Saying "I Do": Examining the Relationship between Attachment Style

and Motivation to Marry in Young Adults

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Declaration

I declare that this report does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree in any University, College of Advanced Education, or any other educational institution, and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

I further declare that the ethical principles and procedures specified in the Faculty of Life and Social Science's Human Research Ethics Committee document have been adhered to in the preparation of this report.

Name: Aisha Brydon

Signed:……………………………………..

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Abstract

This thesis aimed to investigate the relationship between attachment style and attitudes towards marriage. Three hundred and forty-one young adults (276 female and 56 male) aged between 18-25 who were currently in heterosexual relationships, that were at least one year, long took part in the study. Data was collected by an internet based questionnaire. Attachment style was found to be related with desire to marry, reasons for marriage, and the types of relationship participants formed. However, attachment was unrelated to the participants' ideal age of first marriage and participants' expectations of how marriage would improve their life. Further studies are recommended to investigate the stability of attachment over the duration of a relationship. Although attachment was related to the decision to marry in young adulthood, enduring relationships with high levels of commitment best distinguished those who married from other participants.

Overview

The innate tendency to form intimate romantic relationships with a single partner is characteristic of adult relationships and is argued to be the normative pattern of human mating (Hazan & Diamond, 2000). The institution of marriage has evolved to culturally acknowledge and celebrate this tendency, or possibly to overcome its shortcomings (Kirkpatrick, 1998). Research has consistently found that marriage is perceived to be a serious lifelong commitment that is qualitatively different from other types of relationships (Cherlin, 2004; Martin, Martin & Martin, 2001). Today, many behaviours that were once exclusive to marriage (or at least only socially acceptable within a marriage) such as sex, childrearing and cohabitation, are now regarded as a normal behaviour in Western society. Although most people still expect to marry eventually, they are not in a rush to do so and take advantage of alternative relationships that are now socially acceptable (Martin, Specter, Martin & Martin, 2003). Consequently, the average age of first marriage for both males and females across the Western world is rising (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002).

A great body of research has been dedicated to investigating why people are getting married later in life than previous generation (Lichter, 1990; Williams & Philipguest, 2005). As marriage is a social institution, and the boundaries of what is normal have changed, marrying later in life is now considered the norm. Little research has been undertaken from a psychological perspective investigating those who marry early compared to their peers. At a time when there are many alternatives to marriage, it is possible that those who marry young are seeking the *perceived* permanence of marriage.

Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1998; Ainsworth, 1982) has become one of the most popular frameworks for investigating romantic relationships (Fraley & Shaver, 2000; Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Encompassing developmental, evolutionary and psychoanalytic theory, attachment theory has provided consistent findings that are theoretically meaningful. Furthermore, the findings provided by attachment theory are useful in an applied context, most notably within a counselling setting.

It has been shown that an individual's attachment style impacts on their perception of interpersonal relationships throughout their life span. However, although attachment models are generable stable, they are flexible and open to revision in light of new experiences (Bowlby, 1980). This is supports the finding that the impact early childhood experiences have on romantic relationships diminishes with further relationship experience (Carnelley & Janoff-Bulmanm, 1992). It is expected that young adults will have less relationship experience than older adults, and therefore their attachment models would not have been revised by extensive relationship experience. Hence, the current study predicted that investigating attachment theory in young adults would provide a unique opportunity to examine how early childhood experiences impact upon the ability to form romantic relationships. It is expected that the findings of this research will build upon current attachment literature and provide a better understanding of relationships in young adulthood.

Young Adults and Marriage Patterns in the West

The current generation of young adults in Western society have grown up in a different social climate than previous generations. Love has been commercialised (Segrin & Nabi, 2002; Vannini, 2004; Wolfinger, 2003); divorce is acceptable and organised religion has a

reduced role in daily life (Dempsey & de Vaus, 2004). Additionally, there has been an increase in the importance of individual development, success and satisfaction (Coonz, 2004). This has been mirrored with an increase in the belief that love is a prerequisite for marriage (Simpson, Campbell & Berscheid, 1986**).** Possibly as a consequence of these changes, the number of people who choose to get married has been on a steady decline for the past two decades. The most recent data available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that the number of people marrying has reached a record low in recent years, even surpassing the low marriage rates associated with economic depressions (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2003). Australia's decreasing rate of marriage is comparable to other Western countries, with the lowest levels of marriage being in the United Kingdom and the highest levels being in the United States of America (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002). Additionally, the average age of first marriage is also steadily increasing. Twenty years ago the average age of first marriage amongst Australian males and females was 24.6 and 22.4 respectively, whereas the average age today is 31.2 for men and 29.1 for women (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2003).

The declining marriage rate and increasing age of first marriage has been attributed to the popularity of cohabitation. The number of couples who cohabit before marriage has increased dramatically in recent times. In 2003, 75% of couples lived together before marriage, compared to 27% in 1983 and 16% in 1975 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002). These statistics support the idea that cohabitation may not be an alternative to marriage, but a stage in a relationship that precedes marriage (Martin, Specter, Martin & Martin, 2003). However, it is unknown how many couples cohabit on a long-term basis without an intention to eventually marry, or how many couples enter short-term cohabiting relationships.

It has been suggested that, due to parental divorce and the dissolution of the family home, the current generation of young adults will develop more conservative values towards marriage and family life (Tasker, 1992). Although holding conservative values towards marriage increases the likelihood of marrying in young adulthood (Sassler & Goldscheider, 2004), there has not been an increase in the number of people marrying under the age of 25 (ABS, 2003). Despite social changes, marriage is still seen to be a serious lifelong commitment that is qualitatively different from other types of relationships and a more serious relationship compared to cohabiting unions (Cherlin, 2004; Martin, Martin & Martin, 2001).

Attachment Theory

Bowlby and Ainsworth. Attachment theory was developed by John Bowlby (1978; 1980; 1988) to explain the importance of a continuous warm mother-child relationship for psychological well being. This theory is also used to explain the detrimental effects that occur if the mother-child relationship is disrupted by separation or maternal deprivation.

Due to their extreme immaturity at birth, human children rely on the protection and support of a parent for many years. It is proposed that infants engage in attachment behaviours that adults find rewarding, such as smiling or crying when they are anxious. These behaviours are designed to ensure a caregiver remains close to the child so that they can provide the child with support and protection (Bowlby, 1988). To regulate these behaviours, it is proposed that humans have developed an attachment system (Bowlby).

From as early as 2-4 months of age, children form an emotional bond with a single caregiver, and subsequently direct their attachment behaviours towards this person (Mizukami, Kobayashi, Ishii & Iwata, 1990). The person with whom they form this bond is usually their mother. However, this bond is based how familiar and responsive a caregiver is to an infant, and therefore any caregiver can become an attachment figure.

An attachment figure fulfils three important roles for a child called attachment functions. The first of these roles is to provide a *safe haven* for the infant, which involves providing comfort, support and reassurance in times of distress. The second role is *proximity maintenance,* which involves remaining physically close to the infant. The third role is to provide a *secure base,* which children use to engage in non-attachment related behaviours, such as play, that are considered essential for normal, healthy childhood development. Additionally, a behaviour that distinguishes an attachment bond from other social relationships is *separation distress*, which a child experiences if they endure an unexpected or prolonged separation from their caregiver (Hazan & Diamond, 2000).

Drawing upon ethological theory, Bowlby (1988) proposed that this attachment system is akin to biological systems that regulate physiological processes, such as blood pressure and heart rate. When there is a real or perceived threat to proximity maintenance, a human child becomes anxious, which in turn activates the attachment system. The child will then devote all their actions and energy to re-establishing proximity to their attachment figure. When proximity is reattained, the attachment system is deactivated, and children experience feelings of security and love (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall, 1978).

The history of how a caregiver responds to an infant forms the basis of a mental model that outlines the child's expectations of future interactions with the caregiver. This mental model is based on two dimensions. Firstly, the child's expectations of whether a caregiver will be consistently responsive to their calls for support and protection, and secondly, whether the infant believes that they are a person worthy of the caregiver's response (Bowlby, 1973). If a mother consistently responds to her child's attachment needs in a warm and nurturing manner, whilst still allowing the child the freedom to meet their own needs, the child will learn that they are worthy of love and respect. Furthermore, they will learn that their caregiver is available and reliable. Attachment theory is based on a belief that these early life experiences shape individuals' expectations of future relationships, as the mental models are applied to future caregivers (Bowlby, 1988).

Through naturalistic observational studies, Mary Ainsworth identified three different patterns of attachment in children that corresponded with differences in maternal behaviour (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall, 1978). However, naturalistic observation was time consuming and expensive. One of Ainsworth's greatest contributions to attachment theory was the development of the first measure of attachment - the Strange Situation (Ainsworth et al). This research procedure involved separating and reuniting a child with their mother- a scenario designed to elicit attachment behaviours. Based on the child's response to the Strange Situation, children were categorised as secure, anxious/ambivalent or avoidant.

Children who Ainsworth (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978) described as secure cried little and used their mother as a secure base to explore their environment. However, these children also engaged in proximity seeking behaviours, such as turning to their mothers and smiling. If separated from their mother, secure children would become distressed, but

were comforted when they returned. Children described as anxious/ambivalent clung to their mothers and were reluctant to explore or engage in play activities. When separated from their mother, they were unable to sooth themselves and were not able to be comforted upon her return. Children who Ainsworth described as avoidant did not engage in proximity seeking behaviours. They focused their attention on the external environment and were somewhat unperturbed by their mother leaving the room.

Adult Attachment

The bond between mother and child and the bond between adult romantic partners are both characterised by the defining features of attachment relationships (proximity maintenance, safe haven, separation distress and secure base; Fraley & Davis, 1997; Hazan & Zeifman, 1994). Furthermore, the intimate behaviours associated with these relationships, such as mutual gazing, cuddling, nuzzling, sucking, kissing and prolonged bodily contact, are reserved almost exclusively to these two types of relationships.

Hazan and Shaver (1987) were the first researchers to empirically test the theory that romantic love can be conceptualised as an attachment process. In their landmark study, Hazan and Shaver applied Ainsworth's (1978) three category system of attachment to adults. They found that the mental models formed as a child affected the way romantic love was experienced in adulthood. Understanding romantic love as an attachment process improved upon previous theories of love as it explained in a single conceptual framework the processes of falling in love, loneliness and grief. Furthermore, attachment theory explained differences in healthy and unhealthy forms of love, and how they developed (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Hazan and Shaver (1987) created three descriptions of adults that characterise Ainsworth's secure, avoidant and anxious/ambivalent attachment styles. Participants' attachment style was measured by asking them to indicate the description they best identified with. A significant relationship was found between the attachment style that participants identified with and their attachment history. Furthermore, Hazan and Shaver also found that the distribution of participants between attachment groups was similar to the distribution found in infants. A majority of participants were classified as being securely attached (56%), with avoidant attachment being the next most common style (25%). The least common attachment style was anxious/ambivalent (19%).

Participants categorised as secure had the most positive experiences of love and found their relationship experiences to be very happy, friendly and trusting. Secure individuals also held different expectations and beliefs about love. They indicated that romantic feelings in relationships wax and wane, but also recognised intense romantic feelings, characteristic of the beginnings of relationships, are capable of returning. Participants categorised as avoidant were characterised by their fear of intimacy, emotional extremes and jealousy. They reported that they found it hard to find a person they could fall in love with, and believed that romantic love fades. Furthermore, they were skeptical that "head over heels" love existed in real life. Participants categorised as anxious/ambivalent also found their experiences of love took them on a ride of emotional extremes. They experienced strong sexual attraction towards their partner and a strong desire to increase intimacy and have their feelings reciprocated. However, at the same time this group experienced high levels of jealousy and an obsessive preoccupation with their relationships. They frequently fell in love, but distinguished this from finding true love.

Participants with insecure attachment styles (avoidant and anxious/ambivalent) were found to have shorter relationships, and if married, their marriages were more likely to end in divorce (Hazan and Shaver, 1987). Hazan and Shaver concluded that the differences in the experience of love described by participants in each attachment category highlighted that there were three different styles of love, rather than three different experiences of love on a continuum.

Hazan and Shaver (1987) found support for Bowlby's theory that attachment models characterise the human experience into adulthood. However, their study also provides an insight into the differing impact of attachment at each stage in life. Hazan and Shaver found that young avoidant participants viewed their parents in a more positive light than older avoidant participants. This indicates that the strength of mental models, in shaping how an individual perceives the world, may vary with age. Further support for this comes from the finding that the impact of early childhood experiences on romantic relationships diminishes with relationship experience (Carnelley & Janoff-Bulman, 1992).

The Four Category Model of Adult Attachment

The single item measure of adult attachment developed by Hazan and Shaver (1987) had a number of psychometric concerns. The descriptions of each attachment style had a number of different components. It could not be ascertained which components respondents identified with or how strongly they identified with each attachment category. A popular alternate measure of adult attachment was developed by Main - the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI; George, Kaplan & Main 1985, Brennan, Clark & Shaver, 1998). Hazan and Shaver's and Main's measures of attachment differed in a number of ways. Hazan and

Shaver used self report measures, whereas Main categorised people into different attachment categories based on the participants' response in a semi-structured interview. However, the most significant difference was that, whilst Hazan and Shaver focused on the way adults formed romantic relationships, Main's AAI continued to explore adults' perceptions of their childhood relationship with their parents. Both measures categorised individuals into Ainsworth's three attachment categories.

These two different measures had convergent validity for their description of secure and anxious/ambivalent individuals (Brennan, Clark & Shaver, 1998). However, there was some discrepancy in the description of avoidance. The individuals Hazan and Shaver (1987) categorised as avoidant showed extreme discomfort with becoming close to another person. However, individuals categorised as avoidant through the AAI were characterised by a dismissive attitude to the importance of intimate relationships.

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) argued that these discrepancies revealed the presence of a fourth attachment category. Bowlby (1973) had theorised that mental models were shaped by an individual's perception of self and other. Bartholomew and Horowitz used these two dimensions to explain theoretical differences between secure individuals, these being defined as having a positive model of self and other. Preoccupied individuals had been previously labelled as anxious/ambivalent in earlier models, this attachment style being defined by a negative model of self and a positive model of others. In Bartholomew and Horowitz's model, someone who is secure can be described as having a warm approach to relationships and confidence in their own self-worth. This means they are not reliant on others for approval. Someone who is preoccupied in this model is characterised by low self-esteem. Like anxious/ambivalent individuals, their dependency on others for validation

makes them prone to extreme jealously and prone to forming an obsessive preoccupation with their partner. The emotional anguish associated with preoccupied individuals experience of love can be likened to physical pain (Feeney, 2005).

Using the dimensions of self and other, Bartholomew and Horowitz divided participants previously labelled as avoidant into two categories – dismissing, as defined by a positive model of self and a negative model of other, and fearful, as defined by a negative model of both self and other. In this model of attachment, someone who is dismissing emphasises the importance of individual freedoms and diminishes the importance of intimate relationships. Those who are classified as fearful in this model are similar to those who are preoccupied, in that they have a strong desire for intimacy. However, the fearful group avoid intimacy due to fear of rejection and a mistrust of others. Bartholomew and Horowitz found that the differences between each of the attachment categories were theoretically meaningful. A pictorial representation of this model can be seen in Figure 1. It has been found that when using this model most of the population is classified as secure (46.75%). The next most common attachment group was fearful (20.78%), and then dismissing (18.18%). The fewest people were classified as preoccupied (14.29%; Bartholomew & Horowitz).

Positive Image of Other
(Low Avoidance)

PREOCCUPIED   SECURE

Negative Image of Self _____ Positive Image of Self
(High Anxiety)   (Low Anxiety)

FEARFUL   DISMISSING

Negative Image of Other
(High Avoidance)
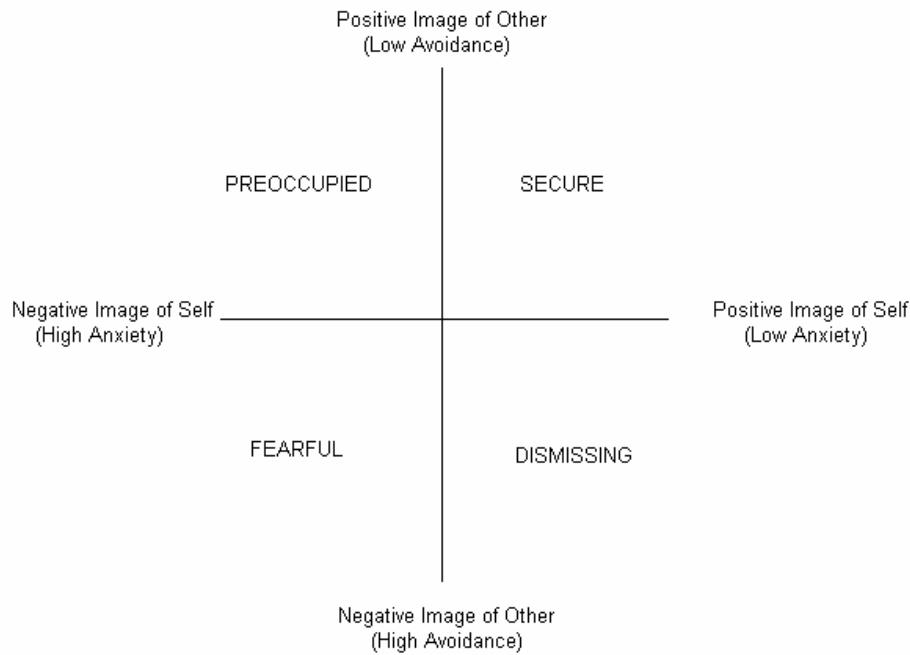
Figure 1. Bartholomew and Horowitz's Four Category Model of Attachment

Dimensions of Attachment

    The two dimensions in Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) model of attachment

represent expectations about worthiness of self and expectations about the responsiveness of

others. Although these dimensions form a Cartesian plane that separates the four different

attachment groups, they are also continuous dimensions that can be assessed separately.

Examining the dimensions as continuous variables, rather than as groups, allows the

investigation of variability in models of self and other. It also allows attachment to be

investigated with more powerful statistical tools.

    The dimensions of self and other have also been labelled as anxiety and avoidance

respectively (Brennan, Clark & Shaver, 1998). The dimension of anxiety represent a

continuum of the degree to which someone believes they are lovable and the degree to which

they are dependent upon approval in romantic relationships. That is, a person with low levels of anxiety also has a strong internal belief of their own self-worth and do not need reassurance from others. The dimension of avoidance represents the degree to which someone is open to intimacy and the degree to which they value intimate relationships.

Attachment and Marriage

Research into the impact of attachment styles on romantic relationships has primarily focused on how internal mental models affect mate selection (Hazan & Diamond, 20000; Tolmacz, Goldzweig & Guttman, 2004) and relationship quality (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Treboux, Crowell & Waters, 2004). More recently, the transfer of attachment to romantic partners has been investigated (Feeney, 2004). It is surprising that the relationship between attachment, the types of relationships people form and the decision to marry has not been previously investigated.

Relevant to the present research on young adults' motivation to marry are the seemingly positive consequences of secure attachment on romantic relationships. As mentioned earlier, Hazan and Shaver (1987) found that secure attachment was associated with longer relationships that were less likely to end in divorce. These couples also had a more positive experience of romantic relationships. Commitment, care giving and relationship satisfaction are also associated with secure attachment (Simpson, 1990). Unsurprisingly, people prefer partners who are securely attached (Latty-Mann & Davis, 1996).

The purpose of internal mental models is to help individuals protect their emotional and physical wellbeing. Preoccupied individuals crave intimacy with a romantic partner and tend

to feel dissatisfied with the levels of intimacy they achieve in their relationships. Preoccupied individuals' mental models may have adapted to help prevent themselves from experiencing further pain. This explains the finding that these people are less optimistic about their future relationships (Carneley & Janoff-Bulman, 1992).

Love has been found to be a prerequisite for marriage. As research suggests that love is experienced differently by those with different attachment styles, it possible that there is a difference across attachment styles in what is considered to be essential for marriage.

Mating Strategy and Attachment

Recently, researchers have begun to examine the relationship between attachment and mating strategy. Rather than viewing insecure attachments as a malfunction in the attachment system, Buss and Greiling (1999) propose that differences in attachment are adaptive individual differences that reflect, or at least are associated with, differences in mating strategy. This view combines evolutionary and developmental psychology. The link between attachment and reproduction strategies has been supported by prominent attachment researchers (Hazan & Diamond 2000; Kirkpatrick, 1998, 1999; Schachner & Shaver, 2002, 2004).

Kirkpatrick (1998) suggested that Bowlby's proposed dimension of other/avoidance actually measures long-term/short-term mating strategy. Long-term strategies involve long term monogamous pair bonds, where parents place a great investment in their relationship and in the parenting of their offspring. Conversely, short-term strategies involve having a high number of sexual partners, without investing in an ongoing relationship with them.

Short-term mating strategies are also associated with a reduced investment in offspring, at least for the father. Both mating strategies have distinct advantages and disadvantages, and it is hypothesised that people will adopt the reproduction strategy that provides them with the highest chance of successfully reproducing and raising offspring, given local conditions. It is consistent with attachment theory that the reproductive strategy a person pursues is determined by early childhood experiences with their caregivers (Chilsom, 1996, cited in Kirkpatrick, 1998).

A number of studies have shown support for the theory that avoidance represents a dimension of mating strategy. High levels of avoidance have been associated with frequently fantasising about having sex with someone other than a current partner, expecting to have multiple partners, having one night stands and by ideally wanting a greater number of sexual partners (Kirkpatrick, 1998). Those with high levels of avoidance show no need to have an intimate attachment with someone to enjoy having sex with them and tend to believe that sex without love is acceptable (Kirkpatrick). This is also indicated by the finding that those high in avoidance prefer oral and anal sex over other more emotionally intimate forms of sexual contact (Kirkpatrick).

Research has also shown that the unrestricted sexual behaviour of avoidant individuals cannot be explained by a higher sex drive (Schachner & Shaver, 2002). These behaviours are consistent with a short-term mating strategy and are consistent with the findings of Shaver and Brennan (1992) that people who are avoidant tend to be uninterested in long-term committed relationships.

Conversely, securely attached individuals who have low levels of avoidance participate in sexual behaviour that is consistent with a long-term mating strategy. Securely attached individuals are less likely to be involved in one night stands; are less likely to have sex with a partner outside of an established romantic relationship; and hold the belief that sex should be restricted to committed romantic relationships (Brennan & Shaver 1995; Simpson & Gangestad, 1991). Additionally, anxious/ambivalent women who are characterised by low levels of avoidance tend to form more stable relationships, despite their low levels of relationship satisfaction (Kirkpatrik & Davis, 1994).

Research into anxiety and sexual behaviour has found that highly anxious individuals engage in sexual relations with the hope of increasing emotional intimacy and commitment in their relationship, and in turn, allay anxieties about their relationship (Schachner & Shaver, 2004). Because of the intense fear of losing their partner, anxious women have been found to be more likely to engage in consensual unwanted sexual experiences because they fear their relationship will end if they decline the partner's sexual advances (Gentzler & Kerns, 2004; Impett & Peplau, 2002). Research has also shown that anxious individuals find sex less enjoyable than their securely attached peers. They also report previous sexual experiences to have caused them to become upset and create high levels of distress (Tracy, Shaver, Albino & Cooper, 2003). In summary, this research indicates that highly anxious individuals tend to use sex as a mechanism for improving their relationships and to quash their fears of abandonment and rejection, rather than as an activity from which to derive physical enjoyment.

Other Factors Related to Early Marriage

The question of why marriage rates are declining has initiated research both from psychological and sociological perspectives. The extended period of parental dependence as a result of prolonged tertiary education; disillusion with the institution of marriage; and acceptance of cohabitation are societal trends that have been attributed to causing this change (Coontz, 2004; Sassler & Goldscheider, 2004; McLaughlin, Lichter & Johnston, 1993).

From a psychological perspective there are a number of relationship characteristics that are associated with a successful marriage, including commitment and relationship satisfaction (Stanley, Markman & Whitton, 2002). Although the effect of these in predicting marriage has not been examined, it is expected that a lack of these factors decrease an individual's preference for marriage. This study will examine whether these relationship factors impact upon early marriage.

The Present Study

Research to date has focused on the question of who delays marriage and for what reasons. For the past decade the average age of first marriage has been rising, and although most people intend to marry one day (Martin, Specter, Martin & Martin, 2003), the number of people who do eventually marry is declining (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002). The current study is unique in that it placed an emphasis on identifying who marries early, relative to their peers.

Although attachment theory has been found to have a significant impact on the type of mating strategy an individual adopts, much of the research in this area has focused on sexual

behaviour. The current research is the first to examine whether attachment style is related to the decision to marry, cohabit or remain in a dating relationship.

It has consistently been found that attachment style is related to the quality of a married couple's relationship and the likelihood of divorce (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). However, it has not been previously examined whether the reasons for which people initially marry impact on the success of a marriage. This study has set up the basis for this research and examines whether there is a difference across attachment styles in the reasons people marry and the expectations they hold about marriage. This study also assessed the strength of attachment in predicting who marries young, in contrast with traditional sociological and psychological predictors of marriage.

Hypotheses

Specifically, as theory suggests that those who are low in avoidance adopt long-term mating strategies, it was hypothesised that participants with low levels of avoidance would ideally marry at a younger age than those high in avoidance. The relationship between anxiety and the ideal age of first marriage was explored; however, no prediction was made about this relationship. Similarly, it was hypothesised that participants low in avoidance would have a stronger desire to marry than those high in avoidance. The relationship between anxiety and the desire to marry was also explored, however, no prediction was made about this relationship.

To further explore the relationship between attachment and the types of relationships people form, the levels of avoidance and anxiety of participants in alternative relationships

were examined. As marriage is usually seen as a lifelong monogamous relationship (Cherlin, 2004; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Martin, Martin & Martin, 2001), this study assumed that it is equivalent with a long-term mating strategy, and that dating and cohabiting relationships represent the use of a shorter-term mating strategy. It was hypothesised that those who are engaged or married would have lower levels of avoidance than participants who are cohabiting or dating. No direct hypotheses were made about patterns in anxiety across these different relationships. As it was expected that relationship length would impact upon the type of relationship participants were currently in, relationship length was controlled for in this hypothesis.

It has been repeatedly found that insecure attachment styles have a negative impact on marriage (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Brennan & Shaver, 1995). This study is the first to examine whether there are differences across attachment groups in what is perceived as a good reason to marry and how marriage is expected to change participants' lives. It was hypothesised that participants with high levels of anxiety (preoccupied and fearful) would use (or would like to use) marriage as a mechanism to create greater levels of intimacy and commitment in their relationships.

Because it is hypothesised that anxious participants would want to marry to improve their relationship, it is predicted that they will expect marriage to improve their lives more than other participants. These last two hypotheses examine attachment categories, rather than dimensions, to better explore the interaction between anxiety and avoidance, and to allow for comparison with previous research.

Finally, the strength of attachment style as a predictor of marriage was assessed in relation to sociological and psychological predictors of marriage. These predictors included religious importance, education, relationship satisfaction, commitment, attitudes towards marriage and relationship length.

Method

Participants

Three hundred and forty-one young adults aged between 18-25 years, currently involved in heterosexual relationships, participated in this study. The majority of the sample were female (80.94%), with a mean age of 21.96 years (*sd*=2.18, *n*=276). The average age of males (19.06%) was 22.06 years (*sd*=2.34, *n*=65). The majority of participants were born in Australia (52.50%, *n*=179), and lived in Australia (64.20%, *n*=218) at the time the questionnaire was completed. Only 2.50% (*n*=8) of those who completed the questionnaire were not currently living in a Western country. In regard to relationship status, 137 (40.17%) of the participants classified themselves as dating their current partner, 75 (22.00%) as cohabiting but not engaged, 74 (21.70%) as engaged (and also cohabiting) and 55 (16.13%) as married. The average length of participants' current relationships was 3.28 years (*sd*=2.05), however, their current relationship had to be a minimum of one year to participate in the study. A majority of the participants had completed some tertiary education with 34 (10.00%) having completed a postgraduate qualification, 131(36.70%) having completed a bachelor degree, and 57 (16.70%) having completing a trade school qualification or TAFE diploma. Of those participants without tertiary education, most had completed secondary education 111 (32.60%), however 14 (4.10%) had not. It should be noted that 26 participants had one child at the time of assessment.

Materials

Participants were asked to complete a number of demographic questions in regard to their age, gender, current relationship, religion and education, in addition to the following measures:

Ideal Age for First Marriage. A single item, "What do you think is the ideal age (in years) for a first marriage for someone of your sex?" was used to assess ideal age for first marriage for males and females. Responses had to be integers.

Experiences in Close Relationships Questionnaire Revised (ECR-R; Fraley, Waller & Brennan, 2000). The ECR-R is a 36-item self-report attachment measure that is derived from an item response theory analysis of items previously developed to assess attachment The measure is comprised of two subscales, avoidance and anxiety, that each consist of 18-items. Responses to items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale from 1= "strongly disagree" to 7= "strongly agree". Fourteen items were reverse coded. Examples of avoidance items included, "I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down" and "I find it easy to depend on romantic partners" (reverse scored). Examples of anxiety items included, "I am afraid that I will lose my partner's love" and "I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him/her". The ECR-R has shown high test-retest reliability over a six week period (*r=.86)* and strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha found to be above .93 for both subscales (Sibley & Liu, 2004).

Desire to Marry. Participants' motivation to marry was assessed with three items designed for this study. Participants responded to the questions "How much do you want to get married?" and "How likely is it that you will get married" on 6-point Likert scales, with 1= "not at all/I will not get married", to 6= "I am already married". The third item used to assess motivation to marry asked

participants to indicate, on a 7-point Likert scale, how desirable four types of relationships were to them (single and un-partnered, dating, cohabiting and married) from 1= "not at all desirable" to 7= "very desirable". This item was designed to ensure that participants considered the desirability of marriage in the context of alternative relationships. However, only their response in regard to the desirability of marriage was used in the analysis. This is important, as previous research has indicated that preference for marriage is overestimated when alternative relationships are not considered (Sassler & Schoen, 1999). Higher scores on these items indicated a greater motivation to marry.

Perceived Benefits of Marriage (Bulcroft & Bulcroft, 1993). This 8-item measure of expectations of marriage is designed to assess how participants expect their life to change if they were to marry. The measure consists of two subscales, economic and social/emotional benefits of marriage. Participants indicated on a 5-point Likert scale how they expected aspects of their life to change if they were married. Low scores indicated being worse off and high scores indicated being better off. The economic subscale consists of three items, including "living standard" and "economic security" and Cronbach's alpha is reported to be .84. The emotional/social subscale consists of the remaining five items, including "emotional security" and "overall happiness", and Cronbach's alpha has been reported to be .77. It should be noted that this measure was only answered by participants who were not married. Adaptations of this measure that do not use subscales have also found this measure to be reliable (Cronbach's alpha= .83; Sassler & Schoen, 1999). It should be noted that this measure was only answered by participants who were not married.

Reasons for Marriage. This measure was designed for this study to assess participants' endorsement of 13 different reasons for entering a marriage. Responses are measured on 7-point Likert scale, ranging from "no reason" to "very strong reason". The listed reasons for entering

marriage are based on the top five reasons identified for entering marriage by the State of the Nation Survey (Relationships Australia, 1998).

The Commitment Inventory (Stanley & Markman, 1992). A short version of this measure was used to assess the commitment levels of participants. Responses to 22 items from the full scale, such as "I want this relationship to stay strong no matter what rough times we encounter" and "I may not want to be with my partner in a few years from now" (reversed scored) were measured on a 7-point Likert scale, from 1="strongly disagree" to 7="strongly agree". Cronbach's alpha for the short version of this scale has been found to be .90 (Dougall, 1998).

Relationship Satisfaction Scale (Hendricks, 1988). This scale consists of 7-items such as "How well does your partner meet your needs?" and "How much to you love your partner?." These items are designed to assess how satisfied participants are with their partner and relationship. Responses were measured on a 5-point scale specific to each question with higher responses indicating greater levels of relationship satisfaction. Two items in this measure were reverse scored. Cronbach's alpha for this scale is reported to range from .79 to .86 (Hendricks, 1988; Cramer, 2003)

Acceptance of Cohabitation (Sassler & Goldscheider, 2004). A single item, "It's alright for an unmarried couple to live together even if they have no interest in considering marriage" was used to assess participants' general acceptance of cohabitation. Responses to this item are measured on a 7-point Likert scale from 1= "no agreement" to 7= "strong agreement".

Optimism Towards Marriage (Carnelley & Janoff-Bulman, 1992). Two items that formed a sub-scale assessing optimism towards marriage in Carnelley and Janoff-Bulman's Optimism About Future Relationships measure were used in this study. The items were, "How likely is it that you

will have a successful marriage?", and, "How likely is it that you will get divorced sometime in your life?" (reverse scored). These items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1= "not at all", and 5= "extremely", and Cronbach's alpha is reported to be .68 for the two items (Carnelley & Janoff-Bulman, 1992).

Procedure

Participants were recruited though personal contact with the researcher and announcements advertising the study in general discussion internet forums. Participants were provided with a link to the online questionnaire and completed it using the Surveyor Data Collection Program. The questionnaire took approximately 40 minutes to complete. Data was retained for participants who did not complete the questionnaire; however, the data from unfinished measures was not used in this analysis. Usable data was collected from 50.14% of the 680 participants who accessed the online questionnaire.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Participants' data was transferred from Surveyor to SPSS for Windows statistical package, version 13.0. The responses of 339 participants who had not completed a sufficient amount to the questionnaire to be included in the research were removed from that data set. A further 18 were removed from the sample due to inconsistent responses and an obvious use of response sets. Seventeen respondents who were engaged but not living together, were removed from the analysis. Ideally these participants would be examined as a separate group, however, due to the small group

size, it would not have been possible to perform meaningful statistical analyses. Therefore, it is important to note that all the engaged participants in this study also cohabit with their partner. Three participants who had entered a marriage, but were no longer married were removed from the sample as there were too few participants to perform meaningful statistical analyses.

The analyses performed in the present study are based on the remaining 341 participants. Scale and subscale scores for the measures of avoidance, anxiety, satisfaction, commitment, expectations of marriage, acceptance of cohabitation and marriage optimism were calculated using their authors' instructions. As responses to each item were compulsory for continued participation in the questionnaire, there were no missing responses in the data.

Cluster Analysis. A cluster analysis, based on participants' avoidance and anxiety scores, was used to categorise participants into attachment groups. This has been done previously by Brennan, Clark & Shaver (1998) and each attachment category had mean levels of avoidance and anxiety similar to those found by these researchers. However, it is interesting to note that the proportion of preoccupied participants is higher than what is found in previous research. The mean and standard deviation avoidance and anxiety scores for each attachment category can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1.

Mean and Standard Deviation Avoidance and Anxiety Scores across Attachment Types

	Secure		Preoccupied		Dismissing		Fearful	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Avoidance	27.36	7.25	35.79	7.14	58.79	11.89	63.30	12.23
Anxiety	30.80	8.66	62.79	10.84	49.40	8.47	84.50	11.52
N	132		71		42		30	

Desire to marry was calculated using three single questions in the data - two that assessed the desire to marry and a third that assessed preference of marriage against alternative relationships. As items were assessed on different scales, z-scores were created, and the sum of participant's z-scores for these items created their total motivation to marry score.

Exploring Reasons to Marry. To identify the different reasons for which people marry, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted using the 13 Reasons for Marriage items. A maximum-likelihood factor analysis, with an oblique (oblimin) rotation was chosen as the factors were expected to be correlated. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was high (.81), and Bartlettt's test of Sphericity was significant ($\chi^2(78)=1494.21$, $p<.001$), indicating that the data was suitable for factor analyses. The significance level for factor loadings was .40.

Three factors had eigenvalues greater than one, and together they accounted for 55.30% of the variance in the data. This solution approached simple structure and no items loaded significantly on different factors. Two and four factor solutions were compared with this three factor solution and the larger solution was rejected, as two factors contained only two items and the smaller solution was rejected because it was more difficult to interpret. A summary of the results of the three factor solution is presented in Table 2. The three factors were interpreted as symbolism, relationship enhancement and family creation, and sub-scales were created by summing participants' scores on each factor.

Table 2

Factor Loadings, Eigenvalues and Percentages of Variance Explained for the Three Reasons to Marry

Factors and Items	1	2
F1: Family Creation		
Security for children	.98	
Dual responsibility for children	.88	
To raise children in a conventional home	.57	
F2: Relationship Enhancement		
You and your partner can't break up		.76
To be assured that your partner really loves you		.51
To prevent your partner from dating others		.43
To feel loved		.87
To improve your relationship		.86
F3: Symbolism		
To show commitment		
To signify desire that you will be together forever		
To signify you and your partner are one		
Because you and your partner are in love		
To signify lifelong commitment		
Eigenvalues	4.57	2.31
% of variance explained	35.13	17.77

Transforming Variables.   The anxiety and avoidance variables were found to be significantly positively skewed. A log transformation was performed, which removed the excessive skewness and left the variables normally distributed, as recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001). Outliers were defined in this study to be values that were more than three standard deviations above the mean; however, no cases in this study met this criterion.

Statistical Description of Measures. The mean, standard deviations and internal consistencies of each scale used in this thesis can be seen in Table 3.

Main Analysis

Avoidance and Anxiety as Predictors of Ideal Marriage Age. To examine whether avoidance and anxiety were predictors of ideal marriage age, the intercorrelations between these variables were examined and can be seen in Table 4. No significant relationship was found between anxiety and ideal marriage age, and although there was a significant relationship between avoidance and ideal age to marry, it was too weak to be of any consequence.

Table 3

Description and Internal Reliability of the Main Measures Used

Measure	M	SD	Theoretical Range	Cronbach's Alpha
Anxiety*	48.69	20.78	18-126	.93
Avoidance*	38.79	16.46	18-126	.92
Desire to marry	-.07	2.65	-9-9	.86
Ideal marriage age	25.12	2.56	0-100	-
Enhancement as a reason to marry	12.20	6.53	5-35	.77
Symbolism as a reason to marry	29.50	6.40	5-35	.84
Family as a reason to marry	13.93	5.64	3-21	.85
Economic benefits	10.59	2.27	3-15	.73
Emotional/Social benefits	17.02	3.03	5-25	.75
Acceptance of cohabitation	5.07	1.84	1-7	-
Marriage optimism	8.42	1.45	2-10	.67
Commitment	113.65	17.81	18-396	.86
Relationship satisfaction	29.76	4.02	7-35	.85

*Untransformed scores are seen in this table.

Table 4

Correlations between Avoidance, Anxiety and Ideal Marriage Age

	Avoidance	Anxiety	Ideal Age
Avoidance	-		
Anxiety	*.60 **￰*	-	
Ideal Age	*.11**	*.05*	-

*n= 285, *p<0.05, **p<.01*

To further investigate the ideal age of first marriage in the sample, the mean and median for this variable was examined. It was found that the majority of both males and females indicated that they would ideally be married before they turn 26 (Male, *median=25, mean=25.95, sd=1.19, n=67*; Female, *median=25, mean=24.93, sd=1.14, n=290).*

Avoidance and Anxiety as Predictors of Desire to Marry. To examine whether there is a relationship between attachment and desire to marry, the intercorrelations between these variables were examined and can be seen in Table 5. These correlations provided justification to further explore the relationship between avoidance, anxiety and the desire to marry. It should be noted that married participants were excluded from this analysis as they have already fulfilled any desire they had to marry.

Table 5

Correlations between Desire to Marry, Avoidance and Anxiety.

	Avoidance	Anxiety	Motivation to Marry
Avoidance	-		
Anxiety	*.60***	-	
Motivation to Marry	*-.41***	*-.22***	-

n= 285,**p<0.01

A standard multiple regression was performed to assess how much of the variance in desire to marry is accounted for by attachment. It was found that attachment predicted 17.00% of the variance in desire to marry ($F_{(2,272)}$=27.69, *p*<.001). T-tests revealed that avoidance was a stronger predictor (*standardised ß*=-.43, *t*=-6.24, *p*<.001*)* and the variance accounted for by anxiety was not significant (*standardised ß*=.04, *t*=.52, *p*=.60*)*.

Anxiety and Avoidance in Different Relationships. To test the hypothesis that those who are engaged or married at a young age would have lower levels of avoidance than those who are cohabiting and dating, a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was conducted. The dimensions of attachment (anxiety and avoidance) were the dependent variables, relationships status (dating, cohabiting, engaged and married) as the independent variables. Relationship length was included in the analysis as a covariate. The mean and standard deviation of avoidance and anxiety scores for each type of relationship can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6.

Untransformed Mean Avoidance, Anxiety for each Relationship Type

	Dating		Cohabiting		Engaged		Married	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Avoidance	43.73	17.30	38.83	14.10	31.10	13.28	37.35	15.62
Anxiety	55.73	20.02	51.33	21.46	37.49	16.33	42.64	19.31
Relationship Length	2.28	1.42	2.99	1.67	4.04	2.05	5.13	2.23
n=	137		75		74		55	

The MANCOVA indicated that relationship length did not have a significant impact on the relationship between the dimensions of attachment and the type of relationship (*Wilks*=.99, $F(2,335)$=.49, p=.61). However, after adjusting for relationship length, there was a significant difference in the attachment style of those in different types of relationships (*Wilks*=.88, $F(6,670)$=7.59, $p<.001$, η^2=.06). Univariate testes revealed that both avoidance and anxiety scores differ significantly across relationship types (Avoidance, $F(3,336)$=9.45, $p<.001$, η^2=.08; Anxiety, $F(3,336)$=13.35, $p<.001$, η^2=.11).

Scheffe post hoc multiple comparisons revealed that, after adjusting for relationship length, engaged participants had significantly lower levels of avoidance than participants in other relationships (*p*<.05). No significant difference was found between the levels of avoidance of participants in other relationships. In regard to anxiety, it was found that there was no difference between married and engaged participants, nor between dating and cohabiting participants (*p*<.05). However, these two groups differed from each other, with those who have formalized their relationships through marriage having significantly lower levels of anxiety.

Why Get Married? Exploring "Good Reasons" to Marry Across Attachment Categories.
To examine whether there were differences between what attachment groups endorsed as
"good reasons" to marry, a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was conducted
with enhancement, symbolic, and family reasons as dependent variables and attachment
category as an independent variable. Married participants were not included in this analysis,
as it was expected that what they judge as good reasons to marry would be shaped by their
experience of marriage, which none of the other participants have had. The means and
standard deviations of endorsement of the three different reasons for marriage across
attachment can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7.

The Mean and Standard Deviation Enhancement, Symbolic and Family Scores across

Attachment Categories

	Secure		Preoccupied		Dismissing		Fearful	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Enhancement	10.61	6.17	14.37	7.06	10.64	4.41	12.91	5.23
Symbolic	29.79	7.35	30.06	4.77	26.50	7.16	29.33	5.53
Family	12.75	6.04	15.01	4.99	14.74	5.34	12.36	6.05
n =	112		73		50		33	

The MANOVA indicated that there was a significant difference in the reasons each attachment
category gave as good reasons to get married (*Pillai's Trace*=.15, $F(9,750)$=4.41 $p<.001$, η^2=.05).
Univariate tests revealed that there was a significant difference in the way attachment categories
endorsed the three reasons to marry (*Relationships enhancement,* $F(3,250)$=6.02, $p<.001$, η^2=.07;

Symbolic, (3,250)=3.27, *p*<.05, η^2=.04; *Family, F*(3,250)=2.81, *p*<.05, η^2=.03). The means reveal a trend in the data for preoccupied participants to rate all reasons more strongly than other attachment groups. Scheffe post hoc multiple comparisons were calculated at the .05 level of significance. These revealed that preoccupied participants tended to perceive relationship enhancement reasons as significantly stronger reasons than secure and dismissing individuals; however there was no significant difference between other attachment types. Preoccupied participants viewed symbolic reasons as significantly better reasons to marry than dismissing participants however there was no difference between the other attachment types. Lastly, differences in family reasons were investigated, but it was found that Scheffe post hoc multiple comparisons were not sensitive enough to detect a difference in the endorsement of family reasons. As the univariate tests detected a difference further post hoc tests were conducted. LSD multiple comparisons revealed that preoccupied participants viewed family as a significantly better reason to marry than secure participants (*p*<.05*)*, however, there was no difference between other attachment types.

How Will Marriage Change My Life? Exploring Expectations of Marriage Benefits Across Attachment Categories. A one-way MANOVA was conducted to see if there was a difference in the expected benefits of marriage across attachment types. Again, married participants were excluded from this analysis, as they already know how marriage has changed their life. The mean expected benefits of marriage for each attachment category are seen in Table 8.

Table 8.

The Mean and Standard Deviations of Marriage Benefits Across Attachment Types

Expected Benefit	Secure		Preoccupied		Dismissing		Fearful	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Financial	10.81	2.26	10.74	2.25	10.24	2.54	10.00	1.75
Emotional/Social	17.36	3.10	17.04	2.44	16.39	3.84	16.77	2.52
N=	100		70		46		26	

The analysis found no significant difference in each attachment category's expectations of how marriage will improve their life (*Pillai's Trace=*.03, *F(6,478)=*.99*, p=*.43*, partial η^2=.01)*, although the mean scores indicated that there was a weak overall trend for those with low levels of avoidance (secure and preoccupied attachment) to believe that marriage would cause a greater improvement to their life.

What Best Predicts Early Marriage? The strength of attachment dimensions, compared to traditional indicators of marriage, was investigated. A standard discriminate function analysis was performed using nine predictors of membership in three relationship groups. A total of 174 participants met the criteria to be included in this analysis. The nine predictors were the two dimensions of attachment - avoidance and anxiety, two measures of marriage attitudes -marriage ideology and optimism towards marriage, three measures of relationship characteristics - commitment, satisfaction and relationship length, and finally, two sociocultural measures - education and religious importance. The three groups were cohabiting, engaged and cohabiting, and those who were married. Married and engaged participants were examined separately, as significant differences between these participants had been found previously in the study. Dating participants were

excluded from the analysis, so as to focus on the differences between those currently in marriage-like relationships.

Two significant functions were calculated that showed significant differences between the groups. The first function (χ^2(16)=76.83, *p<.001*) accounted for 82.1% of the between group variability and maximally separated married from cohabiting participants. After the removal of the first function, there was still a significant difference between the groups (χ^2 (7)=15.47, *p<.05*) which accounted 17.9% of the between group variability. The second function maximally separated those who are engaged from those who are cohabiting or married.

The correlations between predictor variables and discriminate function suggested that relationship length, followed by commitment, best distinguishing those who marry from those who choose to cohabit, with those are in enduring committed relationships being more likely to marry. Low levels of avoidance were found to best distinguish engaged participants from those who were married or cohabiting. These correlations can be seen below in Table 9.

Table 9.

Standardised Canonical Discriminate Function Coefficients

Predictor	Function 1	Function 2
Avoidance	.07	.66
Anxiety	-.27	.36
Commitment	.61	-.10
Satisfaction	-.12	.28
Relationship Length	.67	.08
Marriage Optimism	-.01	-.17
Acceptance of Cohabitation	-.13	.18
Religious Importance	.57	.52
Education	.14	-.01

Overall, the discriminate function successfully predicted relationship status in 62.1% of cases. Across each relationship status, 69.4% of cohabiting individuals were correctly identified as cohabiting, 47.5% were correctly identified as engaged, and 70.6% were correctly identified as married. This indicated that those who are engaged are most difficult to distinguish, which is further supported by the finding that, of the engaged participants who were incorrectly classified, exactly half were identified as married and half as cohabiting.

To further examine the role of commitment in distinguishing between those who were dating and those who were married, a post-hoc correlation was calculated to gain an insight into whether marriage caused increased commitment, or whether those who were marrying were more committed to their relationships. The correlation between commitment and how soon (in years) currently

unmarried participants could see themselves marrying their partner was calculated. It was found that the more committed a person was to their relationship, the sooner they believed that they would marry their partner ($r=-.49$, $p<.01$). This suggests that those who are more committed to their relationship are more likely to marry early.

Discussion

Aims Reviewed

This study aimed to investigate how attachment impacts upon the relationships young adults form and their attitudes towards marriage. No evidence was found to link attachment with what participants perceived to be an ideal age to marry. However, the hypothesis, that low levels of avoidance would be associated with an increased desire to marry, was supported. This finding supports previous research that theoretically argued that avoidance represented mating strategy (Buss & Greiling, 1999; Kirkpatrick, 1998). This study also aimed to investigate the relationship between anxiety and the desire to marry, however, no relationship was found.

The present study aimed to investigate how attachment impacted upon the relationships people formed once the length of relationship was controlled for. The hypothesis, that those who were married or engaged would have lower levels of avoidance than those who were cohabiting or dating, was partially supported. It was found that engaged participants had significantly lower levels of avoidance than cohabiting or dating participants. However, no difference was found between the other attachment groups. In exploring the relationship between anxiety and the types of relationships people form, it was found that there was no difference in the anxiety levels of those who were

married or engaged. There was also no difference between the anxiety levels of those who were dating and cohabiting. However, it was found that those who were engaged and married, and those who were cohabiting and dating, differed from each other, with those who have formalised their relationships through marriage having significantly lower levels of anxiety.

The hypothesis, that fearful and preoccupied participants (those high in anxiety) would be more likely than other attachment types to use marriage as a mechanism for improving their relationships, was also partially supported. Preoccupied individuals were more likely than both dismissing and secure individuals to believe that getting married would improve their relationship. Although fearful participants had a higher mean score for relationship enhancement reasons than dismissing and secure participants, they did not statistically distinguish themselves from other attachment groups. This is possibly the result of the small number of participants classified as fearful in the present study.

There was a difference across attachment styles as to whether participants believed that getting married to symbolise the love and commitment they had to their relationship was a good reason to marry. There was a trend for those low in avoidance to rate this as a better reason to marry than those high in avoidance. However, there was only a significant difference between preoccupied and dismissing participants. As these attachment types can be viewed as opposites, this finding does not provide insight into whether avoidance or anxiety is the reason for this difference.

Different attachment types varied in the way they endorsed family creation as a reason to marry. There was only a significant difference between the secure and the preoccupied participants for this reason, with preoccupied participants being significantly more likely to

endorse this as a good reason to marry. Again, it is possible that a larger sample of insecure attachment types may have revealed more significant differences between the attachment groups.

An interesting pattern that arises from the analysis of these three reasons to marry is that preoccupied participants viewed all of the three reasons as stronger reasons to marry than other attachment types. Preoccupied attachment is characterised by a high desire of union, and it is possible that this finding reflects this.

Evidence was found that there is a difference between attachment groups in relation to what is seen as a good reason to marry. However, the hypothesis that those high in anxiety would expect greater improvement with marriage was not supported. Furthermore, it was found that all attachment groups similarly believed that marriage would slightly improve their life.

The strongest predictors that distinguished participants who were married from those in a cohabiting relationship were relationship length and commitment. Those who had enduring, committed relationships were more likely to be married. Interestingly, avoidance best distinguished those who were engaged from both those who were married and those who were cohabiting. Those who were engaged had lower levels of avoidance than these two groups.

Interpreting Findings in Context with Previous Research

This study supports Kirkpatrick and Davis's (1994) finding that attachment impacts upon the seriousness of a relationship. However, this study provides further insight by examining the impact of anxiety and avoidance as separate continuous dimensions. Additionally, this study examines the role of cohabitation and marriage preference. There was partial support for the theory that high levels of avoidance were associated with a shorter-term mating strategy. However, it is possible that further support for this hypothesis was not found as it could be argued that all participants in this study had adopted a long-term mating strategy, as their relationships were a minimum of one year in duration.

There is evidence to suggest that anxiety may be related to formalising a relationship through marriage. Those who were engaged or married had significantly lower levels of anxiety than those who were cohabiting or dating. However, this finding may be the result of high levels of anxiety being related to relationship breakdown (Campbell, Simpson, Boldry & Kashy, 2005). Therefore, it is possible that the relationships of those with high levels of anxiety breakdown before they advance to the more serious relationships of engagement and marriage. Furthermore, the study current found that there was no relationship between anxiety and desire to marry. This supports the idea that participants low in anxiety may not have formalised their relationship through marriage because they want to marry their partner more than other participants, but rather because their relationships was more serious.

The trend for engaged participants to have more secure attachment than married participants, in conjunction with the finding that low levels of avoidance best distinguish engaged from married or cohabiting participants, raises a question about the stability of

attachment during the transition to marriage. As it is assumed that a majority of the engaged participants will eventually marry their partner, this difference in avoidance may reflect a distinct change that occurs in attachment during engagement. This hypothesis can also be used to explain why those who are married or engaged have lower levels of anxiety than those who are cohabiting or dating. It is possible that information gained when becoming engaged cannot be assimilated into individuals' previous understanding of their partners and their own self-worth. This information could include knowing that their partner wants to spend the rest of their life with them, and acknowledging that they committed to spending the rest of their life with their partner. It is possibly that individuals' mental model of self and other must be revised to accommodate this information. This may lead to a decrease in avoidance and anxiety. However, this hypothesis can only be examined with longitudinal research.

Another limitation to this hypothesis is that it does not explain the difference between married and engaged participants' levels of avoidance, unless the initial dramatic change is part of the accommodation process. More realistic mental models may evolve after marriage. The practical implications of a significant shift towards secure attachment during engagement will be discussed later in the current study.

Previous researchers who have examined the transfer of attachment across the transition to marriage have found that attachment categories tend to remain stable (Crowell, Treboux & Waters, 2002). However, it is unknown how much variability occurs within categories, or how much variability occurs within a 21 month period. Instead, Crowell, Treboux and Waters research simply by looking at attachment in participants three months prior to ther wedding, and again after they had been married for a year and a half.

A difference between this study and Crowell et al's (2002) research is the measures used to assess attachment. Crowell et al's research used the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) which places an emphasis on early experiences and individuals. The current study used the Experience in Close Relationships Revised Measure (ECR-R) that focused on behaviour within current romantic relationships. It is possible that the AAI would be less sensitive to changes in the perception of a romantic relationship, or possibly less vulnerable to the idealistic distortions of engagement compared to the ECR-R Questionnaire.

Alternatively, the finding that engaged participants appear to be more securely attached than other participants may be the result of social desirably. This was possibly emphasised by the romanticisation of engagement in Western culture and participants desire to live up to this image (Vannini, 2004). Previous studies have found that those who are engaged tend to view their relationship in an idealistic manner (Bonds-Raacke, Bearden, Carriere, Anderson & Nicks, 2001). It is possible that this may result in participants reporting lower levels of avoidance and anxiety during this period rather than experiencing a change in attachment.

It is not surprising that there are differences across attachment groups in what are seen as good reasons to marry. However, it is surprising that there were no differences in each attachment groups' perception of how marriage will change their life. However, this can be explained by the existence of a universal understanding within our culture of what marriage is like. This cultural concept of marriage may be adopted, regardless of attachment style. Additionally, it may be possible that people with a preoccupied attachment style do not believe that they will be much better off if they do marry, but do fear what life will be like if they don't marry. Therefore, they may not expect marriage to cause great improvements in their emotional or social wellbeing. This finding means that because expectations are similar

across attachment groups, it is unlikely that a difference in these expectations will later have an impact on marital relationships.

However, it is possible that the same expectations of how marriage will improve life may have a different impact on each attachment group. This possibility is raised recent research that investigated individuals' relationship satisfaction, marital expectations and their partners' relationship skills (McNulty & Karney, 2004). This research found that if an individual's partner has good relationship skills, the individual would be most satisfied if they are optimistic about the success of their relationship. However, if an individuals' partner did not have good relationship skills, the individual would be most satisfied if they had low expectations for the relationship. Those with an insecure attachment style engage in behaviour that is detrimental to relationships (Sharpsteen & Kirkpatrick, 1997). Therefore, these people can be seen to have poor relationship skills. Researchers have found romantic partners to be non-randomly paired in terms of attachment. Those with insecure attachment are more likely to have an insecure partner, while those who are secure are more likely to have a secure partner (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994). In light of this research, it is possible the positive expectations that insecure participants have about marriage may have a detrimental effect on their future relationships, as they are more likely to have a partner with poor relationship skills. Conversely, the positive expectations of secure participants may have a beneficial effect on their future relations, as they are more likely to have a partner with good relationship skills.

The current study supports the theory that secure attachment has beneficial consequences for romantic relationship. A majority of participants would ideally like to marry before they

turn 26. Participants with low levels of anxiety were more likely to have achieved this goal, while those with low levels of avoidance and anxiety were more likely to be engaged.

Possible Limitations

One of the greatest challenges in the current study was to determine whether it was best to use dimensions of attachment or attachment groups to test hypotheses. There has been a recent trend to use the dimensions of anxiety and avoidance to investigate attachment. Measuring attachment on these dimensions allows for more accurate statistical tools, such as regression, to be used. Assessing attachment on the two dimensions also allowed for subtle differences in avoidance and anxiety to be assessed, rather than depending on arbitrary cut-off points. However, using attachment categories enables research to be directly comparable with the vast body of previous research, as well as accounting for the effect of anxiety and avoidance combined.   This study has assessed attachment both as continuous variables attachment categories to gain the benefits of both methods of assessing attachment. The hypotheses testing the reasons for marriage and expected benefits of marriage used attachment categories to allow for direct comparison with previous research. However, it must be noted that these analyses are not as accurate or powerful as they would be if attachment was assessed on a continuous scale.

In this sample the distribution of anxiety and avoidance was relatively low, as is expected in a normal population. However, this calls for caution in interpreting the results of this study. Particular caution should be taken if generalising these results to populations that have sought counselling to resolve relationship concerns, as it is possible these problems may be the consequence of high levels of avoidance and anxiety.

This study should not be applied to couples in homosexual relationships, as homosexual couples face unique challenges in regards to marriage that are beyond the scope of this research. The findings of this study also cannot be applied to those who are engaged but not living together, as the characteristics of this group are uncertain. It is not possible to know whether they can be likened to the engaged participants in the present study, who were all living with their fiancées, or whether they are more similar to dating participants, who don't currently live with their partner. Finally, because marriage is a cultural institution and almost all participants in this study were from Western countries, it would not be appropriate to generalise these findings to non-Western cultures.

It should also be remembered that this study used a number of new and short measures to assess variables, due to constraints on the length of the questionnaire and the availability of pre-established measures. The validity of one-item measures can only currently be assessed at face value. Although the other brief measures created for this study showed high levels of internal consistency, it is unknown whether similar levels of reliability would be found in future samples.

A unique feature of this study's sample is that the process of recruiting participants and completing the questionnaire was completed entirely on the Internet. Collecting data in this way has many advantages. Participants can complete the questionnaire at a time convenient to them; the data collection processes are automatic; and a large sample can be collected at low cost. However, collecting data in this way limits the sample to participants who have Internet access. Although the differences in education completion indicates that participants in this study come from diverse economic backgrounds, it is possible that limiting the questionnaire to those with Internet access may have acted as a filter and prevented those

from low socioeconomic backgrounds from participating in the research. This study used

public Internet discussion forums to recruit participants which may have resulted in the

gender imbalance of participants. Research has found that females are more likely to use the

Internet for communication (Joiner et al., 2005) and therefore are more likely to use Internet

discussion forums than males. Joiner et al. found that males tended to use the Internet to play

games, research specific topics and download material. It is a challenge for future Internet

researchers to devise a way to more effectively recruit males online.

Implications

   The findings of this study have positive implications for those who marry at a young age.

These participants have higher levels of commitment to their relationship and a trend for

more secure attachment patterns.

   On the same note, this study raises the issue that young adults are not marrying because

they are spending extra years in education or because they are taking advantage of alternative

relationships. Rather, it is because they are not forming enduring, intimate relationships that

are high in commitment. The lack of commitment to romantic relationships may be

attributed to the increased independence of women in today's society. Commitment has been

found as the key to long and satisfying relationships (Stanley, Markman & Whitton, 2002).

The current study found that that those with high levels of commitment believe that they are

likely to marry their partner sooner, compared to those with low levels of commitment. If the

levels in this sample are representative of the current generation, the study suggests that

current marriage patterns will not change. These results raise the questions of whether low

levels of commitment characterise those who marry later in life, and whether those with the lowest levels of commitment will remain single.

Engaged participants in this study were found to have significantly lower levels of avoidance than participants who were married. Until further studies are completed to investigate the stability of attachment throughout engagement, those working with engaged people, particularly those working in premarital counselling, should also be aware of the following issue. Those who are engaged may overestimate their attachment security- or alternatively, the current levels they report may not be representative of their enduring mental models of self and other.

The current study found differences in the reasons people marry across attachment types. The implication of this for research into attachment theory and close relationships is that the impact that attachment has on a marriage may precede the marriage itself. However, in light of this finding, it is surprising that there were no significant differences in the expectations different attachment types held regarding marriage. The hypothesis that insecure attachment types experience relatively high levels of marital dissatisfaction and dissolution because of differences in marital expectations can be largely dismissed. However, it is still possible that positive expectations about marriage have a different impact across attachment groups. The practical implications these findings have for relationship counsellors is to explore whether the expectations a person has about marriage are realistic, particularly in context with their past relationships. Furthermore, relationship counsellors should be aware that there appears to be a standard expectation of how marriage will improve life, and expectations diverging from this norm may warrant further investigation.

Further Research

This study successfully explored the characteristics of those adults who marry young compared to their age peers. However, it is unknown how those who marry at a young age differ from those who marry later in life. Additionally, for a better understanding of this group, further studies could examine the normal progression of adult romantic relationships and provide insight into how long people usually spend in each stage of a relationship before getting married (e.g. how long they spend dating, cohabiting and engaged). Further studies could also examine whether the progression of a relationship is hastened or hampered by attachment factors.

The present study calls for further investigation of the stability of attachment as a relationships progress through engagement to marriage. If changes occur, identifying what initiates these changes in the attachment pattern of engaged participants, would be of great benefit to relationship counsellors who wish to explore clients' levels of attachment. Furthermore, identifying what causes attachment patterns to revert back to pre-engagement levels would provide insight into the events that change mental models of self and other, as well as providing further insight into the challenges faced in early marriage.

Further research is also needed to assess whether the differences in the reasons people marry impact upon the quality and success of the marriage itself. If this is the case, examining the reasons why a couple are choosing to marry may help a premarital counsellor discuss with a client the impact these reasons may later have in the marriage. Secondly, as there was not a significant difference in how each attachment group expected marriage to change their life, premarital counsellors could explore a client's concerns about what would

happen if they did not choose marriage. Finally, the present study did not examine the impact that an individuals' partners' attachment style had on a relationship and the decision to marry. Future research could be conducted to explore this issue.

Although it is beyond the scope of this research, the discrepancy between participants' ideal age of first marriage (25 years of age) and the average age of first marriage in Australia (31.20- and 29.10 years of age respectively for males and females) is noteworthy. It is possible that participants in this study would like to marry at a younger age than the norm because they are currently in a committed relationship that is at least a year long, and therefore believe the relationship is serious and will continue. However, one reason participants in the present study stated their ideal age for marriage is younger than the norm, is because their current relationships may break down. If so, the norm of marrying at approximately 30-years of age may reflect a trial and error attempt to find the right marriage partner rather than as a decision to delay marriage as a lifestyle choice. Alternatively, participants may revise their ideal age to marry as they grow older.

Conclusion

The current study provided further insight into how the mental models of self and other formed in childhood impact upon the romantic relationships participants formed as adults. Distinct differences in attachment can be seen between those who choose to formalise their relationship through marriage, and those who choose cohabiting or dating relationships in young adulthood. However, it is acknowledged that, although attachment has an impact on the decision to marry, commitment and relationship length were the strongest predictors of

early marriage. Finally, this study calls for further examination of changes to attachment

models that may occur during a relationship, and more specifically, throughout engagement.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that the present study does not recommend marriage to

be an ideal goal for young adults, nor does it state that a marital relationship is necessarily

preferable to an informal relationship. Although marriage is associated with a number of

positive outcomes (Brown, Bulanda & Lee, 2005; Hudston & Melz, 2004), marriage does not

guarantee happiness- as the number of relationships that end with divorce indicate. The

present study only aimed to explore the relationship between attachment and attitudes

towards marriage in young adulthood.

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Appendix A: The Questionnaire

1. What is your gender?

1. **Male**
2. Female

2. What is your age in years?

Max: 18 Min: 25

3. What is your country of birth?

1. Australia
2. America
3. Canada
4. England
5. New Zealand
6. South Africa

4. What country do you live in?

1. Australia
2. America
3. Canada
4. England
5. New Zealand

5. What is your ethnic background?

6. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

1. Postgraduate qualification
2. Bachelor degree
3. Trade School certificate or diploma
4. Secondary school
5. Did not finish secondary school

7. What is your religion?

1. None
2. Catholic
3. Muslim
4. Jewish
5. Protestant

8. If you are protestant please specify what denomination?

9. How important is religion to the way you live your life?

1. Not important
2. Slightly important
3. Moderately important
4. Very important

10. What is the length of your relationship with your romantic partner in years?

Max: 1 Min: 25

11. Have you discussed marriage with your partner?

1. Yes
2. No

12. What is your relationship status with your partner?

1. Dating
2. Engaged and not cohabiting
3. Cohabiting and not engaged
4. Cohabiting and engaged
5. Married

13. How many previous romances have you had?

Max: -1 Min: 100

14. What is the country of birth of your mother?

1. Australia
2. America
3. Canada
4. England
5. New Zealand
6. South Africa

15. What is the country of birth of your father?

1. Australia
2. America
3. Canada
4. England
5. New Zealand
6. South Africa

16. What is your parents relationship status?

1. No formal relationship
2. Living together but not married
3. Married
4. Separated
5. Divorced
6. Widowed

17. If your parents are divorced or separated, please indicate how old you were when this happened.

Max: 0 Min: 25

18. Have you, or do you expect to live with a partner without being married to them?

1. Yes
2. No

19. Do you consider cohabiting/living together to be the same as marriage?

1. Yes
2. No

20. How much do you want to get married?

1. I am already married
2. Very strong desire
3. Strong desire
4. Moderate desire
5. Weak desire
6. Not at all

21. How likely is it that you will get married?

1. I am already married
2. I will get married
3. It is very likely I will get married
4. There is a 50/50 chance I will get married
5. It is unlikely that I will get married
6. I will not get married

22. How likely is it that you will marry your current partner?

1. I am married to my current partner
2. I will marry my current partner
3. It is very likely that I will marry my current partner
4. There is a 50/50 chance that I will marry my current partner
5. It is unlikely that I will marry my current partner
6. I will not marry my current partner

23. If it is possible or likely, when could you see yourself when could you see yourself marrying your current partner?

1. In less than 1 year
2. Between 1-2 years
3. Between 3-5 years
4. In more than 5 years
5. It is not possible or likely that I will marry my current partner.

24. What do you think is the ideal age (in years) for a first marriage for someone of your sex?

Max: 0 Min: 99

25. Do you have any children?

1. Yes
2. No

26. If you are married, how long have you been married for?

1. I am not married
2. Less than 1 year
3. 1 years
4. 2 years
5. 3 years
6. 4 years
7. 5 years
8. More than 5 years

27. Have you been previously married?

1. Yes
2. No

28. How many years old is your partner?

Max: 10 Min: 99

29. What is the highest level of education your mother has completed?

1. Postgraduate qualification
2. Bachelor degree
3. Trade school certificate or diploma
4. Secondary school
5. Did not finish secondary school

30. Below is a list of statements. Please look at each one in turn and indicate the extent to which each one it true for you.

	Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly Agree
I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love.							
I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.							
I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me.							
I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with a partner.							
I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me.							
I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.							
I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.							
I am comfortable being close to romantic partners.							
I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him/her.							

31. Below is a list of statements. Please look at each one in turn and indicate the extent to which each one it true for you.

	Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly Agree
I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.							
I worry a lot about my relationships							
I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners							
When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he or she might become interested in someone else.							
I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to get close to me.							
When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me.							
I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.							
I rarely worry about my partner leaving me.							
It's not difficult for me to get close to my partner.							

32. Below is a list of statements. Please look at each one in turn and indicate the extent to which each one it true for you.

	Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly Agree
My romantic partner makes me doubt myself.							
I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.							
I do not often worry about being abandoned.							
It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.							
I find that partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.							
I tell my partner just about everything.							
Sometimes romantic partners change their feelings about me for no apparent reason.							
I talk things over with my partner.							
My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.							

33. Below is a list of statements. Please look at each one in turn and indicate the extent to which each one it true for you.

	Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	Strongly Agree
I am nervous when partners get too close to me.							
I'm afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he/she won't like who I really am.							
I feel comfortable depending on romantic partner.							
It makes me mad that I don't get the affection and support I need from my partner.							
I find it easy to depend on romantic partners.							
I worry that I won't measure up to other people.							
It's easy for me to be affectionate with my partner.							
My partner seems only to notice me when I am angry.							
My partner really understands me and my needs.							

34. Please indicate how strongly you agree with the following three statements.

	No Agreement	2	3	4	5	6	Strong Agreement
It's alright for an unmarried couple to live together even if they have no interest in getting married.							

35. What is your ideal relationship status? Using the following scale, please indicate how desirable each type of relationship is to you.

	Not at all Desirable	2	3	4	5	6	Very Desirable
Single and unpartnered	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dating	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cohabiting	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Married	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

36. Please indicate how strong the following reasons would be for you to get married .

To signify life-long commitment.

	No Reason	2	3	4	5	6	Very Strong Reason
Is this a reason to get married?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

37. Please indicate how strong the following reasons would be for you to get married .

Security for children.

	No Reason	2	3	4	5	6	Very Strong Reason
Is this a reason to get married?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

38. Please indicate how strong the following reasons would be for you to get married.

Dual responsibility for children.

	No Reason	2	3	4	5	6	Very Strong Reason
Is this a reason to get married?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

39. Please indicate how strong the following reasons would be for you to get married.

To prevent partner from dating others.

	No Reason	2	3	4	5	6	Very Strong Reason
Is this a reason to get married?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

40. Please indicate how strong the following reasons would be for you to get married.

To feel loved.

	No Reason	2	3	4	5	6	Very Strong Reason
Is this a reason to get married?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

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41. Please indicate how strong the following reasons would be for you to get married .

So you and your partner can't break up.

	No Reason	2	3	4	5	6	Very Strong Reason
Is this a reason to get married?	-		-	-	-	-	-

42. Please indicate how strong the following reasons would be for you to get married

To be assured that your partner really loves you.

	No Reason	2	3	4	5	6	Very Strong Reason
Is this a reason to get married?	-		-	-	-	-	-

43. Please indicate how strong the following reasons would be for you to get married

To signify your desire to be together forever.

	No Reason	2	3	4	5	6	Very Strong Reason
Is this a reason to get married?	-		-	-	-	-	-

44. Please indicate how strong the following reasons would be for you to get married

To raise children in a conventional home.

	No Reason	2	3	4	5	6	Very Strong Reason
Is this a reason to get married?	-		-	-	-	-	-

45. Please indicate how strong the following reasons would be for you to get married

Because you and your partner are in love.

	No Reason	2	3	4	5	6	Very Strong Reason
Is this a reason to get married?	-		-	-	-	-	-

46. Please indicate how strong the following reasons would be for you to get married

To signify you and your partner are one.

	No Reason	2	3	4	5	6	Very Strong Reason
Is this a reason to get married?	-		-	-	-	-	-

47. Please indicate how strong the following reasons would be for you to get married

To show commitment.

	No Reason	2	3	4	5	6	Very Strong Reason
Is this a reason to get married?	-		-	-	-	-	-

48. Please indicate how strong the following reasons would be for you to get married

To improve your relationship.

	No Reason	2	3	4	5	6	Very Strong Reason
Is this a reason to get married?	-		-	-	-	-	-

49. Please indicate your response to the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	2	3	Neither Agree or Disagree	5	6	Strongly Disagree
If a couple works hard at making their marriage work but		-	-	-	-	-	-

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finds themselves incompatible, divorce is the best thing they can do.							
I would have no trouble finding a suitable partner if his relationship ended.							
My friends would not mind if my partner and I broke up.							
I have not spent much money on my partner.							
I want this relationship to stay strong no matter what rough times we may encounter.							
I don't make commitments unless I believe I will keep them.							
I like to think of my partner and me more in terms of "us" and "we" than "me" and "him/her".							
My career (or job, studies, home-making, child rearing etc.) is more important to me than my relationship with my partner.							
I makes me feel good to sacrifice for my partner.							

50. Please indicate your response to the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	2	3	Neither Agree or Disagree	5	6	Strongly Disagree
I am not seriously attracted to anyone other than my partner.							
People should feel free to end a marriage as long as the children are not going to be hurt.							
I believe that there are many people who would be happy to have me as their spouse or partner.							
My family really wants this relationship (mine with my partners) to work.							
I have put a number of tangible, valuable resources into this relationship.							
My relationship with my partner is clearly part of my future plans.							
I do not feel compelled to keep all of the commitments I make.							
I do not want to have a strong identity as a couple with my partner.							
When push comes to shove, my relationship with my partner often must take a backseat to interests of mine.							

51. Please indicate your response to the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	2	3	Neither Agree or Disagree	5	6	Strongly Disagree
Giving something up for my partner is frequently not worth the trouble.		-	-		-	-	
I think a lot about what it would be like to be married to someone other than my partner.		-	-		-	-	
I may not want to be with my partner a few years from now.		-	-		-	-	
My relationship with my partner is more important to me than almost anything in my life.		-	-		-	-	

52. How different would these areas of your life be for you if you were married?

	Much Worse	2	3	4	Much Better
Overall happiness	-	-	-	-	-
Sex life	-	-	-	-	-
Standard of living	-	-	-	-	-
Friendships	-	-	-	-	-
Parent relations	-	-	-	-	-
Economic security	-	-	-	-	-
Emotional security	-	-	-	-	-
Economic independence	-	-	-	-	-

53. How true is each statement of your relationship?

	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
My partner and I understand each other perfectly.					
My partner completely understands and sympathizes with my every mood.	-	-	-	-	-
Our relationship is a perfect success.	-	-	-	-	-
I have some needs that are not being met by our relationship.					
I have never regretted my relationship with my partner, not even for a moment.	-	-	-	-	-

54. Please answer the following questions about your future relations.

	Not at all.	2	3	4	Extremely
How likely is it that you will have a successful marriage?		-	-	-	
How confident are you that you will have successful love relationships in the future?		-	-	-	
How likely is it that you will get divorced sometime in your lifetime?		-	-	-	
In general, how optimistic do you feel about the success of your love relationship?		-	-	-	

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55. How well does your partner meet your needs?

1. Not at all
2. Slightly
3. Moderately
4. Considerably
5. Extremely

56. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

1. Not at all
2. Slightly
3. Moderately
4. Considerably
5. Extremely

57. How good is your relationship compared to most?

1. Much worse
2. Not as good
3. About the same
4. Better
5. Much better

58. How often do you wish you hadn't gotten into this relationship?

1. Never
2. Seldom
3. Sometimes
4. Often
5. Very often.

59. To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Moderately
4. Considerably
5. Very much

60. How much do you love your partner?

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Average
4. Quite a bit
5. Very much

61. How many problems are there in your relationship?

1. Hardly any.
2. Less than average.
3. About average.
4. More than average.
5. A great many.

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