Thus, as self-monitoring is influential in many aspects of a dating relationship, its impact may be seen when examining marriages as well. To this end, Leone and Hall (2003) studied 117 married individuals to determine the relationship between relationship satisfaction and self-monitoring. They found that low self-monitors tended to have higher satisfaction rates in their marriages as compared to high self-monitors. Also, high self-monitors tended to have higher divorce rates (Leone & Hall, 2003). Together, these different trends may be a function of the different reasons high and low self-monitors choose to initiate relationships with certain partners. As high self-monitors tend to initiate relationships based upon external factors, they may not consider trying to find partners with whom they are compatible with on deeper levels, resulting in increasing levels of disappointment and dissatisfaction as the relationship wears on and eventually divorce. As such, this tendency also suggests high self-monitors are less likely to engage in behaviors that promote connection within romantic relationships as their marriages are more dissatisfactory and more likely to end in divorce than those of low self-monitors.

Thus, given the importance of maintaining satisfactory relationships, further research is warranted to address these differential relational outcomes.

### **Summary**

Self-monitoring is clearly salient to the development and maintenance of romantic relationships; thus, it is reasonable to infer that this trait may influence other aspects of relationships not previously assessed in the empirical literature. However, as there is currently no research crossing self-monitoring with risk regulation, this study sought bridge these two concepts in hopes of determining the extent to which the two are related. Specifically, the risk regulation model suggests that relationships are governed by a “Person x Situation” structure (Murray, et al., 2006). This indicates that one’s personality characteristics and the situation he or she is in governs one’s risk regulatory behavior, that is, the amount to which one seeks to connect or protect within a relationship. Thus, as one’s level of self-monitoring reflects one’s personality and directly affects one’s behavior in various situations, self-monitoring may affect one’s engagement in the risk regulation model. More specifically, as self-monitoring closely influences the way one behaves in any given situation, it may account for one’s differing behaviors when involved in a romantic relationship. For example, previous research has shown that self-monitoring is tied to commitment levels in relationships (e.g., Norris & Zweigenhaft, 1999). Thus, as higher levels of commitment may signify connection or desired connection to one’s partner, more research is needed to assess this possible link.

Moreover, there is presently no literature that bridges the concepts of self-monitoring and attachment style. Therefore, this study included exploratory hypotheses to reveal potential interrelationships amongst these constructs as attachment styles are

thought to influence regulatory behavior patterns, such as relationship avoidance (Edenfield et al., 2012). As there are implications that both attachment style and self-monitoring may be in some way related to risk regulation patterns in romantic relationships, this study examined any interactions that may be at play between these two constructs.

Given the questionability of previous research regarding the risk regulation model's connection to self-esteem, the absence of literature on self-monitoring in conjuncture with the risk regulation model, and also the absence of literature on self-monitoring in conjuncture with attachment style, the current study sought to both confirm and expand upon past research. Specifically, as previous studies utilized portions of psychological scales to assess the relationship between self-esteem, connection and protection (some of which were simply constructed by the researchers for the specific study), the present study used more psychometrically sound methods to validate the previously discovered relationship between the two constructs. In particular, this study utilized widely-used, reliable, and valid measures to assess directly the constructs of "connection" and "protection," as opposed to previous studies, which largely used only portions of scales to identify each construct. Following the aims of the present study, the following hypotheses were proposed:

Hypothesis 1 predicted that self-monitoring would be positively related to self-esteem and the "connection" factors of dependency and need to belong. Moreover, self-monitoring would be inversely related to commitment and the "protection" factors of anxiety and avoidance. Furthermore, hypothesis 1a predicted that high and low self-monitors would differ in their levels of "connection" and "protection" factors.

Specifically, high self-monitors would report higher levels of self-esteem, dependency, and need to belong and lower levels of commitment, anxiety, and avoidance than low self-monitors.

Hypothesis 2 asserted that self-esteem would be positively related to the “connection” factors of dependency, commitment, and need to belong. Conversely, self-esteem would be negatively related to the “protection” factors of anxiety and avoidance. In an effort to explore the potential interrelationships among self-monitoring and attachment, Hypothesis 3 proposed that self-monitoring would be positively related to the preoccupied attachment style and inversely related to the secure and fearful-avoidant attachment styles. Furthermore, self-monitoring and gender differences were to be explored across the four attachment styles.

Hypothesis 4 proposed that individuals’ style of attachment would impact their scores on both “connection” and “protection” factors. For the connection factors, securely attached individuals were expected to score higher in dependency, commitment, and need to belong than those with the other three, insecure styles of attachment. For the “protection” factor of anxiety, it was anticipated that those with fearful-avoidant and preoccupied attachment styles would score higher than those with either a secure or dismissing-avoidant style of attachment. For the avoidance “protection” factor, it was anticipated that those with a dismissing-avoidant attachment style would score higher than those with any of the other three attachment styles. Moreover, it was suspected that attachment style differences would be observed in self-esteem scores. Specifically, securely attached individuals were expected to report higher self-esteem scores than those



with preoccupied and fearful-avoidant attachment; however, there was no expected difference between them and those with dismissing-avoidant attachment style.

Hypothesis 5 proposed that self-esteem would moderate the relationships among both attachment styles and self-monitoring and “connection” and “protection” outcomes. Specifically, it posited that preoccupied high self-monitors with low self-esteem would report the greatest levels of dependency, need to belong, and anxiety than all other comparison groups. In contrast, securely attached low self-monitors with high self-esteem were expected to report the greatest levels of commitment and lowest levels of avoidance in comparison to all other groups.

## **Method**

### **Participants and Procedure**

Participants in the present study consisted of 137 students enrolled in Introduction to Psychology courses at the University of South Carolina Aiken, ranging in age from 18 to 31 years old ( $M=19.01$ ,  $SD= 1.79$ ). The sample was comprised of 30 males and 107 females. Participants were all involved in a romantic relationship at the time of their participation, ranging in length from 1 to 72 months ( $M= 19.04$ ,  $SD= 16.7$ ). Additionally, participants reported their number of total relationships, which ranged from 1 to 25 ( $M= 2.94$ ,  $SD= 2.67$ ). Table 1 includes the participants’ self-reported demographic information (e.g., gender, class standing).

Data were collected using self-report questionnaire measures. Upon entering the laboratory room, each participant received a questionnaire packet, which included a demographics questionnaire, a measure of self-esteem (i.e., Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale), a measure of self-monitoring (i.e., Self-Monitoring Scale), two measures of

attachment style (i.e., Relationship Questionnaire, Relationship Scales Questionnaire), and measures of connection (i.e., Interpersonal Dependency Inventory, Investment Model Scale, Need to Belong Scale, Dimensionality of Marital Commitment) and a measure of protection (i.e., Experiences in Close Relationship- Revised). Table 2 includes descriptive statistics for all measures used in this study. Participants were compensated with nominal course credit in exchange for their voluntary participation.

### **Measures**

*Demographics Questionnaire* (see Appendix A). Participants completed a demographics questionnaire to obtain descriptive data, such as age, class year, and gender. This questionnaire also asked participants about the length of their current romantic relationship, the number of past romantic relationships, and each of those past relationships' estimated length of duration. Finally, participants were asked how committed they were to their partners and how satisfied they were with their partners and relationships, respectively. Indices of partner/relationship commitment and satisfaction was gathered on an eleven-point Likert-type scale where 0 = not at all committed/satisfied and 10 = extremely committed/satisfied.

*Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale* (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965; see Appendix B). The RSES is designed to evaluate one's general impression of oneself (Rosenberg, 1965). The RSES is a measure of trait self-esteem. This ten-item scale is completed on a five-point Likert scale, where 0 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. Total scores range from 10-50, with higher scores indicating higher levels of self-esteem. Items include such statements as "I feel that I have a number of good qualities" and "I feel that I do not have much to be proud of." The RSES has been validated generating alpha levels

consistently greater than .77, denoting acceptable levels of internal consistency (Rosenberg, 1965). The RSES is also correlated with the Feelings of Inadequacy Scale, Self-Liking Scale, and State Self-Esteem Scale, which suggests a relatively high level of validity (Ziegler-Hill, 2010).

*Self-Monitoring Scale* (SMS; Snyder, 1974; see Appendix C). The SMS is used to determine whether a person identifies as a high or a low self-monitor (Snyder, 1974). The SM scale is composed of 25 items, all of which include statements about one's behavior to which participants can respond either "true" or "false." When response is "true" statements such as "I find it hard to imitate the behavior of other people" indicate a low self-monitor and "I'm not always the person I appear to be" indicates a high self-monitor. The reliability of the SM scale has been calculated at .83 (Snyder, 1974). Validation of the SMS was completed by comparing scores from the SMS with scores from the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (M-C SDS), which determines how likely one is to engage in socially desirable behaviors. As predicted, those who identify as high self-monitors have low scores on the M-C SDS, with an  $r$  value of  $-.1874$  (Snyder, 1974).

*Interpersonal Dependency Inventory* (IDI; Hirschfeld, Klerman, Barrett, Korchin & Chodoff, 1977; see Appendix D). The IDI is a 48-item inventory designed to judge the level of dependency one has on one's partner. Participants respond to items on a four-point Likert-type scale, where 1= Not characteristic of me, and 4= Very characteristic of me. Total scores range from 48 – 192. Items include statements such as "I prefer to be by myself" and "Disapproval by someone I care about is very painful to me." Bornstein, Rossner, and Hill (1994) reported test-retest reliability scores for the IDI above .70

consistently, indicating adequate reliability. Validity of the IDI was also confirmed by Bornstein et al. (1994), who reported correlations between IDI scores and scores on the Rorschach Oral Dependency Scale on two separate occasions, indicating fair reliability.

*Experiences in Close Relationship- Revised* (ECR-R; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000; see Appendix E). The ECR-R was designed to test avoidance and anxiety related to relationships. It is a 36-item scale, including 18 items that assess anxiety and 18 items that assess avoidance. Items include statements such as “I often worry that my partner doesn’t really love me” and “I don’t feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners” to gauge anxiety and avoidance, respectively. These statements are scored on a seven-point Likert scale, where 1= Strongly Disagree and 7= Strongly Agree. Total scores range from 1 to 7 for both subscales of anxiety and avoidance, with higher scores indicating higher anxiety or avoidance. Test- retest reliability of the ECR-R has been calculated at .90 or above consistently (Sibley & Liu, 2004). To determine the validity of the ECR-R, the factors of avoidance and anxiety from the ECR-R were compared to the same constructs as measured by the Relationship Questionnaire, the scores were highly correlated at  $r = .51$  (Sibley, Fischer, & Liu, 2005).

*Investment Model Scale* (IMS; Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998; see Appendix F). The IMS is a 15-item scale designed to assess one’s level of commitment in his or her relationship. Commitment is assessed on a nine-point Likert-type scale where 0= Do not agree at all, and 8= Agree completely. Total scores range from 0 to 120. Items include such statements as “I feel completely attached to my partner and our relationship” and “I feel really terrible when things are not going well for my partner.” Alpha levels for the various constructs the IMS is designed to measure vary from .82 to .95, indicating high

reliability (Rusbult et al., 1998). The IMS was also found to be correlated with dyadic adjustment, the Relationship Closeness Inventory, and trust level, all indicating that the IMS does in fact measure commitment to relationships (Rusbult, et al., 1998).

*Dimensionality of Marital Commitment (DMC; Adams & Jones, 1997; see Appendix G).* The DMC is a measure of marital commitment. For the purposes of the present study, it will be altered to reflect romantic relationships in general rather than marital relationships specifically. Specifically, the word “spouse” in the items will be changed to “partner.” This 45-item scale includes such statements as “There is nothing that I wouldn’t sacrifice for my partner” and “I am completely devoted to my partner.” Items are scored on a five-point Likert-type scale where 1= Strongly disagree and 5= Strongly agree, with total scores ranging from 45-225. The varying dimensions of the DMC produced alpha levels ranging from .86- .91, indicating fairly strong reliability (Adams & Jones, 1997). Validity was determined by comparing objective commitment scores obtained from the DMC with the subjective ratings of other parties. Results showed that the objective scores from the DMC were fairly positively correlated with the subjective information provided by both spouses and other relatives (Adams & Jones, 1997).

*Need to Belong Scale (Leary, Kelly, Cottrell & Schreindorfer, 2007; see Appendix H).* The Need to Belong Scale is a 10-item scale designed to assess one’s need to belong, or one’s desire to be involved in some form of a meaningful relationship. Items are scored on a five-point Likert scale where 1= Strongly disagree and 5= Strongly agree. Items include statements such as “I want other people to accept me” and “I do not like being alone.” Total scores range from 10-50. Reliability for the Need to Belong Scale has

proven fairly strong, with an alpha level of .78 (Mellor, Stokes, Firth, Hayashi, & Cummins, 2008). While construct validity has shown a correlation between the Need to Belong Scale and the Need for Affiliation subscale of the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule and the Interpersonal Orientation Scale (Kelly, 1999).

*Relationship Scales Questionnaire* (RSQ. Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994a: see Appendix I). The RSQ is an objective way to measure attachment style. This 30-item scale helps to identify individuals as exhibiting one of the four attachment styles; secure, fearful, preoccupied or dismissing. Items include statements such as “I often worry that romantic partners don’t really love me” and “I find it easy to get emotionally close to others.” Items are scored on a five-point Likert-type scale where 1= Not at all like me, and 5= Very much like me. Griffin and Bartholomew (1994b) reported Cronbach alpha levels from .41 for the secure subscale and .70 for the dismissing subscale. Construct validity of the RSQ was tested using other self-report measures, such as Hazan and Shaver’s three-category attachment model, friend reports, romantic partner reports, and trained judge ratings of attachment to determine that the RSQ does in fact possess adequate construct validity (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994b). In addition, high discriminant and convergent validity were present when comparing the RSQ to the various secondary measures (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994b).

*Relationship Questionnaire* (RQ. Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991: see appendix J). The RQ is a 5-item scale designed to determine which of the four attachment styles individuals identify with. The RQ presents descriptions of the four attachment styles, of which the participants identify which they feel is most congruent with their general relationship style. The four attachment styles are also placed on a 7-point Likert-type

rating scale, with 1= Disagree Strongly, and 7= Agree Strongly. Adequate construct and discriminant validity of the RQ has been demonstrated in comparisons to other self-report measures such as a semi-structured interview, The Inventory of Interpersonal Problems, The Friendships Questionnaire, and the Sociability Scale (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Scharfe and Bartholomew (1998) conducted a study in which they uncovered stability ratings for the RQ at .73 and .74 for women and men respectively. This indicates relatively adequate reliability for the RQ.

### Results

For the purpose of analysis, participants were categorized as either high or low self-monitors using a median-split procedure. Specifically, the median-split procedure was performed using the median point of 13 to determine which participants fell within each category. Accordingly, participants who scored below the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile (scores ranging from 0 to 12;  $n = 65$ ) were classified as low self-monitors, while participants whose self-monitoring scores fell above the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile (scores ranging from 14 to 25;  $n = 57$ ) were labeled high self-monitors. Lastly, 15 scored exactly at the median of 13, and these participants were excluded from comparison analyses. This method was selected as it is consistent with recent research classifications of high and low self-monitors (e.g., Snyder, 1998; Leone & Hall, 2003).

Hypothesis 1 proposed that self-monitoring would be positively related to self-esteem and the “connection” factors of dependency and need to belong. Moreover, self-monitoring would be inversely related to commitment and the “protection” factors of anxiety, and avoidance. To test this hypothesis, Pearson’s  $r$  product-moment correlations were conducted for all pairwise comparisons (see Table 4). Results revealed partial

support for some aspects of this hypothesis. Specifically, there was a significant positive relationship between self-monitoring and dependency,  $r = .18, p < .05$ , indicating that higher levels of self-monitoring were associated with higher levels of dependency. A second significant positive relationship was discovered between self-monitoring and need to belong,  $r = .25, p < .01$ , showing that higher levels of self-monitoring were associated with higher levels of need to belong. However, contrary to prediction, results indicated a significant positive relationship between self-monitoring and relationship anxiety,  $r = .25, p < .01$ , suggesting that high self-monitoring was associated with higher levels of relationship anxiety in the present sample. Similarly, also in contrast to expectation, a significant negative relationship was found between self-monitoring and self-esteem,  $r = -.30, p < .01$ , indicating that higher levels of self-monitoring were associated with lower levels of self-esteem. Lastly, no relationships were found between self-monitoring and either commitment,  $r = -.02, n.s.$ , or relationship avoidance,  $r = .10, n.s.$

Hypothesis 1a further posited that high and low self-monitors would differ in their levels of “connection” and “protection” factors. Specifically, it was anticipated that high self-monitors would report higher levels of self-esteem, dependency, and need to belong and lower levels of commitment, anxiety, and avoidance than low self-monitors. A Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was used to test this hypothesis with the independent variable being self-monitoring and dependent variables being self-esteem and both “connection” and “protection” factors. Three significant main effects of self-monitoring were discovered (see Figure 1). A main effect of self-monitoring was found for self-esteem,  $F(1,114) = 7.53, p < .01$ . However, this findings was in contradiction to the posited hypothesis as low self-monitors ( $M = 42.05, SD = 5.50$ ) reported significantly



higher levels of self-esteem than did high self-monitors ( $M = 38.65$ ,  $SD = 8.08$ ) in the present study. In accordance with the prediction, a second main effect of self-monitoring was found for need to belong,  $F(1,114) = 5.83$ ,  $p < .05$ , with high self-monitors ( $M = 31.91$ ,  $SD = 8.03$ ) reporting significantly higher levels of need to belong than low self-monitors ( $M = 28.48$ ,  $SD = 7.67$ ). An additional main effect of self-monitoring on relationship anxiety approaching significance was discovered,  $F(1,114) = 3.19$ ,  $p < .08$ , denoting that high self-monitors ( $M = 61.88$ ,  $SD = 21.88$ ) reported marginally higher levels of relationship anxiety than did low self-monitors ( $M = 54.63$ ,  $SD = 22.75$ ).

A second MANOVA was conducted with gender included as an exploratory independent variable to determine any interactions among gender, self-monitoring, self-esteem and “connection” and “protection” factors. As this was an exploratory analysis, no predictions were made regarding the outcome. A two-way interaction was found between gender and self-monitoring on dependency,  $F(3,112) = 3.88$ ,  $p < .05$ . Specifically, high self-monitoring men reported the lowest levels of dependency ( $M = 101.94$ ,  $SD = 3.92$ ) while high self-monitoring women reported the highest levels of dependency ( $M = 114.37$ ,  $SD = 2.45$ ; see Figure 2). A main effect of gender on commitment also was discovered,  $F(1,112) = 4.30$ ,  $p < .05$ , revealing women reported significantly greater levels of commitment ( $M = 87.83$ ,  $SD = 2.46$ ) than did men ( $M = 76.84$ ,  $SD = 4.64$ , see Figure 3).

Hypothesis 2 proposed that self-esteem would be positively related to the “connection” factors of dependency, commitment, and need to belong. Conversely, self-esteem will be negatively related to the “protection” factors of anxiety and avoidance. To test this hypothesis, Pearson’s  $r$  product-moment correlations were conducted for all

pairwise comparisons (see Table 5). Results supported this hypothesis in one instance. Specifically, self-esteem was significantly negatively related to relationship anxiety  $r = -.48, p < .01$ . Contrary to hypothesized results, self-esteem was significantly negatively correlated with both dependency,  $r = -.43, p < .01$ , and need to belong,  $r = -.51, p < .01$ . Results revealed no relationship between self-esteem and commitment  $r = .06, n.s.$ , nor avoidance  $r = -.14, n.s.$

Hypothesis 3 posited that self-monitoring would be positively related to the preoccupied attachment style and inversely related to the secure and fearful-avoidant attachment styles. Furthermore, self-monitoring and gender differences were explored across the four attachment styles. To test this hypothesis, Pearson's  $r$  product-moment correlations were conducted for all pairwise comparisons. Contrary to expectations, results revealed no significant relationships between self-monitoring and any of the four attachment styles (see Table 6).

An exploratory MANOVA also was used to examine self-monitoring and gender differences across the four attachment styles in Hypothesis 3. Thus, self-monitoring and gender were entered as the independent variables, while the continuous ratings for the four styles of attachment served as the dependent variables for this exploratory analysis. Several main effects of gender on attachment style were discovered (see Figure 4). Specifically, there was a main effect of gender for the fearful attachment style,  $F(4,115) = 9.98, p < .01$ , denoting females ( $M = 13.08, SD = .34$ ) reported significantly higher levels of fearful attachment style than did males ( $M = 10.80, SD = .64$ ). Similarly, a second main effect of gender was found for the dismissing attachment style,  $F(4,115) = 4.88, p < .05$ , revealing females ( $M = 17.48, SD = .31$ ) reported significantly higher levels

of dismissing attachment style than did males ( $M = 16.01$ ,  $SD = .59$ ). The last main effect of gender was for the secure attachment style,  $F(4,115) = 4.57$ ,  $p < .05$ , showing that males ( $M = 17.41$ ,  $SD = .53$ ) reported significantly higher levels of secure attachment style than did females ( $M = 16.13$ ,  $SD = .28$ ). However, results indicated no interaction between self-monitoring and gender for any of the four attachment styles.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that individuals' style of attachment would impact their scores on both "connection" and "protection" factors. For the connection factors, it was predicted that securely attached individuals would score higher in dependency, commitment, and need to belong than those with the other three, insecure styles of attachment. For the "protection" factor of anxiety, it was anticipated that those with fearful-avoidant and preoccupied attachment styles would score higher than those with either a secure or dismissing-avoidant style of attachment. For the avoidance "protection" factor, it was anticipated that those with a dismissing-avoidant attachment style would score higher than those with any of the other three attachment styles. Moreover, attachment style differences were expected to be observed in self-esteem scores. Specifically, securely attached individuals were expected to report higher self-esteem scores than those with preoccupied and fearful-avoidant attachment; however, there was no predicted difference between them and those with dismissing-avoidant attachment style.

A MANOVA was used to assess Hypothesis 4 with the independent variable being attachment style and the dependent variables including both "connection" and "protection" factors as well as self-esteem. MANOVA results revealed several significant main effects of attachment style (see Figure 5). The first was a significant

effect of attachment style on relationship anxiety,  $F(3,128) = 6.54, p < .001$ . Specifically, preoccupied individuals ( $M = 72.22, SD = 23.47$ ) reported the highest levels of relationship anxiety, while dismissing individuals reported the lowest levels of relationship anxiety ( $M = 46.34, SD = 22.04$ ). The second main effect of attachment style was on dependency,  $F(3,128) = 5.67, p < .001$ , revealing preoccupied individuals ( $M = 118.22, SD = 13.81$ ) reported the highest levels of dependency, while secure individuals reported the lowest levels of dependency ( $M = 104.40, SD = 15.58$ ). A third main effect of attachment style was found for need to belong,  $F(3,128) = 5.24, p < .01$ , with preoccupied individuals ( $M = 35.56, SD = 6.84$ ) reporting the highest levels of need to belong and dismissing individuals reporting the lowest levels of need to belong ( $M = 25.45, SD = 8.51$ ). The final main effect of attachment style was on relationship avoidance,  $F(3,128) = 5.22, p < .01$ , indicating dismissing individuals ( $M = 51.83, SD = 19.49$ ) reported the highest levels of relationship avoidance and preoccupied individuals reported the lowest levels of relationship avoidance ( $M = 36.56, SD = 13.25$ ).

A second MANOVA was conducted for Hypothesis 4 to include gender as an exploratory independent variable to determine any interactions among gender, attachment style, self-esteem and “connection” and “protection” factors. As this was an exploratory analysis, no predictions were made regarding the outcome. MANOVA results revealed a main effect of gender for relationship avoidance, which approached significance,  $F(1,137) = 2.89, p < .10$ . Specifically, males ( $M = 52.56, SD = 4.15$ ) reported higher levels of relationship avoidance than did females ( $M = 44.27, SD = 2.56$ , see Figure 6). Additionally, a significant interaction effect was found across attachment style and gender on self-esteem,  $F(3,137) = 3.10, p < .05$ ; see Figure 7). A Tukey HSD post hoc test

was performed to assess the exact location of the difference, revealing that preoccupied females scored significantly lower than all other interaction groups in terms of self-esteem ( $MSE = 41.18, p < .05$ ).

In Hypothesis 5, self-esteem was proposed to moderate the relationships among attachment styles, self-monitoring, and “connection” and “protection” outcomes. Specifically, preoccupied high self-monitors with low self-esteem were expected to report the greatest levels of dependency, need to belong, and anxiety than all other comparison groups. In contrast, securely attached low self-monitors with high self-esteem were expected to report the greatest levels of commitment and lowest levels of avoidance in comparison to all other groups. A series of five stepwise regression analyses were used to test this hypothesis. The four attachment styles, self-monitoring, and self-esteem acted as the independent or predictor variables, while connection and protection factors served as the dependent variables.

Results of the first regression indicated that there are five significant predictors of the connection factor need to belong, including preoccupied attachment style, self-esteem, fearful attachment style, secure attachment style, and self-monitoring, in the present sample. Preoccupied attachment style emerged as the best predictor of need to belong,  $t(136) = 7.17, p < .001, r^2 = .28$ . This result indicates that higher levels of preoccupied attachment style accounted for 28% of variance in need to belong scores for the present sample. Preoccupied attachment style and self-esteem together made up the second model,  $t(136) = -4.95, p < .001, r^2 = .39$ , indicating that low self-esteem contributed an additional 11% of the variance in need to belong scores. The third model included preoccupied attachment style, self-esteem and fearful attachment style,  $t(136) =$

-3.62,  $p < .001$ ,  $r^2 = .44$ , revealing that lower levels of fearful attachment style accounted for an additional 5% of the variance in need to belong scores for the present sample. Secure attachment style combined with preoccupied attachment style, self-esteem and fearful attachment style in the fourth model to predict need to belong scores,  $t(136) = -3.09$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $r^2 = .48$ , indicating that lower levels of secure attachment style accounted for another 4% of the sample's variance in need to belong. The fifth and final model comprised preoccupied attachment style, self-esteem, fearful attachment style, secure attachment style, and self-monitoring,  $t(136) = 2.06$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r^2 = .50$ , revealing that higher levels of self-monitoring accounted for another 2% of the variance in need to belong. Overall, the combination of these five factors (e.g., preoccupied attachment style, self-esteem, fearful attachment style, secure attachment style, and self-monitoring) accounted for 50% of the variance in need to belong scores in the present sample (see Table 7).

A second stepwise regression analysis was performed to examine the connection dependent variable of dependency. Regression results revealed three factors to be significant predictors of dependency: preoccupied attachment style, self-esteem, and fearful attachment style. Preoccupied attachment style emerged as the best predictor of dependency,  $t(136) = 5.69$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $r^2 = .19$ , indicating that higher levels of preoccupied attachment accounted for 19% of variance in dependency scores within the present sample. Preoccupied attachment style and self-esteem together made up the second model,  $t(136) = -3.91$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $r^2 = .28$ , showing that lower levels of self-esteem contributed an additional 8% of the variance in dependency scores. The third model included preoccupied attachment style, self-esteem and fearful attachment style,  $t(136) =$

3.67,  $p < .001$ ,  $r^2 = .34$ , denoting that higher levels of fearful attachment accounted for an additional 6% of the variance in dependency scores for the present sample. The combination of these three factors (e.g., preoccupied attachment style, self-esteem, and fearful attachment style) accounted for 34% of the variance in dependency scores within the present sample (see Table 8).

The third regression explored the connection variable of commitment. However, as two measures of commitment were given to participants, two separate regressions were performed to analyze this supposition. When a regression was performed using the IMS (Investment Model Scale; Rusbult et al., 1998) score of commitment, results indicated that no predictor variables significantly predicted the variance within commitment scores. However, when a regression was performed using the DMC (Dimensionality of Marital Commitment; Adams & Jones, 1997) score of commitment, one significant predictor did emerge. Specifically, the regression using the DMC revealed that lower levels of fearful attachment significantly predicted higher levels of commitment,  $t(136) = -2.08$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $r^2 = .03$ . As such, this result indicates that lower scores of fearful attachment style account for 3% of the variance in commitment scores in the current sample (see Table 9).

A fourth regression was performed to explore the predictor variables of the protection factor of relationship anxiety. Overall, results revealed that preoccupied attachment style, self-esteem, fearful attachment style, and self-monitoring were all significant predictors of relationship anxiety. Preoccupied attachment style emerged as the best predictor of relationship anxiety,  $t(136) = 7.71$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $r^2 = .31$ . This result indicates that higher levels of preoccupied attachment accounted for 31% of variance in

relationship anxiety for the present sample. Preoccupied attachment style and self-esteem together constituted the second model,  $t(136) = -4.45, p < .001, r^2 = .40$ , revealing that lower levels of self-esteem contributed an additional 9% of the variance in relationship anxiety. The third model included preoccupied attachment style, self-esteem and fearful attachment style,  $t(136) = 3.94, p < .001, r^2 = .46$ , showing that higher levels of fearful attachment style provided an additional 6% of the variance in relationship anxiety for the present sample. Self-monitoring was introduced in the fourth model and final model, in addition to preoccupied attachment style, self-esteem and fearful attachment style,  $t(136) = 3.09, p < .01, r^2 = .50$ , denoting that higher self-monitoring scores additionally accounted for another 4% of the sample's variance in relationship anxiety. The combination of these four factors (e.g., preoccupied attachment style, self-esteem, fearful attachment style, and self-monitoring) accounted for 50% of the variance in relationship anxiety scores within the present sample (see Table 10).

The fifth and final regression explored predictor variables of the protection factor relationship avoidance. Two predictors, fearful attachment style and secure attachment style, were found to significantly predict relationship avoidance. Specifically, fearful attachment style was found to be the greatest predictor of relationship avoidance,  $t(136) = 5.60, p < .001, r^2 = .19$ . This indicates that higher levels of fearful attachment style predict 19% of the variance in relationship avoidance scores for the present sample. The second model added the predictor of secure attachment style,  $t(136) = -2.30, p < .05, r^2 = .22$ , indicating low scores of secure attachment contributed an additional 3% of the variance in relationship avoidance. Together, high levels of fearful avoidance and low



levels of secure attachment predicted 22% of the variance in relationship avoidance scores within the present sample (see Table 11).

### **Discussion**

As the current empirical literature fails to address either the impact of self-monitoring on risk regulation within romantic relationships or how attachment style differences may further compound such differences, this study sought bridge these experimental oversights by examining the interrelationships among the risk regulation model, self-monitoring, attachment style, and self-esteem within the context of romantic relationships. Overall, results confirmed many of the proposed hypothetical suppositions, indicating that the above-stated factors combine to differentially predict relationship outcomes. In particular, it may be that the additive mix of the factors studied within the present study affects the governing principles of the risk regulation model in romantic relationships. Moreover, as gender differences emerged within the findings of the present study, especially in regard to connection and protection factors, gender is seen as a salient contributing factor in predicting relationship outcomes.

The first hypothesis of the present study proposed that self-monitoring would be positively related to self-esteem, dependency and need to belong, and inversely related to commitment and anxiety, and avoidance. This prediction was partially supported as individuals who reported higher self-monitoring scores also reported higher levels of dependency and need to belong. Specifically, results suggest those who experience higher levels of self-monitoring also feel a higher need to belong and experience greater levels of dependency on others, especially in the context of intimate relationships. As

such, these results may reflect the basic qualities of high self-monitors, who have been dubbed “social chameleons” as they are more apt to adjust their behaviors in order to fit in with those around them (Snyder, 1974); correspondingly, it appears they engage in such behaviors to meet the demands of higher dependency and belongingness needs. Unexpectedly, the results of the present study also revealed that individuals with higher levels of self-monitoring had significantly higher scores of relationship anxiety. Although contrary to prediction, this result, too, may be explained in context of high self-monitors’ ever-changing behaviors to meet social demands, reflecting that such individuals worry about be able to become as close to others as they desire. Additionally, correlation results indicated that individuals with higher self-monitoring scores reported significantly lower scores of self-esteem, once again in opposition to the predicted outcome. As this hypothesis was based loosely on a handful of reported findings, it should be noted that these factors, in fact, have never been directly studied in conjunction with one another prior to this study. Thus, more research is needed to explore the interrelationship between traits levels of self-esteem and self-monitoring tendencies to either confirm or refute the present findings.

Hypothesis 1A further proposed that high self-monitors would have significantly higher levels of self-esteem, dependency, and need to belong and significantly lower levels of commitment, anxiety, and avoidance when compared to low self-monitors. This hypothesis was partially substantiated by the results, which revealed that high self-monitors reported significantly higher levels of need to belong and relationship anxiety than did low self-monitors. High self-monitors may report higher levels of need to belong as it is a characteristic reflected by their ever changing behavioral presentations

and their desire to blend in with those surrounding them (Snyder, 1974). Furthermore, low self-monitors reported significantly higher levels of self-esteem than did high self-monitors. As stated previously, self-monitoring had never been studied in conjunction with self-esteem prior to this study; thus, this finding is new and brings with it some theoretical and empirical questions that need to be addressed by further research. The best supposition as to why this result was yielded may be due to the stability of self-maintained by low self-monitors across social situations – they always present themselves as they are and do not try to change who they are to meet situational demands (Snyder, 1974). Thus, it may be that the more-established sense of self may allow a low self-monitor to feel more comfortable in his or her own skin, allowing for better self-evaluation and, consequently, higher self-esteem.

Additionally, an exploratory analysis performed to explore potential gender differences in Hypothesis 1 revealed a two-way interaction of gender and self-monitoring on dependency, denoting that high self-monitoring women reported the highest levels of dependency, while high self-monitoring men reported the lowest levels of dependency. This finding is partially in contrast with previous findings. High self-monitors generally have been found to be less committed to their relationships (Norris & Zweigenhaft, 1999); thus, by extension, it may be that they are also less dependent on their partners. However, the additive factor of gender may have cancelled out this interaction as high self-monitoring females were found to differ from high self-monitoring men, in that high self-monitoring women reported the highest levels of dependency overall. Gender also was found to influence commitment scores, with female participants reporting significantly higher levels of commitment to their current relationships than their male

counterparts. These gender differences may reflect basic gender differences in the context of romantic relationships, such as a man's reluctance to be as expressive in his commitment to a relationship (Balswick & Peek, 1971). Again, as these factors have never been studied in combination with one another, further research is needed to explore these gender effects.

The second hypothesis proposed that self-esteem would be positively related to the "connection" factors of dependency, commitment, and need to belong, and negatively related to the "protection" factors of anxiety and avoidance. As expected, self-esteem was significantly and negatively related to relationship anxiety, a protection factor. This finding aligns with past research, indicating that high self-esteem individuals tend to display lower levels of protection in context of intimate relationships (Murray et al., 2008). This means that, in general, individuals with higher self-esteem are more apt to connect to their partners and become more readily and easily invested in their relationships.

However, Hypothesis 2 also was contradicted in two instances as results indicated that self-esteem is negatively related to dependency and need to belong. As such, these findings also contradict previous research by Murray et al. (2008), indicating that individuals with high self-esteem were more likely to connect to their partners, which may be accomplished through dependency and reflective of a higher need to belong. These differing results may be due to a difference in the methodology of the current study, as previous research used sample items of existing scales to identify a single concept of "connection;" whereas, in the present study, the entire scale was used to assess the multiple concepts that lie within the "connection" category (i.e., commitment,

dependency, and need to belong). Due to these discrepancies, future research may use a more empirically validated process to identify connection and protection factors and examine their relationship to self-esteem once more.

Hypothesis 3 posited that self-monitoring would be positively related to the preoccupied attachment style and inversely related to the secure and fearful-avoidant attachment styles. Self-monitoring and gender differences also were explored across the four attachment styles; however, results indicated no such interrelationships. As a relationship between self-monitoring and attachment style had never previously been established, this hypothesis was based on the knowledge of the characteristics of each attachment style and the levels of self-monitoring. Nevertheless, exploratory analyses revealed that the genders differed with regard to the fearful, dismissing, and secure attachment style scores, with females reporting higher levels of fearful and dismissing attachment style, and males reporting higher levels of secure attachment style. Although, theoretically, individuals of both genders should have relatively even attachment style distributions, the distribution of the current study is in conflict with findings from previous research. For example, Matsuoka et al. (2006) found that, within an adolescent population, females were more securely attached than were males overall. Thus, further research is needed to determine whether this skewed distribution was typical or atypical of the college population in general.

In Hypothesis 4, it was posited that individuals' style of attachment would impact their scores on both "connection" and "protection" factors. Correspondingly, results indicated those differing attachment styles reported differential levels of relationship anxiety, dependency, need to belong, and relationship avoidance. With regard to

relationship anxiety, preoccupied individuals reported the highest scores and dismissing individuals the lowest. This finding aligns with Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) conceptualization of preoccupied individuals as having a "sense of unworthiness" and seeking validation from others, and the conceptualization of dismissing individuals as "invulnerable." Similarly, preoccupied individuals also reported the highest levels of dependency, while secure individuals reported the lowest levels of dependency. Again, these findings reflect previous theory and research, which suggests preoccupied individuals place their evaluation of themselves in others' perceptions, while secure individuals are believed to have a high level of self-worth and self-concept (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

With regard to the need to belong prediction specified in Hypothesis 4, preoccupied individuals reported the highest levels of need to belong; whereas dismissing individuals reported the lowest levels of need to belong. This aligns once more with Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) conceptualization of the two attachment styles, particularly the idea that dismissing individuals may tend to avoid relationships altogether, possibly due a significantly lower need to belong. In contrast, preoccupied individuals are believed to have a high need to belong as they desire nothing more than to be in a lasting, intimate relationship and will do anything to maintain such relationships. Lastly, for relationship avoidance, results indicated that dismissing individuals reported the highest levels, while preoccupied individuals reported the lowest levels of relationship avoidance. Once more, this supports the research of Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), which revealed that dismissing individuals tend to avoid intimate relationships, preferring to maintain an autonomous sense of self. In contrast,

preoccupied individuals feel very uncomfortable and unsure of themselves when they are without a relationship partner as they define themselves and base their sense of self-worth on their intimate relationships.

As an exploratory analysis was conducted for Hypothesis 4 to include gender as a possible moderator between attachment style, self-esteem and “connection” and “protection” factors, a main effect of gender was found for relationship avoidance. Males reported higher levels of relationship avoidance when compared to females. This may be due to the general lack of expressiveness of males (Balswick & Peek, 1971), and the implication that this may cause males to shy away from situations that would require emotional closeness and increased expressiveness, such as intimate relationships. Results also revealed a significant interaction of attachment style and gender for self-esteem with preoccupied females reporting lower self-esteem levels than all other groups. This could be yet another reflection of the basic characteristics of preoccupied individuals, such as not having an internal conceptualization of one’s self-worth (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). However, the gender difference therein calls for further research to determine why preoccupied men and women differ in their self evaluations.

In the fifth and final hypothesis, self-esteem was proposed to moderate the relationships among both attachment styles and self-monitoring and “connection” and “protection” outcomes. Results indicated the presence of several predictor factors, from those variables assessed in the present study, for all of the connection and protection factors analyzed. Specifically, need to belong was best predicted by high levels of preoccupied attachment style, low levels of self-esteem, low levels of fearful attachment style, low levels of secure attachment style, and high levels of self-monitoring. The

attachment style predictors may be explained by reflecting on the basic characteristics of each attachment style that would affect need to belong, such as a fearful individual's likelihood to protect against potential rejection and a preoccupied individual's need to receive acceptance from others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Similarly, as high self-monitors constantly change their behavior(s) to best fit their social surroundings, such behavior is suggestive of higher levels of need to belong (Snyder, 1974). Moreover, lowered self-esteem may cause a heightened need to belong due to a lower sense of self-worth and corresponding desire to be accepted by others. However, it should be noted that this finding is inconsistent with the assumptions of Murray et al. (2008), who proposed that individuals with low self-esteem would be more likely to "protect" and thus could have a lower need to belong. In this regard, it is worth noting that Murray et al.'s suppositions were based upon data derived from partial scale assessments of related variables, calling into question the overall validity of such findings. In contrast, full versions of reliable and valid scales of the constructs of interest were used in the present study, allowing for more empirically-sound conclusions. Nevertheless, further research is needed to address this inconsistent pattern of results.

Results for Hypothesis 5 also revealed that high levels of preoccupied attachment style, low levels of self-esteem, and high levels of fearful attachment all accounted for a significant percentage of the variance in dependency scores reported by the present sample. As previously discussed, preoccupied attachment style may affect the amount of dependency one displays in relationships due to characteristics of these individuals in terms of self-worth (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). High levels of fearful attachment may account for variance in dependency scores due to these individuals' fear of intimacy



and tendency to avoid social relationships (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Low levels of self-esteem also may affect dependency because of lowered self-worth, as discussed previously. However, this finding is inconsistent with that of Murray et al. (2008), who found that individuals with low self-esteem are more prone to exhibit protective behavioral patterns, inconsistent with heightened dependency on one's partner. Thus, more research is needed to address these empirical contradictions as this is only the second study to assess such interrelationships.

Hypothesis 5 results indicated that low levels of fearful attachment style were significant predictors of commitment. This association may be related to fearful avoidant individuals' tendency to avoid social situations, negative view of others, and fear of interdependency due to the potential for being hurt and/or abandoned (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Accordingly, the results of the present study, those with low levels of fearful attachment enjoy interdependence and possess a positive view of others, allowing them to have a stronger sense of commitment to their relationships and relationship partners, in particular. This appears to be consistent with the literature as past research has shown that individuals with avoidant attachment styles, in general, have been found to have more positive attitudes toward infidelity in relationships, reflecting lower levels of commitment to their current partners (DeWall et al., 2011). Thus, it makes sense than those who possess low levels of avoidance express higher levels of commitment in their relationships.

The fourth factor assessed in Hypothesis 5 was relationship anxiety. Accordingly, results indicated high levels of preoccupied attachment style, low levels of self-esteem, high levels of fearful attachment style, and high levels of self-monitoring best predict

relationship anxiety. This finding aligns with previously discussed characteristics of attachment style considered by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), including preoccupied individuals' concern with being accepted by others and fearful individuals' overall fear of intimate relationships. The finding that low self-esteem predicts relationship anxiety is also consistent with past research as relationship anxiety as Murray et al. (2009) found that individuals with low self-esteem exhibited higher levels of protection strategies in their romantic relationships (Murray et al., 2008). High levels of self-monitoring may predict relationship anxiety due to the established relationship between high self-monitors and lower levels of both commitment (Norris & Zweigenhaft, 1999) and future time orientation in relationships (Öner, 2002). As these individuals are already involved in romantic relationships, the anxiety may manifest as a lower level of commitment, possibly reflecting a worry of getting close to one's partner or an abbreviated outlook on the future of one's relationship.

Relationship avoidance was the final factor assessed in Hypothesis 5. High fearful attachment style and low secure attachment were found to be significant predictors of relationship avoidance. These findings are again supported by Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) characterization of each attachment style. In particular, those with a fearful attachment style tend to shy away from relationships in order to stay safe and avoid being hurt. Secure individuals, in contrast, are more likely to be more comfortable with relationships and less likely to avoid relationships, a behavioral pattern that is supported by the current findings (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

### **Limitations**

While the results of this study indicated numerous significant outcomes, there are some limitations worth noting that could be addressed in future research. One limitation possibly at play in the present study is the nature of the sample. While attempts were made to create an equal gender distribution, there were over three times as many female participants ( $n= 107$ ) as there were male participants ( $n=30$ ) in the present study; thus, women accounted for a significant percentage of the sample (78.1 %). However, this is not a surprising nor unexpected outcome as this gender discrepancy is generally consistent with most empirical psychological studies. Moreover, gender differences were observed in the present study despite this discrepancy, showing it to be a minor issue at best.

A second limitation resides in the fact that there was a wide range in the total number of past/current romantic relationships reported by the participants in the present sample (1 to 25), which may have affected the participants' views of relationships and affected their levels of commitment and level of dependency on their partners. Speculatively, it may be assumed that, given the youth of the sample and their wide range of relational partners, commitment and dependency levels might be lower than anticipated. Therefore, more research is needed to address this issue specifically.

Another limitation may be the distribution of attachment styles within the sample. Unexpectedly, there was a very small percentage of individuals with a preoccupied attachment style (6%) when compared to the other attachment styles (see Table 1). In addition, there was a much higher percentage of fearful individuals (39%), which is not aligned with estimations of attachment style distributions in the general population as articulated by the theory and research of Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991). As such,

this skewed distribution may have impaired the ability to detect some relationship outcome differences. Thus, future research may work to obtain a much more equitable or theoretically-aligned attachment style distribution in order to validate the findings of the present study.

Lastly, all data were gathered from participants enrolled in *Introductory Psychology* classes at a small southern university (i.e., University of South Carolina Aiken). Largely due to their status as college students, the majority of participants fell within a rather low age range (18 to 31 years old) with a mean of 19 years. Thus, the sample was very young overall with limited relationship experience. Taken together, these factors create a sample that is not likely to create results generalizable to the general population. Future research may seek to avoid these shortcomings by diversifying the sample, obtaining participants from various geographic locations and from a wider age range. Moreover, future research ought to evaluate the differences in connection and protection factors in participants with various ranges of relationship lengths to determine whether relationship length plays a factor in the presentation of these factors.

### **Conclusion and Future Directions**

Although there were some limitations to the current study, results revealed numerous significant findings, suggesting no significant impairment of the empirical findings and their implications. As self-monitoring was found relate to several connection and protection factors, including need to belong, dependency and relationship anxiety, the results indicate it plays a noteworthy role in the risk regulation model in general. Further, this is one of the first studies to consider the impact of attachment style within the context of the risk regulation model. Findings in this regard proved to be

plentiful, revealing that preoccupied individuals had the highest levels of relationship anxiety, dependency, and need to belong, while dismissing individuals had the highest levels of relationship avoidance. Correspondingly, these findings suggest more research is needed as this is a viable area of investigation. The current study also replicated some of the findings presented by Murray et al. (2008), confirming the negative relationship between self-esteem and relationship anxiety. However, results did fail to support some of their suppositions; for example, self-esteem was inversely related to the need to belong in the present study. As such, further research is needed to assess this relationship and its significance to the risk regulation model.

The findings of the present study also indicated that attachment style, self-esteem, and self-monitoring in varied combinations are likely predictors of all connection and protection factors. Moreover, exploratory analyses revealed that gender might also play a part in these interrelationships. Thus, as much of this study bridged gaps in the empirical literature as several of these constructs had not been studied in conjunction with one another previously, future research is needed to validate the results of the present study. In particular, as self-monitoring, attachment style and gender were viable factors in understanding the risk regulation model in the context of romantic relationships, future research ought to obtain equal sample representation of these three factors and all pairwise pairings to validate the findings of the present study. Moreover, gathering participants from geographic locations and differing socioeconomic statuses ought to allow for more generalizable results. Lastly, differences in protection versus connection factors need to be measured between married and dating individuals to see whether these different types of romantic relationships pull for different predictors of said factors.

Lastly, clinicians may use the information found in this study to raise self-awareness in their clients. In particular, clinicians who work with couples may find this literature particularly interesting. By understanding one's attachment style, self-esteem level and self-monitoring classification, clinicians may be better equipped to intervene in the lives of their clients. These characteristics may be used to foster understanding and acceptance between partners, as they can affect one's behaviors in the context of romantic relationships in particular. They also may be used to help clinicians more adeptly tailor interventions for their client's conflicts, and improve the quality of their relationships overall. In conclusion, future research ought to such clinical implications and applications as they can significantly ameliorate client outcomes.

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*Appendix B. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. (Rosenberg, 1965).*

**Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. For each of the questions in the next section, write in the number from the scale, which best describes how you feel about the statement.**

**1 = Strongly Disagree   2 = Disagree   3 = Undecided   4 = Agree   5 = Strongly Agree**

\_\_\_1. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

\_\_\_2. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

\_\_\_3. I wish I could have more respect for myself.

\_\_\_4. I certainly feel useless at times.

\_\_\_5. At times I think I am no good at all.

\_\_\_6. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

\_\_\_7. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

\_\_\_8. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

\_\_\_9. I feel that I do not have much to be proud of.

\_\_\_10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

*Appendix C. Self-monitoring Scale. (Snyder, 1974).*

The statements below concern your personal reactions to a number of different situations. No two statements are exactly alike so consider each statement carefully before answering. If a statement is true or mostly true as applied to you mark true as your answer. If a statement is false or not usually true as applied to you mark false as your answer. It is important that you answer as frankly and as honestly as you can. Record your responses in the spaces provided on the left.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I find it hard to imitate the behavior of other people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. My behavior is usually an expression of my true inner feelings, attitudes and beliefs.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. At parties and social gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things that others will like.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I can only argue for ideas which I already believe.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I can make impromptu speeches even on topics about which I have almost no information.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. When I am uncertain how to act in a social situation, I look to the behavior of others for cues.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I would probably make a good actor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I rarely need the advice of my friends to choose movies, books or music.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I sometimes appear to others to be experiencing deeper emotions than I actually am.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. I laugh more when I watch a comedy with others than when alone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. In a group of people I am rarely the center of attention.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. In different situations and with different people, I often act like very different persons.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I am not particularly good at making other people like me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Even if I am not enjoying myself, I often pretend to be having a good time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. I'm not always the person I appear to be.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. I would not change my opinions (or the way I do things) in order to please someone else or win their favor.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. I have considered being an entertainer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. In order to get along and be liked, I tend to be what people expect me to be rather than anything else.



- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. I have never been good at games like charades or improvisational acting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. At a party, I let others keep the jokes and stories going.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. I feel a bit awkward in company and do not show up quite so well as I should.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. I can look anyone in the eye and tell a lie with a straight face (if for a right end).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. I may deceive people by being friendly when I really dislike them.

*Appendix D.* Interpersonal Dependency Inventory. (Hirschfeld, Klerman, Barrett, Korchin & Chodoff, 1977).

**Please read each statement and decide whether or not it is characteristic of your attitudes, feelings, or behavior. Then assign a rating to every statement, using the values given below:**

**1 = Not characteristic of me**

**2 = Somewhat characteristic of me**

**3 = Quite characteristic of me**

**4 = Very characteristic of me**

- \_\_\_ 1. I prefer to be by myself.
- \_\_\_ 2. When I have a decision to make, I always ask for advice.
- \_\_\_ 3. I do my best work when I know it will be appreciated.
- \_\_\_ 4. I can't stand being fussed over when I am sick.
- \_\_\_ 5. I would rather be a follower than a leader.
- \_\_\_ 6. I believe people could do a lot more for me if they wanted to.
- \_\_\_ 7. As a child, pleasing my parents was very important to me.
- \_\_\_ 8. I don't need other people to make me feel good.
- \_\_\_ 9. Disapproval by someone I care about is very painful to me.
- \_\_\_ 10. I feel confident of my ability to deal with most of the personal problems I am likely to meet in life.
- \_\_\_ 11. I'm the only person I want to please.
- \_\_\_ 12. The idea of losing a close friend is terrifying to me.
- \_\_\_ 13. I am quick to agree with the opinions expressed by others.
- \_\_\_ 14. I rely only on myself.
- \_\_\_ 15. I would be completely lost if I didn't have someone special.
- \_\_\_ 16. I get upset when someone discovers a mistake I've made.
- \_\_\_ 17. It is hard for me to ask someone for a favor.
- \_\_\_ 18. I hate it when people offer me sympathy.
- \_\_\_ 19. I easily get discouraged when I don't get what I need from others.

- \_\_\_ 20. In an argument, I give in easily.
- \_\_\_ 21. I don't need much from people.
- \_\_\_ 22. I must have one person who is very special to me.
- \_\_\_ 23. When I go to a party, I expect that the other people will like me.
- \_\_\_ 24. I feel better when I know someone else is in command.
- \_\_\_ 25. When I am sick, I prefer that my friends leave me alone.
- \_\_\_ 26. I'm never happier than when people say I've done a good job.
- \_\_\_ 27. It is hard for me to make up my mind about a TV show or movie until I know what other people think.
- \_\_\_ 28. I am willing to disregard other people's feelings in order to accomplish something that's important to me.
- \_\_\_ 29. I need to have one person who puts me above all others.
- \_\_\_ 30. In social situations I tend to be very self-conscious.
- \_\_\_ 31. I don't need anyone.
- \_\_\_ 32. I have a lot of trouble making decisions by myself.
- \_\_\_ 33. I tend to imagine the worst if a love one doesn't arrive when expected.
- \_\_\_ 34. Even when things go wrong I can get along without asking for help from my friends.
- \_\_\_ 35. I tend to expect too much from others.
- \_\_\_ 36. I don't like to buy clothes by myself.
- \_\_\_ 37. I tend to be a loner.
- \_\_\_ 38. I feel that I have really get all that I need from people.
- \_\_\_ 39. When I meet new people, I'm afraid that I won't do the right thing.
- \_\_\_ 40. Even if most people turned against me, I could still go on if someone I love stood by me.
- \_\_\_ 41. I would rather stay free of involvements with others than to risk disappointments.

- \_\_\_ 42. What people think of me doesn't affect how I feel.
- \_\_\_ 43. I think that most people don't realize how easily they can hurt me.
- \_\_\_ 44. I am very confident about my own judgment.
- \_\_\_ 45. I have always had a terrible fear that I will lose the love and support of people I desperately need.
- \_\_\_ 46. I don't have what it takes to be a good leader.
- \_\_\_ 47. I would feel helpless if deserted by someone I love.
- \_\_\_ 48. What other people say doesn't bother me.



- \_\_\_ 16. It makes me mad that I don't get the affection and support I need from my partner.
- \_\_\_ 17. I worry that I won't measure up to other people.
- \_\_\_ 18. My partner only seems to notice me when I'm angry.
- \_\_\_ 19. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.
- \_\_\_ 20. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.
- \_\_\_ 21. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.
- \_\_\_ 22. I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners.
- \_\_\_ 23. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.
- \_\_\_ 24. I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.
- \_\_\_ 25. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.
- \_\_\_ 26. I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.
- \_\_\_ 27. It's not difficult for me to get close to my partner.
- \_\_\_ 28. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.
- \_\_\_ 29. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.
- \_\_\_ 30. I tell my partner just about everything.
- \_\_\_ 31. I talk things over with my partner.
- \_\_\_ 32. I am nervous when partners get too close to me.
- \_\_\_ 33. I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.
- \_\_\_ 34. I find it easy to depend on romantic partners.
- \_\_\_ 35. It's easy for me to be affectionate with my partner.
- \_\_\_ 36. My partner really understands me and my needs.

*Appendix F. Investment Model Scale (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998).*

### **My Goals for the Future of our Relationship**

Instructions: To what extent does each of the following statements describe your feelings regarding your relationship? Please use the following scale to record an answer for each statement listed below.

Response Scale:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Do Not Agree			Agree			Agree		
At All			Somewhat			Completely		

- \_\_\_ 1. I will do everything I can to make our relationship last for the rest of our lives.
- \_\_\_ 2. I feel completely attached to my partner and our relationship.
- \_\_\_ 3. I often talk to my partner about what things will be like when we are very old.
- \_\_\_ 4. I feel really awful when things are not going well in our relationship.
- \_\_\_ 5. I am completely committed to maintaining our relationship.
- \_\_\_ 6. I frequently imagine life with my partner in the distant future.
- \_\_\_ 7. When I make plans about future events in life, I carefully consider the impact of my decisions on our relationship.
- \_\_\_ 8. I spend a lot of time thinking about the future of our relationship.
- \_\_\_ 9. I feel really terrible when things are not going well for my partner.
- \_\_\_ 10. I want our relationship to last forever.
- \_\_\_ 11. There is no chance at all that I would ever become romantically involved with another person.
- \_\_\_ 12. I am oriented toward the long-term future of our relationship (for example, I imagine life with my partner decades from now).
- \_\_\_ 13. My partner is more important to me than anyone else in life – more important than my parents, friends, etc.

\_\_\_ 14. I intend to do everything humanly possible to make our relationship persist.

\_\_\_ 15. If our relationship were ever to end, I would feel that my life was destroyed.



Appendix G. Dimensionality of Marital Commitment. (Adams & Jones, 1997).

**Directions: Please answer the following questions by placing the appropriate number in the space provided using the scale described below:**

**1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Undecided; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree.**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ___ 1. I'm dedicated to making my relationship as fulfilling as it can be.   | ___ 12. I would not be embarrassed to get a divorce.  |
| ___ 2. A break-up would ruin my reputation.  | ___ 13. I truly believe that spouses should remain devoted to one another "for better or for worse."              |
| ___ 3. It is morally wrong to divorce your spouse.   | ___ 14. There is nothing that I wouldn't sacrifice for my partner.  |
| ___ 4. No matter what, my partner knows that I'll always be there for him or her.  | ___ 15. My family would strongly disapprove if I broke up with my partner.  |
| ___ 5. I have to stay with my partner or else my family will think badly of me.  | ___ 16. I don't feel obligated to remain in a relationship with my partner.                                       |
| ___ 6. I was raised to believe that once one gets married, one doesn't get divorced, no matter how unsatisfying the marriage may be. | ___ 17. I've spent too much money on my relationship with my partner that I could never break up with him or her. |
| ___ 7. It would be humiliating if my partner and I broke up.   | ___ 18. I want to grow old with my partner.   |
| ___ 8. I am completely devoted to my partner.  | ___ 19. I would be shattered if my partner and I broke up.  |
| ___ 9. Marriages are supposed to last forever.   | ___ 20. My friends would disapprove if I ended my relationship.   |
| ___ 10. I want to grow old with my partner.  | ___ 21. I could never leave my partner because it would go against everything I believe in.                       |
| ___ 11. When things go wrong in my relationship, I consider breaking up.   | ___ 22. I believe in the sanctity of marriage.  |
|  | ___ 23. A marriage should be protected at all costs.  |

- \_\_\_24. If there are too many problems in a relationship, it's okay to break up.
- \_\_\_25. I like knowing that my partner and I form an inseparable unit.
- \_\_\_26. When I image what my life will be like in the future, I always see my partner standing next to me.
- \_\_\_27. Under no circumstances should the marriage bond be broken.
- \_\_\_28. I frequently daydream about what it would be like to be in a relationship with someone other than my partner.
- \_\_\_29. I'm not very devoted to my partner.
- \_\_\_30. I feel free to break up with my partner if I so desire.
- \_\_\_31. I can imagine several situations in which the marriage bond should be broken.
- \_\_\_32. When spouses promise "to have and to hold," it means forever.
- \_\_\_33. I often think that my partner and I have too many irreconcilable differences.
- \_\_\_34. I don't think I could handle the shame of being divorced.
- \_\_\_35. I don't think it's morally wrong to divorce your spouse.
- \_\_\_36. I don't believe that marriages should last forever.
- \_\_\_37. I am not confident that my relationship will last forever.
- \_\_\_38. My partner and I remain together because we value the institution of relationships.
- \_\_\_39. I often think about what it would be like to be romantically involved with someone other than my partner.
- \_\_\_40. It would be shameful if my spouse and I broke up.
- \_\_\_41. I could never leave my partner; I have too much invested in him or her.
- \_\_\_42. I believe that marriage is for life regardless of what happens.
- \_\_\_43. I'm afraid that if I were to leave my partner, God would punish me.
- \_\_\_44. It would be particularly hard on my family and friends if my partner and I broke up.
- \_\_\_45. My future plans do not include my partner.

*Appendix H.* Need to Belong Scale. (Leary, Kelly, Cottrell & Schreindorfer, 2007).

**For each of the statements below, indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement by writing a number in the space beside the question using the scale below:**

- 1 = Strongly disagree**
- 2 = Moderately disagree**
- 3 = Neither agree nor disagree**
- 4 = Moderately agree**
- 5 = Strongly agree**

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. If other people don't seem to accept me, I don't let it bother me.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. I try hard not to do things that will make other people avoid or reject me.

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. I seldom worry about whether other people care about me.

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. I need to feel that there are people I can turn to in times of need.

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. I want other people to accept me.

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. I do not like being alone.

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. Being apart from my friends for long periods of time does not bother me.

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. I have a strong need to belong.

\_\_\_\_\_ 9. It bothers me a great deal when I am not included in other people's plans.

\_\_\_\_\_ 10. My feelings are easily hurt when I feel that others do not accept me.



- \_\_\_ 19. It is very important to me to feel self-sufficient.
- \_\_\_ 20. I am nervous when anyone gets too close to me.
- \_\_\_ 21. I often worry that romantic partners won't want to stay with me.
- \_\_\_ 22. I prefer not to have other people depend on me.
- \_\_\_ 23. I worry about being abandoned.
- \_\_\_ 24. I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others.
- \_\_\_ 25. I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like.
- \_\_\_ 26. I prefer not to depend on others.
- \_\_\_ 27. I know that others will be there when I need them.
- \_\_\_ 28. I worry about having others not accept me.
- \_\_\_ 29. People often want me to be closer than I feel comfortable being.
- \_\_\_ 30. I find it relatively easy to get close to others.

*Appendix J. Relationship Questionnaire. (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).*

Following are four general relationship styles that people often report. Place a checkmark next to the letter corresponding to the style that best describes you or is closest to the way you are.

\_\_\_ A. It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me.

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

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

\_\_\_ D. I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me.

Now please rate each of the relationship styles above to indicate how well or poorly each description corresponds to your general relationship style.

			Style A			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed	Strongly Agree		

			Style B			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed	Strongly Agree		

			Style C			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed	Strongly Agree		

			Style D			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/Mixed	Strongly Agree		

Table 1

*Participant Demographics*

Variables	<i>N</i>	Percent of Sample
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	30	21.9
Female	117	78.1
<i>Class Standing</i>		
Freshman	97	70.8
Sophomore	25	18.2
Junior	11	8.0
Senior	4	2.9
<i>Attachment Style</i>		
Secure	45	32.8
Fearful	54	39.4
Preoccupied	9	6.6
Dismissing	29	21.2

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics of Measures Included in Analyses*

Measures	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
RelNo	2.94	2.67	1	25
TimeDate	19.04	16.70	1	72
RSESTOT	40.77	6.98	15	50
NTBTOT	29.80	7.97	10	49
SMSTOT	12.83	3.80	4	21
ECRANXTOT	57.04	22.56	20	105
ECRAVDTOT	46.58	19.82	18	124
IMSTOT	85.49	23.21	18	120
RSQSecure	16.47	2.79	10	24
RSQFearful	12.61	3.40	5	20
RSQPreocc	11.39	3.00	4	20
RSQDismiss	17.22	3.00	9	25
DMCTOT	140.26	20.51	94	202
IDITOT	109.45	15.65	76	158

*Note.* RelNo=Number of relationships; TimeDate=Months dating current partner; RSESTOT=Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale total score (Rosenberg, 1965); NTBTOT=Need to Belong Scale total score (Leary et al., 2007); SMSTOT=Self-Monitoring Scale total score (Snyder, 1974); ECRANXTOT=Experiences in Close Relationships Scale Anxiety subscale score (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000); ECRAVDTOT=Experiences in Close Relationships Scale Avoidance subscale score (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000); IMSTOT=Investment Model Scale total score (Rusbult et al., 1998); RSQSecure=Relationship Scales Questionnaire Secure subscale score (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994); RSQFearful=Relationship Scales Questionnaire Fearful subscale score (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994); RSQPreocc=Relationship Scales Questionnaire Preoccupied subscale score (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994); RSQDismiss=Relationship Scales Questionnaire Dismissing subscale score (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994); DMCTOT=Dimensionality of Marital Commitment total score (Adams & Jones, 1997); IDITOT=Interpersonal Dependency Inventory total score (Hirschfeld et al., 1977).



Table 3

*Median Split Procedure for Self-Monitoring*

	Mean	Median	Std. Dev	Minimum	Maximum
Self-Monitoring	12.84	13.00	3.80	4.00	21.00

	Frequency	Percent
Low Self-Monitors	65	47.45
High Self-Monitors	57	41.61
Median Self-Monitors	15	10.95

Table 4

*Interrelations among Self-Monitoring, Self-Esteem, Dependency, Need to Belong, Commitment, Relationship Anxiety and Relationship Avoidance*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Self-Monitoring	----							
2. Self-Esteem	-.30**	----						
3. Dependency	.18*	-.43**	----					
4. Need to Belong	.25**	-.51**	.36*	----				
5. Commitment (IMS)	-.11	.05	.17*	.17*	----			
6. Commitment (DMC)	-.02	.06	.24**	.15	.58*	----		
7. Anxiety	.25**	-.48**	.49**	.40**	-.09	-.11	----	
8. Avoidance	.10	-.14	.12	-.09	-.57**	-.36**	.35	----

*Note.* \*\*=  $p < .01$ ; \*=  $p < .05$ . Commitment was measured using both the IMS=Investment Model Scale (Rusbult et al., 1998) and the DMC=Dimensionality of Marital Commitment (Adams & Jones, 1997).

Table 5

*Interrelations among Self-Esteem, Dependency, Need to Belong, Commitment, Relationship Anxiety and Relationship Avoidance*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Self-Esteem	----						
2. Dependency	-.43**	----					
3. Need to Belong	-.51**	.36**	----				
4. Commitment (IMS)	.55	.17*	.17*	----			
5. Commitment (DMC)	.06	.24**	.15	.58**	----		
6. Anxiety	-.48**	.49**	.40**	-.09	-.11	----	
7. Avoidance	-.14	.12	-.09	-.56**	-.36**	.35**	----

*Note.* \*\*=  $p < .01$ ; \*=  $p < .05$ . Commitment was measured using both the IMS=Investment Model Scale (Rusbult et al., 1998) and the DMC=Dimensionality of Marital Commitment (Adams & Jones, 1997).

Table 6

*Interrelationships among Self-Monitoring and Attachment Style*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Self-Monitoring	----				
2. Secure	-.06	----			
3. Fearful	-.09	-.45**	----		
4. Preoccupied	-.02	-.09	.11	----	
5. Dismissing	-.07	-.28**	.40**	.22**	----

*Note.* \*\* =  $p < .01$ .

Table 7

*Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Need to Belong*

Variables	B	SE B	$\beta$	$r^2$
<i>Model 1</i>				
RSQPreocc	1.40	.20	.53	.28
<i>Model 2</i>				
RSQPreocc	1.04	.19	.39	.28
RSESTOT	-.41	.08	-.36	.39
<i>Model 3</i>				
RSQPreocc	1.11	.19	.42	.28
RSESTOT	-.41	.08	-.36	.39
RSQFearful	-.55	.15	-.24	.44
<i>Model 4</i>				
RSQPreocc	1.15	.18	.43	.28
RSESTOT	-.33	.08	-.29	.39
RSQFearful	-.80	.17	-.34	.44
RSQSecure	-.65	.21	-.23	.48
<i>Model 5</i>				
RSQPreocc	1.20	.18	.45	.28
RSESTOT	-.28	.08	-.25	.39
RSQFearful	-.76	.17	-.33	.44
RSQSecure	-.65	.21	-.23	.48
SMSTOT	-.29	.14	.14	.50

*Note.*  $R^2 = .28$  for Model 1;  $R^2 = .39$  for Model 2;  $R^2 = .44$  for Model 3;  $R^2 = .48$  for Model 4;  $R^2 = .50$  for Model 5; ( $ps < .041$ ). RSQPreocc=Relationship Scales Questionnaire Preoccupied subscale score (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994); RSESTOT=Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale total score (Rosenberg, 1965); RSQFearful=Relationship Scales Questionnaire Fearful subscale score (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994);RSQSecure=Relationship Scales Questionnaire Secure subscale score (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994); SMSTOT=Self-Monitoring Scale total score (Snyder, 1974).

Table 8

*Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Dependency*

Variables	B	SE B	$\beta$	$r^2$
<i>Model 1</i>				
RSQPreocc	2.29	.40	.44	.19
<i>Model 2</i>				
RSQPreocc	1.69	.41	.32	.19
RSESTOT	-.70	.18	-.31	.28
<i>Model 3</i>				
RSQPreocc	1.54	.40	.30	.19
RSESTOT	-.70	.17	-.31	.28
RSQFearful	1.20	.33	-.26	.34

*Note.*  $R^2 = .19$  for Model 1;  $R^2 = .28$  for Model 2;  $R^2 = .34$  for Model 3; ( $ps < .000$ ).  
 RSQPreocc=Relationship Scales Questionnaire Preoccupied subscale score (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994); RSESTOT=Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale total score (Rosenberg, 1965); RSQFearful=Relationship Scales Questionnaire Fearful subscale score (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994).

Table 9

*Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Commitment*

Variables	B	SE B	$\beta$	$r^2$
<i>Model 1</i>				
RSQFearful	-1.06	.51	-.18	.03

*Note.*  $R^2 = .03$  for Model 1 ( $p < .04$ ). RSQFearful=Relationship Scales Questionnaire Fearful subscale score (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994).

Table 10

*Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Relationship Anxiety*

Variables	B	SE B	$\beta$	$r^2$
<i>Model 1</i>				
RSQPreocc	4.16	.54	.55	.31
<i>Model 2</i>				
RSQPreocc	3.25	.54	.43	.31
RSESTOT	-1.04	.23	-.32	.40
<i>Model 3</i>				
RSQPreocc	3.04	.52	.40	.31
RSESTOT	-1.05	.22	-.32	.40
RSQFearful	1.68	.43	.25	.46
<i>Model 4</i>				
RSQPreocc	3.25	.51	.43	.31
RSESTOT	-.82	.23	-.25	.40
RSQFearful	1.80	.42	.27	.46
SMSTOT	1.20	.39	.20	.50

*Note.*  $R^2 = .31$  for Model 1;  $R^2 = .40$  for Model 2;  $R^2 = .46$  for Model 3;  $R^2 = .50$  for Model 4; ( $ps < .002$ ). RSQPreocc=Relationship Scales Questionnaire Preoccupied subscale score (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994); RSESTOT=Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale total score (Rosenberg, 1965); RSQFearful=Relationship Scales Questionnaire Fearful subscale score (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994); SMSTOT=Self-Monitoring Scale total score (Snyder, 1974).



Table 11

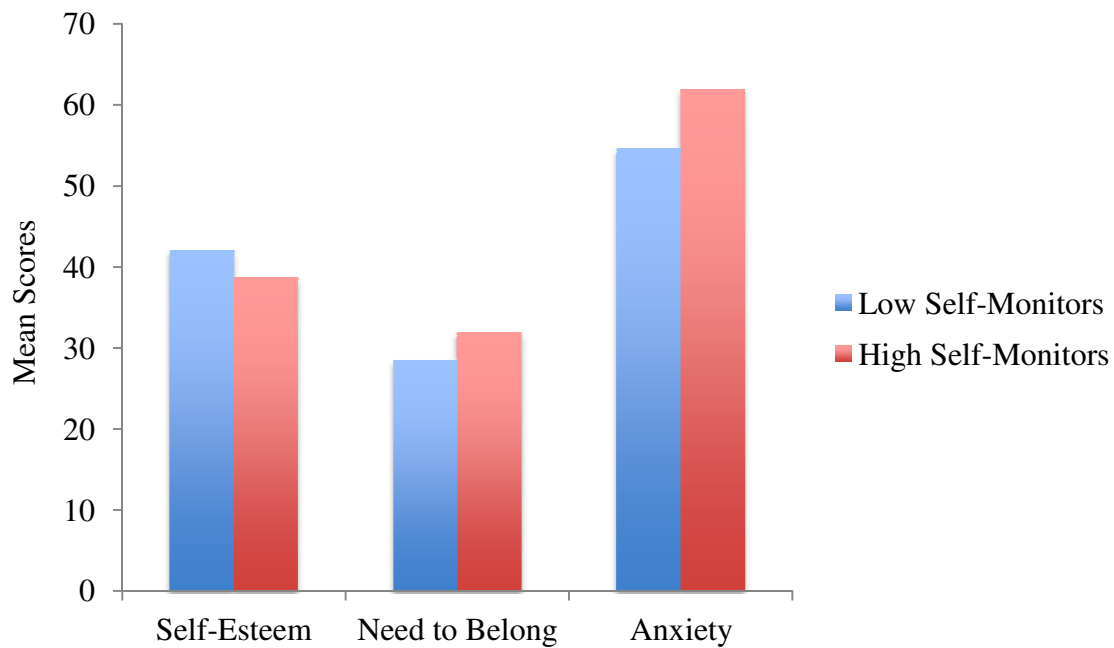
*Summary of Stepwise Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Relationship Avoidance*

Variables	B	SE B	$\beta$	$r^2$
<i>Model 1</i>				
RSQFearful	2.53	.45	.43	.19
<i>Model 2</i>				
RSQFearful	2.01	.50	.35	.19
RSESSecure	-1.40	.61	-.20	.03

*Note.*  $R^2 = .19$  for Model 1;  $R^2 = .22$  for Model 2; ( $ps < .023$ ). RSQFearful=Relationship Scales Questionnaire Fearful subscale score (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994); RSESSecure=Relationship Scales Questionnaire Secure subscale score (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994).

Figure 1

*Mean Differences in Self-Esteem, Need to Belong, and Anxiety by Self-Monitoring*



*Note.* Mean scores for the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965); Need to Belong Scale (Leary et al., 2007); and the Experiences in Close Relationships Anxiety subscale (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000) for high vs. low self-monitors.  $F_{\text{Self-esteem}}(1,114) = 7.53, p < .01$ ;  $F_{\text{NeedtoBelong}}(1,114) = 5.83, p < .05$ ;  $F_{\text{Anxiety}}(1,114) = 3.19, p < .08$ .

Self-Esteem	Mean
Low Self-Monitors	42.05
High Self-Monitors	38.65

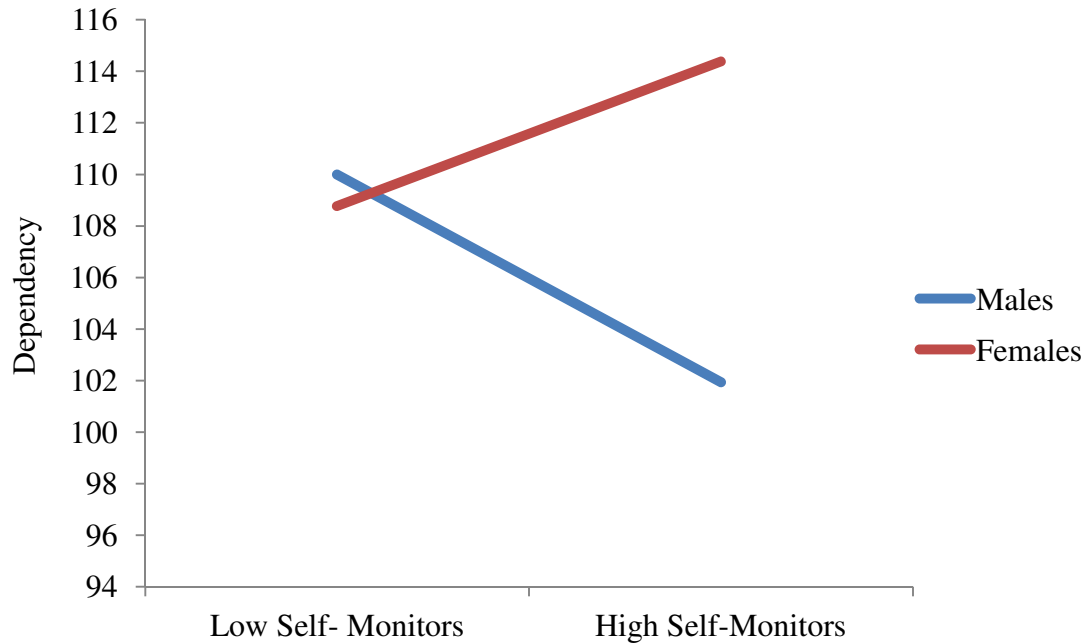
Need to Belong	Mean
Low Self-Monitors	28.48
High Self-Monitors	31.91

Relationship Anxiety	Mean
Low Self-Monitors	54.63
High Self-Monitors	61.68

Figure 2

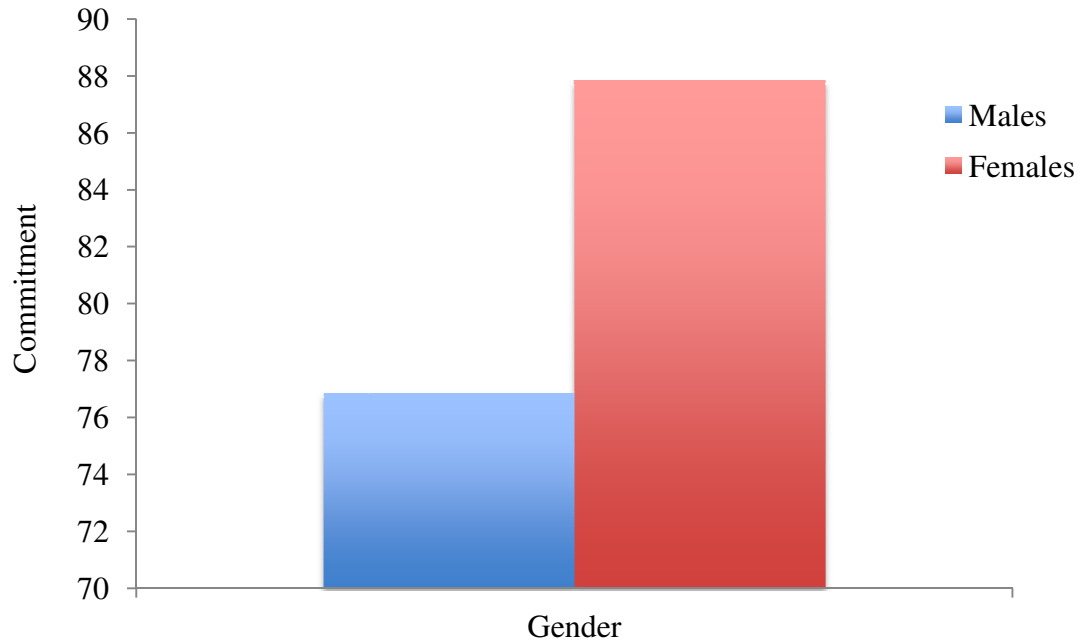
*Interaction Effect between Self-Monitoring and Gender on Dependency*



*Note.* Mean scores on the Interpersonal Dependency Inventory (Hirschfeld et al., 1977) for high vs. low self-monitors and males vs. females,  $F(3,112) = 3.88, p = .05$ .

<u>Dependency</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>
Low Self-Monitors	110.00	108.76
High Self-Monitors	101.94	114.37

Figure 3

*Mean Differences in Commitment by Gender*

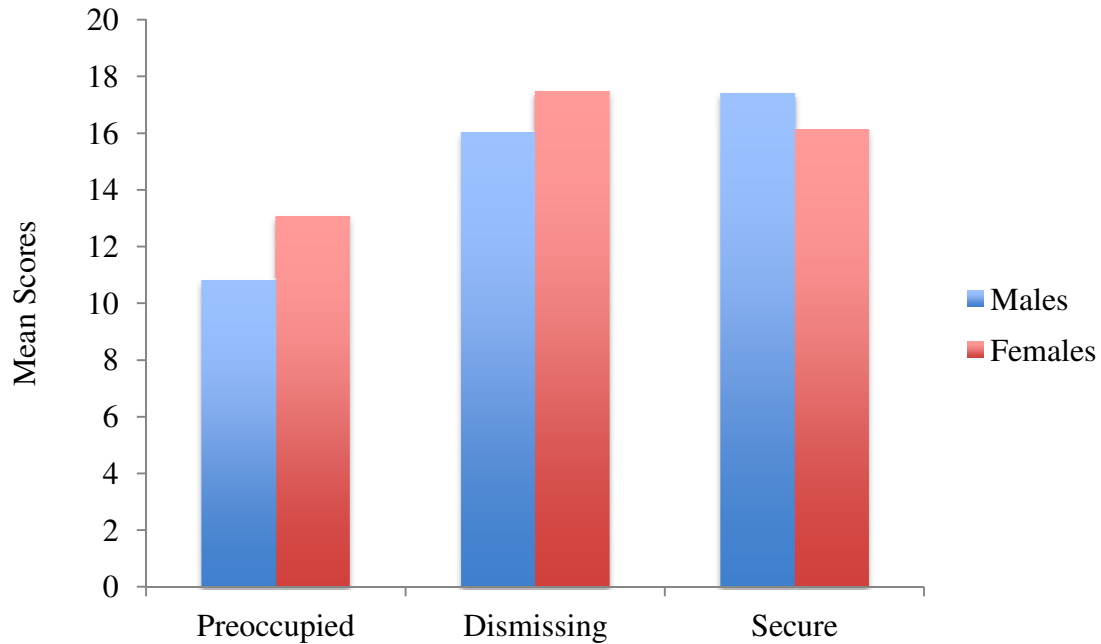
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*Note.* Mean scores for Investment Model Scale (Rusbult et al., 1998) for males vs. females,  $F(1,112) = 4.30, p < .05$ .

Commitment	Mean
Males	76.84
Females	87.83

Figure 4

*Mean Differences in Preoccupied, Dismissing, and Secure Attachment Style by Gender*

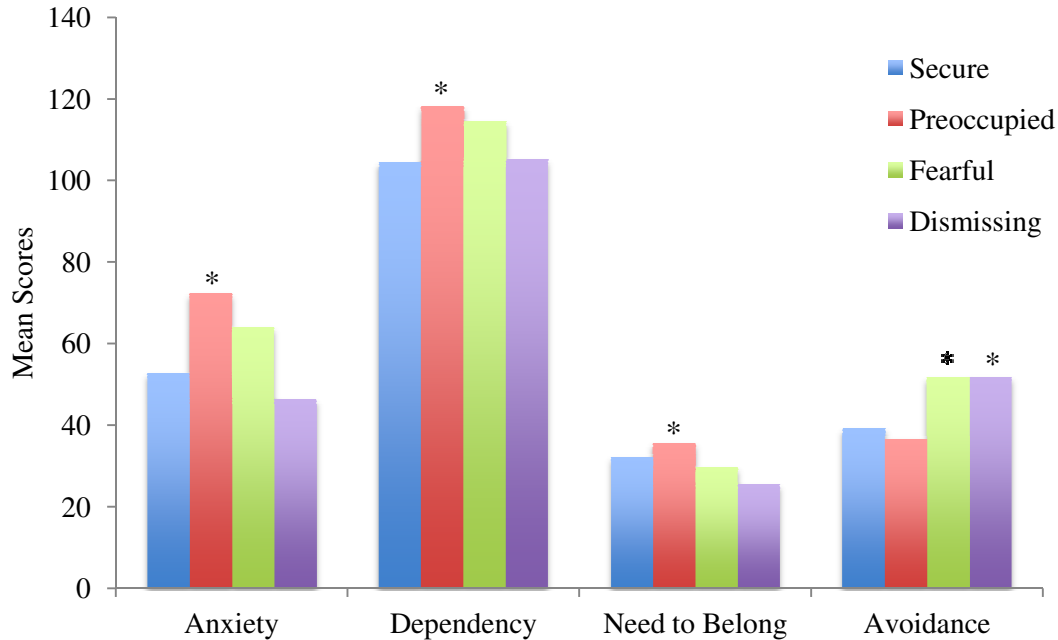


*Note.* Mean scores for Relationship Scales Questionnaire Preoccupied, Dismissing, and Secure subscales (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994) for males vs. females.  $F_{\text{Preoccupied}}(1,115) = 9.98, p < .01$ ;  $F_{\text{Dismissing}}(1,115) = 4.88, p < .05$ ;  $F_{\text{Secure}}(1,115) = 4.57, p < .05$ .

Preoccupied Attachment Style	Mean
Males	10.80
Females	13.08
Dismissing Attachment Style	Mean
Males	16.01
Females	17.48
Secure Attachment Style	Mean
Males	17.41
Females	16.13

Figure 5

*Mean Differences in Relationship Anxiety, Dependency, Need to Belong, and Relationship Avoidance by Attachment Style*



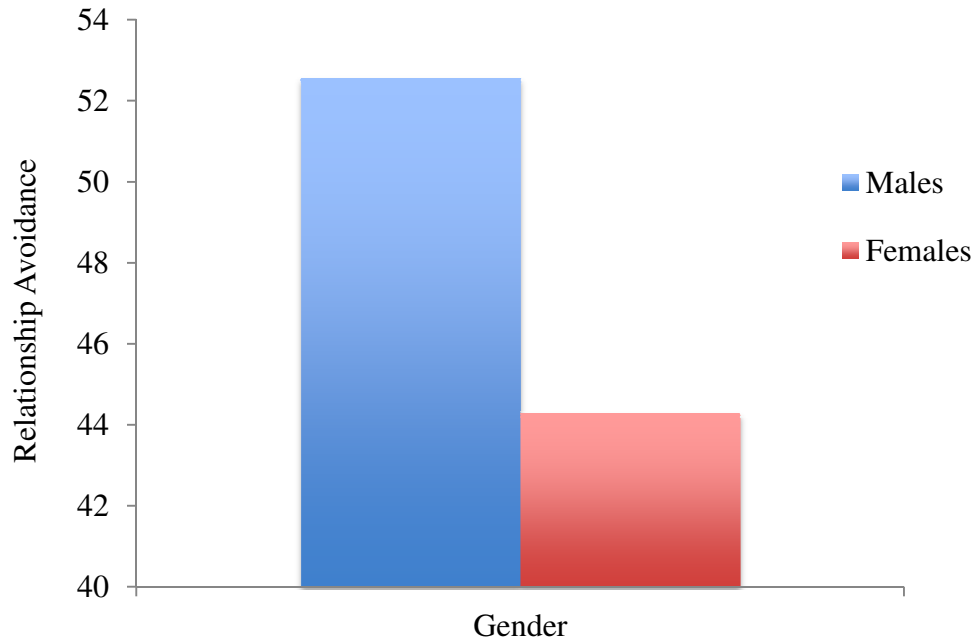
Note. Mean scores for Experiences in Close Relationships Anxiety and Avoidance subscales (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000); Interpersonal Dependency Inventory (Hirschfeld et al., 1977); and Need to Belong Scale (Leary et al., 2007) for the four attachment styles.  $F_{\text{Anxiety}}(3,128) = 6.54, p < .001$ ;  $F_{\text{Dependency}}(3,128) = 5.67, p < .001$ ;  $F_{\text{NeedtoBelong}}(3,128) = 5.24, p < .01$ ; and  $F_{\text{Avoidance}}(3,128) = 5.22, p < .01$ .

Relationship Anxiety	Mean	Need to Belong	Mean
Secure	52.56	Secure	32.09
Preoccupied	72.22	Preoccupied	33.56
Fearful	63.98	Fearful	29.61
Dismissing	46.34	Dismissing	25.45

Dependency	Mean	Relationship Avoidance	Mean
Secure	104.40	Secure	39.09
Preoccupied	118.22	Preoccupied	36.56
Fearful	114.52	Fearful	51.67
Dismissing	105.10	Dismissing	51.83

Figure 6

*Mean Differences in Relationship Avoidance by Gender*

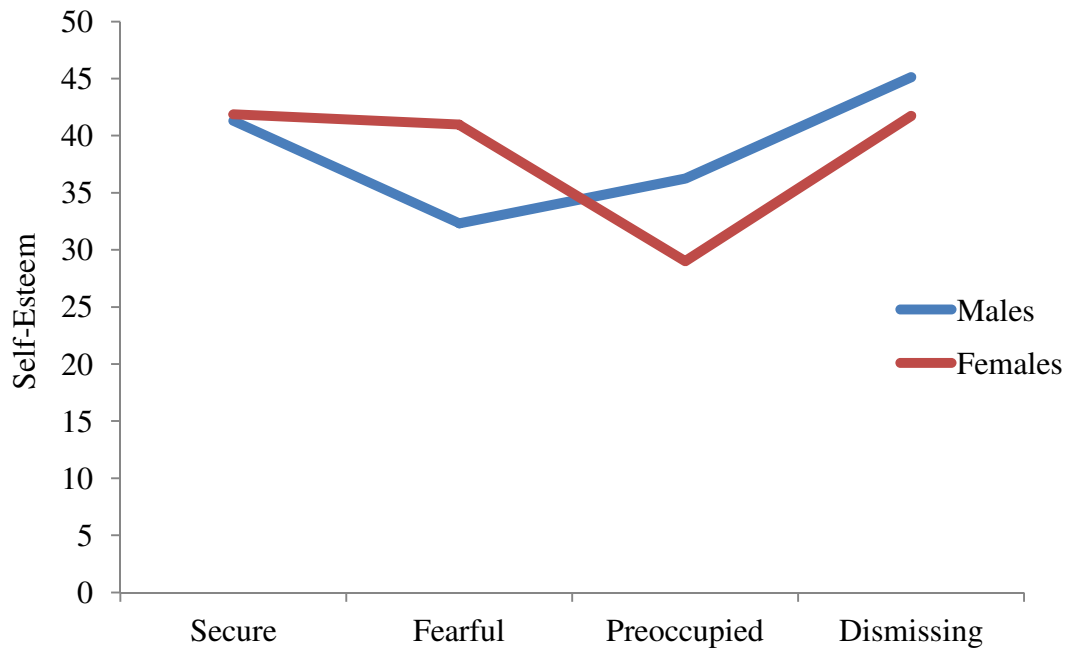
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*Note.* Mean scores for Experiences in Close Relationships Avoidance subscale (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000)  $F(1,123) = 2.89, p < .01$ .

Relationship Avoidance	Mean
Males	52.56
Females	44.27

Figure 7

*Interaction Effect of Attachment Style and Gender on Self-Esteem*



*Note.* Mean scores on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) for the four attachment styles (Secure, Fearful, Preoccupied, Dismissing) and males vs. females,  $F(3,137) = 3.10, p < .05$ . A Tukey HSD post hoc test revealed that preoccupied females had the lowest levels of self-esteem ( $MSE = 41.18, p < .05$ ).

Self-Esteem	Males	Females
Secure	41.31	41.86
Fearful	32.33	40.96
Preoccupied	36.25	29.00
Dismissing	45.14	41.73