Attachment Style Convergence and Divergence Across College Students' Friendships and Romantic Relationships

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ABSTRACT. Attachment representations in friendship and romantic relationship contexts were examined in a sample of 398 college students. Analyses examined patterns of attachment style in both relationship contexts, divergence and convergence in attachment style, and links between attachment representations and negative peer and romantic relationship experiences (i.e., relational and physical victimization and betrayal). The majority of participants reported more secure attachment representations, relative to preoccupied or dismissing attachment. However, analysis of biological sex indicated that men reported more dismissing attachment styles with both friends and romantic partners, relative to women. Additionally, significant links were observed between negative peer and romantic relationship experiences and attachment representations, in theoretically consistent directions.

As a communal species, the role of relationships formed by humans is important for social development. An element of relationships considered imperative to achieve is intimacy (Collins & Sroufe, 1999). The development of intimacy is reliant on the experiences in which one engages and the choices one makes. Collins and Sroufe (1999) argued that in order to obtain intimacy, individuals must value closeness and be able to tolerate and express strong emotions within the context of the relationship. Close relationships give the individual the opportunity to learn what kinds of expectations they should have with regard to interpersonal communication, as well as to learn to accept feedback from others (Collins & Sroufe, 1999). Attachment theory provides a compelling framework for understanding the development of capacity for intimacy and for generating hypotheses about continuity and change in intimacy experiences over time (Ainsworth, 1989). Many individuals encounter hardships in their close relationships. Some face social victimization (e.g., bullying) while others are betrayed by their friends or romantic partners. How individuals perceive these events can affect the course of that relationship (Finchman, 2001). Since these perceptions affect the relationship itself, it could also generalize into other types of relationships or to attachments developed in the future. In this study, negative past relationship events were examined in relation to attachment experiences in both close friendships and romantic relationships.

Hazan and Shaver (1987) first applied the tenets of attachment theory to adult romantic relationships. They theorized that the emotional bond developed between adult romantic partners shares a similar motivational system to the emotional bond between infants and their caregivers. Some parallels between adult and infant attachment include (a) both feel safe when the attachment figure is present and responsive, (b) both engage in close, intimate bodily contact, and (c) both feel insecure when the other person is not available. Hazan and Shaver (1994) assessed attachment experiences among adult participants via self-report measures and observed that adult romantic representations could be adequately captured with the same attachment categories observed in parent-child attachment relationships: (a) secure; (b) dismissing or avoidant; and (c) preoccupied or ambivalent.

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Further, attachment styles in adult participants were observed in similar proportions to those reported in the parent-child attachment literature with samples in the United States; roughly 60% of participants were categorized as secure, 25% as avoidant or dismissing, and 15% as anxious or preoccupied (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Finally, attachment representations in adult participants were linked to relationship experiences and relationship expectations in theoretically defensible ways.

Relational Views

Many researchers have suggested that relationships with friends, romantic partners, and family provide overlapping, but distinct, attachment-related functions, such as the provision of a secure base from which to explore the world and support during distressing situations (Furman & Buhrmester, 1992; Furman & Wehner, 1994; Laursen & Collins, 1994; Savin-Williams & Berndt, 1990). Furman and Wehner (1994) coined the term "views" to describe attachment-related belief systems about important relationships with family, friends, and romantic partners. They defined views as the unconscious and conscious perceptions individuals hold about themselves, their relationship partners, and the relationship. Furman and Wehner (1994) suggested that views are formed through both the interactions and experiences of the current relationship and experiences from previous relationships.

Although views of a particular type of relationship (e.g., friendships) are theorized to be influenced by other types of relationships (e.g., parent-child relationships or romantic relationships), views of different relationships are not expected to be identical because they are influenced strongly by experiences in different contexts. People enter into relationships with expectations for the relationship based on past experiences in similar relationships and in other types of connections they have had (Furman & Wehner, 1994). These preconceptions shape how individuals act and may lead to fulfilling their expectations (Snyder, Tanke, & Berscheid, 1977). If these expectations are not met, they may gradually be altered (Furman & Wehner, 1994). Past romantic relationship experiences and relationships with others are likely to impact the quality of emerging romantic relationship views. Thus, although views of different types of relationships might be expected to be similar, based on the cumulative relational experiences the individual has had, distinctions may emerge in the attachment views of different types of relationships (e.g., friendships vs. romantic relationships; Furman & Wehner, 1994).

Developmental Change and Convergence vs. Divergence

The transition into adulthood may be characterized by insecurity and anxiety about the changes that individuals are facing (Arnett, 2004). Despite the importance of forming close relationships in adolescence, it has been indicated that while in the high school setting, the presence of parents helps students handle stressful life events (Erickson, 1963; Greenberg, Siegel, & Leitch, 1983). However, as these students enter university, peer relationships may become even more central for managing stressors and emotions, and adjusting successfully to the college environment (Swenson, Nordstrom, & Heister, 2008). Research has suggested that not only can peer relationships influence how students develop, but these relationships may also affect the student's ability to concentrate on academics (Swenson et al., 2008). At times, romantic relationships formed during transition to adulthood may alter the original attachment style to which someone adheres (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003, 2007). In Dinero, Conger, Shaver, Widaman, and Larsen-Rife's (2011) study, it was found that a person's romantic relationships do influence the person's general attachment style. Thus, emerging adulthood may be a critical developmental stage for understanding continuity and discontinuity in attachment experiences across different close relationship types.

There has been speculation as to why attachment style may not be convergent across different important relationships. Furman and Wehner (1998) theorized that experience differentially affects attachment style in different types of relationships. They said that individuals' views in their relationships are open to change depending on their experiences. Expectations also play a role in the development of certain views about a relationship. If individuals' expectations differ from what actually occurs in a relationship, this can change their view of that particular type of relationship (Furman & Wehner, 1998). Kirkpatrick and Hazan (1994) suggested that perhaps one's romantic attachment style might alter due to a change in the functioning of the relationship, but Baldwin and Fehr (1995) found that attachment style did not necessarily change with romantic relationship

status. In sum, the available literature suggests that attachment style is modestly stable across developmental transitions, but is amenable to influence by relationship experiences across relationship types.

Maladaptive Peer and Romantic Experiences

Research has shown that relationship quality with peers can influence later romantic relationships (Linder, Crick, & Collins, 2002). Poor peer relations have been repeatedly linked to psychological and physical victimization among women later in life, even marital violence (O'Leary, Malone, & Tyree, 1994; Sharpe & Taylor, 1999). In distressed couples, members with insecure attachment styles tended to view the other person's behavior in a way that enhanced distress (Johnson, Makinen, & Millikin, 2001). Insecure members of the relationship may also take minor disappointments in the current relationship and turn them into something bigger, often attributing the little things as a reflection of past wrongs that had happened to them. This negative view of their relationship eventually could lead to only remembering the negative aspects of the relationship. Combining the elements of adhering to a negative schema about their relationship and escalating small issues into a major problem due to past experience, it has been suggested that future actions engaged in by either individual could lead to the other feeling like a hostage in their relationship (Johnson et al., 2001). Additionally, when betrayal occurs in a relationship, individuals who adhere to an avoidant attachment style tend to further distance themselves from their partner; whereas, anxious individuals may obsess over the betrayal act and react emotionally (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2006). Ledly et al. (2006) found that children who were victimized in elementary school were at greater risk for later social intimacy difficulties. Specifically, individuals with victimization histories grew up to be less comfortable with intimacy and trusting others, more likely to fear abandonment, and more likely to suffer from a low self-esteem. Thus, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that negative relationship events (e.g., victimization, rejection, or betrayal) would be linked to more negative or insecure views of close relationships (Johnson et al., 2001).

Summary and Research Questions

The current study examined attachment related views, as defined by Furman and Wehner (1994), and the concordance and discordance between close friendships and romantic relationships. As has been suggested, attachment views across relationships may overlap, and past relationships affect emerging ones. Thus, this study examined associations between attachment styles across friendships and romantic relationships and peer-victimization and relationship betrayal. The views of close friendships and romantic relationships are likely differentially associated with relationship specific histories of victimization and betrayal. The following research questions were addressed:

1. What are the patterns of friendship and romantic relationship attachment views among college students? To what extent are attachment views for friendship and romantic relationships convergent and divergent?

Based on the available literature, we hypothesized that the majority of emerging adults would hold secure views of both close friendships and romantic partners, and that modest overlap across relationship types would exist. Further, recent data (Del Giudice, 2011) indicate that attachment experiences in adult romantic relationships demonstrate systematic gender differences. As the applicability of these gender differences to friendship attachment is unknown, all analyses were conducted separately for men and women.

2. How are reported negative experiences in past peer and romantic relationship contexts related to attachment representations in friendships and romantic relationships?

We expected that histories of betrayal and victimization would be linked to less secure attachment views, and that links within relationship type (i.e., betrayal in romantic relationships and attachment views of romantic relationships) would be stronger than links across relationship types (e.g., betrayal in romantic relationships and attachment views of close friendships).

Methods

Participants

Participants were 381 undergraduate student volunteers, ages 17 to 26 ($M = 19.92$, $SD = 2.16$), enrolled in both introductory and advanced psychology courses at Utah State University. Women represented 67% of the sample. Of the sample, 90.3% of participants were White and 82.9% were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Approximately half (50.4%) of participants were first year students, and over 50% of participants

were either 18 or 19 (35.2% were 18, and 21.3% were 19); 36.2% of participants were single, 28.3% were casually dating, 22.3% reported being in a serious relationship, 3.7% were engaged, 10.2% were married, and 0.3% were divorced.

Measures

Behavioral Systems Questionnaire. The Behavioral Systems Questionnaire (BSQ; Wehner & Furman, 2000) is a 65-item measure assessing attachment, caregiving, affiliation experiences, and physical/sexual behavior. All four scales are relevant for assessment of romantic relationship views, but only the attachment, caregiving, and affiliation scales are administered to assess views of friendships or parent-child relationships. For the purpose of this study, only the 15-item attachment scale was used to assess attachment views with romantic partners and friends. Scores were calculated for secure, dismissing, and preoccupied attachment styles. Sample items in this portion of the BSQ include "I seek my romantic partner/friend when something bad happens," "I do not ask my romantic partner/friend to comfort me," and "My romantic partner/friend acts as if I count on them too much," for secure, dismissing, and preoccupied styles, respectively. Scoring is based on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Items within a subscale are summed to create a total score. For the attachment, caregiving, and affiliation scales, a mean alpha = .89 (range = .84 to .94) was found in previous research (Flanagan & Furman, 2000). In this study, secure romantic attachment yielded an alpha of .87, dismissing views demonstrated an alpha of .84, and preoccupied yielded an alpha of .83. Alphas for secure, dismissing, and preoccupied styles in close friendships were .87, .84, and .85, respectively.

Self-Report of Aggression and Social Behavior Measure. The Self-Report Measure of Aggression and Victimization (Linder et al., 2002; Morales & Crick, 1998) is a 56-item questionnaire with subscales for relational aggression, physical aggression, relational victimization, physical victimization, exclusivity, and pro-social behavior. Within each domain, separate scores are calculated for experiences in peer relationships and experiences in romantic relationships. Respondents use a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (*not at all true*) to 7 (*very true*). Previous research using subscales from this measure have obtained reliability coefficients above .70 (Linder et al., 2002; Morales & Crick, 1998). With the current data, separate alphas were calculated for the relational victimization, physical victimization, and exclusivity scales representing experiences for both friendship and romantic relationships. Romantic and friendship relational victimization scales yielded alphas of .82 and .74, respectively. Physical victimization scales resulted in an alpha of .63 for romantic relationships and .69 for platonic relationships. Romantic exclusivity showed an alpha of .79, and friendship exclusivity yielded .67. General prosocial behaviors yielded an alpha of .83. Estimates of internal consistency for some scales were relatively low; however, all scales were retained for analyses, with awareness that lower reliability may have reduced the likelihood of detecting significant associations among the variables of interest.

Betrayal Questionnaire. The Betrayal Questionnaire is a 24-item measure designed for the purpose of this study. Items were developed to assess betrayal experiences with friends and romantic partners. Eleven items tap common experiences of feeling betrayed by a friend (e.g., "has your friend ever put you down?"). Thirteen items assess experiences of betrayal in romantic relationships (e.g., "has your romantic partner ever cheated on you with another romantic partner?"). Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 (*never*) and 5 (*many times/often*). Alphas were .88 for friendship betrayal and .91 for romantic relationship betrayal.

Procedure

Once Institutional Review Board approval was obtained for this study, students were informed of the opportunity to participate through announcements in their psychology courses and notices posted on the class websites. Participation in this study was used by the students as one of many ways they could receive course credit for lab requirements. Participants completed the survey online at their convenience. Before being allowed to complete the survey, participants were directed to an informed consent page. Participants were told that some survey items addressed personal issues and potentially emotion-triggering relational experiences. Participants who consented to participate clicked a button labeled "continue" to be forwarded to the survey. For sections of the survey which inquired about romantic relationship experiences, students who had never been in a relationship skipped those parts of the measure. All data were encrypted for secure transmission. Upon completion, participants were prompted to close the page so third party individuals would

not see their information. There was a link to a separate survey where participants submitted their names and instructors' names to receive credit for participating.

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Patterns of Attachment Representation

Table 1 presents means and standard deviations for men and women for all study variables. Generally, both men and women reported relatively low scores on measures of victimization and betrayal (i.e., means below the mid-point of the scales), and average scores on the measures of attachment views were consistent with attachment theory predictions (i.e., lower scores for preoccupied and dismissing views, relative to secure). Two mixed two-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were calculated. In the first ANOVA, scores on the secure, dismissing, and preoccupied scales for romantic relationships were used as a repeated measure (each participant obtained a score for each of the three attachment styles, thus violating the assumption of independence for an independent samples ANOVA), and biological sex was used as a between-subjects factor. There was a significant main effect for attachment style, $F(2, 738) = 182.42$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .33$. Overall, participants reported (a) higher secure attachment scores than dismissing scores, and (b) higher dismissing scores than preoccupied scores. All Bonferroni pairwise comparisons were significant. Additionally, although there was no significant main effect for biological sex, $F(1, 369) = 1.68$, $p = .203$, $\eta^2 = .004$, there was a significant interaction between biological sex and attachment style, $F(2, 738) = 25.53$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$ (see Figure 1). Men demonstrated higher dismissing attachment scores than women, $t(369) = 5.46$, $p < .001$, while women demonstrated higher secure attachment scores than men, $t(369) = -5.67$, $p < .001$.

Similarly, for the second ANOVA, the repeated factor was comprised of secure, dismissing, and preoccupied scores within the friendship context, and biological sex was the between-subjects factor. Results showed no significant main effect for biological sex, $F(1,371) = .63$. $p = .429$, $\eta^2 = .002$; however, a significant main effect for attachment style was observed, $F(2,742) = 177.67$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .32$, and the pattern of Bonferroni pairwise comparisons was the same as the main effect for romantic attachment style. Finally, a significant interaction was observed between biological sex and attachment style, $F(2,742) = 26.92$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$ (see Figure 2). The pattern of interaction for friend attachment scores was the same as the pattern for romantic attachment scores. Men demonstrated higher dismissing attachment scores than women, $t(371) = 5.19$, $p < .001$, while women demonstrated higher secure attachment scores than men, $t(371) = -5.81$, $p < .001$.

Convergence and Divergence in Attachment Representations

Participants were categorized either as dismissing, preoccupied, or secure in both friendship and romantic relationship contexts, based on

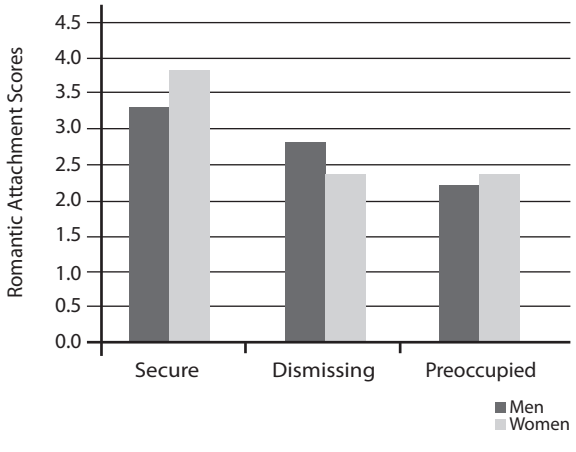
TABLE 1

Men and Women Means *(SD)* for all Study Variables

	Males ($N = 123$)		Females ($N = 252$)	
Attachment Views	Friend	Romantic Partner	Friend	Romantic Partner
Secure	3.01 (0.83)	3.30 (0.84)	3.54 (0.82)	3.81 (0.82)
Dismissing	3.09 (0.73)	2.84 (0.75)	2.61 (0.89)	2.37 (0.79)
Preoccupied	1.98 (0.72)	2.22 (0.79)	2.03 (0.73)	2.33 (0.81)
Relationship Experiences				
Relational Victimization	2.88 (1.20)	2.28 (1.03)	3.45 (1.44)	2.02 (1.15)
Physical Victimization	2.07 (1.13)	1.44 (0.93)	1.66 (0.89)	1.27 (0.74)
Exclusivity	2.33 (0.91)	2.85 (1.19)	2.49 (0.97)	2.82 (1.13)
Betrayal	2.16 (0.56)	1.80 (0.57)	2.42 (0.70)	1.91 (0.73)
Prosocial Behaviors	5.39 (0.74)		5.69 (0.75)	

FIGURE 1

Interactions Between Biological Sex and the Mean Scores for Attachment Style in Romantic Relationships



the highest score achieved on the three BSQ attachment domains. Undifferentiated individuals were those who had two or more scores which were equivalent. Convergence and divergence in attachment style between friendship and romantic relationships was examined via a chi square analysis that summarizes the frequency of converging and diverging patterns of attachment (see Table 2). Several cells in this crosstabs matrix did not meet the assumption of at least five expected observations in each cell necessary for Chi-square test of independence; however, a cautiously interpreted Chi-square analysis did demonstrate a significant relationship between friendship and romantic attachment styles, $\chi^2(9, N = 369) = 75.18$, $p < .001$, V = .26. Of the participants, 225 (61% of the sample) were convergent in their attachment styles, with 48% of the sample being convergent secure. Of those who were divergent, the majority were secure in their friendships or their romantic relationships and dismissing or undifferentiated in the other relationship type.

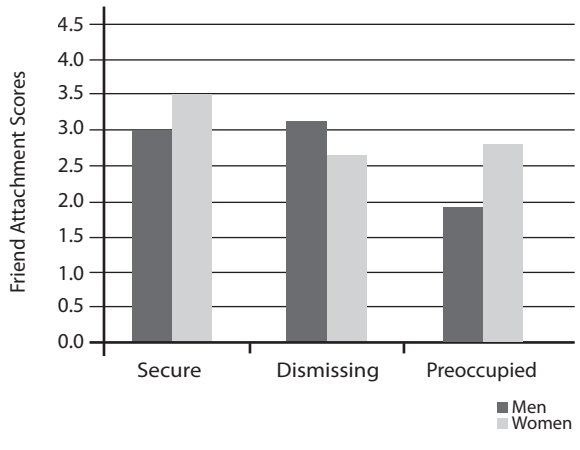
Links Between Relationship Experiences and Attachment Representations

Tables 3 and 4 report correlations between relational experiences and attachment styles for both the romantic relationships and friendships of men and women. The pattern of significant correlations among men appears to be rather diffused, showing that negative experiences in friend and romantic relationships are linked to attachment scores in both relationship types. The majority of peer and romantic experiences of victimization and betrayal (i.e., romantic and friend relational victimization, romantic and friend exclusivity, and friend betrayal), however, appear to be strongly related to men's preoccupied attachment style in both romantic relationships and friendships (see Table 3).

Significant correlations for women were shown to be concentrated in three ways (see Table 4). First, negative romantic experiences and romantic exclusivity were significantly associated with the three romantic attachment styles for women in theoretically consistent directions. Second, similar to men, women who reported higher levels of either romantic or friend preoccupied attachment style engagement had a greater number of significant correlations with both romantic and platonic negative relational experiences and betrayal. Third, scores for women on all of the romantic and friend attachment scales were significantly correlated with the pro-social scale. Secure attachment was positively linked to pro-social behaviors and dismissing and preoccupied attachment were negatively linked to pro-social behaviors.

FIGURE 2

Interactions Between Biological Sex and the Mean Scores for Attachment Style in Friendships



Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore links between romantic and friend attachment representations and experiences of victimization and betrayal. Research questions investigated patterns of friendship and romantic relationship attachment among college students, levels of convergence and divergence in friend and romantic attachment styles, and associations between attachment styles and experiences of betrayal and victimization. Results from the current study indicate that amongst both men and women, the dominant attachment style that was reported was secure. A significant interaction was observed between biological sex and attachment styles, suggesting that men were more likely to engage in an avoidant attachment style than women whereas women were more likely to have a secure attachment style than men. When evaluating the convergence and divergence of the attachment styles engaged in by young adults in their close friendships and romantic relationships, the current study suggests that 60% of the sample were convergent in their attachment style adherence with 47% of the convergent group being securely attached. Amongst the divergent attachment style population, the majority of participants were secure in one relationship type and distant/anxious in the other.

Results also suggested that, for men, adhering to an anxious attachment style is correlated broadly with negative relationship experiences associated with both close friendships and relationships, including victimization, friend betrayal, and friend and relationship exclusivity. Women demonstrated a correlation between negative romantic relationship experiences across all of the attachment styles showing less prominence among secure attachment individuals and higher levels among the women who adhered to dismissing or anxious attachment styles.

Overall Attachment Patterns in Romantic and Close Friendship Relationships

Similar to the findings of Hazan and Shaver (1994), data from this study suggest that the majority of participants reported being secure in their romantic relationships. Many studies over the years have explored attachment styles in romantic relationships, but the literature comparing romantic attachment styles with platonic relationship attachment styles is less developed. Research has shown the importance of friendships early in life for the development of intimacy with others, and platonic peers have been posited to serve as primary attachment figures during adolescence and the transition to adulthood (Furman & Wehner, 1994; Shulman, Elicker, & Sroufe, 1994). It is not surprising that these friendships may continue to play a prominent attachment role into adulthood. Friendship relationships may always have the capacity to serve as a learning context for people to gain better insight as to how to interact and bond with others. This study offers a foundation for exploring the friendship attachment experiences of adults.

There were some interesting sex differences observed in this study. Women reported being predominantly secure in attachment style, whereas men reported higher dismissing attachment styles than women. Men and women's scores did not particularly differ on preoccupied scores. This is consistent with the results of a recent meta-analysis reporting higher avoidant attachment in men across 100 studies (Del Giudice, 2011). Sex differences in romantic attachment experiences can be understood from an evolutionary perspective (Del Giudice, 2011); a short-term mating strategy, observed predominantly among males, is more amenable to an avoidant attachment style than a secure style. However, the similar patterns observed among men's friendship attachment styles in this study indicate that the gender differences may be more complex.

Convergence and Divergence

Although 70% of the sample reported having a secure romantic attachment, and 60% reported having a secure friendship attachment, only 47% reported being convergent secure (i.e., secure in both types of relationship). Although the number of individuals who identified as secure in both relationship types was substantial, the majority (53%) of participants had at least one insecure attachment style in regards to their relationships with friends or romantic partners. Future research may benefit from examining factors linked to greater likelihood of confidence and ease in connecting with individuals in either or both relationship contexts. This is important because of the implications of having an insecure attachment style on future health and

TABLE 2

Patterns of Attachment Categories in Friendships and Romantic Relationships (*N* = 386)

		Friend Attachment Category			
		Secure	Dismissing	Preoccupied	Undifferentiated
Romantic Attachment Category	Secure	177	61	5	18
	Dismissing	19	40	2	1
	Preoccupied	5	5	4	0
	Undifferentiated	19	8	1	4

TABLE 3

Bivariate Correlations Between Attachment Scores and Relationship Experiences for Men

	Secure Romantic	Secure Friend	Dismissing Romantic	Dismissing Friend	Preoccupied Romantic	Preoccupied Friend
Romantic Relational Victimization	-0.04	-0.01	0.02	-0.01	0.26**	0.15
Romantic Physical Victimization	-0.20*	-0.14	-0.02	0.04	0.14	0.22*
Romantic Exclusivity	0.16	-0.08	-0.18	0.11	0.43**	0.17
Romantic Betrayal	0.05	0.13	-0.07	-0.05	0.22*	0.19*
Friend Relational Victimization	-0.15	0.14	0.07	-0.06	0.26**	0.25**
Friend Physical Victimization	-0.27**	0.07	0.18*	-0.05	0.04	0.10
Friend Exclusivity	0.06	0.14	-0.11	-0.10	0.46**	0.40**
Friend Betrayal	-0.08	0.18*	0.00	-0.12	0.24*	0.34**
Prosocial Behaviors	0.10	0.21**	0.07	0.00	-0.13	-0.19*

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$

relationship experiences. For instance, in one study it was found that women who adhered to an insecure attachment style reported more physical symptoms when going to a doctor than those with a secure attachment style, and individuals who are anxiously attached have the highest medical costs and number of visits to a health care facility when compared to those who adhere to a secure or dismissing attachment style (Ciechanowski, Walker, Katon, & Russo, 2002). Research has also suggested that individuals with secure attachment styles are more likely to engage in preventative health behaviors (i.e., exercising or watching their diet) and have a higher self-esteem than those with insecure attachment styles (Huntsinger & Luecken, 2004). Additionally, insecure attachment styles have been linked to less-restrictive sexual beliefs and, those with an avoidant attachment style are more likely to engage in unwanted but consensual sexual activity (Gentzler & Kerns, 2004). Marital satisfaction has been suggested to be negatively influenced if members of a dyad adhere to an insecure attachment style, affecting both individual and partner happiness with the relationship (Banse, 2004). Specifically, men who have a preoccupied attachment style and women who are either preoccupied or avoidant in their attachment style have the most impact on marital satisfaction of their partners.

It would also be of interest to determine how other variables, such as personality and culture, influence the divergent attachment styles experienced by 40% of our participants. Studies in the future will need to evaluate how cultural scripts for interacting and bonding with romantic partners differ from scripts for peer-interaction. This is important since the description of an insecure relationship and a secure relationship may differ among cultures. For instance traits that are consistent with Western cultures' anxious insecure attachment style are considered to be adaptive and favorable in Japan (Rothbaum, Weisz, Pott, Miyake, & Morelli, 2000). Personality easily could also influence how a person attaches to another. For instance, some individuals may have a tendency to be avoidant by nature and are content with more distant relationships.

TABLE 4

Bivariate Correlations Between Attachment Scores and Relationship Experiences for Women

	Secure Romantic	Secure Friend	Dismissing Romantic	Dismissing Friend	Preoccupied Romantic	Preoccupied Friend
Romantic Relational Victimization	-0.18**	-0.03	0.16*	0.00	0.27**	0.21**
Romantic Physical Victimization	-0.12	-0.09	0.07	0.08	0.18**	0.08
Romantic Exclusivity	0.17*	-0.07	-0.16*	0.08	0.27**	0.03
Romantic Betrayal	-0.06	-0.06	0.03	0.04	0.26**	0.14*
Friend Relational Victimization	-0.01	0.01	0.03	0.05	0.07	0.14*
Friend Physical Victimization	-0.06	0.02	0.03	0.00	0.11	0.10
Friend Exclusivity	-0.11	-0.07	0.10	0.06	0.25**	0.28**
Friend Betrayal	-0.01	0.01	0.03	0.04	0.17**	0.25**
Prosocial Behaviors	0.19**	0.19**	-0.17**	-0.15*	-0.13*	-0.16**

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$

Attachment Styles and Relationship Experiences

The findings from this study support attachment theory. For example, the exclusivity score assesses the level of dependence individuals felt towards their significant other (e.g., close friend or romantic partner). Scores on preoccupied attachment demonstrated the strongest positive correlation with exclusivity among the three styles. This is not surprising because this attachment style is often characterized by individuals' dependence on their partner or friend for happiness.

Correlation results also have interesting implications for both general attachment style research and gender socialization research. Supporting the classic definitions of attachment styles, individuals who reported the highest levels of secure attachment had scores associated with lower negative relational experiences and higher engagement in pro-social behaviors. This result is consistent with Collins and Sroufe (1999) who said that children who displayed a secure attachment style were neither the bully nor the victim. Instead, children who are predominantly secure report more self-reliance and better peer relationships.

In the current study, the more diffuse pattern of significant correlations shown in men's relationship experiences and attachment scores may also be portraying ambiguity in their friendships; however, it is hard to be certain why exactly significant correlations across relationship type (e.g., negative romantic experiences linked to friend attachment style) emerged as frequently as within relationship type. In this study, participants were not asked if they were thinking of a male or female friend while answering the attachment questions. In the future, it would be important to investigate if there

are differences in participants' views of same- and cross-sex peers and how those compare to views of romantic partners.

Conclusions

Results from this study suggest that many negative relationship experiences are significantly linked to the way men and women represent attachment in important relationships. This was especially clear for individuals who were high on preoccupied attachment, who showed the most significant correlations with negative experiences. It is curious that these relationship events were so strongly linked to preoccupied attachment representations. Although they experienced the strongest correlations between attachment style and experiences, does this really mean that they had any more or fewer occurrences of victimization and betrayal than secure and dismissing individuals? Or is it affected by how they perceive and apply their experiences? Longitudinal studies will need to assess individuals' childhood experiences of peer victimization and betrayal and compare those to their scores in adolescence and adulthood. Examining scores over a longer span of time will allow us to examine if there are differing levels of victimization and betrayal reported at these developmental stages.

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