To my family
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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<tr>
<td>AGI</td>
<td>Attachment to God Inventory. A theoretical and psychometric scale that operationalizes attachment to God. It measures avoidance of intimacy and anxiety about abandonment and displays good factor structure, internal consistency, and construct validity.</td>
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<td>BFST</td>
<td>Bowen Family System Therapy. Bowen’s theory on family systems (BFST) is based on the assumption that the same processes that govern the behavior of all living things regulate human behavior. The major concepts of BFST (1976, 1978) include differentiation of self, triangulation, nuclear family emotional system, family projection process, emotional cutoff, and multigenerational transmission process. In addition, sibling position and emotional process in society is deliberated; however, differentiation of self is considered the most central idea.</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Emotional Cutoff. The distancing of oneself from others based on fears of intimacy and/or the associated behavioral defenses against those fears</td>
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<td>ECR-R</td>
<td>Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised. Instrument developed by Fraley, Waller and Brennan (2000) with the purpose of measuring attachment anxiety and avoidance.</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>Exploratory Factor Analysis. EFA is a statistical method used to uncover the underlying structure Exploratory of a relatively large set of variables. EFA is a technique within factor analysis whose overarching goal is to identify the underlying relationships between measured variables</td>
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<td>ER</td>
<td>Emotional Reactivity. The measure of the propensity to react to environmental stimuli on the basis of autonomic emotional responses and emotional lability.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FO</td>
<td>Fusion with Others. This concept reflects emotional over-involvement with significant others and over identification with one’s parents—taking in parental values, beliefs and expectations without question.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>I-Position. This term describes having a clearly defined sense of self and the ability to thoughtfully adhere to one’s convictions even when pressured to do otherwise</td>
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<td>SSP</td>
<td>Strange Situation Procedure. The SSP is considered the “gold standard” for measuring attachment quality in caregiver—child dyads. The SSP reliably assesses an infant’s stress reaction to separation; more specifically, it assesses the infant’s perception of availability of his/her caregiver during separation (ages 9–20 months).</td>
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Aside from family of origin relationships, the marital relationship constitutes the most intimate and long lasting for the majority of people. It can also be the most challenging, as it is characterized by a high degree of interdependence of partners’ behaviors, emotions, and cognition. Both attachment and differentiation theories are useful for providing a framework to understand relationship conflict and for increasing marital success. Both emphasize the significance of how family of origin issues affect current romantic relationships. A parallel relationship exists between individuals’ attachment styles to partners and their attachment styles to God. The overarching goal of this study was to conduct an exploratory factor analysis of three overlapping areas pertaining to the powerful forces of togetherness and separateness; these areas include adult attachment, differentiation of self, and God attachment. A two-factor model was uncovered: factor 1, engagement, and factor 2, avoidance.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Marriage continues to be a highly revered institution, transcending all socioeconomic boundaries (Edin & Reed, 2005). Whether married or not, most Americans believe “making a lifelong commitment” is a valuable component of one’s existence. This statement is supported by findings from a Pew Research Center survey (2011) of 1,306 married individuals and 1,385 unmarried individuals. Eighty-seven percent of married and 74% of unmarried individuals surveyed believed marriage is a lifelong commitment. According to the survey results, marriage is an important goal for most Americans, with 36% of adults confirming that having a successful marriage is “the most important thing” in life. An additional 48% said it is “very important but not the most important” (Pew Research Center, 2011).

The benefits of marriage are clearly evident in Western cultures. Morbidity and mortality rates are reliably lower for married versus unmarried people. This benefit exists across a wide spectrum of both acute and chronic conditions and includes such diverse medical conditions as cancer, heart disease, and vascular disease (Kiecolt-Glaser & Newton, 2001). Moreover, marital status and biological parentage have been shown to be unarguably integral to both a child’s short and long-term well-being (Brown, 2010). It has been postulated that the bulk of this benefit is attributed to relationship stability, that is, biological parents remaining with children since birth results in no transitions or disruptions in family structure (Brown, 2010). With a preponderance of documented benefit, why then do 40% to 50% of married couples in the United States (US) divorce (Pew Research Center, 2011)? Why this disconnection?
The Togetherness and Separateness Conundrum

Human development, in nearly all facets, has been described as emerging from relationships (Bowen, 1976, 1978). Evolutionary success has rested on our ability to bond and belong to a physical and emotional family unit. Humans need this consistent sense of connectedness. However, individuality and personal achievement have also been integral to humanity’s success story. How does an individual find and maintain his/her independence and identity yet remain bound to the close-knit support of the emotional unit, be it the family or a committed relationship? This question then is the essence of the togetherness versus separateness conundrum.

Relationships are part of a system held together by opposing forces of tension between togetherness and separateness (van Ecke, Chope, & Emmelkamp, 2006). Aside from family of origin relationships, marriage, in fact, is the central relationship for the majority of adults (Edin & Reed, 2005). It is an ancient and venerable institution of human society; anthropologists inform us that some type of marriage has been found in every known human society since earliest recorded history. Marriage has varied definitions. Traditionally in Western culture, marriage has been considered as the relationship that exists between a husband and a wife, but recently marriage has also been extended to include similar relationships between people of the same sex. A broader definition of marriage is, then, any of the diverse forms of interpersonal union established in various parts of the world to form a familial bond.

Marriage is likely the most intimate form of belonging. A healthy marriage involves a balance between two seemingly incompatible and opposite behaviors: togetherness and separateness. There are risks with too much of either; too much togetherness can result in engulfment or fusion and too much separation can result in
loneliness or isolation. Marriage requires a high degree of interdependence. Marriage calls for an individual to leave the familiar connection with his/her of origin and create a new relationship. In doing this, individuals have to cope with a dominant psychological issue, the togetherness and separateness conundrum. Marriages often negotiate the balance between separateness and togetherness in an ongoing dynamic, requiring delicate conversation and cooperation. Two of the most important emotional needs of adults are the need to be an autonomous self in control of one’s own life and, conversely, the need to be emotionally connected to another person. Successful couples have to find ways to balance the togetherness and separateness drives to avoid conflict. A couple’s ability to satisfy both drives could pilot them to a more mature and gratifying relationship. It is highly beneficial when an individual recognizes that their partner has both a need to connect yet simultaneously be detached, and that these needs and desires are dynamic and changing throughout the course of their relationship.

For most couples, though, this task is daunting, hence the high divorce rate in marriages. It is most difficult when two persons’ needs do not match at the same time or where one party needs more space and another might need more connection. Like many aspects in relationships, it requires open communication, the ability to safely express one’s needs, and the ability to know what one is feeling. In the most immature relationships, neither need is satisfied. The degree of emotional dependency the partners feel toward one another can keep them hurling uncontrollably between the terror of abandonment and the fear of engulfment. The general feeling then becomes “I cannot be okay unless you want the same thing that I want at the same time that I want
Often one partner tends to hold all the closeness needs while the other holds all the autonomy needs (distancer-pursuer) (Johnson, 2004, p. 119). Individuals who are secure and have a high degree of differentiation are able to acknowledge that they both have separateness and togetherness needs and desires. Couples who understand that these forces are constantly at play are less likely to blame each other and try to understand and work through their own anxieties about connectedness and separateness.

**Theoretical Rationale**

The togetherness and separateness conundrum can be examined through at least three overlapping theories: attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982), differentiation (Bowen, 1976, 1978) and God attachment (Kirkpatrick, 1999). In attachment theory, the healthy individual maintains a balance between the pull towards togetherness and the push towards separation, which is called differentiation (van Ecke, Chope, & Emmelkamp, 2006). Attachment theory suggests that the various attachment patterns that develop between a child and caregiver during childhood then shape the ideas and thoughts of self and others throughout life, ultimately affecting marriage (Bretherton & Munholland, 2008). Differentiation implies that an individual is able to separate his/her self from the emotional attachments and projections of anxiety from family of origin and also not cutoff from significant adult relationships and marriage (Bowen, 1976, 1978). God attachment is the concept that an individual’s representation of God can be a continuation of childhood attachment experiences (Sorenson, 1997); thus, an individual’s God attachment can influence marriage and may even compensate for deficiencies in the marriage.
Attachment theory and differentiation theory are both based on the assumption that an individual exists as a component of a naturally occurring system of opposing forces (Holmes, 1993; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Togetherness forces can be viewed as similar to the safety-seeking behavior in Bowlby's attachment theory. The desire for separation in Bowen's theory can be seen as analogous to the desire to explore in Bowlby's theory. Theories of attachment and differentiation have proven useful for purposes of providing a framework to understand relationship conflict and marital success. Both theories emphasize the significance of how family of origin issues affect current romantic relationships. Granqvist and Kirkpatrick' (2008) believe that a parallel relationship may also exist between an individual's attachment style to partners and attachment style to God. Understanding how these three constructs converge can allow family therapists to explore the powerful forces of togetherness and separateness in counseling sessions and begin to disentangle the complex intricacies surrounding the intrapsychic and interpersonal dimensions of relating to others and/or to God.

Over the past several decades, empirical evidence has validated the utility of Bowlby’s attachment theory in both human development and psychotherapy (Gelso, Palma, & Bhatia, 2013). The goal of attachment in childhood is protective care given by the parent to the child, whereas in adulthood, the goal of attachment remains survival, with sexual relationships providing offspring, as well as emotional and material care giving. The schemes that are adopted impact individuals' behavior, prompting them to feel anxious, happy, sad, or confused. Yet attachment is more than a cognitive schema, it is an emotional blueprint and a physiological pattern of response involving the brain and neural pathways.
A four-group model of attachment in adulthood has been proposed by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991). In this model, four prototypic attachment patterns are defined using combinations of a person’s self-image (positive or negative) and image of others (positive or negative). The model identifies four primary styles of relating to others: secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful. Secure attachment espouses a positive view of self and others. Secure people feel worthy of love and are therefore capable of both giving and receiving it. Preoccupied attachment espouses a negative view of self and an unrealistically positive view of others. Preoccupied people typically are anxious in their relationships and exhibit an unhealthy fear of abandonment. Dismissing attachment promotes an overly positive view of self and an excessively negative view of others. Individuals with a dismissing attachment are uncomfortable with closeness and become overly self-reliant. Fearful attachment supports a negative view of both self and others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

Central to Bowen’s family systems theory (BFST) is the concept of differentiation of self. Differentiation is a multidimensional construct that exists when an individual is able to separate from the family of origin’s emotional attachments and projections of anxiety. The emotional attachments and projections of anxiety of the family of origin are termed the “nuclear family emotion system.” Nuclear family emotion system represents the extent to which a person is embedded in the emotion matrix of the family. Differentiation is a marker of how well an individual has separated from the nuclear family emotion system. Differentiation can be understood as the middle point on a continuum of togetherness and separateness forces, with fusion representing too strong of an emotional force of togetherness between family members and cutoff as too strong
of an emotional separation force between family members. Differentiation represents the internal process of being able to incorporate and choose between one’s intellectual and emotional systems (Bowen, 1978) as well as an external process of being able to remain a separate “self” while staying connected with significant others (Bowen, 1961; Kerr, 1985). Differentiation is crucial for mature development and the achievement of psychological health (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998).

God attachment theory provides a third lens to illuminate the togetherness and separateness paradox. Close relationships between humans and God also constitute attachments. There is abundant evidence that believers engage in proximity-seeking behavior through various types of spiritual coping when faced with stressful events or circumstances (Pargament, 1997). In a groundbreaking review of literature, Granqvist and Kirkpatrick’ (2008) theorized that “core aspects of religious beliefs and behavior can be meaningfully and usefully interpreted in terms of attachment dynamics” (2008, p. 906). The authors marshaled evidence from various sources to support the hypothesis that many aspects of religious life and experience reflect (at least in part) the operation of attachment processes. These spiritual relationships meet the “defining criteria” for an attachment relationship and function meaningfully like other attachment relationships. They provide a safe haven when threats or distress are noticed and serve as a secure base for risky or challenging endeavors.

**Statement of the Problem**

Human society has evolved through relationships, yet each individual struggles to maintain his/her independence and identity, while needing and thriving on the closeness and support of the emotional unit, be it the family or a committed relationship. This statement defines the basis of the togetherness versus separateness conundrum.
Family therapists have a practical understanding of the theories that comprise the togetherness and separateness conundrum, but there is a paucity of research that empirically examines the nature of the relationship among these three constructs. This study examined the relationship among the assumptions of these three theories using empirically based methods. The investigation was guided by the following two research questions. Is there a factor structure that can be used to examine critical features that are common to these three psychological theories that focus on the problem of togetherness and separateness? Second, are there specific elements that define and characterize the structure?

**Need for the Study and Significance of the Research**

This study will facilitate the practice of couples’ therapy by providing an understanding of the interpersonal relationship assumptions of these three theories. If people desire marriage to be a lifelong commitment yet still divorce, there seems to be a need for greater understanding of healthy relationships and relationship distress. Both healthy and distressed relationships can be explored through the conceptual lenses of attachment, differentiation of self and God attachment, as all three theories illustrate the dilemma that couples face as they attempt to balance the pull towards togetherness and the push towards separation in their relationships. In next section, I provide a hypothetical case study for examination. In this case study, the couple is viewed through a compound lens that represents the intersection of three different theories.

**Case Study**

The following case study is presented for the purpose of analyzing relationship conflict utilizing the principles of both Bowlby’s and Bowen’s theories as well God attachment.
Vika loves and needs attention. She thrives when Daniel, her third husband, notices and acknowledges all the numerous things she does during the day just to please him; she decompensates when he does not, retreating to a darkened closet to sob uncontrollably until Daniel apologizes and comforts her. Vika, daughter of a hermetic and impoverished Southern Baptist family, has her own daughter from an unplanned premarital teenage pregnancy, who was hidden in shame for years within her family’s rural community. For Vika and her four sisters, higher education and career planning were never considered or encouraged by their parents. Contrarily, Vika finds herself jealously resenting the attention Daniel gives his two daughters, virtually guaranteeing constant acrimonious conflict. Daniel, in turn, resents what he considers her critical and controlling intrusiveness. Vika, despite harboring contradictory emotions and memories regarding her parents, has always maintained close and warm relationships with her family of origin. Vika attends church regularly, but if on occasion misses church, she is overcome with the feeling that God is angry with her, and may, in fact, imminently punish her. Vika is adamant that Daniel figuratively place his spouse above all others and at all times because Scripture mandates it. Daniel counters that Vika is confusing the words of the traditional wedding vow of “forsaking all others,” with Paul’s Epistle to the Ephesians, “for this reason shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they should be two in one flesh” (Ephesians 5:31). Daniel was raised in a large, authoritarian, patriarchal and religious household of first generation immigrant origin. His demanding and critical father, whom he rarely saw, was an overworked family physician and a strict disciplinarian. His mother, a nurse, was described as nurturing, but ineffectual and unavailable. Daniel does not have warm
relationships with family members; in fact, the relationships border on cold and detached. He does not attend church with Vika, considers himself unreligious, and yet attests to a belief in God. He is quite knowledgeable about the Bible, but became disillusioned with religion when he left his family home at age 17 for college, never to return. In his collegial social circle, he found his childhood religious beliefs questioned and often ridiculed by his friends. He has remained disenchanted with organized religion, stating “it is the reason for most of the world’s problems.” As Vika seems to have a propensity for locating a passage in Scripture to rationalize her reactions to most matters, this becomes a source of contention, as Daniel does not believe that Scripture, in a verbatim form, is applicable to today’s world. He has difficulty accepting Vika’s arguments as valid or relevant. Their incessant bickering, likely indicative of other deep-seated problems possibly stemming from their childhoods, has poisoned the well of their marital relationship.

**Analysis of Romantic Relationship Using Bowlby, Bowen, and God Attachment Principles**

Based on key historical elements of their parental-child relationships, it is plausible to conclude that both Daniel and Vika have developed insecure attachment styles that have and continue to interfere with their relationships. This conclusion is supported by the work of Hazan and Shaver (1987) demonstrating that the best predictor of adult attachment type is a respondent’s perceptions of the quality of parental relationships. Vika’s parents, who were excessively reclusive and needy, likely discouraged her exploration of the world and resulted in her disproportionately valuing intimacy at the expense of autonomy (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). She craves closeness, smothering her spouse with often-unwanted attention, yet feels insecure, fearing
imminent abandonment. Over involvement in close relationships, a dependence on other people’s acceptance for a sense of personal well-being, a tendency to idealize others, and incoherence and exaggerated emotionality, are characteristics of a preoccupied attachment style (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Conversely, Daniel seems readily identifiable as a dismissive type for a myriad of reasons. His distant and demanding parents, who interpreted emotion as a sign of weakness or manipulation, likely contributed to his overly developed sense of autonomy and resentment of authority. His dismissive attachment style is also reflected in his early departure and emotional detachment from his family. He is confident in his self-reliance. He resists intimacy for fear of risk or pain and withdraws from those who express emotional needs. He characteristically devotes an inordinate amount of his time and energies to work and hobbies, re-proving his self-worth by measuring and taking joy from his successes. He is mistrusting of others, including his wife, mistaking her affections for controlling manipulations. Daniel’s behavior is consistent with the conclusions of Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) who demonstrated that dismissive subtypes scored uniquely high on self-confidence and uniquely low on emotional expressiveness and warmth. Dismissive types also scored low on all scales reflecting intimacy, reliance on others, and use of others as a secure base.

Bowlby’s theory tends to focus explicitly on child development, including the shift from care seeking behavior to eventually both giving and accepting care. Both Daniel and Vika, in different ways, are experiencing distress over this developmental issue. Daniel has difficulty in both accepting care from Vika and giving her the care that she craves but clearly is too dependent on.
Vika displays rather classic signs of sensory, or defensive, exclusion when she is emotionally overwhelmed, which is evidenced by her self-imposed seclusion in a dark closet. Because the current stimuli in her relationship with Daniel trigger previous experiences of anger, fear, sadness, or anxiety that have met with rejection in the past, she has developed inflexible, autonomic response patterns that characterize a less than optimum pattern of relating.

Vika's needy parents provided intrusive caregiving (and may or may not have been abusive) and laid the foundations for her particularly pathogenic condition. According to Bowen, Vika developed a relationship reaction pattern that is nearly entirely emotionally based, with little cognitive recognition. Thus, she is emotionally reactive, with little or no ability for controlling her reactions.

On her daily lengthy sojourns into town, Vika habitually listens to sermons or Christian talk shows. She also attends church functions frequently. She yearns deeply to please God, for His blessings, and to earn His approval. As mentioned before, Vika is overwhelmed with feelings of guilt if she misses a church meeting. Displaying a typical preoccupied attachment style to God as described by Clinton and Straub (2010), Vika fervently desires to win God’s approval and feel connected to Him. However, she feels inadequate in God's eyes. Conversely, Daniel's attachment style to God is dismissing, as he is uncomfortable with the idea of an intimate relationship with God (Clinton & Straub, 2010). Daniel has difficulty feeling that God loves him and believes that God has given him all the abilities and tools necessary to deal with any life events. Furthermore, when stressors occur, Daniel feels that God likely is distant and unavailable, and therefore he must depend solely on himself.
While this is a hypothetical case, it illustrates the key concepts of attachment, differentiation, and God attachment. My conjectures regarding potential factors to be identified by this new "compound lens" are the following:

1. assurance of self, significant others and God;
2. approval seeking from self, significant others and God;
3. duty to self, significant others, and God;
4. disconnection from self, others, and God; and
5. chaos in relation to self, significant others, and God.

The availability of this new lens may assist practitioners and supervisors in understanding and intervening with clients in an ethically appropriate manner by providing a new way to conceptualize relationship dynamics and spiritual issues.

Definition of Key Concepts

Following are definitions of key concepts used throughout this dissertation.

Committed relationship: A committed relationship is an interpersonal relationship based upon a mutually agreed-upon commitment to one another involving exclusivity, love, trust, honesty, openness, or some other agreed-upon behavior. Forms of committed relationships include courtship, long-term relationships, engagement, marriage, and civil unions. In this research study, a committed relationship is specifically described as an exclusive relationship of six months and includes same-sex couples.

Attachment theory: The model that various attachment patterns between a child and caregiver developed during childhood shape a child’s internal representations of self and others. The attachment patterns that develop in childhood are believed to be stable across the lifetime of the individual (Bowlby, 1969/1982).

Secure attachment: One type of attachment pattern described in attachment theory that is typified by a good sense of self-worth and trust in others and
characteristically develops when a child receives consistent and sensitive care by primary caregivers during childhood (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978).

**Insecure attachment:** One type of attachment pattern described in attachment theory that is exemplified as mistrust of others and a sense of being unworthy of love and typically develops when a caregiver fails to meet a child’s attachment needs such as proximity, security, and comfort (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978).

**Adult attachment theory:** The application of attachment theory to the field of couple relationships in adolescence and adulthood (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2010).

**Four-group model of attachment styles:** A model of adult attachment theory proposed by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991). In this model four attachment patterns are defined using combinations of a person’s self-image (positive or negative) and image of others (positive or negative), which are labeled secure, preoccupied, dismissing, or fearful.

**Secure attachment:** One of the four types of attachment styles considered to exist in adulthood in which an individual espouses a positive view of self and others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

**Preoccupied attachment:** One of the four types of attachment styles considered to exist in adulthood in which an individual espouses a negative view of self but an unrealistically positive view of others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

**Dismissing attachment:** One of the four types of attachment styles considered to exist in adulthood in which an individual espouses an overly positive view of self and an excessively negative view of others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).
**Fearful attachment:** One of the four types of attachment styles considered to exist in adulthood in which an individual espouses a negative view of both self and others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

**Bowen’s family systems theory:** Bowen theory on family systems (BFST) is based on the assumption that human behavior is regulated by the same processes that govern the behavior of all living things. The major concepts of BFST (1976, 1978) include differentiation of self, triangulation, nuclear family emotional system, family projection process, emotional cutoff, and multigenerational transmission process. In addition, sibling position and emotional process in society is deliberated; however, differentiation of self is considered the most central idea.

**Togetherness and separateness forces:** Bowen viewed the family as an organic system held in balance between the opposing forces of togetherness and separation. In this system, the goal for each individual is to achieve autonomy within the family system.

**Differentiation of self:** A major tenet of Bowen’s family system theory is portrayed when individuals are able to separate themselves from the emotional attachments and projections of anxiety of their families of origin, and accomplish this without cutting themselves off from the family or severing significant relationships (Bowen, 1976, 1978).

**Intrapsychic differentiation:** The capability of balancing thoughts and emotions (Bowen, 1976, 1978).
**Interpersonal differentiation:** The capability of sharing profound levels of intimacy while still maintaining a feeling of independence in emotionally important relationships (Bowen, 1976, 1978).

**Emotional reactivity:** The measure of the propensity to react to environmental stimuli on the basis of autonomic emotional responses and emotional lability (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998).

**Emotional cutoff:** The distancing of oneself from others based on fears of intimacy and/or the associated behavioral defenses against those fears (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998).

**I-position:** This term describes having a clearly defined sense of self and the ability to thoughtfully adhere to one’s convictions even when pressured to do otherwise (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998).

**Fusion with others:** This concept reflects emotional over-involvement with significant others and over identification with one’s parents—taking in parental values, beliefs and expectations without question (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998).

**God attachment:** The concept that an individual’s representation of God can be a continuation of childhood attachment experiences (Clinton & Straub, 2010).

**Attachment styles to God:** A modified model of Bartholomew and Horowitz’s (1991) four-group model of attachment styles in which God is considered as a substitute attachment figure for a parent or spouse (Clinton & Straub, 2010).

**Secure God attachment:** This represents the style of God attachment that describes an individual who feels worthy of God’s love, but does not demonstrate an anxious or avoidant pattern in relating with God (Clinton & Straub, 2010).
Anxious God attachment: One of the four-groups of attachment styles described by Clinton and Straub (2010), representing the equivalent of the “preoccupied” style described by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991). These individuals feel insecure in their relationship with God and are very active in pursuing and trying to please God, and may represent the most religiously active of the relational styles.

Avoidant God attachment: One of the four-groups of attachment styles described by Clinton and Straub (2010), representing the equivalent of the “dismissing” style described by Bartholomew and Horowitz (date). They have an “arms-length” relationship with God and tend to emphasize their duty as believers rather than their relationship with God.

Fearful God attachment: This attachment style describes an individual who tries hard to connect with God, but seldom feels close to him, because he/she has learned to attribute the chaos to God. This pattern of attachment shapes perceptions of God in a negative way but may not be the only reason the individual has trouble connecting with God (Clinton & Straub, 2010).

Attachment to God Inventory (AGI): A theoretical and psychometric scale that operationalizes attachment to God. It measures avoidance of intimacy and anxiety about abandonment and displays good factor structure, internal consistency, and construct validity (Beck & McDonald, 2004).

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction to the togetherness versus separateness conundrum and provides an overview of the problem, purpose, and rationale for the study. Chapter 2 represents a review of the literature including the theoretical perspectives of three separate theories: attachment,
differentiation, and God attachment. Chapter 2 also describes the empirical studies connecting these constructs. Chapter 3 describes in detail the methodology used in this study. Chapter 4 provides the statistical results of the data analysis. Chapter 5 offers a summary of the study including limitations, a discussion of the results, and implications for future research.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Aside from family of origin relationships, the marital relationship constitutes the most intimate and long lasting for the majority of people. It can also be the most challenging, as it is characterized by a high degree of interdependence of partners’ behaviors, emotions, and cognitions (Berscheid, 1994). Both attachment and differentiation theories are useful for providing a framework to understand relationship conflict and for increasing marital success. Both emphasize the significance of how family of origin issues affect current romantic relationships.

A parallel relationship may also exist between individuals’ attachment styles to partners and their attachment styles to God. Coexistence of these relationships can be examined through three theories: attachment theory, differentiation, and God attachment. These three theories allow one to explore the powerful forces of togetherness and separateness and begin to disentangle the complex intricacies surrounding the intrapsychic and interpersonal dimensions of relating to others and/or to God.

This chapter provides a review of the literature of each of these theories and provides a critical synthesis of how these concepts can converge in the application of couples counseling. The contents of this chapter include a discussion of attachment, differentiation, and God attachment theories in the context of couples counseling; a review of instruments that have been developed to assess the key constructs of these three theories; and the presentation of a conceptual framework for examining the intersection of these theories.
Attachment Theory and Childhood

Attachment theory was introduced by the noted psychoanalyst, John Bowlby, who observed that various attachment patterns develop during childhood as a result of the powerful emotional bonds existing between infants and their mothers or other primary caregivers. In essence, Bowlby postulated that the quality of care provided by parents or parental figures influences and molds the attachment bond (Bowlby, 1969/1982). These bonds are believed to shape a child’s internal representations of self and others (Bretherton & Munholland, 2008). This working model or internal representation, a sort of “mental picture” or schema, of our attachment relationships remains with us throughout our lifetime.

Ainsworth, a collaborator of Bowlby, is best known for her elaboration of attachment theory. Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) developed the widely used Strange Situation Procedure (SSP). The SSP is considered the “gold standard” for measuring attachment quality in caregiver—child dyads. The SSP reliably assesses an infant’s stress reaction to separation; more specifically, it assesses the infant’s perception of availability of his/her caregiver during separation (ages 9–20 months). The measurement process yields three styles of infant attachment: (1) secure, (2) avoidant (anxious–avoidant), and (3) resistant (anxious–ambivalent). Typically, the SSP assessment is conducted in a laboratory setting in which a series of three-minute episodes of increasing perturbations activate the child’s attachment behavior system. The procedure involves the following: (1) caregiver and child are alone in a room; (2) stranger enters and interacts first with caregiver and then with child; (3) caregiver leaves, child is alone with stranger; (4) caregiver and child reunite as stranger leaves; (5) caregiver leaves a second time, child is alone; (6) stranger returns; and (7) caregiver
and child reunite a second time while the stranger leaves. Trained observers code
caregiver and infant behavior using scales that measure proximity seeking, contact
maintaining, avoidance, and resistance. Child behavior is noted throughout the
procedure; however, the pattern of mother and infant behavior during reunions is the
most informative (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Roberson, 2006).

Based on the results of structured laboratory research by Ainsworth (1989),
securely attached children welcome their caretaker’s return after separation and, if
distressed, readily seek comfort from them. Children that are securely attached are
confident that their caregivers will be responsive to their needs. In contrast, anxious-
ambivalent infants explore little in the SSP, are highly distressed when the caregiver
leaves, and show ambivalence towards the caregiver when the caregiver returns.
Children with an anxious-ambivalent attachment style cannot depend on their caregiver
to reliably be responsive to their needs. Infants who are classified as anxious-avoidant
“avoid” interaction with caretakers upon reunion. These infants will seem unruffled but
are actually experiencing internal distress though not visible (Ainsworth, 1989). In more
practical terms, secure attachments result from consistent and sensitive care given by
caretakers. Insecure attachments result from failure of a caregiver to provide an infant’s
basic needs of proximity, security, and comfort, likely due to a parent or caregiver who
is unavailable, unresponsive, or inconsistently responsive (Ainsworth, 1989). More
recently, a fourth category of attachment has been defined and accepted: “confused,”
unresolved, or disorganized (Main & Solomon, 1986). A child with a disorganized
attachment exhibits a confusing combination of behavior (disoriented or dazed) and
both avoids or resists the caregiver. For these children, a caregiver may serve as both a source of comfort and a source of fear (Main & Solomon, 1986).

Attachment patterns developed in childhood are believed to be rather stable across the lifetime of the individual (Bowlby, 1969/1982). Over time, children internalize caretaker experiences to form prototypic attachment “styles” that govern future relationships outside the family including relationships with peers, friends, and eventually romantic partners. The evolution of these patterns results in either secure or insecure attachment patterns. Specifically, a secure attachment is typified by a sense of self-worth and trust in others. Security provides the foundation, or safe haven, for the exploration of new environments and ideas, fosters the development of new skills, and aids in the fulfillment of autonomously derived goals and aspirations. In contrast, an insecure attachment is typified by mistrust of others and a sense of being unworthy of love. If an individual’s requests for support or comfort result in an insensitive or intrusive response by their partner, then a pattern develops where autonomy is compromised (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2010).

Over the past several decades, empirical evidence has validated the utility of attachment theory in both human development and psychotherapy (Gelso, Palma, & Bhatia, 2013). The goal of attachment in childhood is protective care given by the parent to the child, whereas in adulthood, the goal of attachment remains survival, with sexual relationships providing offspring, as well as emotional and material care giving. This working model or internal representation, a sort of “mental picture” or schema, of our attachment relationships remains with us throughout our lifetime. The schema that is adopted impacts our behavior, prompting us to feel anxious, happy, sad, or confused.
This cognitive schema has been laid down and becomes activated during a time of a real or perceived threat of losing a significant other (van Ecke, Chope, & Emmelkamp, 2006). Yet attachment is more than a cognitive schema, it is an emotional blueprint, and a physiological pattern, involving the brain and neural pathways, of response.

**Adult Attachment Theory**

Hazan and Shaver (1987) built on the substance of Bowlby’s work (1982) and applied attachment theory to the field of couple relationships in adolescence and adulthood. Adult attachment theory illuminates how healthy and unhealthy forms of love originate (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Similar to children, adults turn to their close relationship partners when distressed and in need of comfort. A romantic or marital partner will frequently act as a primary attachment figure; however, the ideal situation is a more mutual allocation of care with a romantic or marital partner. Additionally, there are important differences between attachment styles in childhood and adulthood. In the parent-infant relationship, the delivery of care is unidirectional. Ideally in couple relationships, both partners are able to turn to each other for comfort and security when stressed and are able to offer soothing support when needed (Schachner, Shaver, & Mikulincer, 2003).

In couple relationships, partners’ thoughts, feelings, and behavior are influenced by both partners’ attachment and care-giving behavior. Attachment styles are influenced by the care individuals received as a child and also by their partner’s attachment style. A person with an insecure attachment style may not be emotionally available or stable for his/her partner and, as a result, trust, security, and intimacy in the relationship may suffer (Bretherton, & Munholland, 2008).
For example, a female partner may complain about lack of intimacy and the emotional absence of her partner. The male partner may reactively become angry when the female partner demands more attention and closeness. His reaction may have arisen due to childhood circumstances such as the absence of warmth and comfort by his family. Unfortunately, he did not develop the skills needed to sensitively respond to his current partner. He is unable to comfort her because as a child he did not receive comfort by his caregivers when he was stressed. Thus, he continues to carry these problems into adulthood and even into his family leading to multigenerational transmission of attachment behavior (Aldous & Klein, 1991). Clueless about how to cope with his feelings of anxiety and how to please his partner, he withdraws from her and from the relationship. He goes into a “survival mode,” and she concludes that he is not trustworthy because he should be available when she needs him.

In another example, a male partner may grumble that his female partner makes him “her last priority” and is no longer affectionate toward him. She is a very successful professional in her field, works 10 to 12 hours every day of the week, and rarely ever takes time to relax, even for short periods of time. She has always been uncomfortable with intimacy. Her parents were immigrants that were separated from their extended family. As a teenager, her parents tragically died, compelling her to self-autonomy at a young age. She is fearful to get close to people because she is afraid of losing them, as indeed she lost her own parents. Her partner frequently criticizes her out of exasperation because she does not respond to his bid for intimacy. She does not want to lose him, but sadly, she is too fearful to allow him to be close to her.
Romantic Love is an Attachment Process

Hazan and Shaver (1987) conducted a study to explore the prospect that romantic love is an attachment process, consisting of affectational bonds similar to those that exist between infants and their parents. Hazan and Shaver were the first to attempt to conceptualize romantic love experiences in a way that parallels the typology developed by Ainsworth and her colleagues. Hazan and Shaver analyzed the results of 620 respondents who completed the love-experience questionnaire printed in a local newspaper. The investigators translated descriptions of infants developed by Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) into terms appropriate to adult love and designed a single-item measure of the three attachment styles. The love-experience questionnaire was constructed based on previous adult-love measures and extrapolation from the literature on infant-caregiver attachment. The investigators performed a principal-components analysis followed by equimix rotation on the 56-item measure. The study demonstrated that, compared with the secure group, the two insecure groups, anxious-resistant and avoidant, reported more negative experiences and beliefs about love, had a history of shorter romantic relationships, and provided less favorable descriptions of their parental relationships. Insecure subjects also expressed more self-doubt and less acceptability than secure subjects. The results indicate that individuals with differences in attachment orientation entertain different beliefs about the course and nature of romantic love, the availability and trustworthiness of love partners, and indeed, their own sense of love-worthiness. These aberrations might lead to difficulties in trust and intimacy, resulting in jealousy, emotional lability and ultimately, loneliness.

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), to build upon the studies of Hazan and Shaver, theorized an insecure adult romantic attachment having two dimensions:
anxiety over abandonment and proximity avoidance. The first dimension, anxiety over abandonment, signifies a working model of self, where the individual believes they are unlovable and typically worry excessively about being rejected by a partner. The second dimension, proximity avoidance, signifies a working model where the individual believes that others are unavailable in times of need and the individual often attempts to avoid being too close to or dependent on others in intimate relationships.

The modification and expansion of these two dimensions of adult attachment led to the four-group model of attachment in adulthood, also proposed by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991). In this model, four prototypic attachment patterns are defined using combinations of a person’s self-image (positive or negative) and image of others (positive or negative). There are four primary styles of relating to others: secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful. Secure attachment espouses a positive view of self and others. Secure people feel worthy of love and are therefore capable of both giving and receiving it. Preoccupied attachment espouses a negative view of self and an unrealistically positive view of others. Preoccupied people typically are anxious in their relationships and exhibit an unhealthy fear of abandonment. Dismissing attachment promotes an overly positive view of self and an excessively negative view of others. Individuals with a dismissing attachment are uncomfortable with closeness and become overly self-reliant. Fearful attachment supports a negative view of both self and others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Several empirical studies have suggested that these patterns persist into adulthood and affect adult romantic relationships (Gelso, Palma, & Bhatia, 2013; Gelso & Bhatia, 2012; Gelso & Hayes, 1998).
Adult Attachment Instruments

The following section provides an overview of adult attachment instruments followed by sections detailing each instrument. Adult attachment has been a consistent focus of social science research for nearly three decades and is one of the most frequently studied topics in current romantic relationship literature. A vast body of research suggests that adult attachment is related to a wide variety of outcomes in romantic relationships. As with any well-established research domain, a multitude of instruments to assess adult attachment have emerged. While researchers have used an array of measurement approaches, the most common approach is the multi-item self-report inventory, most likely due to the ease of use and lack of expense in obtaining self-report survey data (Graham & Unterschute, 2015).

Graham and Unterschute (2015) conducted a meta-analysis of self-report adult attachment measures that included a total of 313,462 individuals from 564 studies. Among other observations, they found large variations in the popularity of the different assessment instruments. Some self-report adult attachment measures are widely used by investigators while others are used less frequently. The five most frequently used continuous measures of adult attachment are the Adult Attachment Questionnaire (AAQ), Adult Attachment Scale (AAS), Revised Adult Attachment Scale (RAAS), Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR), and Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R). The following sections provide a discussion of the most frequently used adult attachment measures.

Adult Attachment Questionnaire

The Adult Attachment Questionnaire (AAQ), developed by Simpson (1990), examined the impact of secure, anxious, and avoidant attachment styles on romantic
relationships in a longitudinal study involving 144 dating couples. At least one member of each couple was enrolled in introductory psychology classes at Texas A&M University and participated in this investigation. The mean age of men and women was 19.4 and 18.7 years, respectively. The mean length of the dating relationships was 13.5 months. More than 92% of the couples had dated for more than one month. In this study, attachment style was measured by having both members of each dyad rate 13 sentences contained within the Hazan and Shaver (1987) adult attachment measure. Hazan and Shaver were the first to attempt to conceptualize romantic love experiences in a way that parallels childhood attachment styles. AAQ contains three subscales: secure, anxious, and avoidant. To construct continuous measures of each attachment style, the items corresponding to each story describing an attachment style (secure, anxious and avoidant) were identified, keyed in the proper direction, and aggregated to form three continuous attachment indexes. The Secure Attachment Style Index yielded an internal reliability estimate of .51 using Cronbach’s alpha calculation. Higher scores represented greater security. The Avoidant Attachment Style Index yielded a score of $\alpha = .79$. Higher scores indicated greater avoidance. The Anxious Attachment Style Index yielded $\alpha = .59$. Data regarding test-retest reliability was not found for this article.

**Revised Adult Attachment Questionnaire**

The AAQ was revised by Simpson, Rholes, and Nelligan (1992) from 13 to 17 items to increase the internal consistency of the attachment anxiety subscale. Simpson et al. examined how adult attachment styles moderate spontaneous behavior between dating couples when one member of the dyad is confronted with an anxiety-provoking situation. The revised AAQ asks individuals to indicate how they relate to romantic partners in general and contains the following items: (a) “I find it relatively easy to get
close to others”; (b) “I’m not very comfortable having to depend on other people”; (c) “I’m comfortable having others depend on me”; (d) “I rarely worry about being abandoned by others”; (e) “I don’t like people getting too close to me”; (f) “I’m somewhat uncomfortable being too close to others”; (g) “I find it difficult to trust others completely”; (h) “I’m nervous whenever anyone gets too close to me”; (i) “Others often want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being”; (j) “Others often are reluctant to get as close as I would like”; (k) “I often worry that my partner(s) don’t really love me”; (l) “I rarely worry about my partner(s) leaving me”; (m) “I often want to merge completely with others, and this desire sometimes scares them in our relationship”; (p) “I usually want more closeness and intimacy than others do”; (q) “The thought of being left by others rarely enters my mind”; and (r) “I’m confident that my partner (scale (1 = strongly disagree; 7 = strongly agree). These items were then used in the development of two subscales.

The revised AAQ consists of two subscales: attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. The sample that Simpson et al. examined included 123 dating couples (123 men and 123 women). Similar to the AAQ, at least one member of each dyad was enrolled in an introductory psychology course at Texas A&M University. To ensure that couples were involved in meaningful relationships, partners were required to have been dating for at least 6 months in order to participate. The mean length of relationships was 21 months (range = 6 months to 5.5 years), and the mean age of men and women was 19.6 and 18.9 years, respectively (range = 17 to 23 years).

The revised AAQ has high reliability as Simpson et al. (1992) computed Cronbach’s alpha for avoidance index = .81 for both men and women. Cronbach’s
alphas for anxiety index = .58 and .61 for men and women, respectively. Simpson, Rholes, and Phillips (1996) computed 'Cronbach's alpha coefficients separately for men and women, and obtained values of .70 and .74 for avoidance, and .72 and .76 for attachment anxiety, respectively. Unfortunately, Simpson et al. did not provide information regarding test-retest reliability.

The AAQ was one of the first measures used to demonstrate that adult attachment might be best described as having two orthogonal dimensions. However, the validity of AAQ scores has been questioned, as the dimensions of the AAQ appear to be unrelated to the result of the Adult Attachment Interview (Bouthiller, Julien, Dube, Belanger, & Hamelin, 2002 as cited in Graham and Unterschute, 2015).

In the meta-analysis conducted by Graham & Unterschute (2015), the average reliability of scores produced by the AAQ was .785 for both the avoidance and ambivalence subscales. Graham and Unterschute (2015) showed that for each subscale, the lower and upper bounds of the 95% confidence interval place the average reliability of scores produced by the AAQ in the high .70s range. This suggests an overall level of reliability acceptable for research purposes, and is generally comparable with reliabilities from the AAS and RAAS. The average interitem correlations between AAQ items were moderate. Graham and Unterschute (2015) established that the AAQ scores are relatively stable across samples, and thus the AAQ remains a widely used measure.

**Adult Attachment Scale**

Collins and Read (1990) developed the Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) from three studies that examined the correlates of adult attachment. In Collin and Read’s first study, they composed an 18-item scale to measure adult attachment style dimensions
based on the original work of Hazan and Shaver (1987). Hazan and Shaver proposed that variations in adult attachment were associated with different beliefs about oneself and others. Collin and Read’s second study (citation) explored the relationship between these attachment variations and working models of self and others. Their third study (citation) explored the role of attachment style dimensions in three aspects of ongoing dating relationships: partner matching on attachment dimensions; similarity between the attachment of one’s partner and caregiving style of one’s parents; and relationship quality, including communication, trust, and satisfaction.

The AAS was initially a 21-item scale based on Hazan and Shaver’s (1987) adult attachment descriptions and additional characteristics of the three attachment styles described in the developmental literature. Hazan and Shaver (1987) described an avoidant attachment style as being afraid of intimacy and experiencing emotional highs and lows as well as jealousy during relationships. An individual with an anxious (ambivalent) attachment style perceives love in an obsessive way, with strong need for constant reciprocation and validation, along with emotional highs and lows, and feelings of jealousy and strong sexual attraction. Individuals with a secure attachment style describe their romantic relationships as friendly, trusting, and happy. They accept their partners regardless of faults. They tend to have long and fulfilling relationships. Collins and Read rewrote Hazan and Shaver’s paragraphs into their component statements and each was formed into one-scale item. This resulted in the generation of 15 items, 5 for each attachment style. Subscales included the following: 1) discomfort with closeness, 2) discomfort with depending on other, and 3) anxious concern about being abandoned or unloved. Participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale. The
participants in this study were 406 undergraduates taking introductory psychology at the University of Southern California and participating for extra credit. The sample included 206 women and 184 men (16 subjects did not report their sex), ranging in age from 17 to 37, with a mean of 18.8.

For the AAS, data were provided for reliabilities. Cronbach’s alpha for the depend, anxiety, and close items were all reasonable, .75, .72, and .69 respectively (Collins & Read, 1990). A subset (N= 101) of the sample completed the attachment scale again approximately two months later. Test-retest correlations for close, depend, and anxiety were .68, .71, and .52 respectively. Items on the anxiety factor may have been more closely tied to a particular relationship than were the close and depend items, which may help account for the relatively lower stability of anxiety scores. Overall, scores were fairly stable over a two-month period.

**Adult Attachment Scale Revised**

The Adult Attachment Scale Revised (RAAS) was constructed by Collins (1996) to improve reliability of scores produced by the measure and correct several poorly worded items (Graham & Unterschute, 2015). Collins used two studies to examine attachment style differences in social perception. In the first study, participants wrote open-ended explanations for hypothetical relationship events and described how they would feel and behave in response to each event. The second study was designed to replicate the first and test the relative importance of attachment style and relationship quality to predicting each outcome.

The revised AAS was an 18-item test with six items each measuring attachment across the three dimensions of the AAS: close, depend and anxiety. Subscales included the following divisions: (a) the close subscale measures the extent to which a person is
comfortable with closeness and intimacy; (b) the *depend* subscale assesses the extent to which a person is comfortable depending on others and believes that people can be relied on when needed; and (c) the *anxiety* subscale measures the extent to which a person is worried about being rejected and abandoned by others. Participants were asked to respond to each item in terms of their general orientation toward close relationships.

Participants were 82 female and 53 male undergraduate students from the University of Southern California who participated in exchange for extra credit in their introductory psychology course. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 25 years, with a mean age of 18.7. At the time of the study, 55% of participants were involved in a romantic relationship and 45% were not. Data provided for reliability were as follows: Cronbach’s alphas for the close, depend, and anxiety subscales were .77, .78, and .85, respectively. Data for test-retest reliability was not found in this article (Collins, 1996).

The average reliability of scores produced by the RAAS was notably improved over the AAS, ranging from .768 to .855 across subscales (Graham & Unterschute, 2015). This finding suggests that the revisions undertaken by Collins (1996) were effective in improving the overall reliability of scores (Graham & Unterschute, 2015). The reliability of the anxiety subscale (.855) is particularly noteworthy, considering that it is only six items long (Graham & Unterschute, 2015). Although sufficient data are not available to make broader conclusions, the reliability of RAAS scores seems consistently biased in favor of U.S. samples. As such, it is encouraged to exhibit caution when using the RAAS in non-U.S. samples and, in particular, when making cross-national comparisons (Graham & Unterschute, 2015).
Experiences in Close Relationships

Brennan, Clark and Shaver (1998) developed the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) to identify a common metric for assessing adult romantic attachment style. Brennan et al. pooled 482 items obtained from existing measures and subjected them to a factor analysis. Two 18 item scales emerged, one to assess attachment anxiety and the other to assess avoidant attachment. The two scales together create a 36-item self-report measure. A seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) was used to measure attachment anxiety and avoidant attachment.

Researchers administered questionnaires to 1,086 undergraduates (682 women and 403 men) enrolled in psychology courses at the University of Texas at Austin. These students ranged in age from 15 to 50 years, with the median age of 18 years. Just fewer than half the sample (487 students) described themselves as seriously involved in a relationship at the time of testing; the rest were dating casually (220) or not at all (376). Of those in a relationship, median relationship length was 15 months. Students received research credits in their classes for participating in the study, but their answers were anonymous. The questionnaire took approximately two hours to complete.

Although no information was provided in the original publication regarding reliabilities, this measure has been used in hundreds of studies since 1998 (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2010, p. 91). However, a number of independent investigators have provided evidence for the reliability of these two scales. High reliability (the alpha coefficients are always near or above .90 and the test-retest coefficients range between .50 and .75, depending on the time span and nature of sample (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2010, p. 91).
Graham and Unterschute (2015) found average reliability of scores produced by the ECR was .892 and .898 for the anxiety and avoidance scores, respectively, suggesting strong overall reliability. The authors reported a low correlation between the two subscales (.11), suggesting two independent factors (Graham & Unterschute, 2015). Subsequent research has found these two subscales to be more highly correlated (Cameron, Finnegan, & Morry, 2012).

A shortened version of the ECR has been developed (Wei, Russell, Mallinckrodt, & Vogel, 2007). For each subscale, the lower and upper bounds of the 95% confidence interval place the average reliability of scores produced by the ECR squarely at about .89. (Graham & Unterschute, 2015) Large sample size notwithstanding, both subscales of the ECR tend to produce more reliable scores with unmarried versus married individuals, with early-stage versus well-established relationships, with gays and lesbians versus heterosexual individuals, with individuals from inside the U.S. versus outside the U.S., and with college student samples versus non-college-student samples. Furthermore, the ECR Avoidance subscale appears to produce more reliable scores in younger, versus older, samples. ECR is unlikely to produce scores of unacceptably low reliability in any of these groups. Therefore, caution should be exhibited when using ECR scores to make cross-group comparisons (Graham & Unterschute, 2015).

Support for the construct validity of the ECR is found in the results of a variety of independent investigations. Zamora, Winterowd, Koch, and Roring (2013) explored the relationship between love styles and romantic attachment styles in self-identified gay men. Participants (N = 72) completed the ECR and the Love Attitudes Scale Short Form. Results indicated that all six love styles were significantly predictive of anxious
and avoidant romantic attachment. A series of multiple regressions were performed using love styles as predictors of avoidant and anxious attachment styles separately. Examination of the beta weights indicated that eros and mania love styles were unique predictors of anxious and avoidant romantic attachment for the gay men in this sample.

Muraru and Turliuc (2013) explored the differences between women and men in relationships among family-of-origin, romantic attachment, and marital adjustment. Two hundred and forty-nine participants completed four self-reported measures including ECR. Regardless of gender, only the romantic attachment was a significant predictor of marital adjustment. The results suggest that women and men are similar regarding family-of-origin experiences, romantic attachment patterns, and marital adjustment. Cronbach α reliability was .82 for avoidance and .66 for anxiety.

In a study of 193 community-based couples, Péloquin, Lafontaine, and Brassard (2011) examined the intrapersonal, dyadic, and mediational relationships underlying romantic attachment (Experiences in Close Relationships), dyadic empathy (Interpersonal Reactivity Index for Couples), and psychological partner aggression (Revised Conflict Tactics Scales). In women, attachment insecurity predicted lower dyadic empathy and greater psychological aggression. In men, attachment insecurity predicted lower perspective taking, higher empathic concern, and greater psychological aggression. Partner effects were found for men, with their attachment predicting their female partner’s dyadic empathy and psychological aggression. In women, low perspective taking mediated the relationship between (1) their anxiety over abandonment and their psychological aggression; and (2) their avoidance of intimacy
Carpenter and Chung (2011) investigated the interrelationships between childhood trauma, attachment, alexithymia, and the severity of obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) in a cohort of participants with OCD. The sample was comprised of 82 people with OCD and 92 comparison participants and four measures were used including the ECR. The study found a relationship between childhood trauma and OCD; however, the relationship is not direct but is influenced by an individuals’ past experiences with significant others and associated difficulties in emotional processing. These authors did not examine reliability; instead they referenced Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (1998). The reliability and construct validity of the two subscales have been demonstrated in a wide variety of samples; the internal consistencies of anxiety and avoidance were .91 and .94, respectively (Brennan et al., 1998).

**Experiences in Close Relationships Revised**

Fraley, Waller and Brennan (2000) found that the ECR appeared too focused on avoidance and anxiety while de-emphasizing security, thus their impetus in developing the Experiences in Close Relationships Revised (ECR-R). Self-report measures of adult attachment are typically scored in ways (for instance averaging or summing items) that can lead to erroneous inferences about important theoretical issues, such as the degree of continuity in attachment security and the differential stability of insecure attachment patterns. To determine whether existing attachment scales suffer from scaling problems, the authors used IRT to analyze 323 items from four commonly used adult attachment measures: ECR (Brennan et al., 1998); AAS (Collins & Read, 1990); RSQ (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994); and Simpson’s attachment scales (1990). Eighteen items
were included in each subscale. Like the ECR, the ECR-R uses a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The ECR-R contains the same avoidance (e.g., “I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down”) and anxiety (e.g., “I’m afraid that I will lose my partner’s love”) dimensions as the ECR. The subscales they used were attachment anxiety and avoidant attachment. The data used in this study were originally collected by Brennan and her colleagues (Brennan et al., 1998). The sample they used in the ECR-R contained item responses from 1,085 undergraduate students (682 women, 403 men) from the University of Texas at Austin. At the time of testing, the participants had a median age of 18 years (range = 16-50).

Fraley et al. (1998) suggested using different items taken from the Brennan et al.’ (1998) item pool to replace some of the original items. They believed that these changes would yield better discrimination of the subscales. The new and old scales correlate around .95 with each other, and findings from the new and old scales are usually quite similar (Fraley et al., 1998). These modifications led to the current ECR-R.

Graham and Unterschute (2015) showed that the average reliability of scores produced by the ECR–R was .897 and .908 for the Anxiety and avoidance scores, respectively. For each subscale, the lower and upper bounds of the 95% confidence interval place the average reliability of scores produced by the ECR-R squarely at about .90. The authors found that across the five measures, by all criteria considered, the ECR-R produced scores with the highest average reliability of all of the measures considered. They also showed that the reliability of the scores was relatively unaffected by characteristics of the sample and setting, suggesting that the ECR-R is particularly well-suited, not only as a general measure of adult attachment security, but for making
cross-group comparisons between participants of a variety of backgrounds. ECR-R scores have been shown to be stable over a three-week (Sibley, Fischer, & Liu, 2005) and a six-week period (Sibley & Liu, 2004). Fairchild and Finney (2006) gathered internal structural validity and external criterion validity evidence for the ECR-R scores. Specifically, confirmatory factor analysis of the data provided general support for the hypothesized two-factor model, and hypothesized relationships with external criteria were substantiated. However, minor model misfit and low communalities suggested that some items may represent extraneous constructs.

Support for the construct validity of ECR-R has been found by several independent investigators. Busonera, Zavattini, and Santona (2014) examined the psychometric properties of a newly translated Italian version of the ECR-R scale. The sample comprised 1,363 adults (906 women, 456 men, 1 unreported sex) with reported ages 18–64 years, (M = 33.4, SD = 8.9) who lived in Italy and spoke Italian as their first language. Of the sample respondents, 4% reported being engaged in a romantic relationship, and 9.4% declared being single. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses showed the expected bi-factorial (anxiety/avoidance) structure and a close correspondence between factors and scales. Test-retest (assessed on a subsample of 63 participants after 100 days, was satisfactory: \( r = .74 \) (p < .001) for the anxiety scale and \( r = .84 \) (p < .001) for the avoidance scale), and internal consistency (Cronbach’s \( \alpha \) .88 and .79, respectively) reliabilities were adequate. Correlations with the Relationship Questionnaire, a categorical measure of attachment, and with the Dyadic Adjustment Scale were consistent with the theoretical relations among the constructs.
Hanak and Dimitrijevic (2013) present details about the validation of the Serbian version of the ECR-R questionnaire modified to measure attachment in close relationships in general (SM–ECR–R). Its psychometric features were examined with two samples of students ($N=719$ and $N=91$) and one group of employed adults ($N=259$). The results obtained in the student sample were equivalent to those obtained in validation studies worldwide, whereas in the more heterogeneous sample of employed adults, internal consistency of both avoidance and anxiety was lower and intercorrelation was higher. Internal consistency was .89 for the avoidance subscale and .90 for anxiety. Test–retest reliability was satisfactory ($r = .81$, $p < .001$) for the avoidance subscale and $r = .87$ for the anxiety subscale ($p < .001$), and relations with measures of attachment, empathy, and personality structure were meaningful. The results support the SM–ECR–R as a reliable and valid research instrument, but its internal structure and consistency might vary in different samples, depending on age, education, gender, and culture.

Kooiman, Klaassens, van Heloma Lugt, and Kamperman (2013) showed that the ECR-R appears to have appropriate psychometric qualities. They reported factor structure, reliability, and construct validity of the Dutch translation of the ECR-R in an outpatient mental health sample ($N= 262$). The original factor structure could satisfactorily be replicated, the reliability of the ECR-R was also stable over time, and there was good evidence for its construct validity. Internal consistencies of the scales were good with Cronbach’s $\alpha = .94$ for attachment-related avoidance and Cronbach’s $\alpha = .92$ for attachment-related anxiety. The test-retest reliability of the avoidance subscale was $r = .83$, and that of the anxiety subscale was $r = .85$ (both $p < .01$).
Goodall, Trejnowska and Darling (2014) investigated the relationship between the attachment security, emotion regulation abilities, and mindfulness in a sample of 192 participants who had previously had no mindfulness training. Participants completed the Five Factor Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), the ECR-R and the Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS) online. Results supported that both emotional regulation abilities and attachment security were related to dispositional mindfulness. These authors did not examine reliability within their study but rather referenced the studies of Fairchild and Finney who showed that the scale had good internal reliability, with alpha coefficient values of .90 or higher for both sub scales (Fairchild & Finney, 2006).

Demirli and Demir (2014) investigated the predictive value of gender, attachment dimensions, and family environment in explaining loneliness among students. The study included 473 students (281 females, 192 males) from Ankara University. The UCLA Loneliness Scale, Family Environment Assessment Scale, and ECR-R Questionnaire were administered to all participants. The study demonstrated that insecurely attached males with low-coherent families reported the highest degree of loneliness. On the other hand, securely attached females with high-coherent families reported the lowest degree of loneliness. The internal consistencies of attachment avoidance and anxiety subscales were found to be satisfactory (.90 and .86, respectively).

The role of General Factor of Personality (GFP) and adult attachment dimensions in marital quality through relationship attributions and emotional reactions was explored by Nilforooshan, Ahmadi, Fatehizadeh, Abedi, and Ghasemi (2013). The sample consisted of 261 couples who were married more than one year and had no
major stressful events in their lives up to the time of the study. The study used the ECR-R and four other measures with structural equation modeling (SEM) to analyze the data. The results suggest that attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance and GFP directly and indirectly, through relationship attributions and emotional reactions, were related to marital quality. In this study, the Cronbach’s α was .88 for attachment anxiety and .89 for attachment avoidance. The two dimensions were modestly correlated (r = .26, p < .05). The three-week test-retest reliability was .91 for attachment anxiety and .93 for attachment avoidance in this research.

Dumont, Jenkins, Hinson, and Sibcy (2012) explored the effect of attachment to God and a history of an alcoholic parent on adult relationship satisfaction. A total of 267 participants from an evangelical graduate program in professional counseling were administered six measures including the ECR-R. The study indicated that secure attachment to God may override the effects of being raised in an alcoholic home on adult relationship satisfaction. The subscales encompass distinctive dimensions with high internal reliabilities of .95 for anxiety and .94 for avoidance.

**Summary of Attachment Instruments**

The current consensus among the research community appears to be that adult attachment security is best conceptualized across two dimensions: attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance (Mikulincer, Shaver, & Pereg, 2003). This two-factor conceptualization is used in a variety of measures (Stein et al., 2002), and explains both the two-factor structures of the ECR, ECR-R and the AAQ, as well as the three-factor structure of the AAS, for which closeness and dependency could be combined into a “single avoidance subscale” (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2010, p 115). While attachment provides one lens to examine the separateness and togetherness dynamic of the
human condition, differentiation provides a second lens to examine the same phenomena.

**Bowen’s Family Systems Theory**

Bowen theory on family systems (BFST) is based on the assumption that human behavior is regulated by the same processes that govern the behavior of all living things. The major concepts of BFST (1976, 1978) include differentiation of self, triangulation, nuclear family emotional system, family projection process, emotional cutoff, and multigenerational transmission process. In addition, sibling position and emotional process in society is deliberated; however, differentiation of self is considered the most central idea. Bowen viewed the family as an organic system held in balance between the opposing forces of togetherness and separation, with the goal for each individual to achieve autonomy within the family system. An individual’s level of autonomy is described as an individual’s separate and yet solid sense of self within the family’s emotional system. This principal concept is termed “differentiation of self” and represents the cornerstone of Bowen Theory. Bowen’s second concept, “triangulating” is a three-person emotional configuration that is the basic building block of any emotional system. A two-person relationship operates under the constant togetherness and separateness forces and has a low tolerance for anxiety, but when a third person is triangulated in the relationship system, the relationship system then becomes stable and the stress between the dyad is displaced. Triangles are one common way that humans cope with relational anxiety (Bowen, 1978). Bowen’s third concept, nuclear family emotion system, previously termed “undifferentiated ego mass,” depicts the emotional functioning in a single generation and the symptomatic patterns produced by intense fusion between partners, which is reflected by their lack of differentiation.
(Bowen, 1978). The fourth concept is family projection process, which describes the primary manner by which parental undifferentiating is subsequently projected onto one or more children and results in impaired function. The fifth concept is “emotional cutoff,” an instinctive biological process that acts as an emotional safety valve in relationships; however, cutoff is an immature separation of people from each other. Differentiation is conceptualized as a continuum of togetherness and separateness with fusion and cutoff at opposite ends and differentiation representing the middle point. Fusion occurs when the pull of togetherness forces become so strong that individuals become merged with each other at the expense of their autonomy. When fusion occurs in a family it demands and creates pseudo-selves, family members who give up or reorganize authentic self for the sake of togetherness (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). The sixth concept is sibling position, which observes how interactive patterns between marital partners relate to the sibling position of each partner in his/her family of origin. The seventh concept, mutigenerational transmission process, describes how the level of differentiation increases or decreases for individuals in all families over multiple generations. The eighth concept is societal emotion process that addresses ways that families shape society and society shapes families (Bowen, 1978). Bowen believed that the emotional system drives function at all levels including family, society, work, social organizations, and other nonfamily groups (Kerr, 2003).

**Differentiation of Self**

Central to BFST is the concept of differentiation of self. Differentiation is a multidimensional construct that exists when an individual is able to separate his/her self from the family of origin’s emotional attachments and projections of anxiety, and this is termed “nuclear family emotion system.” Nuclear family emotion system represents the
extent to which a person is embedded in the emotion matrix of his/her family.

Differentiation is a marker of how well an individual has separated from the nuclear family emotion system. Differentiation is understood as the middle point on a continuum of togetherness and separateness forces, with fusion representing too strong of an emotional force of togetherness between family members and cutoff as too strong of an emotional separation force between family members. Differentiation is the internal process of being able to incorporate and choose between one’s intellectual and emotion systems (Bowen, 1978) as well as an external process of being able to remain a separate “self” while staying connected with significant others (Bowen, 1961; Kerr, 1985).

Individuals with high differentiation can be authentic without emotionally cutting off from their family and severing significant relationship (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Individuals with low differentiation are emotionally fused with family members; family members are similar in emotional expression to the extent that they know each other’s thoughts, feelings, and dreams (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Differentiation involves individuals managing independence and interdependence in emotionally significant relationships (i.e., within one’s family or in marriage) (Bowen, 1978). Differentiation is developed and established early in life by the degree of emotional separation from one’s parents achieved while growing up (Bowen, 1978). Individuals who are having difficulty differentiating continue to be fused with parents (Johnson & Waldo, 1998; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). This level of emotional separation is passed down from generation to generation and is fixed through life unless there is a focused and determined effort to change it (Kerr & Bowe, 1988; Papero, 1990).
Differentiation of self in relationships is a lifelong process and complete differentiation exists only as a theoretical concept (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

There are two types of differentiation: (1) intrapsychic differentiation is the capability of balancing thoughts and emotions and (2) interpersonal differentiation is the capability of sharing profound levels of intimacy while still maintaining a feeling of independence in emotionally important relationships (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). On the intrapsychic level, differentiated adults are more skilled at reflecting on, experiencing, and regulating their emotions, and are less emotionally reactive than their less differentiated counterparts (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Bowen’s theory suggests that such individuals maintain a solid sense of self and hold fast to their own opinions and beliefs (Bowen, 1978). On the other hand, less differentiated individuals tend to get overwhelmed by their emotions and have difficulty maintaining a solid sense of self in their relationships (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998).

On an interpersonal level, individuals who lean toward emotional cutoff, which could be summarized as a lack of relationships, tend to become anxious in response to emotional closeness with significant others. Cutoff occurs when individuals do not maintain an emotional connection in their relationships with others. Rather than coping with the anxiety of the relationship, individuals engage in a process of denying their needs for connection and distancing in their relationships. A reasonably differentiated person is able to have authentic concern for others without expecting anything in return (Majerus & Sandage, 2010).

Individuals who tend to fuse with others commonly experience separation anxiety incited by independent activities taken on by their significant other. Fusion is the
obscuring or diminishing of one self by the overshadowing of another self or by the relationship system. The self is submerged in a metaphoric relationship “sea” where all distinctive characteristics are lost. The less developed personal identity one has, the more one will hang on to a common self (shared identity with other) for direction and energy (Fritzlan, 1990). In general, these individuals remain anxious about acceptance and rejection in important relationships (Kerr, 1992). For example, a certain partner in a committed three-year relationship, who I will name Ken, opts for a weekend trip with friends exclusive of his partner, Barbie. Barbie becomes consumed with feelings of uncertainty and jealousy, despite that up to this time neither partner has given the other reason to question their commitment and faithfulness to the relationship. However, Barbie, the fused partner, begins to tell Ken how much she does not truly like his friends and becomes angry that he would chose to spend time with them instead of her. Underlying the anger and jealousy are long standing beliefs questioning self-worth and the lingering thought that, “maybe I will always be rejected by those I love.”

Differentiation occurs when an individual can separate oneself from the emotional system and burden of anxiety carried by their family (Bowen, 1979 as cited in van Ecke, Chope, Emmelkamp, 2006). Highly differentiated people have an adequately developed sense of self that allows them to invest in relationships. In contrast, poorly differentiated individuals have a shaky and fragile sense of self and are unable to sustain both individuality and stable relationships (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). The level of emotional reactivity that an individual displays is related to both types of differentiation; higher levels of reactivity are related to lower levels of differentiation (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). Thus, differentiation is crucial for mature development
and the achievement of psychological health (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). Differentiation in families encourages solid selves, individuals who understand and accept the limitations of relationships (Bowen, 1978).

In theory, at least four factors affect a person’s level of differentiation: emotional reactivity, emotional cutoff, fusion with others, and the ability to take an I-position (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 252). First, individuals with low differentiation are thought to be emotionally reactive. Individuals who are emotionally reactive often engage in automatic and reflexive behavior in relationships. For these individuals a great deal of energy is focused on the experience, expression, and intensity of their feelings. Conversely, highly differentiated individuals can experience strong emotions but are not consumed by them. They can produce alternative ways of thinking and being if necessary. In addition, when internal experiences or interpersonal interactions are too intense, individuals with low differentiation isolate themselves from others as well as from their emotions. Individuals with low differentiation are said to be overly involved or “fused” with others in most, if not all, close relationships (Tauson & Friedlander, 2000). In contrast, individuals who are highly differentiated do not feel this need to cut themselves off emotionally and typically do not fear losing their identity in relationships since they achieved resolution in their emotional attachments to parents.

Table 1, modified from Metcalf (2011, p. 43), summarizes the traits of lower differentiated individuals and compares them to higher differentiated individuals. The differentiation of self has parallels with measures of physical, psychological, and relational well-being (Bray & Harvey, 1992; Harvey, Curry, & Bray, 1991; Skowron, 2000, 2004; Skowron & Friedlander, 1998; Skowron, Holmes, & Sabatelli, 2003). Less
differentiated individuals typically have more psychological stress, trait anxiety (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998), social anxiety (Peleg, 2005), separation anxiety (Peleg, Halaby, & Whaby, 2006; Peleg & Yitzhak, 2011), physiological symptoms (Kim-Appel, Appel, Newman, & Parr, 2007; Skowron, 2000) and depression (Kim-Appel et al., 2007). In contrast, individuals with higher degrees of differentiation have positive mental health outcomes and general well-being.

Skowron and Friedlander (1998) found that greater differentiation corresponded to decreased mental health symptom scores. Skowron (2000), replicating earlier research, found an association between greater differentiation and increased marital satisfaction. Later, Skowron (2004) found that increased differentiation predicted greater psychological adjustment. Later yet, Skowron et al. (2009) through the use of a longitudinal design found that lower differentiation predicted difficulties in interpersonal functioning and increased emotional distress over the course of a college semester.

Other researchers have also demonstrated the association between differentiation and well-being. Hooper, Marotta, and Lanthier (2008) found that increased differentiation scores corresponded to decreased psychological distress, and Williamson, Sandage, and Lee (2007) found that increased differentiation scores corresponded to increased social connectedness and decreased shame-proneness. A recent trend within the literature frames differentiation as a mediator in associations between various predictors, such as indicators of stress and prosocial constructs, and well-being (Knauth & Skowron, 2004; Sandage & Jankowski, 2010; Skowron & Dendy, 2004; Skowron et al., 2004; Williamson et al., 2007).
Holman and Busby (2011) focused on the importance of differentiation of self for successful functioning in adult romantic/marital relationships. The investigators studied 1,839 couples identified from a larger population of 12,545 couples. Structural equation modeling was implemented and data were collected via a relationship quality survey, RELATionship Evaluation (RELATE), which is a 370-item comprehensive assessment of the couple relationship. In addition to gathering data about relationships, the online survey provided an outreach tool to help couples learn about their relationships. Measurements included relationship quality, family structure, parent’s marital quality, and parent-child relationship quality, differentiation from “family of origin” negative qualities, race/ethnic qualities, and length of relationship. Data was analyzed using Analysis of Moment Structures, a SEM program. This SEM procedure allowed for data from each member of the couple to be analyzed separately so that it was possible to examine how each partner’s family of origin experiences affected his/her relationship quality; SEM also provided analysis to examine how each partner’s differentiation crossed over to influence the other partner’s relationship quality. This approach statistically controlled for the effect of each partner’s own family-of-origin experiences on his/ her own relationship quality as well as for the correlation between the partners’ relationship quality. The authors discovered that parents’ marital quality retains a moderate direct relationship to adult romantic relationship quality for females and a small direct relationship for males, even in the presence of the two variables, differentiation of self and parent-child relationship quality. Additionally, they found that family of origin processes are carried forward, that is, transmitted to the next generation (Holman & Busby, 2011)
Interestingly, Holman and Busby (2011) found that past relationships in the family of origin have more impact on romantic relationship quality for females than for males, since continued connections with parents were an essential part of the female experience. The authors also suggested, as a clinical implication of their work, that individuals who are single and want to prepare themselves for future relationships would be well-served by working through their reactivity to current family members and by developing higher levels of differentiation prior to initiating new intimate relationships (Holman & Busby, 2011).

**Differentiation of Self Instruments**

The importance of Bowen theory (Bowen, 1976, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988) in the field of family therapy has led to the development of several key instruments to assess differentiation. These instruments have been identified from Academic Search Premier and searching Google Scholar. Almost all of the articles found from these sources used the Differentiation of Self Inventory (DSI) or Differentiation of Self Inventory–Revised (DSI-R). The other instrument found were the following: The Differentiation in the Family System Scale (DIFS), Differentiation of Self Scale (DSS), Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire (PAFS-Q), and Family of Origin Scale (FOS). Information on these instruments was scarce and original publications of DIFS and DSS could not be found.

**The Differentiation in the Family System Scale**

The less known and less utilized Differentiation in the Family System Scale (DIFS) was developed by Anderson and Sabatelli (1992) as a self-report measure that assessed family differentiation. The scale consisted of 11 items and employed a “circular questioning” format to assess an individual’s perception of how the various
members of the family interact with one another. Differentiation was theorized as a family-level variable including interactions that enable individuals to maintain both a sense of ongoing emotional connectedness (support, involvement, personal relationship) and a sense of separateness (autonomy, uniqueness, freedom of personal expression) within the context of a family-of-origin.

**Differentiation of Self Scale**

Another less employed scale is the Differentiation of Self Scale (DSS), developed by Kear (1978). The DSS consists of three factors: Separation of Thinking and Feeling, Emotional Maturity, and Emotional Autonomy; yet items reflect only interpersonal components of differentiation and ignore quality of relations with spouse or partner (Kear, 1978, cited in Skowron; 1998). The DSS suffers from significant methodological drawbacks including that the factor analysis used to create its subscales was conducted on 72 initial items using only 50 participants (Nunnally, 1978, cited in Skowron; 1998).

**Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire**

The Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire (PAFS-Q), developed by Bray (1984), was intended to measure family processes based on aspects of current intergenerational family theory (Williamson, 1981, 1982b). The questionnaire is composed of eight scales that measure concepts such as differentiation, fusion, intimacy isolation, and personal authority intimidation in the three-generational context. The PAFS-Q scales include (1) spousal fusion individuation, (2) intergenerational fusion individuation, (3) spousal intimacy, (4) intergenerational intimacy, (5) nuclear family triangulation, (6) intergenerational triangulation, and (7) intergenerational intimidation. Study 1 indicated that the scales had good internal consistency and good test-retest reliability. Study 2 confirmed the underlying factor
structure of the PAFS-Q and supported the construct validity of the scales. At Study 1, the coefficients ranged from .82 to .95 with a mean of .90. At Study 2, the coefficients ranged from .80 to .95, with a mean of .89. The reliability estimates were generally consistent across time periods. Test-retest reliability estimates were also calculated. The reliability estimates range from .55 to .95, with a mean test-retest reliability of .74.

PAFS-Q includes items about current relationships; however, it neglects the concept of emotional cutoff and doesn't allow for the assessment of intrapsychic aspects of Bowen’s concept of differentiation (1976, 1978) as shown by the study of Day, St. Clair, and Marshall (1997). In a study of 36 heterosexual couples, in which both members completed the PAFS-Q, the authors examined Bowen’s hypothesis that people marry at the same level of differentiation of self. The similarity of the actual couples' scores was compared with the similarity of randomly formed couples for each of seven PAFS-Q variables. Several indexes of couple similarity revealed that the members of the actual couples were more similar than the members of the pseudo-couples on just one of the spousal measures and none of the measures of intergenerational relationships. Thus the findings of Day, St. Clair, and Marshall did not support Bowen’s hypothesis (Day, St. Clair, & Marshall, 1997).

Family of Origin Scale

The Family of Origin Scale (FOS), designed by Hovestadt, Anderson, Piercy, Cochran & Fine, 1985), provides retrospective perceptions of adults' family of origin relations and has demonstrated discriminant validity (Hovestadt et al., 1985; Mazer et al., 1990). The FOS scale is a 40-item, self-inventory, Likert scale designed to assess two primary constructs in one’s family of origin: autonomy and intimacy, which are divided into 10 subscales. The Autonomy construct consists of the following 5
subscales: clarity of expression, responsibility, respect for others, openness to others, and acceptance of departure and loss. The Intimacy construct subclasses include mood and tone, range of feeling, conflict resolution for others, and trust. The FOS has demonstrated test-retest and internal consistency coefficients above .90 (Hovestadt et al., 1985).

Manley, Searight and Skitka (1991) used the FOS to assess adolescents’ perceptions of family health. While initial research has suggested that the instrument demonstrates factorial validity, the reliability of the FOS for adolescents had not yet been established. In this 1991 study, FOS was administered to 88 adolescents on two occasions, with a two-week interval between testing. The global FOS index and 10 subscale scores demonstrated high test-retest reliability. Internal consistency reliability for the instrument was also high. When taken together with previous research, this study’s results suggest that the FOS for adolescents is psychometrically sound.

Capps, Searight, and Russo (1993) examined the discriminant validity of the FOS using 60 self-defined adult children of alcoholics (ACOAs) and 64 undergraduate and graduate university students. The ACOAs’ participants obtained significantly lower scores on the 10 FOS subscales, on two larger dimensions of autonomy and intimacy, and on global score. A discriminate function correctly classified nearly 88% of the sample. The findings are generally compatible with theoretical and clinical writing about ACOAs and provide further psychometric support for the FOS as a clinical and research instrument. The study provided additional validating support for the FOS. When the differences in age between the groups were controlled, ACOAs obtained significantly lower scores on all of the FOS dimensions than a comparison sample of non-ACOAs.
The FOS subscales were able to correctly classify almost 88% of the participants as ACOAs or non-ACOAs.

In 1995, Niedermeier and Searight administered the FOS to 100 adolescent psychiatric inpatients and concurrently administered the Brief Symptom Inventory (BSI) to examine the FOS’s discriminant and construct validity. When compared with 100 nonclinical adolescents, the psychiatric inpatients perceived their family as less healthy on all FOS dimensions. Perceived family health on the FOS was moderately correlated with the BSI dimensions. The finding provides psychometric and clinical support for FOS with adolescents. Two studies did not find the FOS to be a useful research tool. Lee et al. (1990) concluded that the FOS does not exhibit adequate psychometric properties to be a research instrument. Kline and Newman (1994) used the FOS to assess 162 gay and bisexual males and found the value of the FOS was suspect.

**Differentiation of Self Inventory**

Skowron and Friedlander (1998) produced a self-report instrument, the DSI, a multidimensional measure of differentiation that focuses specifically on adults (age 25 years plus), their significant relationships, and current relationships with family of origin (1998). To construct the DSI, a series of three studies were conducted with three different samples (Jackson, 1970; Jackson & Messick, 1958; Loevinger, 1957; Nunnally, 1978). Skowron and Friedlander took into consideration Jackson’s suggestions for personality scale development in order to construct items that would reflect differentiation of self; be well-defined and clear-cut; be free of social prejudice and other content biases; have high discriminatory ability; and, as a group, represent the underlying construct of differentiation (Jackson, 1970; Skowron & Friedlander, 1998).
In Skowron and Friedlander’s first study, definitions, descriptions, and examples from Bowen (1976, 1978) and his successors (Kerr, 1985; Kerr & Bowen, 1988; Nichols, 1984; Nichols & Schwartz, 1998; Papero, 1990) were used to create a pool of items that exemplified differentiation of self. Items \((N = 96)\) generated by the research team reflected the ability to distinguish and balance (1) thinking and feeling and (2) the capacity for intimacy with and autonomy from others in current important relationships as well as with parents and siblings. Differentiation was operationalized in a multidimensional fashion, given that Bowen (1976, 1978) described many components of differentiation in his writings. This was supported by the studies of Gurman (1978) who also characterized differentiation as multidimensional. Skowron and Friedlander used a principal-components analysis to identify the DSI’s dimensionality and determine item selection. Theoretical relations between differentiation and chronic anxiety were tested to assess the initial construct validity of the DSI. Specifically, Bowen’s proposition that poorly differentiated individuals also experience more chronic anxiety was examined.

In the first of three studies conducted by Skowron and Friedlander (1998), the DSI had 96 items with four subscales and required that participants rate each item using a 6-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (not at all true of me) to 6 (very true of me). Study 1 participants were adults \((N = 313)\) living in New York, Ohio, and California, including (1) randomly selected faculty and staff at a large state university; (2) parents of children on a suburban athletic team; (3) graduate students in counseling psychology, clinical psychology, and social work; and (4) available friends and acquaintances of research team members. Completed questionnaires were returned by 213 women and
98 men, 75% were married, and 49% had children. On average, participants were 36.8 years of age ($SD = 9.69$, range = 25-65). In terms of ethnicity, 5.1% of the samples were African American, 4.5% Asian American, 2.2% Latino-Latina, 1.9% Native American, 82.7% White, and 3.2% other.

Skowron and Friedlander conducted a principal-components analysis using an orthogonal rotation to identify a few coherent dimensions that best reflected the various aspects of the differentiation. Skowron and Friedlander considered only those items loading at least .40 on a single factor ($n = 43$). Four scales were identified. factor 1, with 12 items, was defined as emotional reactivity; factor 2, with 10 items, was defined as taking an I-position; factor 3, with 13 items, was defined as reactive distancing; and factor 4, with 9 items, was defined as fusion with parents. Internal consistency estimates using Cronbach’s alpha suggested high reliabilities for the DSI total scale and each of the four subscales: $DSI = .88$; emotional reactivity = .83; reactive distancing = .80; fusion with parents = .82; and I-position = .80. Subscale correlations with the DSI full scale were moderate to high: .59 (fusion with Parents), .65 (I-position), .75 (reactive distancing), and .80 (emotional reactivity). There was a considerable amount of variance unaccounted for in the factor analysis of this study.

To address this degree of variance, Study 2 was undertaken. In Study 2, revision of the theoretical focus and item content of the original DSI was carried out and the DSI subscales underwent conceptual revisions to strengthen psychometric properties on the basis of item analyses. Furthermore, in Study 2, a critical examination of social desirability bias was performed. Participants included adults ($n = 169$, 111 women and 58 men), greater than 25 years of age. Participants averaged 42.34 years old. The
majority were married (70.2%; \( M = 15.04 \) years), 13.7% were single, 6.3% were unmarried and living with a partner, and 9.5% were separated or divorced. In terms of ethnicity, 90.4% were White, 5.4% African American, 0.6% Asian American, 0.6% Latino-Latina, 0.6% Native American, and 2.4% other. Approximately 15% of participants were currently in therapy; 45% had sought therapy in the past. The DSI used in Study 2 contained 78 items instead of the original 96 items but had the same four subscales: emotional reactivity, I-position, emotional cutoff, and fusion with others. To rate each item, respondents used a 6-point Likert-type scale, ranging from “not at all true of me” (1) to “very true of me” (6).

In Study 3, the final version of the DSI, 43 items are utilized with the original four subscales. The 11-item Emotional Reactivity subscale reflects the degree to which a person responds to environmental stimuli with emotional flooding, emotional liability, or hypersensitivity. The I-position subscale contains 11 items that reflect a clearly defined sense of self and the ability to thoughtfully adhere to one’s convictions when pressured to do otherwise. The 12-item emotional cutoff subscale reflects feeling threatened by intimacy and feeling excessive vulnerability in relations with others. Items reflect fears of engulfment and behavioral defenses like over-functioning, distancing, or denial. Finally, the 9-item fusion with others subscale reflects emotional over-involvement with others, including triangulation and over-identification with parents. Cronbach’s alpha was used to estimate internal consistency reliabilities for the DSI full scale and each of the four subscales (DSI \( \alpha = .88 \), emotional reactivity \( \alpha = .84 \); I-position \( \alpha = .83 \), emotional cutoff \( \alpha = .82 \); fusion with others \( \alpha = .74 \)).
Other investigators have used the DSI for their research (Lam & Chan-So; 2015). Because of a lack of objective measures about emotional functioning in the Chinese population, a project was conducted to validate the Chinese version of the DSI (C-DSI). This included three studies: Study 1 looked at the factor structure, internal consistency, concurrent validity, and construct validity of the C-DSI; Study 2 examined the test-retest reliability of the C-DSI; and Study 3 tested the discriminant validity of the C-DSI in a clinical sample and in a nonclinical sample and examined its correlations with the General Contentment Scale (GCS). The investigators concluded that the C-DSI possesses good psychometric properties and expanded the understanding of the differentiation of self in the context of Chinese culture.

Skowron, Holmes, and Sabatelli (2003) examined the underlying similarities between the Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire (PAFS; Bray, Williamson, & Malone, 1984a) and the DSI. Generalized least-squares factor analysis yielded two related factors, self-regulation and Interdependent Relating, accounting for 60% of the variance in the solution. Self-regulation is an ability to modulate emotional reactivity and maintain an I-position, and interdependent relating is the ability to freely relate to parents as peers and to be comfortable with both independence and togetherness in close relationships. The DSI scales characterize Self-Regulation as less emotional reactivity and greater ability to take an I-position in relationships. Interdependent relation when marked by greater personal authority, intergenerational intimacy and less intergenerational fusion on the PAFS and less emotional cutoff on the DSI predicted wellbeing among both women and men (Skowron, Holmes, & Sabatelli, 2003).
In 2004, Skowron focused on examining the cross-cultural validity of Bowen family systems theory (Bowen, 1978), namely differentiation of self for individuals of color. Ethnic minority men and women completed measures of differentiation of self, ethnic group belonging, and three indices of personal adjustment, and support for the cross-cultural utility of Bowen family systems theory was observed. Participants comprised 61 persons of color (80.3% women and 19.7% men) attending a large, Midwestern university. Participants averaged 22.17 years ($SD = 5.14$) and fell into the following college classifications: 29.5% were freshmen, 24.6% were sophomores, 16.4% juniors, 9.8% seniors, and 19.7% were graduate students. The majority of participants were single (49.0%) or single and in a committed relationship (42.6%). Only 8.2% were married, and 16.7% were parents. Students were self-identified as Asian American ($n = 15, 24.6%$), Native American ($n = 12, 19.7%$), African American ($n = 10, 16.4%$), Latino/Latina ($n = 9, 14.8%$), or multiethnic ($n = 15, 24.6%$). English was the primary language spoken in most participants’ homes (73.8%), followed by Hmong (9.8%), Spanish (6.6%), Mandarin (1.6%), Cantonese (1.6%). The remaining participants (4.9%) lived in other bilingual families, and 1.7% did not report language. Only a third of participants (36.1%) had ever attended counseling or therapy. Among persons of color, a higher level of differentiation of self was associated with superior psychological adjustment, better social problem-solving skills, and greater ethnic group belonging.

**Differentiation of Self Inventory–Revised**

The DSI-R was developed by Skowron and Schmitt (2003) with the purpose of improving reliability and construct validity of the fusion with others subscale while retaining the desirable factor structure of the existing DSI; statistical analyses were
performed at the item level on the responses of the 225 adults in the sample. Greater fusion with others was associated with greater spousal fusion and dimensions of adult attachment insecurity. The DSI-R full scale consists of 46 items that assess four dimensions of differentiation: emotional reactivity (ER), I-position (IP), emotional cutoff (EC), and fusion with others (FO).

For this study the 225 participants were adults, 79% women and 21% men, with a mean age of 36.31 years. Most participants were either married (42.7%), remarried (5.5%), or cohabitating (14.2%), and the remaining were single, never married (20.6%), separated or divorced (16.5%), or widowed (0.5%). The majority (69.3%) of individuals were employed, with median household income between $50,000 and $60,000. The ethnic composition of the sample was 4.9% biracial/multiracial, 1.8% African American, 0.8% Asian American/Pacific Islander, 0.9% Latino, 1.3% Native American, and 86.6% European American. Participants’ highest levels of education were as follows: 11.6% high school graduates; 44.4% some college/technical training; 23.6% bachelor’s degree; 15.1% master’s degree; and 0.4% doctorate, medical doctorate, or juris doctorate. More than one-half (61.9%) reported a history of counseling or psychotherapy with mean satisfaction of 2.17 (SD = 1.01) on a scale of 1 (very satisfied) to 4 (very dissatisfied). Participants were solicited through the World Wide Web via news groups focusing on family and parenting issues, relationships, and genealogy. Internal consistency reliabilities were calculated using Cronbach’s alpha and were high for the full scale and subscales: DSI-R full scale = .92, FO = .86, ER = .89, IP = .81, EC = .84. The authors did not provide information about test-retest reliability.
Işık and Bulduk (2015) examined the validity and reliability of DSI-R with Turkish adults. The DSI-R was translated, independently back-translated, and revised. Two independent samples of adults over the age of 25 were used. The original 46-item DSI-R was not supported by the data derived from Sample 1 ($n = 221$). However, a revised 20-item, four-factor model fit the data well. This 20-item model was subsequently cross-validated with a second sample of Turkish adults ($n = 187$). Scale scores showed adequate internal consistency, five-week test-retest reliability, and satisfactory convergent and criterion-related validity. It was concluded that Turkish DSI-R (DSI-T) is a valid and reliable measure to assess an individual’s differentiation level (Işık & Bulduk, 2015).

**Summary of Differentiation of Self Instruments**

This overview of instruments that measure differentiation of self indicates that the DIFS, DSS, PAFS-Q, FOS, DSI, and DSI-R have found utility for the assessment of differentiation in research studies. The DSI was found to be the most commonly used instrument to measure differentiation and operationalizes the intrapersonal and relational dimensions of Bowen’s concept of differentiation of self very well.

**Interplay Between Bowlby’s and Bowen’s Theories**

Only a few studies have attempted to directly compare Bowlby’s and Bowen’s theories. Van Ecke, Chope, and Emmelkamp (2006) published their study comparing client response patterns to relationship anxiety using data from a previous study of adult immigrants (van Ecke, Chope, & Emmelkamp, 2005). Attachment was assessed in van Ecke et al. (2005) using the Adult Attachment Projective (AAP) (George & West, 2001). Interjudge reliability and convergent agreement were calculated using percentage
agreement and Cohen’s kappa. AAP interjudge reliability for secure versus insecure classifications was .93 (kappa = .73, p < .000); interjudge reliability for the four major attachment groups was .86 (kappa = .79, p < .000) (George & West, 2001).

In their 2006 paper, van Ecke et al. examined the following hypotheses: 1) the theoretical underpinnings of both attachment theory and intergenerational family systems theory are fundamentally compatible, 2) attachment based assessment is useful for the Bowenian therapist, 3) Bowen therapeutic interventions can be applied to attachment issues in clinical work with immigrants, and 4) the use of attachment based assessment may facilitate research on the effectiveness of Bowen interventions to improve the client’s attachment status (van Ecke, et al., 2006, p.81). A specific parallel that the authors identified between BFST and a core tenet of attachment theory is that both see human development as emerging from relationships. Humans need a consistent sense of connectedness, a notion found in both attachment theory and in the concept of differentiation (Worrel-Hasling & Erdman, 2003). Relationships are part of a system held together by opposing forces of tension between togetherness and separateness (van Ecke et al., 2006). For example, a person has a strong desire to feel close to his/her partner. He/she enjoys engaging in many mutually shared hobbies he/she has with his/her partner. The force of togetherness is powerful at times. Sometimes, nonetheless, he/she feels a strong need for autonomy and would like to partake in independent activities separate from his/her partner as well. The separateness force can also feel powerful, causing internal tension within the person while he/she considers whether to spend time with his/her partner or enter in other activities alone that he/she enjoys.
Attachment theory and BFST are both based on the assumption that an individual is a byproduct of evolution and exists as a component of a naturally occurring system of opposing forces (Holmes, 1993; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Togetherness forces can be viewed as similar to the safety-seeking behavior in Bowlby's attachment theory. The desire for separation in Bowen's theory can be seen as analogous to the desire to explore in Bowlby's theory. In attachment theory, the healthy individual maintains a balance between the pull towards togetherness and the push towards separation, which in BFST is called differentiation (van Ecke et al., 2006).

In Bowlby's attachment theory, an individual can manage to resolve the anxiety generated by an activated attachment system such as occurs when there is threat of loss, separation, or rejection (van Ecke et al., 2006). For example, a recently married couple is informed that the soldier/husband has been deployed for eight months. The wife becomes alarmed that she may lose the connection she has with her husband and fears he may never return. She is uncomfortable with her uncertainty and new sense of insecurity. She may respond by distancing herself from the relationship to suppress her unpleasant feelings. She may attempt to deny the importance of her relationship. Although she does this to ease her anxiety about the threat of losing him, she is actually pushing him away from her.

Insecure individuals employ various defenses to stay connected; the secure individual uses a simpler, more direct route to feeling safe again; the dismissive individuals avoid feeling unsafe in relationships; and the preoccupied person becomes highly sensitive to the relationship. The person with unresolved attachment is more
likely to lose control over their actions due to the intensity of stress experienced (van Ecke et al., 2006).

In BFST, the result of imbalance between togetherness and separation forces in the family system is also experienced as anxiety within the individual (van Ecke et al., 2006). Fusion is the term used when the individual’s intellectual capacity becomes driven by emotion. Both Bowen and Bowlby view flexibility of emotional and cognitive response as the healthy state and the goal of effective therapy. What Bowen calls fusion, Bowlby names defensive exclusion (Bowen, 1982). Bowen describes problems as occurring when there is fusion between emotional and intellectual systems that begins in childhood by fusion between parent and child. This is particularly problematic when a caregiver uses a child for her/his own needs, which he calls “over attachment” or “fusion.” This process results in lack of differentiation of the child and in the child becoming the recipient of the anxiety carried by the parent. This conceptualization is similar to Bowlby’s (1969) notion that intrusive parenting promotes insecure preoccupied attachment in children, and parental abuse may lead to unresolved attachment issues. Both Bowen (1978) and Bowlby (1969) view needy parents or abusive parenting as leading to pathogenic conditions in the child (cited in van Ecke et al., 2006). Bowen believes healthy ways of relating to others is characterized by differentiation with a minimum of fusion. Bowlby put forth that secure attachment allows for exploration. Furthermore, BFST and attachment theory recognize that patterns of responding in relationships are complex and intergenerational (Bowen, 1978; Bowlby, 1969 cited in van Ecke et al., 2006).
Bowen’s theory focuses on the view of family as a system that evolves, whereas Bowlby puts much emphasis on the infant/caregiver interaction as the context for initial development of attachment. Attachment theory recognizes a difference between adult relationships and child/parent relationships, but it is minor compared to intergenerational family systems theory (Bowen, 1978; Bowlby, 1969 cited in van Ecke et al., 2006).

God Attachment

The teachings of Christianity and other monotheistic world faiths often invoke parent–child imagery, with God portrayed as the ultimate attachment figure (Kirkpatrick, 2005). Close relationships between humans and God constitute attachments. There is abundant evidence that believers engage in proximity seeking behavior through various types of spiritual coping when faced with stressful events or circumstances (Pargament, 1997). Researchers examining God attachment theory have reported that secure (as opposed to avoidant or insecure) attachment to God is associated with higher levels of life satisfaction, lower levels of depressed affect, lower psychological distress, and fewer feelings of loneliness. Anxious attachment to God is inversely associated with positive affect, but rather positively linked to distress and neuroticism (Bradshaw et al., 2008; Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1992; Kirkpatrick et al., 1999; Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002). The compensation hypothesis and the correspondence hypothesis of God attachment are commonly considered. The principle of the compensation hypothesis of God attachment is that an individual’s representation of God can be a continuation of childhood attachment experiences or a compensation for them if distorted (Sorenson, 1997). The basis for the correspondence hypothesis of God attachment is the similarity or correspondence between one’s early attachment history with parents and later relationship with God (Beck & McDonald, 2004; Hall & Edwards, 2002).
Attachment Styles to God

A third lens to illuminate the togetherness and separateness paradox is God attachment. In a groundbreaking review of the literature, Granqvist and Kirkpatrick theorized that “core aspects of religious beliefs and behavior can be meaningfully and usefully interpreted in terms of attachment dynamics” (2008, p. 906). The authors marshaled evidence from various sources to support the hypothesis that many aspects of religious life and experience reflect (at least in part) the operation of attachment processes. Based on descriptions of perceptual and behavioral patterns unique to attachment (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1969/1982), Granqvist and Kirkpatrick (2008) argued that relationships could be used to portray a spiritual or divine attachment relationship. These spiritual relationships meet the “defining criteria” for an attachment relationship and function meaningfully like other attachment relationships, in that they provide a safe haven when threats or distress are noticed and serve as a secure base for risky or challenging endeavors. Granqvist and Kirkpatrick specified these attachment criteria: “(1) perceived relationships with God are central to many people’s religious beliefs and experiences; (2) the emotional bond experienced in this relationship is a form of love akin to the infant-caregiver attachment bond; and (3) images of God tend to parallel the characteristics of sensitive attachment figures” (2008, pp. 908-909). These criteria are found in the five relational patterns present in a spiritual attachment relationship with God: (1) seeking and maintaining proximity to God, (2) God as a safe haven, (3) God as a secure base, (4) response to separation and loss, and 5) perceiving God as stronger and wiser (Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2008; Granqvist et al., 2010).
Bowlby’s attachment theory hypothesized that internal working models developed during infancy are then applied to later relationships. An individual's representation of God can be a continuation of childhood attachment experiences or a compensation for them if they have been damaged (Sorenson, 1997). Common feelings about God’s love, protectiveness, and responsiveness meet the defining criteria of a secure attachment figure (Kirkpatrick, 1994). Research has shown that secure attachment to a caregiver can help individuals develop positive internal working models of the social world (Klohnen & Bera, 1998). Ideally, an individual that has this secure attachment to God may then use this to compensate for earlier poor attachment experiences (compensation hypothesis). In two later studies, Kirkpatrick (1997, 1998) found evidence that God may serve as a compensatory attachment figure for individuals displaying insecure attachment patterns Granqvist (1998). Additionally, TenElshof & Furrow (2000) found a relationship between adulthood attachment and spiritual maturity.

As previously mentioned, God attachment can represent compensation if the relationship with God helps the individual compensate for deficient caregiver bonds during childhood and the relationship with God fills an attachment void for the individual. The studies of Granqvist (1998) and Kirkpatrick (1990, 1997, 1998) support the compensation hypothesis. However, Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1990, 1994, 2005) were the first to explain that religious experiences can be understood within attachment theory.

Granqvist (1998) initiated a study that utilized questionnaires containing measures of childhood attachment quality and one’s own and parental religiousness.
These were completed by 203 students at Uppsala University, Sweden. The sample included general theology undergraduate students \( (n = 50) \); undergraduates in other fields of theology (Hebrew and Greek, \( n = 39 \)); members from an ecumenically based Christian students’ union \( (n = 12) \); and students in a dormitory \( (n = 25) \) belonging to a Christian denomination. In addition, two undergraduate biology classes \( (n = 46) \) and two psychology classes \( (n = 31) \) also participated in this study. The sample consisted of primarily females (62%) with a mean age of 26 years and a standard deviation of 6.7 (range = 20–50 years). These results supported the compensation hypothesis in the insecure respondents. The secure respondents experienced low parental religiousness but were more religious, were more likely to perceive themselves as having a close relationship with God, expressed more theistic beliefs, and reported a higher level of religious change during adulthood; secure respondents were agonistic to a larger extent.

In 1990, Kirkpatrick and Shaver provided support for the compensatory role of religion for individuals with insecure parental attachment relationships. Subsequent studies have shown a compensatory God attachment can exist for individuals with insecure romantic relationships (Kirkpatrick, 1999; Granqvist & Hagekull, 2003). In these studies, the attachment compensation, or God-substitute attachment figure, serves to regulate distress when a secure attachment figure is not available.

The second hypothesis is the correspondence hypothesis of God attachment. Attachment to God studies have demonstrated correspondence between one’s early attachment history with parents and later relationship with God (Beck & McDonald, 2004; Hall & Edwards, 2002). Other studies support this hypothesis and additionally
suggest that positive relationships with caregivers are associated with more supportive and loving God images and negative relations with caregivers are associated with God being more demanding and authoritarian (Brokaw & Edwards, 1994; Hall & Brokaw, 1995; Hall, Brokaw, Edwards, & Pike, 1998).

Clinton and Straub (2010) hypothesize that anxious (preoccupied) types feel insecure in their relationship with God. These individuals are very active in pursuing God and trying to please, perhaps even representing the most active of the relational styles. For example, individuals with anxious attachment to God may read books, listen to messages, pray for hours, and attend many meetings (Clinton & Straub, 2010, p. 98; Cooper, Bruce, Harman, & Boccaccini, 2009). These individuals might be described as trying to win God's approval in order to feel connected to Him. The challenge for this attachment style is that they may feel as if they will never measure up to God's standards, so they may try anything to feel affirmed and loved by God (Clinton & Straub, 2010, p. 98).

Clinton and Straub also hypothesized that those who have avoidant (dismissive) attachment commonly have an arms-length relationship with God. Such individuals tend to emphasize their duty as believers rather than their relationship with God. The more committed devote their time and energies to making the church function effectively. They acknowledge that it seems nice that others feel close to God, but a deep, rich relationship with God is not even on their personal radar (Clinton & Straub, 2010, p. 98–99).

Then there are individuals who suffered chaotic, abusive home environments. For many of these individuals, the source of their comfort was also the source of their
pain. People and relationships are not considered safe, and this pattern easily spills over into the relationship with God. In the fearful relational style, an individual may try almost anything to connect with God but seldom feels closeness because they have learned to attribute chaos to him (Clinton & Straub, 2010, p. 99). The three insecure patterns of attachment shape perceptions of God in a negative way, but they are not the only reasons that individuals have trouble connecting with God.

**God Attachment Instrument Review**

As previously described, a number of investigators have examined how early attachment experiences play a pivotal role in the development of attachment relationships throughout life (Bowlby, 1969; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Granqvist, 1998; Kirkpatrick, 2005). The Attachment to God Scale, one of the earliest scales, developed in 2002 by Rowatt and Kirkpatrick, demonstrated that dimensions of attachment to God are predictive of measures of affect and personality. Another instrument, the Attachment to God Inventory (AGI), was first published by Beck and McDonald (2004) and is commonly used to assess an individual’s attachment to God. Since 2010, there have been a series of studies that expanded on various aspects of God attachment. Using the Attachment to God scale and the AGI, Houser and Welch (2013) investigated the level of attachment security to God and the connection with hope and religious behaviors, and Freeze and DiTommaso (2015) investigated the possible extension of attachment theory to include the Christian believer’s attachment to their church family. In the following paragraphs, key studies that have generated the landscape of the God attachment literature are briefly presented with specific consideration to the intention of the study and if the measures used were validated within the study.
Attachment to God Scale

In 2002, Rowatt and Kirkpatrick developed the Attachment to God Scale (AGS) to address several limitations of previous research on attachment theory and religion as well as to show that dimensions of attachment to God are predictive of measure of affect and personality. The Attachment to God Scale is based on the original work of Bowlby (1969/1982) and Kirkpatrick (1990/1992). The Attachment to God Scale represents a nine-item self-report measure of the quality of a persons’ relationship to God. There are two subscales based upon two dimensions of attachment to God: avoidance and anxiety. Participants in the original study were 120 individuals from a Texas community in the U.S. (76 women, 44 men; mean age = 42) and 254 undergraduate university students (176 women, 76 men; mean age = 19). Community participants were recruited through ads placed in a newspaper ($n = 28$) and at the airport ($n = 92$). The community sample was ethnically (ethnicity: 81% Caucasian, 7% Hispanic, 6% African American, 3% Asian American, 3% specified another ethnicity) and denominationally diverse (24% Southern Baptist, 12.5% Catholic, 11% Methodist, 8.5% Christian, 8.5% nondenominational, 6% Church of Christ, 5.5% Pentecostal, 5% American Baptist, 3.5% Church of God, 3.5% Lutheran, 2.5% Presbyterian, 2% Protestant, 1% Greek Orthodox, 1% Episcopal, 1% Unitarian, 4.5% none). Community participants reported completing 15 years of education, on average, and earning about $54,000 in 1999. Most community respondents were married (64.5%), 27% were single, and 9.5% were divorced/widowed. Of the university participants who were mostly from the state of Texas (78%), the majority were Baptist (47%) and the others Catholic (23%). Eighty percent were members of a church and were white (75%) and the remaining were Hispanic (7%), Asian/Pacific Islander (7%), or African American/black
The factor analysis revealed two interpretable oblique components with satisfactory internal consistency. Test-retest reliability could not be found within this publication.

Other investigators have utilized Rowatt and Kirkpatrick’s AGS for research. Bradshaw, Ellison, and Marcum (2010) outlined a series of theoretical arguments linking styles of attachment to God, perceptions of the nature of God (i.e., God imagery), and stressful life events with psychological distress. Main effects and potential stress-moderator effects were evaluated using data from a nationwide sample of elders and rank-and-file members of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.). The dependent variable, psychological distress, was gauged with a mean index composed of the following six questions, each of which was coded 1 (none of the time) to 5 (all of the time; Cronbach’s $\alpha=0.816$): “During the past 30 days, how much of the time did you feel …(a) so sad nothing could cheer you up; (b) nervous; (c) restless or fidgety; (d) hopeless; (e) that everything was an effort; and (f) worthless?” This was the K6 scale of psychological distress developed by Kessler and colleagues (2002).

The independent variable was attachment to God and assessed using Rowatt and Kirkpatrick’s (2002) nine-item, multidimensional measure. Key findings indicate that secure attachment to God is inversely associated with distress, whereas both anxious attachment to God and stressful life events are positively related to distress. Once variations in patterns of attachment to God were controlled for, the investigators found no net effects of God imagery on levels of distress. There is only modest support for the hypothesis that God images moderate the effects of stressful life events on
psychological distress, but interestingly no stress-moderator effects were found for attachment to God.

In another study that examined the connection between attachments to God and psychological distress, the investigators analyzed longitudinal data from a study of Presbyterian (Presbyterian Church United States of America) elders and rank-and-file laypersons (Ellison, Bradshaw, Kuyel, & Marcum, 2012). Results showed that a secure attachment to God at baseline was associated with a decrease in distress over time. A secure attachment to God also buffered against the deleterious effects of stressful life events on distress, whereas an anxious attachment to God exacerbated the harmful effects of stress. In these analyses, a secure attachment to God was a more robust predictor of changes in distress than many, more commonly studied variables including race, gender, SES, and church attendance. This study used the AGS (Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002) as its measure. The investigators found that secure attachment to God was tapped with a mean index (α = .866) composed of six questions (coded 1 = not true to 7 = very true.). Anxious attachment to God, a second latent construct, was gauged with a mean index constructed from the following three items (α = .698), each of which was also coded 1 = not true to 7 = very true: “(a) God sometimes seems responsive to my needs, but sometimes not, (b) God’s reactions to me seem to be inconsistent, and (c) God sometimes seems very warm and other times very cold to me.”

Jankowski and Sandage (2014) provided support for the safe haven function that stemmed from significant specific indirect effects between spiritual instability and dispositional humility through lowered differentiation of self, through increased insecure
God attachment, and through both increased insecure attachment and lowered differentiation of self. Attachment to God was measured using the AGS and exhibited alphas of .87 and .63. Partial support for the secure base function was observed. Realistic acceptance tempered the association between religious exploration and dispositional humility.

Sim and Loh’s Attachment to God Scale

Sim and Loh (2003) also conducted a study to explore attachment to God using the conceptual foundations of God attachment theory as specified by Kirkpatrick (1999) and comprised the following four aspects: i) God as a safe haven; ii) God as a secure base for exploration; iii) seeking/maintaining proximity to God, and iv) responding to separation from God. The measure demonstrated good item and scale characteristics. The results of this study indicated that God attachment was a unitary construct, even with its different aspects. In terms of validation, God attachment was distinguished from religious belief and practice, and also from father and mother attachments. In terms of links with particular correlates, attachment to God provided for incremental validity over and above attachment to father and to mother with respect to optimism.

The instrument has a 16-item measure and assesses four key aspects of attachment to God: seeking proximity to God (e.g., “I seek to be close to God’’); God as a haven of safety (e.g., “I feel safe whenever I am with God’’); God as a secure base (e.g., “Knowing that God is there for me helps me live my daily life’’); and responses to separation (e.g., “Life without God would be meaningless for me’’). Participants were instructed to think about their own religion’s God and rate each statement on a five-point scale (1 = never true, 5 = always true). Four subscales were included: safe haven, secure base aspect, proximity aspect, and loss/separation.
The 241 participants were recruited from a publicly funded university in Singapore. The age of these participants ranged from 18 to 25 years, with a mean age of 19 years. The majority were female (82%) and Chinese (87%). In terms of religious affiliation, a substantial number of the participants were Buddhists (21%) or Christians (25%) or indicated no or multiple affiliations (33%); the rest were Muslims, Hindus, or believers of other faiths. The socioeconomic status of these participants, using monthly family income as a proxy, was varied: Twenty-three percent reported a monthly family income of $2000 or less, 21% reported a monthly family income of between $2001 and $3000, and 27% reported a monthly family income of more than $5000. The median for the Singapore population is around $3600 (Leow, 2001). The original reliabilities showed internal consistency. Cronbach’s alphas were high: .96 for the four items assessing the safe haven aspect, .97 for the secure base aspect, .96 for the proximity aspect, and .97 for the loss/separation aspect. For the measure as a whole, internal consistency was again examined. Despite the conceptual distinction in aspects of attachment, very high internal consistency was found; Cronbach’s alpha was .99. The article did not contain test-retest information. The study found that after controlling for social desirability and intrinsic religiousness, doctrinal orthodoxy, and loving God image, anxious attachment to God was a predictor of neuroticism and negative affect while avoidant behavior was an inverse predictor of symbolic mortality and agreeableness.

Sim and Yow (2011) examined the interplay of attachment to God, attachment to mother, and attachment to father with respect to adjustment (hope, self-esteem, depression) for 130 early and 106 middle adolescents in Singapore. Attachment to God was assessed using the Sim and Loh (2003) 16-item measure. Their results showed
that the parental attachments were generally linked (in expected directions) to
adjustment. God attachment, however, had unique results. At the bivariate level, God
attachment was only linked to early adolescents’ self-esteem. When considered
together with parental attachments (including interactions), God attachment did not
emerge as the key moderator in attachment interactions and yielded some unexpected
results (e.g., being positively linked to depression). The investigators concluded that
God and parental attachments may provide a secure base and safe haven functions
during adolescence. Satisfactory psychometric properties (Sim & Yow, 2011) were
found. Cronbach’s alphas were .98 and .99 for early and middle adolescents,
respectively (Sim & Yow, 2011).

**Attachment to God Inventory**

Beck and McDonald (2004) developed the AGI, which has 28 items with each
item considered on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Disagree strongly, 4 = Neutral/Mixed, 7 =
Agree strongly). The AGI has two subscales (similar to the measure developed by Sim
and Loh): avoidance of intimacy and anxiety about abandonment. Beck and McDonald
presented data from three samples including two college samples and one community
sample. The paper detailed the psychometric properties of the AGI, and the authors
provided tests of the correspondence and compensation hypotheses.

The focus of Sim and Loh’s first study was to construct the AGI. They attempted
to model the AGI after the ECR (Brennan et al., 1998) scale that operationalizes the
attachment dimensions of avoidance and anxiety in adulthood love relationships.
Participants for the AGI study included 507 undergraduate and graduate students from
Abilene Christian University, a small (approximately 4,500–5,000 students), and private,
Christian institution. The sample was 62% female. The mean age was 20.13 years (SD
The majority of the participants were Caucasian (85%); of the remaining, 6.3% were African-American and 3.9% were Hispanic. Religious affiliations were reported as 67%, Church of Christ, 11.0%, Baptist; 6.5%, nondenominational; 3.4%, Catholic; and 2.2%, Methodist. Participants were asked to complete the 70-item measure and course credit was offered for participation. Study 1 showed the principal components analyses with Varimax rotation for these 28 items indicated that two factors best fit the data. Varimax rotation tries to maximize the variance of each of the factors, so the total amount of variance accounted for is redistributed over the extracted factors. Factor 1 accounted for 23.2% of the variance and was labeled “avoidance,” while factor 2 accounted for 13.9% of the variance and was labeled “anxiety.” The investigators found that the subscales exhibited good internal consistency, with an alpha coefficient of .86 for the avoidance items and .84 for the anxiety items. After summing the subscale totals, the investigators found that avoidance and anxiety results were found to share only 6.1% of their variance (r = .248).

There were two goals for Study 2. They first sought to ascertain whether the factor structure and internal consistency estimates of the AGI subscales could be maintained in a replication sample. In the second study, surveys were administered to 118 students (89 females and 29 males) in undergraduate and graduate courses at Abilene Christian University. Students ranged in age from 18 to 46 with mean of 20.66 (SD= 3.98). Most of the sample was Caucasian (72%); and 6.9%, Hispanic; 6%, Asian; and 8.6%, African/African American. More than half of the sample (55.1%) described themselves as Church of Christ, 18.6% as Baptist, 6.8% as Catholic, 6.8% as nondenominational, and 1.7% as Methodist. Course credit was offered for completion of
the measures. A second goal of Study 2 was to compare the AGI to the adult romantic attachment scale on which it was modeled, the ECR scale (Brennan et al., 1998). This comparison provided an initial exploration into the compensation versus correspondence hypotheses.

Results of study 2 revealed the AGI items performed well in the replication sample and the factor structure of this measure remained stable. Twenty-six of the 28 AGI items loaded most strongly with their original dimensions, anxiety or avoidance. Further, good internal consistency estimates were observed for both the AGI-anxiety (α = .80) and AGI-avoidance (α = .84) subscales. The AGI subscales (anxiety and avoidance) shared only 1.4% (r = .12) of their variance. By contrast, in this sample the ECR Anxiety and avoidance subscales shared 5.3% of variance. An additional goal of Study 2 was a comparison of the AGI measure with the ECR. The zero-order correlations between the ECR and AGI subscales indicate the pattern of correlations is more ambiguous than what either the correspondence or compensation hypotheses would have anticipated. However, there was some evidence of correspondence between the AGI-anxiety and ECR-anxiety ratings. The correlations are intriguing in that they present one of the first direct tests of association between an attachment to God measure and an adulthood attachment measure. If any trend is apparent in this data, it is towards correspondence (particularly for the attachment dimension of Anxiety). However, the present results are not clear. Specifically, the pattern of associations regarding the Anxiety dimensions may be due to a developmental characteristic of the sample. That is, college students may display a pervasive preoccupation with their
relationships. Beck and McDonald (2004) suggested a replication in an adult population is needed to assess the association regarding anxiety dimensions.

The goal of Study 3 was to administer the AGI to a more religiously diverse community sample. The investigators wanted to conduct additional tests of the correspondence and compensation hypotheses in a sample that was less preoccupied with establishing relational bonds with peers, romantic partners, and for religious populations, God. Finally, they wanted to expand the construct validation of the AGI by comparing it to additional attachment and spirituality measures. For study 3, participants were 109 community adults recruited from adult education programs from three churches in Abilene, Texas. Participants were asked to complete an assessment battery assessing demographics, attachment to God, adulthood attachment, and spiritual well-being. Thirty-eight participants were members of a Church of Christ congregation, 34 individuals participated from a Roman Catholic Church, and an additional 34 persons were recruited from a nondenominational Charismatic congregation. The sample was 61% female. The mean age of the participants was 38.82 ($SD = 13.00$). The ethnicity breakdown was as follows: 79.8% Caucasian, 11% Hispanic, 2.8% African-American, and 2.8% Asian-American. Approximately 82% of the sample was married. The majority of the sample (55.1%) had an annual income between $21,000 and $60,000. Good internal consistency estimates were observed for both the AGI-anxiety ($\alpha = .80$) and AGI-avoidance ($\alpha = .84$) subscales. The article contained no test-retest information.

The results of study 3 indicated that in the community sample, the principal components analysis generated a two-factor solution, with the anxiety factor accounting for 30.42% of the variance between AGI items and the avoidance factor accounting for
an additional 9.83%. The factor loadings in the community sample were very similar to the pattern observed in the previous studies. Most AGI items displayed good structure, loading on their proper factors, with the exception of AGI items 14 and 16 (drafted to be avoidance items) that showed strong cross-factor loadings and correlated more strongly with the anxiety factor. The investigators suggested these two items should be deleted in future studies.

The AGI subscale generated good internal consistency coefficients (avoidance = .86, anxiety = .87). Both the AGI ($r^2 = .31$) and ECR ($r^2 = .20$) subscales were slightly more interrelated than was observed in the college sample. The investigators suggested this might have been because the community sample displayed more secure attachment patterns, both with God and romantic partners. AGI subscales were uniformly and positively correlated with both ECR subscales. The partial correlations displayed convergent trends with the Anxiety subscale of the AGI sharing unique variance with the ECR-Anxiety subscale; the avoidance subscales acted similarly—all of which supported the correspondence hypothesis. The investigators determined that once shared variance with the other attachment dimensions had been controlled for, persons with greater attachment-related anxiety in adulthood love relationships displayed greater attachment anxiety in their relationship with God (with parallel trends for the avoidance constructs). This pattern of results was generally consistent with the trends observed between the Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) and the AGI. Lower scores on AGI anxiety and avoidance were related to increase ratings of the RQ Secure description. Both AGI anxiety and avoidance ratings were positively associated with RQ Fearful ratings. AGI-anxiety, but not AGI-avoidance, was positively associated with
Preoccupied RQ ratings showing a trend towards correspondence. Generally, the correlations with the AGI and the two attachment measures—ECR and RQ—appear to provide converging evidence for the correspondence hypothesis. The AGI subscales of avoidance of intimacy and anxiety about abandonment exhibited good factor structure, internal consistency, and construct validity. The comparisons of the AGI with adulthood attachment measures supported a weak correspondence hypothesis between working models of romantic significant others and God.

Reiner, Anderson, Hall, and Hall (2010) examined whether adult attachment, God attachment and gender are related to perceived stress. To measure God attachment, this study utilized the Attachment to God Inventory (AGI) and the Experiences in Close Relationships questionnaire (ECR) to measure adult attachment. Based on previous studies of these variables, the investigators expected that adult and God attachment would predict perceived stress, that God attachment would have incremental validity over adult attachment in predicting perceived stress, and that gender would be a moderator in the relationship between attachment and perceived stress. The study’s 276 participants were from a private, Christian university in Southern California, who completed questionnaires assessing these variables. Multivariate regression analyses indicated that adult and God attachment anxiety as well as adult attachment avoidance significantly predicted perceived stress. Furthermore, God attachment anxiety had incremental validity over adult attachment. Interestingly, gender was a suppressor variable in the relationship between attachment anxiety and perceived stress. Therefore, attachment relationships with one’s partner and God are both important in explaining perceived stress level. Gender was found to play an indirect
role in this relationship. These subscales have been shown to have good internal consistency, with an alpha coefficient of .86 for avoidance and .84 for anxiety (cited in Beck & McDonald, 2004).

The primary goal of the Limke and Mayfield study was to extend the findings of Beck and McDonald (2004) using the AGI. Limke and Mayfield (2011) investigated the independent contributions of attachment to mother, attachment to father, and attachment to romantic partners on attachment to God. In addition, the study examined the association between attachment to God and spiritual well-being using a sample not chosen for religious characteristics. The authors surveyed 173 students at the University of Central Oklahoma in a study entitled “Attitudes and Relationships.” The subjects were between the ages of 18 and 40 with 44% male and 56% female. The population was predominately white (64%) 13% were Black or African American, 8% were Native American or Alaskan Native, 06% were Hispanic or Latino/a, 5% were Asian, and 5% were self-categorized as “Other.” The majority of subjects (60%) lived with either biological parents or adoptive parents until the age of 18 (whereas 40% did not). Eighty percent reported that they were single, never been married, not living with a significant other whereas 12% reported that they were single, never been married, living with a significant other. One percent were divorced, 6% were separated; and 6% were married. Ninety percent reported that they are exclusively heterosexual/straight; 3.5% identified themselves as exclusively homosexual/gay/lesbian; 4% reported that they are bisexual; and 3% reported that none of these accurately described their sexual orientation. Seventeen percent reported no religious affiliation; no one reported a pagan affiliation or Judaism affiliation; 2% reported a universal affiliation; 0.6% reported an
East Asian affiliation; 1% reported an Indian affiliation; 0.00% reported a Judaism affiliation; 0.6% reported an Islam affiliation; 10% reported a Christian-Catholic affiliation; 61% reported a Christian-Protestant affiliation; 2% reported a Christian-Nontrinitarian affiliation; and 8% reported an “other” religious affiliation. The major finding of the study was that attachment to fathers predicted attachment to God. Moreover, attachment to God predicted both religious and existential well-being.

Prout, Cecero, and Dragatsi (2012) explored the relationships between object representations of mother and father and recovery among outpatients with psychotic disorders, and also examined the role of attachment to God in moderating those relationships. Attachment to God was assessed using the AGI (Beck & McDonald, 2004). Forty-six outpatients diagnosed with schizophrenia or schizoaffective disorder participated. Benevolent representations of mother and father were associated with recovery whereas punitive representations were negatively associated with recovery. Secure attachment to God amplified the association between benevolent representations of father and recovery. Secure attachment to God was found to buffer the relationship between mild-to-moderate punitive parental representations and recovery; however, this relationship was not evident for those with the most punitive parental representations. The anxiety subscale demonstrated good internal reliability for this sample ($\alpha = 0.82$) as did the avoidance subscale ($\alpha = 0.84$).

In a sample of 328 undergraduate college students, Horton, Ellison, Loukas, Downey, and Barrett (2012) examined whether three types of attachment to God (secure, avoidant, and anxious) were associated with health-risk behaviors, to a greater extent than effects of religious attendance, peer support, and demographic covariates.
Attachment security to God was measured using the nine-item AGI (Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002). Contrary to prior theory, secure attachment to God was not inversely associated with recent alcohol or marijuana use, or substance use prior to last sexual intercourse. Instead, avoidant and anxious attachment to God were associated with higher levels of drinking; anxious attachment to God was associated with marijuana use; and avoidant attachment to God was associated with substance use prior to last sexual intercourse. The authors determined that these patterns are gender-specific and that problematic attachment to God in this study was linked with negative outcomes solely among male participants. Internal consistency reliabilities for secure, avoidant, and anxious attachment in this sample of undergraduate students were .89, .92, and .79, respectively.

Following these studies, Houser and Welch (2013) drew on existing research regarding adult attachment, attachment to God, and Trinitarian theology to also investigate the level of attachment security to God (comparing secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful types) and the connection with hope and religious behaviors. A cross-section of 268 undergraduate students at a Christian university completed the AGI (Beck & McDonald, 2004); the Herth Hope Index (Herth, 1992); the Relationship Scale Questionnaire (RSQ) (Fraley et al., 2006); and demographic questions regarding their religious behaviors. Results, analyzed utilizing correlation, polynomial logistic regression, multiple regression, and path analyses, indicated that the levels of hope and religious behaviors predicted 36.6% of the variance in attachment to God-avoidance. This study yielded acceptable internal consistency for this measure (α = .865 for anxiety scale and α = .827 for avoidance scale).
In another study, the efficacy of a manualized group treatment protocol on God image and attachment to God was compared with a manualized Christian Bible study and a waiting list control group in a sample of undergraduate college students attending a Christian college (Rasar, Garzon, Volk, O'Hare & Moriarty, 2013). Thirty students were randomly assigned to one of the treatment conditions and assessed with measures of God attachment, God image, religious coping, and general spiritual outcomes. The student body was given the opportunity to take the AGI (Beck & McDonald, 2004). The investigators hypothesized that significant God image and attachment change would occur among the God image treatment group participants only. In addition, they hypothesized that significant religious coping and spiritual outcome change would occur within both groups compared to the waiting list control group. They found that significant spiritual outcome changes in both groups but no significant God image/attachment change or religious coping change. The Cronbach’s alphas were .86 for the avoidance of intimacy subscale and .87 for the Anxiety about Abandonment subscale (cited in Cooper, Bruce, Harman, & Boccaccini, 2009).

Miner, Dowson, and Malone (2014) tested two contrasting models of attachment to God: need satisfaction and well-being. Attachment to God was assessed by the AGI (Beck & McDonald, 2004). The Attachment Security Primacy Model holds that attachment security facilitates experiences of psychological need satisfaction and hence increased well-being and the Need Satisfaction Primacy Model holds that experiences of psychological need satisfaction facilitate attachment security and hence increased well-being. Self-report data was gathered from 225 Australian Christian participants, SEM analysis indicated that the Need Satisfaction Primacy Model fit the data better than
competing models. The authors provided implications for augmenting theories of attachment to God and providing contexts in which people can experience God as meeting basic needs are discussed. Alpha reliabilities for anxiety and avoidance of attachment to God were .57 and .52 (Miner, Dowson, & Malone, 2014).

Freeze and DiTommaso (2015) performed two studies to assess church family, defined as individuals attending church with a fellow believer. The primary purpose of these studies was to investigate the possible extension of attachment theory to include the Christian believer’s attachment to their church family. A secondary purpose was to determine what relationship, if any, existed among attachment to church family, attachment to God and well-being. Attachment was assessed using the AGI (Beck & McDonald, 2004).

In the first study, 117 individuals from local Protestant churches completed self-report measures of attachment to God and church family as well as spiritual and psychological well-being. In the second study, 185 participants from local Baptist churches completed questionnaire packages that included measures of attachment and emotional well-being. These studies offered support for the usefulness of conceptualizing church family as an attachment process. The Cronbach’s coefficients obtained in this study were .82 for the anxiety dimension and .80 for the avoidance dimension.

Summary of God Attachment Instruments

God attachment as a theory was conceived in the 1990s, and the instruments to examine God attachment were not developed until nearly a decade later. One of the earliest scales, developed in 2002 by Rowatt and Kirkpatrick, the Attachment to God Scale, demonstrated that dimensions of attachment to God can be predictive of
measures of affect and personality. Subsequently, Sim and Loh (2003) conducted a study that explored attachment to God construct using the foundations of attachment theory. In the following year, the Attachment to God Inventory (AGI) was published by Beck and McDonald (2004). This instrument is commonly used to assess an individual’s attachment to God, and it was used to collect data for this study.

**Summary of Theories**

Table 2-1 portrays the dynamics between the forces of closeness and separation. The first column lists child attachment styles proposed by Ainsworth (1989). The second column lists adult attachment styles proposed by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991). The third column lists God attachment styles described by Clinton and Straub (2010). The forth column lists Bowen’s (1978) concepts of differentiation of self and how differentiation relates to attachment styles. The last column describes the coping strategy for relationship anxiety used by each group. This table demonstrates the similarities across alternative theoretical positions.

Figure 2-1 represents a visual schematic of the togetherness and separateness paradox. On the x-axis, an individual’s internal separateness force is represented on a continuum from low to high. On the y-axis, an individual’s togetherness force is represented, from high on top, to low on the bottom. The interplay of these forces is depicted as they relate to attachment, differentiation, and God attachment. Individuals who find themselves somewhere in the top right quadrant, where both internal forces are high, likely have a secure attachment and high differentiation. These individuals also may exhibit low relational anxiety and low avoidance towards relationships. Additionally, they may demonstrate low emotional reactivity and no cutoff and will likely not be fused
in relationships but be able to take the I-position. These individuals typically have secure attachment to God.

Individuals in the top left quadrant, where the internal force of separation is low, but togetherness is high, likely will exhibit a preoccupied attachment and low differentiation. These individuals may have high anxiety in relationship and low avoidance towards relationships. They may have high emotional reactivity, low cutoff, likely be fused and may not be able to take the I-position often. These individual typically display an anxious attachment to God.

Individuals in the lower right quadrant, where the internal force for separation is high, but togetherness is low, will probably exhibit a dismissive attachment and low differentiation. These individuals may display lower relationship anxiety, often by avoiding or cutting off from relationships. These individuals are not actually managing their relationship anxiety in a healthy manner. Moreover, these individuals typically are not fused with others and are able to take the I-position because they feel more confident about their personal thoughts and convictions. These individuals will most likely have an avoidant attachment to God.

Individuals who find themselves somewhere in the bottom right quadrant, where both internal forces are low, likely will exhibit a fearful attachment and the lowest differentiation. These individuals also may exhibit high relational anxiety and high avoidance towards relationships, which can create a great deal of confusion in their relationships and high emotional reactivity. They may sometimes be cutoff and other times fused in relationships. They likely have no consistent strategy for coping with relational anxiety. These individuals have difficulty taking the I-position because they do
not have a solid sense of self. Finally, these individuals typically display a fearful attachment to God.

**Summary**

Examining the relationships among attachment theory, differentiation, and God attachment may provide insight for family therapists and clergy people working with couples. Further understanding the relationship among these variables may promote better counseling insight and new perspectives to help formulate a plan to aid couples with addressing their relationship problems. As illustrated by the hypothetical case of Daniel and Vika in chapter 1, couplehood can be complex and challenging. Research studies that directly address the influence of attachment, differentiation, and God attachment on couples provide a needed foundation for advancing couples therapy by not only the clergy but also by family therapists. In Chapter 3 the methodology for this study is described as well as the measures used to assess each psychological construct.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lower Differentiated Individuals</th>
<th>Higher Differentiated Individuals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unable to separate feeling from thinking</td>
<td>Able to access thinking, even when in high anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive—emotionally driven</td>
<td>Responsive—cable of thoughtful consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuck with or cut off from and families and significant others</td>
<td>Connected with significant others while maintaining separate self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to control functioning of others</td>
<td>Self-defined, self-validating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less flexible, less adaptable, more emotionally dependent</td>
<td>Focused on control of self-functioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easily stressed into dysfunction, has difficulty recovering from dysfunction</td>
<td>More flexible, more adaptable, more emotionally independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant pseudo-self</td>
<td>Higher solid self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inherit a high percentage of all human problems</td>
<td>Can cope with life stresses and recover rapidly from stress-induced dysfunction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life course determined by what feels right</td>
<td>Remarkably free of human problems, life is more orderly and successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Life course based on principled beliefs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Modified from Metcalf (2011, p. 43)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child attachment</th>
<th>Adult attachment</th>
<th>God attachment</th>
<th>Differentiation of self</th>
<th>Coping strategy for relationship anxiety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>High Differentiation</td>
<td>Support will be there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insecure Anxious</td>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
<td>Anxious</td>
<td>Low Differentiation</td>
<td>Downplay need, look elsewhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insecure Avoidant</td>
<td>Dismissive</td>
<td>Avoidant</td>
<td>Low Differentiation</td>
<td>Intensify focus, try harder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disorganized</td>
<td>Fearful</td>
<td>Fearful</td>
<td>Very low Differentiation</td>
<td>Ranges from unclear to panic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Adapted from van Ecke, Chope, and Emmelkamp (2006).
Figure 2-1. Togetherness and Separateness Conundrum
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

The overarching goal of this study is to conduct an exploratory factor analysis of three overlapping constructs that focus on the powerful forces of togetherness and separateness; namely, adult attachment, differentiation of self, and God attachment. This investigation is guided by the following two research questions. Is there a factor structure that can be used to examine critical features that are common to these three psychological theories that focus on the problem of togetherness and separateness? Second, are there specific elements that define and characterize the structure? This chapter provides an overview of the methodology used to examine the factors that underlie togetherness and separateness forces is described. In addition, the research questions, population, sampling procedures, data collection, and data analytic procedures are explained. The instrumentation and limits of the study are also discussed.

Population

The research population will consist of undergraduate students from a large public university in the Southeast, and both graduate and undergraduate students in a business program at a large Midwestern university. Additionally, community members from churches in the two communities in which the universities are located, a small university town in the Southeast and a large metropolitan area in the upper Midwest were participants in the study. As inclusion criteria, all participants had to have been in a current significant relationship or have been in significant relationship (of at least 6 months) and be between 18 and 65 years of age. The sample size was 193.
Sampling Procedure

A convenience sample was drawn from students enrolled in four undergraduate elective courses in the College of Education, which may include stress management, interpersonal communication skills, career development, and drug and alcohol awareness. Students were incentivized to participate by their instructors, who provided extra credit for the enrolled classes. Similarly, students taking business classes at a Midwestern University were offered extra credit to participate. Church members in the Southeast community and in the upper Midwest metropolitan area were asked to volunteer to participate in the research study in response to recruitment invitations in weekly church bulletins, smaller church groups, through the churches’ email lists, and announcements at worship services (where allowed and with the explicit permission from pastors or ministers).

Students and church members were provided with an informed consent documents that outlines the purpose of the study and potential risks and benefits of participation. The informed consent made it clear to participants that they had no obligation to participate, that they could withdraw at any time without penalty, and that strict confidentiality would be maintained. One instrument comprised of 98 items taken from three published inventories as well as an 8-item demographic questionnaire was administered to participants online. This research study was approved by the University of Florida Institutional Review Board.

There were multiple advantages to conducting this research through an online survey. Besides obvious savings in time, labor, and costs over a paper survey, online surveys may be a better mode of contact for this primarily college student population. Additionally, Tourangeau, Couper, and Steiger (2001) and Umback (2004) suggested
that online surveys may moderate some aspects of social desirability and may actually reduce errors in coding participant responses.

However, limitations do exist for using online surveys. Online surveys may introduce bias from several types of error such as coverage, sampling, measurement, and nonresponse error (Umback, 2004). Umback (2004) also emphasized that ethical considerations are important in conducting online surveys, especially regarding privacy and confidentiality of participants. This potential problem was addressed by not requiring participants to provide any personal identifiers, other than general demographic questions, that might be used to connect participants to their responses and also by using a secure web server. To preserve anonymity, no personal emails were used; instead potential participants received invitations from a general link to take the survey which did not identify them. To offset potential limitations in population sampling, this study aims to include a wide range of ages, genders, numerous ethnic groups, individuals of various religious preferences and two different geographical locations.

**Data Collection**

Data collection consists of an instrument comprised of 110 items taken from three published inventories as well as an 8-item demographic questionnaire that was administered online using Qualtrics (Appendix A-5). The survey took participants on average approximately 30 to 45 minutes to complete. Every technological means to maintain website confidentiality, security, and integrity of data were employed. The survey consisted of a title and informed consent page followed by sections for the three main areas assessed including adult attachment, differentiation of self and God attachment; and a final section for demographic information. The last page provided a
“thank you” statement that also provided the researcher’s contact information. Participants could scroll forward or backward through the survey to change or modify answers as they felt necessary.

Instrumentation

This section provides a review of instruments selected to measure the psychological constructs of adult attachment, differentiation of self, and God attachment in this study. The validity of each instrument is discussed as well as the scaling and scoring procedures. A search of religiosity measures indicating that the number of items ranged from 10-500 items. Most religiosity measure focused on religious attendance, rituals and sense of duty; however, the focus of this study was God attachment and an individual’s sense of connection to God.

Self-report measures of adult attachment are typically scored in ways (e.g., averaging or summing items) that may lead to erroneous inferences about important theoretical issues, such as the degree of continuity in attachment security and the differential stability of insecure attachment patterns. To determine whether existing attachment scales suffer from scaling problems, Fraley, Waller and Brennan (2000) used item response theory (IRT) which analyzed 323 items from four commonly used self-report inventories: Experiences in Close Relationships scales (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998), Adult Attachment Scales (Collins & Read, 1990), Relationship Styles Questionnaire (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994) and Simpson’s (1990) attachment scales. Eighteen items were selected for inclusion in the subscales of anxiety and avoidance, thus comprising a total of 36 items. These selected “best items” were used to create the ECR-R with this information.
Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised

The Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) which uses a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The ECR-R contains two subscales: avoidance (e.g., “I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down”) and anxiety (e.g., “I’m afraid that I will lose my partner’s love”) dimensions as the ECR. Graham and Unterschute (2015) showed that the average reliability of scores produced by the ECR-R was .897 and .908 for the Anxiety and avoidance scores, respectively, based on item responses from 1,085 undergraduate students (682 women, 403 men) from the University of Texas at Austin. The first 18 items of the ECR-R comprise the attachment-related anxiety scale. Items 19–36 comprise the attachment-related avoidance scale. The order in which these items are presented are randomized. Each item is rated on a 7-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. To obtain a score for attachment-related anxiety, a person’s responses to items 1–18 are averaged. However, because items 9 and 11 are “reverse keyed” (i.e., high numbers represent low anxiety rather than high anxiety), the answers to those questions were reversed before averaging the responses (e.g., if someone answers with a “6” to item 9, it was re-keyed as a 2 before averaging.) To obtain a score for attachment-related avoidance, a respondent’s responses to items 19–36 were averaged. Items 20, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, and 36 were reverse keyed before computing this average.

Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised

The Differentiation of Self Inventory (DSI-R), based on the DSI created by Skowron and Friedlander (1998), was used to assess differentiation. The DSI is a multidimensional measure of differentiation based on BFST and initially focused on
adults (aged over 25 years) and their current significant relationships and their relations with their families of origin. Knauth and Skowron (2004) administered the DSI to an ethnically diverse sample of 363 adolescents 14 to 19 years of age. The DSI full scale demonstrated good internal consistency reliability, with a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of .84. The results of their study support the use of the DSI with adolescents. Skowron and Friedlander conducted a principal components factor analysis on a sample of 311 adults that suggested the following four dimensions: (1) emotional reactivity; (2) reactive distancing; (3) fusion with parents; and (4) I-position. Scales constructed from these factors were found to be moderately correlated in the expected direction, internally consistent, and significantly predictive of trait anxiety (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998).

In 2003, Skowron and Schmitt published the study that revised the DSI (DSI-R) to improve the fusion with other (FO) subscale. The resulting DSI-R is a 46-item self-report measure. Participants rate items using a 6-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (not at all true of me) to 6 (very true of me). The DSI-R contains four subscales: 1) Emotional Reactivity (ER), which measures the propensity to react to environmental stimuli on the basis of autonomic emotional responses and emotional lability; 2) Emotional Cutoff (EC), which entails items reflecting fears of intimacy or and the associated behavioral defenses against those fears; 3) I-position, which reflects a clearly defined sense of self and the ability to thoughtfully adhere to one’s convictions even when pressured to do otherwise; and 4) fusion with others (FO), which reflects emotional over-involvement with significant others and over identification with one’s parents—taking in parental values, beliefs and expectations without question. Subscale scores are calculated by reversing raw scores on all items on the ER, EC, and FO
subscales and one item on the IP subscale. Scores on all items are then summed across a subscale and divided by the number of items on the subscale, such that scores on each subscale also range from 1 to 6, with high scores reflecting greater differentiation of self, specifically, less ER, EC, and FO, and more skill in taking IP in relationships. Internal consistency reliabilities were calculated using Cronbach’s alpha and were high for the full scale and subscales: DSI-R full scale = .92, FO = .86, ER = .89, IP = .81, EC = .84. The authors did not provide information about test-retest reliability. The 225 adults in this study were solicited through the World Wide Web via news groups focusing on family and parenting issues, relationships, and genealogy.

To compute the four subscale scores, all items on the ER and EC scales employed in this study were reversed, item 35 on the IP scale was reverse scored, and all items on the FO scale were reversed except item 37. Raw scores were then summed and divided by the number of items comprising each subscale (i.e., ER = 11, IP = 11, EC = 12, FO = 12), such that scores on each of the subscales ranged from 1 to 6, with higher scores reflecting less emotional reactivity, greater ability to take I-positions in relationships, less emotional cutoff, and less fusion with others, respectively, or greater differentiation of self. The DSI-R full scale score was obtained by reversing scores on the items noted, then summing across all items and dividing by 46. Scores on the full scale also range from 1 to 6, with higher scores reflecting greater differentiation of self.

**Attachment to God Inventory**

To assess God attachment, the Attachment to God Inventory (AGI) was used. In development of the AGI, Beck and McDonald (2004) took the ECR scale and developed a second measure that assessed attachment dimensions of avoidance of intimacy and Anxiety about Abandonment as they would apply to a relationship with God. Few
theoretical and psychometric scales exist that operationalize attachment to God as it is difficult to characterize this attachment bond; however, the AGI appears to successfully measure attachment to God. The two dimensions of anxiety and avoidance could also be dichotomized to produce the classic four-fold attachment typology: Secure, Preoccupied, Dismissing, and Fearful. The 14 items on the AGI-anxiety subscale (e.g., “I often worry about whether God is pleased with me”; “I fear God does not accept me when I do wrong”) generated, in the sample used by Beck and MacDonald (2004), an alpha coefficient of .85. The 14 items on the AGI-Avoidance subscale (e.g., “I prefer not to depend too much on God”; “I just don’t feel a deep need to be close to God”) generated, in this sample, an alpha coefficient of .88.

Beck and McDonald (2004) developed the AGI and used it to examine two college samples and one community sample. Their first study participants consisted of 507 undergraduate and graduate students from Abilene Christian University. In the second study, participants consisted of 118 students in undergraduate and graduate courses at Abilene Christian University. For study 3, participants consisted of 109 community adults recruited from adult education programs from three churches in Abilene, Texas. Beck and McDonald defined the psychometric properties of the AGI and asked whether a relationship with God can be described within an attachment framework. The AGI subscales of avoidance of intimacy and anxiety about Abandonment displayed good factor structure, internal consistency, and construct validity.

To score and code the AGI avoidance subscale, the scores of all even numbered items were summed; for the anxious subscale odd numbered items were summed.
Items 4, 8, 13, 18, 22, 26, and 28 were reverse scored. Sums were divided by 14 to obtain the average. Scores on the scale range from 1 to 6, with higher scores reflecting greater more anxiety or avoidance, respectively.

**Statistical Procedures**

The participant dataset was downloaded from Qualtrics. The data was evaluated and organized based on the number of completed items. Variables used in the exploratory factor analysis were coded for handling with SPSS software. An exploratory factor analysis was conducted using the subscales for ECR-R, DSI-R, and AGI. Factor analysis is a technique for data reduction, that is, it reduces the redundancy from a set of correlated variables and reinterprets the variables with a smaller set of derivatives called factors. Factor analysis is considered the preferred method for identifying underlying latent constructs (Bandalos & Finney, 2010). An exploratory factor analysis was utilized for this study to examine the interplay of togetherness and separateness forces. In this process, raw data from the ECR-R, DSI-R, and AGI was inputted into a correlation matrix for the purpose of identifying an initial factor (loading) matrix. To determine which factor would be retained for the analysis, each factor was assigned an eigenvalue, the sum of the square factor loadings. The Kaiser Criterion was applied, with only factors having eigenvalues greater than one were retained. A second method utilized is a scree test which is a visual method of factor retention determination.

Factors were conceptualized as constructs. The initial factor matrix underwent orthogonal rotation using the Varimax procedure (Bandalos & Finney, 2010; Osborne et al., 2008). The Varimax procedure is the most commonly used rotation. Varimax rotation attempts to maximize the variance of each of the factors, it does this so the total amount of variance accounted for is redistributed over the extracted factors. Its goal is...
to minimize the complexity of the components by making the large loadings larger and 
the small loadings smaller within each component. Using the Varimax procedure the 
factor loading matrix is said to have "simple structure," and Varimax rotation brings the 
loading matrix closer to such simple structure. A combination of eigenvalue and scree 
test will determine the most appropriate number of factors for this study.

In this study, the variables were expected to be correlated to one another. A 
factor loading figure of .40 was used and those variables with low factor loadings across 
all factors were eliminated because they contributed little to the factor structure. 
Moreover, Stevens (1986) suggested that sample size should also be considered in that 
the factor cut-off criterion should be based on the correlation value that is needed to 
achieve a Type I error of $p < .05$ in a given sample size.

The adequacy of the sample size is important in determining the reliability of the 
Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Comfrey and Lee (1992) suggested specific 
guidelines for evaluating samples of less than 200 participants as poor or fair, 300–500 
as good or very good, and those over 1,000 as excellent and more reliable. Nunnally 
(1978) suggested that a minimum subject to variable ratio of 10:1 was a better standard. 
Osborne and colleagues (2008) recommend using both the total sample size and 
subject to variable ratio in determining the adequacy of the sample; they supported a 
large sample and ratio for the most reliable results. With a sample size of 193 and 8 
subscale variables, the subject to variable ratio was 24:1. This ratio is double the 
recommended minimum ratio of 10:1. Therefore, the sample size for this dissertation 
study ($n = 193$) was adequate for an EFA. The derived factor structure, factor correlation 
matrix, and eigenvalues will be calculated and the derived factors assessed for
independence. The resulting statistical analyses reinforce the theories that underlies togetherness and separateness dynamics by allowing factors that underlie this phenomenon to emerge.

For the analysis, descriptive statistical analyses were conducted to examine psychometric properties of the data set. The range of scores, means, standard deviations, and internal consistency (using Cronbach’s alpha), was calculated for each of the scales and subscales. Higher alpha coefficients suggest better reliability. George and Mallery (2003) suggested the following guidelines for alpha scores: ≥ .90 excellent, ≥ .80 good, ≥ .70 acceptable, ≥ .60 questionable, ≥ .50 poor, and ≤ .50 unacceptable. Additionally, exploratory factor analysis was conducted aimed at answering both research questions.
CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The purpose of this investigation was to examine critical features that are common among three psychological theories, attachment, differentiation, and God attachment, all which focus on the difficult dilemma of togetherness versus separateness in romantic relationships. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of three overlapping constructs, consisting of adult attachment, differentiation of self, and God attachment was conducted. Data was analyzed using SPSS 23. Results of both descriptive and inferential statistics were explored and described in this chapter. Fisher’s exact test was used to test the significance for categorical data and Student’s t-test was performed to test for differences in continuous variables. For the correlation analysis, Pearson’s correlation was employed and EFA results provided. For all statistical tests, the alpha level was set at 0.05.

Sample

The number of participants who volunteered to complete the survey was $N = 287$; however, 94 failed to complete it. Further analysis indicated no specific pattern of nonresponse, thus I cannot determine why some participants did not complete the survey. The database was reviewed and sorted based on the number of completed or missing items. Only participants who completed items for each subscale and demographic item were included. The final sample size of 193 (using listwise deletion) provided a ratio of more than 24 cases per subscale. Lawley and Maxwell (1971) recommend 51 more cases than the number of variables and a subjects-to-variables (STV) ratio no lower than 5 (Bryant & Yarnold, 1995). Suhr (2006) advocated for at least
100 cases and a STV ratio of no less than 5. In my study, I had a ratio of 24 to 1. Therefore, this study satisfied the minimum amount of data for factor analysis.

The 193 subjects participated in the survey by completing an online questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 118 items total; 36 items measured attachment, 46 items measured differentiation of self, and 28 measured God attachment. Additionally, there were eight demographic questions that asked about age, gender, ethnicity, relationship status, and religious affiliation. The majority of participants were female (n = 132, 68.5%), and a lower percentage were male (n = 61, 32.4%). Sixty-five percent of the sample was 21 years of age or younger, while 35% was 22 years old or older. The study sample consisted of five groups of participants drawn from communities in the following regions: Southeast, Midwest, and upper Midwest. These communities were selected based on convenience of assessing participants and because each contained a university with a large number of students. The sample drawn from each of the five sites was predominately Caucasian/White (66%). Participants who self-identified as being African-American (13%) or Hispanic/Latino (18%) comprised the majority of the remainder. The 6% of the respondents who did not fall into one of these three groups were designated as “Other.” The point of contact for 70% of participants was a public university in the Southeast, while 22% were from public university in the Midwest and 7% were recruited from church groups in upper Midwest and Midwest (Table 4-3). Fisher’s exact test was used to examine the association between group differences with respect to ethnicity and gender. No group differences were found and sample characteristics (Table 4-1 and Table 4-2) were provided.
Eighty-two percent of the study sample expressed an affiliation with a religious organization, and 18% stated they were not affiliated with a church or religion (Table 4-3). The religious affiliation of the sample was predominantly Christianity (77%) which is higher than typically observed in Southeast (37%), Midwest (47%) or upper Midwest (50%). The percent of atheist/agnostics was 1% in this study whereas in upper Midwest the percentage observed was typically 30%, in Midwest 25%, and Southeast 44% (Pew Research Center, 2016). In this study, less than 1% of the respondents were Muslim, Jewish, and Buddhist, which reflects national averages (Pew Research Center, 2016) and sample characteristics (Table 4-8).

Sixteen percent of respondents stated that they had never been in a relationship. Thirteen percent had less than 6 months of experience in a relationship, 19% had been in a relationship greater than 6 months but less than 2 years, and 45% of participants were in a relationship greater than 2 years, but less than 6 years. Only 1% of subjects were in a relationship greater than 6 years. When respondents were asked if they considered themselves in a relationship, 88% percent responded that they were single, 10% stated they were married, and less than 1% indicated that they were divorced or separated (summary of sample, Table 4-7).

**Descriptive Analysis of Instruments and Scales**

The mean and standard deviation of each subscale were as follows: Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) anxiety subscale ($M = 2.87$, $SD = 1.22$); ECR-R avoidance subscale ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 1.27$); emotional reactivity (ER) subscale ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.11$); l-position (IP) subscale ($M = 4.03$, $SD = .89$); emotional cutoff (EC) subscale ($M = 4.57$, $SD = .93$); fusion with other (FO) subscale ($M = 3.29$, $SD = .86$); AGI avoidance subscale ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.62$); and AGI anxiety subscale ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 1.62$).
SD = 1.51) (Descriptive statistics Table 4-9) These findings are comparable with the indices reported for ECR-R (Demrili & Demir, 2014; Kooiman, Klaassens, van heloma Lugt, & Kamperman, 2013; Stein, Siefert, Stewart & Hilsenroth, 2011), and for the DSI-R (Goodall, Trejnowska, & Darling, 2012; Skowron, Holmes, & Sabtelli, 2002), and for the AGI (Jankowski & Sanage, 2004).

Attachment-anxiety was found significantly higher in females (M = 3.02, SD = 1.26) than males (M = 2.61; SD = 1.13, p = 0.02). The instrument used for differentiation assessment was the DSI-R. The results showed that the mean and standard deviation for ER in the male group (M = 3.87, SD = .75) was significantly greater than that in the female group (M = 3.34, SD = .76, p < 0.001). The mean for FO in the male group (M = 3.66, SD = 0.87) was significantly higher than in the female group (M = 3.10, SD = 0.79, p < 0.001). The mean of the total scale score in the male group (M = 4.07, SD = 0.65) was higher than that in female group (M = 3.75, SD = 0.64, p < 0.001) (summary of gender differences among subscales, Table 4-8). The instrument used to assess God attachment was the AGI. When the AGI was used to assess ECR-R anxiety in females, the mean score was (M = 3.48, SD = 1.45), which was significantly higher than that in males (M=2.79, SD = 1.52, p < 0.003). Attachment avoidance was higher in females with a level of (M = 3.87, SD = 1.62), whereas in males the mean score was (M = 1.62, SD = 1.49, p < 0.001).

**The Correlation Matrix**

Pearson’s correlation coefficients were calculated for each of the subscales for the ECR-R, DSI-R and the AGI using the scores of the 193 participants (entire data set, Table 4-9). The data was examined for univariate and multivariate outliers. The univariate outliers were examined through converting all scores to standard scores.
Mahalanobis $D^2$ was used to examine multivariate outliers. All values were within the expected range, and no case was identified as an outlier. The assumption of linearity was checked by creating bivariate scatterplots, and first-order relationships were found between variables. Next, homogeneity of variance and multicollinearity were checked. Attachment, differentiation, and God attachment were found to be highly related with many significant p-values. The DSI-R ER and FO were strongly correlated ($r = .77$).

With the DSI-R ER was also moderately correlated with ECR-R anxiety ($r = -.54$). DSI-ER is moderately with AGI anxiety ($r = -.40$). FO was moderately correlated with ECR-R anxiety ($r = -.42$). ECR-R anxiety was moderately correlated with IP ($r = -.43$). ERC-R anxiety and EC were correlated ($r = -.44$). Based on available literature, I had predicted that there would be a strong correlation between the FO and ER.

**Exploratory Factor Analysis**

I used an EFA to uncover the underlying structure of the eight subscales included in the ERC-R, DSI-R and AGI. EFA is a technique within factor analysis whose overarching goal was to identify the underlying relationships between measured variables (Norris & Lecavalier, 2009) and served to identify a set of latent constructs underlying a series of measured variables (Fabrigar, Leandre, Wegener, MacCallum, & Strahan, 1999). EFA was based on the common factor model. Common factors influenced two or more measured variables. EFA assumed that any indicator/measured variable may be associated with any factor (Fabrigar, Leandre, Wegener, MacCallum, & Strahan, 1999).

The EFA was conducted using an orthogonal rotation using the Varimax procedure; there were eight subscales and a sample to variable ratio of 24:1. The Varimax procedure is the most commonly used rotation. Varimax rotation attempts to
maximize the variance of each of the factors, it does this so the total amount of variance accounted for is redistributed over the extracted factors. The goal is to minimize the complexity of the components by making the large loadings larger and the small loadings smaller within each component. Using the Varimax procedure the factor loading matrix is said to have "simple structure," and Varimax rotation brings the loading matrix closer to such simple structure. Data were imputed into a correlation matrix to identify an initial factor (loading) matrix; only components that had eigenvalue of one or higher were included in the study. Previous studies suggested retaining values greater than 1 (Girden, 2001). Finally, the scree test was applied to provide a visual representation of the factors to be considered. In order to show convergent validity, a factor loading must reach an acceptable level (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). Osborne and Costello (2004) suggested that loadings over .50 are generally considered strong as the factor loading explains 25% or more of the variance. Factor loadings between .32 and .50 were considered weak to moderate. A factor cut off score of .40 was used to achieve at least moderate loadings for the factor structure. Several guidelines were proposed in the literature and indicated that the sample size of 193 was appropriate for obtaining stable factor solutions. Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) reported that about 150 cases should be sufficient when solutions have several high loading marker variables.

First, an EFA with an orthogonal rotation was conducted on data gathered from the 193 participants. Eigenvalues of 3.91 and 1.71 were found, explaining nearly 62% of the variance (see Table 4-11). FO loaded strongly with factor 1 (.91). ER loaded strongly with factor 1 (.90). ECR-avoidance loaded strongly with Factor 2 (.84). AGI-
avoidance loaded strongly with factor 2 (.68). EC loaded strongly with factor 2 (-.69). I-position loaded strongly with factor 3 (-.88). ECR-anxiety loaded strongly on factor 1 (-.66) and moderately on factor 2 (.42). IP loaded weakly to moderately on factor 1.

Many of the loadings obtained in this study were substantial, (i.e., .80). Factor 1 showed ($M = 3.42$, $Mdn = 3.50$, $SD = 0.58$). Factor 2 showed ($M = 3.71$, $Mdn = 3.75$, $SD = 0.74$). Two factors that appeared to be reliable based on measuring internal consistency by Cronbach's alpha were identified (factor 1 (.74) and factor 2 (.87)).

Factor 1 was comprised of subscales FO, ER, ECR-R anxiety, AGI anxiety and IP (see Table 4-11). The proportion of variance that was accounted for by factor 1 was 43.40%. Examination of the items on these five scales demonstrated an underlying theme of relationship anxiety and actively working towards emotional engagement in relationships with others and God. Individuals used different types of engagement strategies. Individuals were likely to cope with relationship anxiety by emotionally fusing with others and by being overly attached to their families of origin. Individuals responded to relationship anxiety by being emotionally reactive and highly sensitive in relationships. They worried about abandonment and were generally insecure about their relationships with partners and God. There was a parallel process of emotional engagement between their relationships with others and God. This finding was consistent with the correspondence hypothesis of God attachment, which states that an individual’s attachment style to their significant other is similar to their attachment style to God (Beck & McDonald, 2004; Hall & Edwards, 2002). Individuals with high IP maintained a balanced sense of self. These remained emotionally engaged in a relationship while maintaining cognitive processes and thinking rationally.
Factor 2 included several subscales, including ECR-R avoidance, EC and AGI avoidance (see Table 4-11). The proportion of variance that was accounted for was 19.0%. Examination of the items in these subscales indicated an orientation toward avoiding anxiety by avoiding engagement with others and God. Thus, factor 2 was distinguished by emotional disengagement from intimate relationships with others and God. The individuals had difficulty expressing their feelings and thoughts and were uncomfortable displaying affection. When there was intense relationship emotion, they felt the urge to run away and felt smothered by the relationship. EC from significant relationships characterized factor 2; wherein the individual emotionally separated from his/her partner or God and minimized the significance of the relationship. EC was a coping mechanism that aided the individual from experiencing feelings of vulnerability and EC facilitated the management of anxiety. A parallel relationship between the individual’s relationship with others and God was observed. This finding was consistent with the correspondence hypothesis. Thus, when an individual was uncomfortable with being emotionally close to a partner, she/he was likely to be uncomfortable being emotionally close to God.

**Summary of Results**

Since I had no *a priori* hypothesis about factors or patterns of my measured variables, the following research questions were asked. Was there a factor structure that could be used to examine critical features that are common to these three psychological theories that focus on the problem of togetherness and separateness? Second, were there specific elements that defined and characterized the structure? ECR-R, DSI-R, and AGI subscales were compared with age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, length of relationship, current religious affiliations, and type of
religious affiliation and religious attendance. It was observed that FO and ER were strongly correlated \(r=0.77\), which is consistent with previous literature (Skowron & Schmitt, 2003; Skowron & Friedlander, 1998; Majerus & Sandage, 2010). ECR-R anxiety was found to be significantly higher in females than males. ECR-R avoidance was seen equally in both females and males. AGI anxiety and AGI avoidance in females were significantly higher than in males. These gender differences related to ECR-R anxiety and AGI anxiety have been observed in prior studies (Brennan, Clark & Shaver, 1998). I found that there was a two factor structure: \textit{engagement} and \textit{avoidance}. The specific elements that defined the structure were the following: \textit{engagement} comprised of FO, ER, attachment-anxiety and AGI anxiety and IP; \textit{avoidance} comprised of EC, ECR-R avoidance and AGI avoidance. Both factors had elements of relationship anxiety but responded to relationship anxiety differently.
Table 4-1. Gender and age

<table>
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<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
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<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>chi-sq</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Gender</td>
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<td>66</td>
<td>34.2</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-19</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>76.47</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23.53</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0.09</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-21</td>
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<td>91</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-23</td>
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<td>55</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 &amp; older</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53.57</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46.43</td>
<td>28</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note: Gender and age were analyzed using Student’s t-test.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Female n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Male n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total N</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
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<td>61.54</td>
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<td>38.46</td>
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<td>Fisher's exact test</td>
<td>0.796</td>
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<tr>
<td>H/L</td>
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<td>35.29</td>
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<td>White</td>
<td>87</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>32.56</td>
<td>129</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Ethnicity was analyzed using Fisher's exact test.
Table 4-3. Point of contact and religious affiliation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POC</th>
<th>Female n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Male n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total N</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UF</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>71.85</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>28.1481</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>Fisher's exact test</td>
<td>0.017</td>
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<tr>
<td>OSU</td>
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<td>51.1628</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious affiliation</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>79</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>36.84</td>
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Note: Point of contact and religious affiliation were analyzed using Fisher's exact test.
<table>
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<th>Marital Status</th>
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<th>Total</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
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<td>57</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>Fisher's exact test</td>
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<td>Divorced</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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Note: Marital status was analyzed using Fisher's exact test.
Table 4-5. Length of relationship

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<th>Length</th>
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<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
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<td>73.33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26.667</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>&lt; 6 mo</td>
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<td>57.69</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>42.3077</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 6 mo</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>69.44</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30.5556</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>72.97</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27.027</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt; 6 yrs.</td>
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<td>28.5714</td>
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Note: Length of relationship was analyzed using Fisher’s exact test.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Female n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Male n</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total N</th>
<th>Test Fisher's exact test</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>70.27</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>29.73</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>0.1333</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.67</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.34</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.1333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheist</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>52.94</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>47.058</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4-7. Eigenvalues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Initial Eigenvalues</th>
<th>% of Variance</th>
<th>% Cumulative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>43.40</td>
<td>43.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>62.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N = 193
Table 4-8. Subscale means and standard deviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Female M (SD)</th>
<th>Male M (SD)</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECR-R anxiety</td>
<td>2.88 (1.23)</td>
<td>2.61 (1.13)</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECR-R avoidance</td>
<td>2.82 (1.27)</td>
<td>2.80 (1.29)</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ER</td>
<td>3.49 (1.11)</td>
<td>3.87 (0.75)</td>
<td>-.53</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO</td>
<td>3.30 (0.86)</td>
<td>3.66 (0.87)</td>
<td>-.56</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>4.57 (0.93)</td>
<td>4.34 (0.74)</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>4.03 (0.89)</td>
<td>4.15 (0.92)</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGI anxiety</td>
<td>3.24 (1.51)</td>
<td>2.79 (1.52)</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGI avoidance</td>
<td>4.13 (1.62)</td>
<td>4.64 (1.49)</td>
<td>-.77</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. M = Mean and SD = Standard Deviation
Table 4-9. Correlation matrix of the eight subscales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECR-R anxiety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECR-R avoidance</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ER</td>
<td>-0.54</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO</td>
<td>-0.42</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>-0.44</td>
<td>-0.55</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>-0.43</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGI anxiety</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.40</td>
<td>-0.35</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGI avoidance</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Higher scores on the DSI scales indicate greater differentiation, specifically, less emotional reactivity, greater ability to take an I-position, less emotional cutoff, and less fusion with others. Higher ECR scores represent greater attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Initial Eigenvalues</th>
<th>% of Variance</th>
<th>% Cumulative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>43.40</td>
<td>43.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>62.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N = 193
Table 4-11. Loadings for exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECR-R anxiety</td>
<td>-.66</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECR-R avoidance</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ER</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FO</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>-.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>-.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGI anxiety</td>
<td>-.64</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGI avoidance</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ECR-R = Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised; ER = emotional reactivity; FO = fusion with others; EC = emotional cutoff; IP = I-position; AGI = attachment to god inventory.
Figure 4-1. Scree Plot
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated the critical features that were common among the three psychological theories: attachment, differentiation, and God attachment. The purpose of this work was to examine the association or connection that existed among the assumptions or suppositions of these three theories using empirically based methods. A summary of my research study including a brief overview of the study design, the results, conclusions, limitations, implications for counselors, and my recommendations for further research is provided in this chapter.

The three theories focused on the problem of togetherness and separateness. Both healthy and distressed relationships were explored through the conceptual lenses of attachment, differentiation of self, and God attachment, as all three theories illustrated the daily dilemma that couples faced as they attempt to balance the pull towards togetherness and the push towards separation in their relationships. The three overlapping theories explored were attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/1982), Bowen’s Family Systems Theory (Bowen, 1976, 1978) and God attachment (Kirkpatrick, 1999; Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2008).

Attachment theory states that attachment patterns developed between a child and caregiver shape the ideas and thoughts of an individual throughout his/her lifetime. Importantly, attachment patterns ultimately affect marriage satisfaction and relationship distress (Bretherton & Munholland, 2008). Johnson, et al. (1999), suggested that attachment theory can offer a theoretical basis for understanding the nature of marital distress and adult love. The authors suggested that a female’s level of trust that her partner is caring and the couple’s ability to engage in a partnership with the therapist
predicted future relationship satisfaction. From a theoretical perspective, there is evidence that the objectives of attachment-based interventions, such as emotional responsiveness, and patterned interactional cycles are the most important factors of marital distress. These variables reliably gauge long-term relationship distress and disruption (Gottman, 1994).

Johnson and Talitman (1997) suggested that an attachment-based approach to couples’ therapy, such as Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFCT), is successful in reducing marital distress. Johnson and Talitman found 70% of couples recovered at three-month follow-up (1997). A similar increase occurred in the first EFCT study by Johnson and Greenberg (1985). The observed 46% recovered at termination and 73% at follow-up. A study by Walker et al. (1996) found 38% recovered at termination and 70% at follow-up (Walker, Johnson, Manion & Cloutier, 1996). A two-year follow-up of the couples recruited in the Walker, et al. (1996) study has also been completed and showed encouraging results, as all treatment effects were maintained at follow-up assessment (Walker & Manion, 1998).

Differentiation, a central construct of Bowen’s Family Systems Theory, implies that individuals are able to separate themselves from emotional attachments and projections of anxiety originating from the family of origin, while at the same time not cutting off from significant adult relationships and marriage (Bowen, 1976, 1978). Skowron (2000) showed a positive correlation between differentiation and marital satisfaction, with husbands’ emotional cut-off scores correlating with both husbands’ and wives’ marital satisfaction scores. This study found that the couples who have low levels of differentiation and high levels of ER, EC, and FO experience higher levels of
stress and anxiety in their relationships. These couples were also less satisfied with their marriages (Gubbins, Perosa, & Bartle-Haring, 2010).

God attachment theory, developed by Granqvist and Kirkpatrick (2008), espoused the notion that a parallel relationship may exist between an individual’s attachment style to partners and his/her attachment style to God. This was termed the correspondence hypothesis of God attachment, and it was postulated that there was a similarity between an individual’s early attachment with parents and later relationship with God (Beck & McDonald, 2004; Hall & Edwards, 2002; Granqvist & Kirkpatrick, 2008; Sorenson, 1997). Importantly, an individual’s God attachment influenced marriage.

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of three overlapping areas, including adult attachment, differentiation of self, and God attachment was used to answer the research question. Three instruments were used to perform the online survey: Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R; Fraley, Waller & Brennan, 2000), Differentiation of Self Inventory (DSI-R; Skowron & Schmitt, 2003), and the Attachment to God Inventory (AGI; Beck & McDonald, 2004). These measurements included eight subscales that were used for the EFA. A series of demographic items were included to help identify potential group differences. The survey was administered to a sample population that consisted of undergraduate students from a large public university in the Southeast, and both graduate and undergraduate students in a business program at a large Midwestern university. Additionally, members from two community churches were included. The churches were situated in the cities in which the universities were located,
a small university town in the Southeast and a large metropolitan area in the Upper Midwest.

A total of 193 participants completed the survey and their responses were used for the analyses. The sample was biased towards younger individuals, white females and Christians compared to the general population of those areas. The participants provided reliable responses for items as reliability alpha coefficients for the subscales: ECR-R anxiety (0.93), ECR-R avoidance (0.95), ER (0.91), IP (0.84), EC (0.88), FO (0.81), AGI avoidance (0.90), and AGI anxiety (0.91).

These eight subscales were utilized for the EFA, which was conducted with an orthogonal rotation using Varimax procedure on data gathered from all the participants. A five factor solution was anticipated; however, only two factors emerged from this analysis. Initial factor loadings ranged from -.68 to .90. Subscales that loaded on one of the two factors with a factor loading of .40 in the final solution were retained, explaining nearly 62% of the variance.

Results

The investigation was guided by two research questions. First, was there a factor structure that could be used to define critical features that are common to these three psychological theories? Second, were there specific elements that defined and characterized the structure? The overarching goal of finding answers to these key research questions was to use this knowledge to expand the theory, research, and clinical practice in the areas of couples counseling and spirituality issues.

As evidenced by the results of the EFA the intersection of the three theoretical models can be explained by a two-factor solution. Factor 1 is comprised of 66 items contained in the following subscales FO, ER, ECR-R anxiety, AGI anxiety, and IP.
Taken together, this set of items exhibit an underlying theme of relationship anxiety and actively pursued emotional engagement in relationships with others and God. Given these characteristics, the term engagement was selected as an appropriate label for factor 1. Factor 2 was comprised of the 44 items included in the ECR-R avoidance, EC and AGI avoidance. When considered together these items and subscales demonstrated an orientation toward avoiding anxiety by avoiding engagement with others and God, leading to the use of avoidance as the label for factor 2. A summary of subscales included in each factor Table 5-1 and Table 5-2).

Group differences were explored for demographics, gender, and relationship influence. Fisher’s exact test was used to test the significance for categorical data and Student’s t-test was performed for continuous variables. For the correlation analysis, Pearson’s correlation was used. All statistical tests used a p-value of less than 0.05. The results showed that the mean score for ECR-R anxiety was significantly higher in females than males, a finding noted in previous studies (Demirli & Demir, 2014; Kooiman, Klaassens, van Heloma Lugt, & Kamperman, 2013; Stein, Siefert, Stewart & Hilsenroth, 2011).

The mean score for ER in the male group was significantly greater than the mean in the female group. Initially, this finding seemed surprising due to the general sense of female proclivity for emotion, but this result might be easily explained by the lower level of maturity in males at this age (21 years or younger). FO mean score in the male group showed a significantly higher score than the female group. This also represented an unexpected result, but when linked to the previous finding of greater emotional reactivity in the male group, may be due to the young age of the males. Skowron, Wester, and
Azen conducted four t-tests on gender and each of the DSI subscales (ER, IP, EC, and FO) and also found ER and FO were higher in males (Skowron, Wester & Azen, 2004).

God attachment measured by AGI showed that the mean score for AGI anxiety in women was higher than in males. This finding was consistent with the literature (Clinton & Straub, 2010). The mean score for AGI avoidance was higher in males than females, which was also consistent with the literature (Clinton & Straub, 2010, p. 65). Based on the current study and the literature, individuals who have greater mean scores of anxiety were more emotionally reactive and fused with other people. Moreover, these individuals appeared to have greater scores of attachment anxiety related to their relationship with God.

**Implications for Theory**

Results of this study aided in understanding the intersection of attachment, differentiation, and God attachment theories. Family therapists and researchers provided with the two-factor solution could glean a greater understanding of the forces of togetherness and separateness. In particular, the absence of a secure attachment base created an insecure attachment style that caused greater levels of relationship anxiety. The individual developed coping strategies to manage this relationship anxiety. Two categories of coping strategies could be employed. The first strategy was engagement; the second strategy was avoidance, which was the second factor in my study.

Bowlby (1969/1982) postulated that the development of a secure attachment base between child and caregiver influenced the level of anxiety experienced by the child. A secure base was created through a child’s relationship with a sensitive and responsive caregiver who met the child's needs. A child who learned that he/she could
turn to a caregiver as a safe haven and secure base when upset or anxious learned to trust relationships. When there was trust in the availability and reliability of this relationship, then anxiety was reduced. In my study, it appeared that factor 1 (engagement) illuminated the relationship among secure attachment base, relationship anxiety, and relational engagement. Absence of a secure base created an insecure attachment style that was characterized by relationship anxiety with others and God.

The following section focuses on three different types of engagement responses. Conceptually, individuals in my study engaged in relationships in both healthy and unhealthy ways. FO and ER were unhealthy ways of relationship engagement. Individuals were likely to cope with relationship anxiety by fusing with others (FO) and by being overly attached to their families of origin. FO reflected emotional over-involvement with significant others and over-identification with one’s parents—taking in parental values, beliefs, and expectations without question (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). These Individuals responded to relationship anxiety with emotional reactivity (ER) and were highly sensitive in relationships. ER was the measure of the propensity for reacting to environmental stimuli on the basis of autonomic emotional responses and emotional lability (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998).

Individuals characterized as factor 1 worried about abandonment and were generally insecure about their relationships with partners and God. There was a parallel process of emotional engagement between their relationships with others and God. This finding was consistent with the correspondence hypothesis, which states that an individuals’ attachment style to their significant other was similar to their attachment style to God.
Taking the I-position (IP) was a healthy response to resolving relationship anxiety. IP represented a balanced way of engaging in relationships. IP described having a clearly defined sense of self and the ability to thoughtfully adhere to one’s convictions even when pressured to do otherwise (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). Individuals with high IP maintain a balanced sense of self. He/she remained emotionally engaged in a relationship and applied rational thinking. For example, when a person with high IP experienced relationship anxiety they engaged with the other person (or God) in the appropriate amount. The individual did this while maintaining a balanced sense of self as well as a connection with the other person.

The second and detrimental coping strategy was avoidance or factor 2. Avoidance was comprised of 3 subscales (EC, ECR-R avoidance and AGI avoidance) that included a total of 44 items. An insecure attachment base led to relationship anxiety and a coping response of emotionally disengaging or avoiding others and God. Factor 2 was characterized by emotionally and behaviorally moving away from others and God. Additionally, the avoidance factor represented EC, where distancing of oneself from others or God occurred based on fears of intimacy and/or the associated behavioral defenses against those fears (Skowron & Friedlander, 1998). The avoidance factor was also characterized by inability to depend on or be close to others for fear of being hurt. An individual’s relationship with God was similar to their relationship with others and is known as the correspondence hypothesis of God attachment (Beck & McDonald, 2004; Hall & Edwards, 2002.) Thus, if an individual had an emotionally avoidant relationship with others they would likely have an emotionally avoidant relationship with God, as evidenced in my study as well.
Implications for Future Research

In this researcher's review of the literature, no other studies were found that examined attachment, differentiation, and God attachment. Additional studies could expand on the current work regarding this compound lens approach. While a two-factor structure was discovered (factor 1, an individual's engagement and factor 2, an individual's tendency to avoid relationships), additional studies would glean a more complete understanding of these complicated interrelationships. When considering engagement, individuals who conceptualized through factor 1 had a lack of secure attachment base. This was responsible for their relationship anxiety and exaggerated engagement with others (i.e., FO and ER) and God. When considering avoidance, individuals responded to relationship anxiety by disengaging with others and God, and distancing themselves or emotionally cutting themselves off from significant relationships. The findings in this research were consistent with the differentiation and attachment literature, as well as the God attachment literature, and provided additional support for the previously published literature (Bowen, 1976, 1978; Bowlby, 1969/1982; Kirkpatrick, 1999).

For future research studies, researchers may want to include a third factor using the I-position scale. If a third factor were to be included, the eigenvalue would be .951. A third factor was not included because it did not meet the criteria of greater than 1, which was suggested in a previous study (Girden, 2001). IP did not load strongly on factor 1 in the two-factor model that I suggested; perhaps IP would be better explained as a unique variable. If the IP subscale were considered as a factor it would include 11 items and explain 11% of the variance. Factor 3 could be called differentiation. A three-
factor model would explain 72% of the variance. Future studies could examine the possibility of including a third factor.

Implications for Practice

Examining the relationships among attachment theory, differentiation, and God attachment may provide insight for family therapists and clergy working with couples. Understanding how these three constructs converge could allow family therapists to explore the powerful forces of togetherness and separateness in counseling sessions and disentangle the complex intricacies surrounding the intrapsychic and interpersonal dimensions of relating to others and/or to God.

Further understanding the relationship among these variables may promote better counseling insight and new perspectives to help formulate a plan to aid couples in addressing relationship problems. Research studies that directly address the influence of attachment, differentiation, and God attachment on couples could provide a needed foundation for advancing couples therapy by not only the clergy, but also by family therapists. Helping couples develop a secure base with each other while simultaneously creating a secure attachment with God may be optimal because attachment anxiety and God attachment anxiety, because this study demonstrated that attachment avoidance and God avoidance are related. Therefore, these results suggest that it would be beneficial for individuals to work on their relationships with others and God simultaneously. Thus, a counselor might want to consider them concordantly in therapy.

The findings in this study appear to be consistent with current marriage, family, and couples’ theories. Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy (EFCT) proposes that human emotions are inherently adaptive and relationship conflict decreases when couples transform problematic emotional states or undesirable self-experiences. In
EFCT, there is recognition that attachment, human needs, and desires are necessary and healthy, but conflict occurs when the needs are disowned or not expressed productively (Johnson, 2004, p.44). Emotions are thought to be connected to our most essential wants, and so acknowledgment and the acceptance of emotions are an integral part of the therapy process and new emotional experiences can change the position partners assume. Johnson, et al. (1999), found that EFCT was more successful with couples who noticed the significance of formulating and expressing their attachment needs as well as fears and then concentrated on problems of connection and trust.

Therapeutic change consequently occurs by changing emotions. The therapist assists the couple in expressing and coping with their emotions, which creates new emotional experiences for couple. The focus on emotions and the expression of emotion was a common element between EFCT and the two factors (engagement and avoidance) uncovered in my study. The findings of my two-factor model highlight the importance of these types of interventions used in EFCT such as emotional evocation and reengagement of the withdrawer. These interventions often are used simultaneously to help the partner with increased emotional engagement in a relationship and during the session. Using evocative responding, the therapist focuses upon the emerging aspects of a partner’s emotional experience and helps the partner to vividly grasp the experience. The therapist does this by unfolding and expanding the partner’s emotional experiences in the present moment (Johnson, 2002, p. 153). The therapist uses vivid, specific, and concrete language, particularly images and metaphors to aid the individual in capturing his or her experience (Johnson, 2002, p. 153).
accessing unacknowledged feelings and reframing the problem, it is important to focus on emotions that are usually excluded from interactions and use these emotions to expand the context of the problem. Active engagement of emotional experiences is critical. Partners need to begin to acknowledge primary emotions and not just secondary emotions of anger or frustration (Johnson, 2004, p. 133) Evocative responding leads to partners who are able to engage with each other. Additionally, therapists can then assist a couple with learning how to take the I-position during anxiety provoking relationship conflict.

Reengagement of the partner who withdraws (avoidance) is a highly relevant concept as this is a detrimental coping mechanism. During this process, the therapist can bypass the more superficial content issues in a conversation and evoke the emotions of the client. The therapist engages the “avoider” by empathetic reflections, which can validate the client’s experience and creates therapeutic rapport and safety. The usually withdrawn partner experiences the full impact of the contact with all its associated dread. This partner then processes this fear of vulnerability with the therapist. The therapist then redirects this fear with his/her partner and helps the partner hear how frightened and vulnerable their partner feels in the relationship. Emotional evocation and reengagement of the withdrawer are often used together by therapists to assist an individual who is coping with relationship anxiety through emotional avoidance to learn how to emotionally engage and share feelings with the partner.

Client progress in EFCT can be grouped into four categories: emotional, behavioral, cognitive, and interpersonal. On an emotional level, negative affect has lessened and is regulated differently. There are more positive feelings shared between
partners and partners are more emotionally engaged in the relationship. Emotions are accepted and expressed in a manner that helps the partner respond to them. Behaviorally, partners can then be more accessible and responsive to each other, and can experience the relationship as more supportive. In the cognitive category, partners will perceive each other more optimistically and define their relationship in attachment terms. Finally, interpersonally, the negative cycles are better controlled and can be replaced with new positive cycles (Johnson, 2004, p. 198). Based upon the results of my study, I believe signs of a higher I-position level will be an indicator of client progress. Such that, on an intrapsychic level, individuals will improve their ability of balancing thoughts and emotions; and on an interpersonal level, individuals will improve their capability to share profound levels of intimacy while still maintaining a feeling of independence in emotionally important relationships.

My two-factor model has several similarities with John Gottman’s “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse”. The first concept in the “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse” is criticism and includes such behaviors as attacking a partner’s personality or character, usually with the intent of making the attacker feel right or the partner wrong. Individuals who are emotionally reactive act out on the basis of primal autonomic emotions that may cause exaggerated emotional expression. In these moments, the individual may criticize a partner and say things that he/she really does not intend or mean. When an individual is emotionally reactive they do not integrate the cognitive thinking processes to the emotion experienced. The strong emotion (a strong emotion can be fear, misery or rage) typically takes over the individual’s reasoning abilities. The second concept is contempt and represents attacking a partner’s sense of
self with the intention to insult or psychologically abuse him/her. This includes such behaviors such as hurling insults or name-calling; use of hostile humor; sarcasm or mockery; and body language, such as sneering or rolling eyes. Emotionally reactive individuals will typically use these behaviors without thinking how it is destructive to the relational bond. The third concept in Gottman’s “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse” is defensiveness. Defensiveness occurs when a person sees herself/himself as the victim, and wards off a perceived attack by making excuses. As is common in relationships, disagreeing and then cross complaining likely includes such statements as, “That’s not true, you’re the one who did that.” Defensiveness can be viewed as repeating statements without paying attention to what the other person is saying. Both of the factors in my study have elements of defensiveness as an unhealthy coping strategy to deal with relationship anxiety. Factor 2 is more likely to do this, as these individuals do not want to be emotionally vulnerable. The final concept is stonewalling or withdrawing from the relationship as a way to avoid conflict. Partners may think they are trying to be neutral, but stonewalling conveys disapproval, icy distance, and disconnection. They may remove themselves physically or perhaps employ the silencing behaviors. This type of behavior is characteristic of factor 2 as these individuals withdraw from the significant other and are emotionally and physically distant from their partner (Gottman, 1994).

**Applying the Two-Factor Model to the Story of Daniel and Vika**

Returning to the story of Daniel and Vika, we can see that they both display characteristic traits found in the two factors identified in this study. Vika exhibits typical traits of the engagement factor (FO, ER, ECR-R anxiety, AGI anxiety, and IP) and Daniel exhibits characteristic traits of the avoidance factor (EC, ECR-R avoidance and
AGI avoidance). Vika lives in fear of possible abandonment by Daniel; she is constantly anxious about her marriage and her relationship with God. She actively pursues emotional engagement and attention from Daniel, who at this point in his marriage feels “burnt out” from the daily emotional roller coaster and has effectively withdrawn from their relationship. Vika either demands too much of others or expects too little because she feels she doesn’t deserve it. When she does not get the attention she wants, she has an exaggerated emotional reaction. She becomes fused with others and loses herself in her thirst to be connected to someone. Vika has expressed how deeply sad and lonely she is. She has told Daniel on many occasions how important it is for her to feel needed yet acknowledges that Daniel, if anything, wants “everyone to leave him alone.” This is deeply hurtful if not debilitating to Vika. A year ago, Vika lost her mother to Alzheimer’s. This event seemed to trigger an ever deepening sense of loneliness and abandonment in Vika; she has “latched on” to her older sister for consolation and companionship. Vika demonstrates an extraordinary fusion with her family of origin, typical of individuals with factor 1 characteristics.

Daniel depicts typical traits of the avoidance factor by emotionally and behaviorally moving away from others and God. He is afraid to trust anyone or be vulnerable due to fears of unreliability or betrayal, causing him to have an overly developed sense of autonomy and self-reliance. His inability to depend on or be close to Vika or others for fear of being hurt is a source of much marital strife for Daniel and Vika. He is generally mistrusting of others, including his wife, mistaking her affections and pleas for attention as controlling and even selfish manipulations. Daniel does not share his personal feelings with Vika, mainly because he has grown afraid of her
unbridled emotional reactivity, which often includes name-calling and mocking ridicule of himself and his family. Vika’s verbal tirades are deeply disturbing to Daniel, even though Vika usually apologizes later saying she “really didn’t mean it.” Total shutdown of personal communication has left Vika feeling isolated, unwanted, and unneeded. Daniel also does not share his feelings in his prayers to God, because he does not want to feel indebted for divine intercession. At the core of this relationship problem is the likelihood that Daniel and Vika did not ever develop a secure attachment base in childhood.

Based on the results of this study, a counselor’s goal should be to assist couples like Daniel and Vika develop a secure base with each other while simultaneously creating a secure attachment with God. Addressing attachment issues simultaneously may be necessary since attachment anxiety and God attachment anxiety seemed to be connected in the same manner as attachment avoidance and God avoidance were related. Therefore, these results would suggest that an individual might need to work on relationships with others and God simultaneously, as they are interconnected. Thus a counselor might want to consider this pathway in therapy. The following section discusses potential approaches to help clients build a secure attachment base with God and people at the same time.

A therapist should consider that a client such as Daniel was raised in a family in which he did not receive much support when he likely desperately needed assistance. Instead, he experienced condemnation and isolation in his family of origin. In this environment, a client could grow up thinking, “I’m okay, but you’re not,” and conclude that people are just not trustworthy. In times of stress, the individual may believe that “I can’t trust anybody to be there for me, and if God isn’t going to be there for me either,
then I can do it myself.” To find security in their relationship with God and others, those who are characterized by the avoidance factor likely need to confront their defensive isolation with a pronounced propensity to rely on their own abilities to give them a pseudo I-position. Instead of redoubling the effort to win at all costs, such an individual could benefit finding a secure friend who he/she can trust and who would be able to share an honest perspective in a loving way. Although, it should be noted that a person characterized by avoidance will have a tendency to push away anyone who tries to lovingly offer suggestions. Such individuals “will need to learn and understand that God is capable of loving them and is accessible” (Clinton & Straub, 2010, p. 189).

As individuals like Daniel and Vika take risks to be connected to people, they are sometimes going to be disappointed and tempted to think “there’s no use in trying.” But a secure friend or therapist will keep encouraging them, inviting them to stay connected and to keep taking risks to have an authentic relationship. Every little setback in the relationship may seem to them a catastrophe, and the couple often may want to quit at the slightest provocation. This is an important stage of their rehabilitation; they have to do the hard work of facing their deepest wounds, grieving, forgiving, and learning how to connect to people in healthy adult-adult relationships (Clinton & Straub, 2010, p. 190).

**Study Limitations**

There were various study limitations. First, this study used an Internet based questionnaire and a limited cohort. The data used in the study was self-reported, which could have introduced bias, thus another format to measure the constructs would have been desirable. Ideally, using a more objective measure than the self-report survey would have provided a more in-depth understanding of the individual’s relationship style. For example, interviewing participants and pursuing a detailed analysis of these
three concepts and how they affected relationships would have result in a stronger study.

Second, a larger sample would have allowed for an exploratory factor analysis at the item level instead of the subscales, which might have provided more clarity to the factors. Item level analysis may allow for greater discernment of the concepts and relationship characteristics as well as allowed for a more detailed understanding interrelationships.

Additionally, a larger church sample ideally would have been used as this would have strengthened the findings of this study, particularly relating to God attachment. Thirdly, there were only three regions represented in this study: The Southeast the Midwest, and the upper Midwest, and data from the Midwest were underrepresented. Thus, there may be sampling bias that could have limited the generalizability of the results. However, despite this limitation, the sample size was large for social science research, allowing for some confidence that the results may be generalized to other populations. Future research studies could be conducted to examine these research questions in other areas of the United States, as well as internationally, to see if these results can be replicated. Thus, the concept of a compound lens should be examined in more geographically diverse regions and with more diverse ethnicity than that used in the current study cohort.

Fourthly, I did not test for a social desirability bias. Survey respondents might have tried to answer questions in a manner that would be viewed favorably by others. Respondents might have over-reported “positive” behavior or under reported “negative” behavior in order to be perceived as a “good Christian” or “good person.” The tendency
toward social acceptance poses problems when conducting research with self-reports, especially questionnaires. Finally, the test may have been too long and the participants may have become disinterested or fatigued and ceased to carefully consider their answers.

**Conclusions**

To date, research that empirically examines the nature of the relationship among attachment, differentiation, God attachment has been sparse. Thus, the goal of this study was to perform an exploratory factor analysis of these three overlapping factors that affect the powerful forces of togetherness and separateness. This study successfully examined the relationship among the assumptions of these three theories using empirically based methods. The investigation found a factor structure that can be used to examine critical features that are common to these three psychological theories that focus on the problems of togetherness and separateness. Furthermore, the study identified specific elements that defined and characterized this structure. The outcome of this study made available the notion of a “compound lens” that can integrate the theories of attachment, differentiation, and God attachment to assist clinicians, supervisors, and counselor educators in understanding and intervening with clients in an ethically appropriate manner. The conceptual framework provided by this study garners new ways to simultaneously conceptualize relationship dynamics and spiritual issues.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Questions</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>I often wish that my partner’s feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him or her.</td>
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<td>I worry a lot about my relationships.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he or she might become interested in someone else.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I’m afraid they will not feel the same about me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I rarely worry about my partner leaving me. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>My romantic partner makes me doubt myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I do not often worry about being abandoned. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I find that my partner(s) don’t want to get as close as I would like.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Sometimes romantic partners change their feelings about me for no apparent reason.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I’m afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he or she won’t like who I really am.</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>It makes me mad that I don’t get the affection and support I need from my partner.</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>I worry that I won’t measure up to other people.</td>
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<td>People have remarked that I’m overly emotional. *</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>I usually need a lot of encouragement from others when starting a big job or task.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>When someone close to me disappoints me, I withdraw from him/her for a time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I want to live up to my parents’ expectations of me. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>I wish that I weren’t so emotional. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>When my spouse/partner criticizes me, it bothers me for days. *</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>I feel a need for approval from virtually everyone in my life. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>At times my feelings get the best of me and I have trouble thinking clearly. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>At times I feel as if I’m riding an emotional roller-coaster. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>I’m overly sensitive to criticism. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>I try to live up to my parents’ expectations. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>I often agree with others just to appease them. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>If I have had an argument with my spouse/partner, I tend to think about it all day.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Arguments with my parent(s) or sibling(s) can still make me feel awful.*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5-1. Continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>If someone is upset with me, I can’t seem to let it go easily. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>I often feel unsure when others are not around to help me make a decision. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>I’m very sensitive to being hurt by others. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>When making decisions, I seldom worry about what others will think. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>I often wonder about the kind of impression I create. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>I feel things more intensely than others do. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Sometimes I feel sick after arguing with my spouse/partner. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>I feel it’s important to hear my parents’ opinions before making decisions. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>I worry about people close to me getting sick, hurt, or upset. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>I worry a lot about my relationship with God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>If I can’t see God working in my life, I get upset or angry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>I am jealous at how God seems to care more for others than for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Sometimes I feel that God loves others more than me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>I am jealous at how close some people are to God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>I often worry about whether God is pleased with me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Even if I fail, I never question that God is pleased with me. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Almost daily I feel that my relationship with God goes back and forth from “hot” to “cold.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>I fear God does not accept me when I do wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>I often feel angry with God for not responding to me when I want.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>I crave reassurance from God that God loves me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>I am jealous when others feel God’s presence when I cannot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>I worry a lot about damaging my relationship with God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>I get upset when I feel God helps others, but forgets about me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>I tend to remain pretty calm even under stress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>No matter what happens in my life, I know that I’ll never lose my sense of who I am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>I usually do not change my behavior simply to please another person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>When I am having an argument with someone, I can separate my thoughts about the issue from my feelings about the person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>There’s no point in getting upset about things I cannot change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>I’m fairly self-accepting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>I am able to say “no” to others even when I feel pressured by them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>I’m less concerned that others approve of me than I am in doing what I think is right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>My self-esteem really depends on how others think of me. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>I usually do what I believe is right regardless of what others say.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>I tend to feel pretty stable under stress.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * indicates reverse score.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I don’t feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>It’s not difficult for me to get close to my partner. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need. *</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>I tell my partner just about everything. *</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I talk things over with my partner. *</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>I am nervous when partners get too close to me. *</td>
</tr>
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<td>15</td>
<td>I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I find it easy to depend on romantic partners. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>It’s easy for me to be affectionate with my partner. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>My partner really understands me and my needs. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I have difficulty expressing my feelings to people I care for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I often feel inhibited around my family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I tend to distance myself when people get too close to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>My spouse/partner could not tolerate it if I were to express to him/her my true feelings about some things. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>I’m often uncomfortable when people get too close to me. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I’m concerned about losing my independence in intimate relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>I often feel that my spouse/partner wants too much from me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>When one of my relationships becomes very intense, I feel the urge to run away from it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>I would never consider turning to any of my family members for emotional support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>When I’m with my spouse/partner, I often feel smothered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>When things go wrong, talking about them usually makes it worse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Our relationship might be better if my spouse/partner would give me the space I need.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>I just don’t feel a deep need to be close to God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>I am totally dependent upon God for everything in my life. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>It is uncommon for me to cry when sharing with God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>My experiences with God are very intimate and emotional. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>I am uncomfortable being emotional in my communication with God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>My prayers to God are often matter-of-fact and not very personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items</td>
<td>Questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>I am uncomfortable with emotional displays of affection to God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Without God I couldn’t function at all. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>I believe people should not depend on God for things they should do for themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Daily I discuss all of my problems and concerns with God. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>I am uncomfortable allowing God to control every aspect of my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>My prayers to God are very emotional. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>I let God make most of the decisions in my life. *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * indicates reverse score.
Directions: The statements below concern how you feel in emotionally intimate relationships. We are interested in how you \textit{generally} experience relationships, not just in what is happening in a current relationship. Respond to each statement by circling a number to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree

QUESTIONS

_____ 1. I’m afraid that I will lose my partner’s love.

_____ 2. I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me.

_____ 3. I often worry that my partner doesn’t really love me.

_____ 4. I worry that romantic partners won’t care about me as much as I care about them.

_____ 5. I often wish that my partner’s feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him or her.

_____ 6. I worry a lot about my relationships.

_____ 7. When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he or she might become interested in someone else.

_____ 8. When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I’m afraid they will not feel the same about me.

_____ 9. I rarely worry about my partner leaving me.

_____ 10. My romantic partner makes me doubt myself.

_____ 11. I do not often worry about being abandoned.

_____ 12. I find that my partner(s) don’t want to get as close as I would like.
13. Sometimes romantic partners change their feelings about me for no apparent reason.

14. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.

15. I’m afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he or she won’t like who I really am.

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.

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.

Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised

Directions: These are questions concerning your thoughts and feelings about yourself and relationships with others. Please read each statement carefully and decide how much the statement is generally true of you on a 1 (not at all) to 6 (very) scale. If you believe that an item does not pertain to you (e.g., you are not currently married or in a committed relationship, or one or both of your parents are deceased), please answer the item according to your best guess about what your thoughts and feelings would be in that situation. Be sure to answer every item and try to be as honest and accurate as possible in your responses.

1 2 3 4 5 6
NOT AT ALL TRUE OF ME VERY TRUE OF ME

QUESTIONS

1. People have remarked that I’m overly emotional.
2. I have difficulty expressing my feelings to people I care for.
3. I often feel inhibited around my family.
4. I tend to remain pretty calm even under stress.
5. I usually need a lot of encouragement from others when starting a big job or task.
6. When someone close to me disappoints me, I withdraw from him/her for a time.
7. No matter what happens in my life, I know that I’ll never lose my sense of who I am.
8. I tend to distance myself when people get too close to me.
9. I want to live up to my parents’ expectations of me.
10. I wish that I weren’t so emotional.
11. I usually do not change my behavior simply to please another person.
12. My spouse/partner could not tolerate it if I were to express to him/her my true feelings about some things.
13. When my spouse/partner criticizes me, it bothers me for days.
14. At times my feelings get the best of me and I have trouble thinking clearly.
15. When I am having an argument with someone, I can separate my thoughts about the issue from my feelings about the person.
16. I'm often uncomfortable when people get too close to me.
17. I feel a need for approval from virtually everyone in my life.
18. At times I feel as if I'm riding an emotional roller-coaster.
19. There's no point in getting upset about things I cannot change.
20. I'm concerned about losing my independence in intimate relationships.
21. I'm overly sensitive to criticism.
22. I try to live up to my parents' expectations.
23. I'm fairly self-accepting.
24. I often feel that my spouse/partner wants too much from me.
25. I often agree with others just to appease them.
26. If I have had an argument with my spouse/partner, I tend to think about it all day.
27. I am able to say “no” to others even when I feel pressured by them.
28. When one of my relationships becomes very intense, I feel the urge to run away from it.
29. Arguments with my parent(s) or sibling(s) can still make me feel awful.
30. If someone is upset with me, I can’t seem to let it go easily.
31. I’m less concerned that others approve of me than I am in doing what I think is right.
32. I would never consider turning to any of my family members for emotional support.
33. I often feel unsure when others are not around to help me make a decision.
34. I’m very sensitive to being hurt by others.
35. My self-esteem really depends on how others think of me.
36. When I’m with my spouse/partner, I often feel smothered.
37. When making decisions, I seldom worry about what others will think.
38. I often wonder about the kind of impression I create.
39. When things go wrong, talking about them usually makes it worse.
40. I feel things more intensely than others do.
41. I usually do what I believe is right regardless of what others say.
42. Our relationship might be better if my spouse/partner would give me the space I need.
43. I tend to feel pretty stable under stress.
44. Sometimes I feel sick after arguing with my spouse/partner.
45. I feel it’s important to hear my parents’ opinions before making decisions.
46. I worry about people close to me getting sick, hurt, or upset.

The Attachment to God Inventory

Directions: The following statements concern how you feel about your relationship with God. We are interested in how you generally experience your relationship with God, not just in what is happening in that relationship currently. For the purpose of this inventory, God should be defined in a way that reflects your personal understanding of the term. For example, God could be any deity, religious or spiritual figure, gods, universe, nature or spirit, etc.

Respond to each statement by indicating how much you agree or disagree with it. Write the number in the space provided, using the following rating scale:

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

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QUESTIONS

1. I worry a lot about my relationship with God.
2. I just don’t feel a deep need to be close to God.
3. If I can’t see God working in my life, I get upset or angry.
4. I am totally dependent upon God for everything in my life.
5. I am jealous at how God seems to care more for others than for me.
6. It is uncommon for me to cry when sharing with God.
7. Sometimes I feel that God loves others more than me.
8. My experiences with God are very intimate and emotional.
9. I am jealous at how close some people are to God.
10. I prefer not to depend too much on God.
11. I often worry about whether God is pleased with me.
12. I am uncomfortable being emotional in my communication with God.
13. Even if I fail, I never question that God is pleased with me.
14. My prayers to God are often matter-of-fact and not very personal.*
15. Almost daily I feel that my relationship with God goes back and forth from “hot” to “cold.”
16. I am uncomfortable with emotional displays of affection to God.*
17. I fear God does not accept me when I do wrong.
18. Without God I couldn’t function at all.
19. I often feel angry with God for not responding to me when I want.
20. I believe people should not depend on God for things they should do for themselves.
21. I crave reassurance from God that God loves me.
22. Daily I discuss all of my problems and concerns with God.
23. I am jealous when others feel God’s presence when I cannot.
24. I am uncomfortable allowing God to control every aspect of my life.
25. I worry a lot about damaging my relationship with God.
26. My prayers to God are very emotional.
27. I get upset when I feel God helps others, but forgets about me.
28. I let God make most of the decisions in my life.

Demographic Information

Directions: For the following questions/statements please fill in or select the most appropriate response

1. What is your age? _________

2. What is your gender? _________

3. What is your ethnicity? _________

4. Where is the setting in which you were informed about this survey?
   - □ A course at the University of Florida
   - □ A church located in the Southeast
   - □ A course at Oklahoma State University
   - □ A church located in the Upper Mid-west

4. Are you currently or how you ever been in a committed relationship? □Yes □No

   If “No” then go to next question.
If “Yes”, what length of time have you been (were you) in a relationship with your partner? _________

What is your marital status?

☐ Single, never married
☐ Married or domestic partnership
☐ Widowed
☐ Divorced
☐ Separated

6. Are you currently affiliated with any religious organization? ☐Yes ☐No

If “No” then go to next question.

If “Yes”, what was the name of the organization? _________ and how often do you attend services?

☐ Weekly
☐ Monthly
☐ On religious holidays
☐ Never

7. Have you recently seen a counselor or clergy person in the last 2 years for assistance dealing with a personal issue?

☐Yes ☐No

8. If you have any comments regarding this survey, please feel free to do so below. If not, click next and your survey will be complete.
Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your assistance in providing information is very much appreciated.

If you have any questions or comments about this survey, please feel free contact us at: Redacted
RESEARCH STUDY NEEDING PARTICIPANTS!
America is changing. The world is changing. How we look at ourselves, each other, and even how we look at God continues to evolve. It may feel like it has never been harder in these times to achieve a sense of self and independence yet remain connected to family and God. To most Americans, this sense of connection to each other and to God remains very important.
To better understand the opposing forces of separateness and togetherness in relationships, research is vitally needed. Your input is needed. You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by a University of Florida doctoral student that is designed to examine three theories involving separateness and togetherness in adult relationships.

You will be asked to respond to questions in these three areas:
1.) Your relationships with yourself; 2.) Your relationship with important people in your life; and 3.) Your relationship with God.

All information will be ANONYMOUS. This online survey takes a MAXIMUM OF 20 MINUTES TO COMPLETE. There are no immediate benefits from this study for you, but there may be long-term benefits anticipated as a result of this research which may help counselors in their clinical practice or researchers interested in attachment, differentiation, and God attachment in adult relationships. There are no anticipated risk(s) associated with this study. Participants may exit the survey any time they wish.

Please go to the following link to BEGIN SURVEY HERE:
http://blissw9.wix.com/takesurvey

If you have any questions about this study, please contact:
Principle Investigator: Bliss Wargovich, MEd & EdS
Redacted
APPENDIX C
INFORMED CONSENT

Please read this consent document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Protocol Title: Attachment, Differentiation, and God Attachment: Three Views of the Togetherness and Separateness Conundrum

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of this study is to examine three psychological theories that focus on the forces of togetherness and separateness in adult relationships, specifically in relationships with important people in your life and with God.

What you will be asked to do in the study: This study will examine the factors that are important to togetherness and separateness in adult relationships. You will be asked to respond to questions in three areas: perceptions of yourself, your relationship with others, and God.

Time required: This online survey contains 121 items, therefore, it is expected that this survey will take a maximum of 20 minutes to complete.

Benefits and Risks: There are no immediate benefits to you. However, there may be potential benefits that include contributing to the understanding of relationship forces and this potentially will provide counselors with tools to help couples. Upon completion of the research analysis, the results will be published in a paper that will be available to interested individuals online. No identifying information will be collected or connected with your responses, including name and email address. No risk is expected; and you may exit the survey any time you wish.

Compensation: There is no compensation for participating in this research. However, if you are a student then the compensation is at the discretion of your instructor.

Confidentiality: The data we collect will be anonymous. Only the Principal Investigator (PI) and the research team will have access to the individual assessment results. The results will be maintained by the PI who will keep them in a secure location until completion of the study. Your identity will not be used in any reports that result from this study.

There is a minimal risk that security of any online data may be breached. Since no identifying information will be collected, the online host provides secure webpages (see http://www.qualtrics.com/privacy-statement/), and your data will be removed from the server soon after you complete the study, it is highly unlikely that a security breach of the online data will result in any adverse consequence for you.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating. You have the right to withdraw from the research study at any time without consequence.

Privacy Policy and Security Notice: The survey program does not collect any personal information from survey participants. The survey will be conducted online through a secure website with limited encryption technologies. Physical, electronic and procedural safeguards are employed in connection with the collection, storage and disclosure of any information. However, information you provide could be observed by a third party while in transit.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study: If you have any concerns or questions about this study, please contact the following person:
Principle Investigator: Bliss Wargovich, MEd & EdS
email: redacted,
phone: redacted

Approval of Protocol # 2015-U-0989
Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:
   UF IRB02 Office
   University of Florida
   Box 112250
   Gainesville, FL 32611-2250
   IRB2@ufl.edu
   352-392-0433

Agreement: By beginning this assessment, you acknowledge that you have read
information above and agree to participate in this research.
## UFIRB 02 – Social & Behavioral Research Protocol Submission Form

**THIS FORM MUST BE TYPED. DO NOT STAPLE. Send this form and the supporting documents to IRB02, PO Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611. Should you have questions about completing this form, call 352-392-0433.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Protocol:</th>
<th>Attachment, Differentiation, and God Attachment: Three Views of the Togetherness and Separateness Conundrum</th>
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<tr>
<th>Principal Investigator:</th>
<th>Wargovich</th>
<th>Bliss</th>
<th>UFID #:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Last Name)</td>
<td>(First Name)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree / Title:</td>
<td>MEd &amp; EdS / doctoral candidate</td>
<td>Mailing Address:</td>
<td>Email:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department:</td>
<td>Counseling Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor (If PI is student):</td>
<td>Daniels</td>
<td>Harry</td>
<td>UFID#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Last Name)</td>
<td>(First Name)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Degree / Title:</td>
<td>Phd/ Professor, Director of School of Human Development and Organizational Studies in Education</td>
<td>Mailing Address:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department:</td>
<td>Counseling Education</td>
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<td>Telephone #:</td>
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**Dates of Proposed Research:** 9-1-2015-7-1-2016

**Source of Funding** *(A copy of the grant proposal must be submitted with this protocol if funding is involved):* NOTE: If your study has current or pending funding, AND your research

None
involves comparison of different kinds of treatment or interventions for behavior, cognition or mental health, you must submit the **Clinical Trial Assessment Form.**

**Describe the Scientific Purpose of the Study:** Human society has evolved through relationships, yet each individual struggles to maintain his/her independence and identity, while needing and thriving on the closeness and support of the emotional unit, be it the family or a committed relationship. This statement defines the basis of the togetherness-separateness conundrum. Family therapists have a practical understanding of the theories that comprise the togetherness-separateness conundrum, but there is a paucity of research that empirically examines the nature of the relationship among the three theories of differentiation, attachment and God attachment.

The overarching goal of this study is to conduct an exploratory factor analysis of three overlapping constructs that focus on the powerful forces of togetherness and separateness; namely, adult attachment, differentiation of self, and God attachment. The investigation is guided by the following two research questions: i) Is there a factor structure that can be used to examine critical features that are common to these three psychological theories that focus on the problem of togetherness and separateness? And ii) Are there specific elements that define and characterize the structure?

**Describe the Research Methodology in Non-Technical Language:** *(Explain what will be done with or to the research participant.)*

Up to 500 participants University and Community based will undergo an online survey. The community based sample may utilize a printed version of the survey. The survey is comprised of 110 items taken from three published inventories as well as a 11 item demographic questionnaire which will be administered online using Qualtrics. The published inventories being used are Experiences in Close Relationship-Revised (ECR-R) which measures adult attachment, Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R) which measure differentiation of self, and Attachment to God Inventory (AGI) which measure God Attachment. The items in the inventories are included in the attachment. The survey will take participants a maximum 20 minutes to complete.

**Describe the Data You Will Collect:** *(what are you collecting, where will it be stored, how will it be stored)*

A confederate will be used who is faculty at Oklahoma State University will inform the student on behalf of the principal investigator and a confederate will also be used to contact the community sample. They will instructed to follow a script about the study and will not be allowed to deviate from the script.

**Please List all Locations Where the Research Will Take Place:** *(if doing an online survey then just state “on-line survey”)*

The survey will be conducted online to the student sample and community sample. The community sample will be offered the option of a printed survey with a prepaid envelope to mail the survey to researchers. The community sample will obtain their surveys at the churches in Gainesville,
All data is anonymous. Anonymous information about an individual’s relationship patterns will be collected via a survey. The results will be maintained by the PI who will keep them in a secure location until completion of the study. The identity of the subjects will not be used in any reports that result from this study. Results will be stored in Qualtrics which is a secured program. The participant dataset will be downloading from Qualtrics. The data will be double encrypted by a file password and a computer password. Printed surveys once received will be stored in a lock cabinet in a locked office.

**Describe Potential Benefits:**

There are no immediate benefits to this study, but there may be long-term benefits anticipated as a result of this research which may help counselors in their clinical practice or researchers interested in attachment, differentiation, and God attachment.

**Describe Potential Risks:** *(If risk of physical, psychological or economic harm may be involved, describe the steps taken to protect participant.)*

There are no anticipated risk(s) associated with this study. Participants may exit the survey any time they wish.

**Describe How Participant(s) Will Be Recruited:** *(flyers, email solicitation, social media websites, etc.)*

Students enrolled in four undergraduate elective courses in the College of Education at the University of Florida, which may include stress management, interpersonal communication skills, career development, and drug and alcohol awareness will be contacted by their instructors and students will be incentivized to participate in the proposed study by their instructors providing extra academic credit for their enrolled classes (at the discretion of the instructor). Similarly, students taking business classes at a Midwestern University in Stillwater, Oklahoma will be contacted by their instructors and offered extra academic credit to participate in the study (at the discretion of the instructor). Church members in the Southeast community (Gainesville, FL) and in the Upper Mid-west metropolitan area (Minneapolis–St. Paul Minnesota) will be asked to volunteer to participate in the research study in response to printed recruitment invitations in their weekly church bulletins, smaller church groups, church listserv and (where allowed) announcement by the Principal Investigator or confederate at Florida or in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota.
their weekly church worship services with the explicit permission from their pastors or ministers.

| Maximum Number of Participants (to be approached with consent) | 500 participants | Age Range of Participants: | 18-65 years of age | Amount of Compensation/course credit: | Will be based on instructors discretion |

Describe the Informed Consent Process. (How will informed consent be obtained? Attach a copy of the Informed Consent Document)

Each participant will grant consent to participate in the survey. Participants will access the Informed Consent narrative by clicking on a web link provided on survey website. They will grant consent to participate by checking a box at the end of the Informed Consent narrative that will confirm they have read the informed consent and wish to proceed to the survey items. If the individual does not have access to a computer than the individual will be asked to sign the informed consent before a printed version is provided by the PI.

(SIGNATURE SECTION)

Principal Investigator(s) Signature: Date:

Co-Investigator(s) Signature(s): Date:

Supervisor’s Signature: Date:

Department Chair Signature: Date:
LIST OF REFERENCES


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Bliss Wargovich graduated from University of Florida in 2009 and attended the University of Florida’s Marriage and Family Counseling program. She graduated with her master’s and Ed.S. in Spring 2012. In Fall 2012, Bliss began the doctoral program and earned her doctoral degree in Spring 2016. During her doctoral training, she taught an online and in-class substance abuse course and an in-class stress management course. She also continued to gain clinical experience as a family therapist at local community health centers and provided in-home counseling to families.