A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CURRENT ATTACHMENT STYLES AND PREVIOUS DISENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the University of North Texas in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

Julia Krahl, B.A.
Denton, Texas
August, 1995
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This thesis examined attachment styles and disengagement strategies used to end romantic relationships for 213 college students. The research predicted differences between attributions about the cause of the breakup and who initiated the breakup, depending upon a person's attachment style. The study also predicted differences in attributions about the use of disengagement strategies, depending upon a person's attachment style and their attribution of initiation. The study found differences in attributions about the cause of the breakup for persons with secure attachment styles. Differences in attribution of initiation were observed for persons with dismissing attachment styles. Differences in attributions about the use of disengagement strategies for persons with different attachment styles and different attributions of initiation were observed for positive-tone and behavioral de-escalation strategies.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge those who have supported me throughout this research project. I am forever grateful to Dr. Lawrence Wheeless for giving so much of his time, expert advice, patience, and support. I would like to thank Dr. Jill Rhea, Dr. Steve Fore and Dr. John Gossett for serving as my committee members and offering their knowledge and guidance for the betterment of this study. I would also like to express my appreciation for all of the teaching assistants in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of North Texas who helped me in the data collection necessary for this study. Lastly, I would like to thank my husband Shane for his support and understanding throughout the duration of this research project.
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CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH PROBLEM

Introduction

This chapter will present the purpose of the study and the definition of the terms involved in the research. The significance of the study and the theoretical base of the study will also be discussed.

Purpose of the Study

This study sought to create a better understanding of how the development of attachment style is related to a person's previous experience with disengagement strategies. Furthermore, this investigation hoped to broaden the understanding of the role of attributions in determining this relationship.

While most attachment theory research focuses on how attachment styles which develop during childhood are reflected in adulthood, there are suggestions that studies should look into the experiences which could possibly modify previously held attachment styles. Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) stated that the challenge for future research is to explore how attachment styles are revised in interaction with the social environment. The authors believed that major life transitions may indeed offer the opportunity for
an evaluation and possible reorganization of attachment styles.

Satisfying intimate relationships are often the most important source of a person's happiness and sense of meaning in life (Bartholomew, 1990). The study of relationships encompasses how they begin, how they develop through stages, how they are maintained, how they disintegrate, and how they are terminated through the process of disengagement. While it may seem unusual to discuss relationships in terms of how they are disengaged, the disengagement of an important relationship is considered to be among the most difficult of the life transitions which Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) discussed. For this reason, the research presented here re-examined the disengagement stage of relationships and its role in the development and possible modification of an individual's attachment style.

Many have argued that pre-marital breakups should be studied to further understand the complete cycle of relationships that make up the mate selection process (Baxter, 1982; Cody, 1982; Hill, Rubin & Peplau, 1976). Research suggests that the breakup of a romantic relationship can be an important benchmark in a person's life (Harvey, Flanary, & Morgan, 1986). These romantic breakups can often account for some of our most intense and painful social experiences (Baxter, 1982). It has been said
that "few experiences in life are capable of producing more emotional distress, anguish, and suffering than is the dissolution of an important relationship" (Simpson, 1987, p. 583). If relationship terminations can be so important in our lives, then research should strive to understand more completely the role that these disengagements play in the larger scheme of a person's relational life, including how the possible consequences of disengagements might be related to a person's attachment style.

**Definition of terms**

**Attachment Style.** Attachment style includes one's attitudes, beliefs, and feelings about forming and maintaining close relationships (Bartholomew, 1990). Ainsworth (1989) described an attachment as an affectionate bond that an individual feels toward another person. Attachment theory originally focused on the affectionate bond that develops between a mother and her child (Bowlby, 1973). More recent research has conceptualized adult romantic relationships as attachments because of the important bonds that are created between the partners (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Adult attachment styles reflect a person's general feelings, beliefs and perceptions about the self and other as relational partners, and encompass an individual's personal representations of love (Bartholomew, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987).
Attachment styles have been found to be fairly strong predictors of how people behave in many aspects of their romantic relationships. Collins and Read (1990) reported that people often choose to date others who share their beliefs about closeness and dependability in relationships. Bartholomew (1990) found that working styles of attachment guide behavior between marital partners and were indicators of marital satisfaction. Pistole (1989) reported that attachment styles were closely related to how dating partners used conflict resolution behaviors. It seems then, that attachment styles can be useful in understanding many aspects of romantic relationships.

Disengagement Strategies. Disengagement strategies are the communicative strategies used to facilitate or lead to the termination of a relationship (Baxter, 1982). Research in the area of relationship disengagement has focused on identifying specific strategies that people use to produce the end of relationships (Baxter, 1982; Cody, 1982) and the relational factors that predict the use of a particular strategy (Banks, Altendorf, Greene, & Cody, 1987; Wilmot, Carbaugh, & Baxter, 1985). Most of the research has focused on the relational circumstances and partner characteristics which lead to the choice of one strategy over another, with minimal investigation into the possible associations between relationship disengagement and a person's general feelings and attitudes about relationships. Some have suggested that
if the study of relationship dissolution is to be advanced, future research should examine how people cope with the process of disengagement over time (Banks et al., 1987; Baxter, 1985).

Significance of the Study

Research suggests that the disengagement of a relationship does have the ability to negatively affect relational partners. The breakup of relationships has been correlated with high levels of distress (Frazier & Cook, 1993). More stress was reported with individuals whose relationships had been very close, and who anticipated difficulty in finding another partner. Individuals who had perceived the breakup as less controllable, who had little social support, and who had little self esteem reported a great deal of distress following the breakup. Stephen (1987) also reported that the termination of a romantic relationship ranks among the most emotionally stressful events that life has to offer. These studies offer even more evidence that relationship disengagements do more than simply end relationships, they can also produce high amounts of distress and cast doubts on the individual's view of him/herself as a relational partner.

If the breakup of the relationship has the ability to produce great amounts of distress, then it might be possible that this distress affects the person's views about relationships in general. The reasoning offered by Carnelly
and Janoff-Bulman (1992) can be used to explain that when this person thinks of themselves in a relationship, they could be reminded of the distress they experienced. If this is true, then the breakup of the relationship could have consequences in the person's subsequent relationships. For instance, these same people might be reluctant to develop a relationship to a romantic level for fear of a possible breakup that would result in the negative outcomes and distress that they previously experienced.

**Theoretical Base**

As stated, the disengagement of an important romantic relationship is considered to be a major event in a person's life. It seems quite possible that disengagements could bring about the internal questioning and possible modification of an individual's attachment style. Rather than assume a direct causal relationship between attachment styles and previous disengagement strategies however, this study suggested that there are some mediating factors in determining the relationship between disengagement strategies and attachment styles. These mediating factors are concerned with the attributions that individuals make about the relationship disengagement process itself. Therefore, attribution theory was employed as a theoretical base from which to study the relationship between attachment styles and disengagement strategies.
Attribution theory is a theory of perceived causation (Kelley, 1982). It deals with how people explain "why" an event occurs. Attribution theory has also developed as a way to deal with self and social perceptions. When people seek answers to questions of "why", they make inferences based upon their perceptions of themselves and their social situations. These inferences affect the attributions people make, which in turn affect their reaction to the event or situation (Kelley, 1982). Therefore, the self-perceptions and social-perceptions surrounding the disengagement of a relationship could influence the ultimate consequences of the breakup. If these consequences involve the modification of attachment styles, then the attributions made by the individual are indeed an important mediating factor.

Attributional research is used when trying to determine the consequences of causal explanations on interpersonal relationships (Kelley, 1982). Attribution theory was used here because the study involved attributions made concerning the disengagement itself, and the way in which those attributions contributed to the relationship between attachment styles and disengagement strategies. Kelley explained that "attributional research shows that attributions affect our feelings about past events and our expectations about future ones, our attitudes toward other persons and our reactions to their behavior, and our conceptions of ourselves and our efforts to improve our
fortunes" (p. 13). Attributions about disengagement strategies were of particular importance to this study because it dealt with the development and possible modification of attachment styles. This study proposed that different attributions about disengagement strategies may discriminate between differences in the individual's current attachment style.

Summary

This chapter introduced the purpose of the study, defined the terms involved in the research, and discussed the significance and theoretical base of the study. The next chapter will review the literature concerning attachment styles, disengagement strategies, and attribution theory. Each of the hypotheses and research questions will then be introduced.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the significance of the study, the definitions of the terms involved in the research, and the significance and theoretical base of the study. This chapter will offer a review of the literature concerning attachment styles and disengagement strategies. Attribution theory literature relevant to this study will also be reviewed. Specific hypotheses and research questions will then be presented concerning attachment styles, disengagement strategies, attributions of initiation and attributions of primary cause.

Attachment Styles

To understand how disengagement strategies could be involved in the development of attachment styles, it is necessary to first examine the different types of attachment styles that have been identified in past research. Attachment theory is based on work by Bowlby (1973), who sought to understand how affectionate bonds are formed and broken. Bowlby's work described and explained how infants become emotionally attached to their primary caregivers and emotionally distressed when separated from them. Ainsworth,
Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) expanded on Bowlby's work to create three general categories of attachment style. The styles are referred to as secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant.

Hazan and Shaver (1987) took Bowlby's (1973) theory of attachment and the typology of attachment styles created by Ainsworth et al. (1978), and applied them to adult romantic love. They found that much of the findings on attachment theory and attachment styles could indeed be translated into the study of adult romantic relationships. As a result, Hazan and Shaver created descriptions connected to a single item nominal selection of adult attachment style. This measure classified adult attachment styles in the same categories of secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent, just as Ainsworth et al. had previously done with childhood attachment.

Hazan and Shaver (1987) noted that individuals with secure styles were identified as "those who find it relatively easy to get close to others. They are comfortable with both depending on others, and having others depend upon them. They neither worry about others abandoning them, nor fear others will get too close to them" (p. 515). Individuals with anxious/ambivalent styles were identified as people "who are reluctant to get as close to others as they would like. They often worry that their partners do not love them, or that they want to leave them."
They believe that their desire to merge completely with others sometimes scares people away" (p. 515). Individuals with avoidant styles are described as "being uncomfortable with closeness. They find it difficult to trust and depend on others, and feel nervous when others get too close to them. Individuals with avoidant styles often feel that others want them to be more intimate than they are comfortable being" (p. 515).

Based upon Hazan and Shaver's (1987) research, Bartholomew (1990) investigated adults' avoidance of intimacy in relation to attachment styles. Bartholomew believed that because Hazan and Shaver's three categories of attachment style were explicitly defined to correspond with the previous categories of child attachment, they might not be sufficient for understanding variations in adult attachment styles. Consequently, Bartholomew created four prototypes of adult attachment styles that differ along the dimensions of self and other. These two dimensions show the interaction of a person's own self-worth with their perceptions of the attachment figure's availability.

The dimension of self represents a person's feelings about themselves as love-worthy. A person who is high on this dimension has a positive self-regard, a positive self-concept, views the self as worthy of attention and love, and does not need much external validation from others. A person who is low on this dimension generally has a low
sense of self, a negative self concept, views the self as unworthy of love and attention, and gains positive self-regard mainly through others' acceptance of them (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

The dimension of other represents how a person views others in general. A person who is high on this dimension views others as trustworthy, caring, and available. A person who is low on this dimension views others as untrustworthy, rejecting, and distant (Bartholomew, 1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

Bartholomew's (1990) four prototypes of adult attachment styles resulted from the varying combinations of the self and other dimensions. A diagram of these prototypes is displayed in Figure 1. The four categories consist of secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful. The secure style of attachment corresponds to the secure style identified by Hazan and Shaver (1987), and the preoccupied style corresponds to Hazan and Shaver's anxious/ambivalent style. The dismissing and fearful attachment styles are a separation of Hazan and Shaver's avoidant style into two distinct types of avoidance, differing in the importance each places on others' approval (Bartholomew, 1990). Following is an explanation of each of these attachment styles identified by Bartholomew.

The secure attachment style reflects positive regard for both self and others. Secure individuals display high
Model of Self

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<th>Negative</th>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Dismissing</td>
<td>Fearful</td>
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Figure 1. Styles of Adult Attachment. (Bartholomew & Horowitz 1990).

self-esteem, and are often a result of warm, responsive interaction with others such as close friends and family (Bartholomew, 1990). Bartholomew stated that "the dimensions of self and other models are conceptually parallel to the higher-order constructs of individuation and connectedness" (p. 165). Ainsworth et al. (1978) believed that a secure attachment style allows for the development of both of these processes by providing a secure base from which people can comfortably explore themselves and others.

The preoccupied attachment style is characterized by an "insatiable desire to gain others' approval, and a strong feeling of unworthiness" (Bartholomew, 1990, p. 163). The preoccupied person is overly dependent on others, and has a
somewhat negative view of self. Like the anxious/ambivalent style identified by Hazan and Shaver (1987), the preoccupied person desperately wants acceptance, and actively seeks out close relationships. When they fail in their attempts, "they blame their own unworthiness for any lack of approval from others" (Bartholomew, 1990, p. 163).

A fearful attachment style is defined by a negative view of self and other. A fearful person "desires social contact and intimacy, but experiences pervasive distrust and fear of rejection" (Bartholomew, 1990, p. 164). In order to avoid subjecting themselves to rejection, fearful people actively avoid social situations and close relationships (Bartholomew, 1990).

Bartholomew's (1990) dismissing style represents an individual's "attempt at deactivating the attachment system all together" (p. 164). The dismissing style reflects a positive view of self and a negative view of others. People with dismissing attachment styles deal with rejection by distancing themselves from the source of rejection, namely, close relationships. A dismissing attachment style is characterized by a "positive view of self as adequate and invulnerable to negative feelings which might activate the attachment system" (p. 164). A dismissing person often places value on independence and avoids close relationships because they have come to view them as unimportant (Bartholomew, 1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).
Bartholomew's (1990) reclassification of the previously identified avoidant attachment style offers a better understanding of how and why adults vary in their avoidance of close relationships. The dismissing and fearful styles are alike in their avoidance of close relationships, but the dismissing person attains autonomy and self-worth at the expense of intimacy, while the fearful person has difficulty with both autonomy and intimacy.

Bartholomew's (1990) attachment style prototypes were intended to represent categories that allow for varying similarities among the members of each set. Because a person's images of self and other are formed by their own unique life experiences, however, no individual's experiences will uniformly match one single category. Bartholomew made a valid point when arguing that previous research has too readily assumed that individuals do not vary from a single attachment style. Thus, Bartholomew's four categories offer the person the possibility of having an attachment style with similarities to two or more prototypes. When a person describes him/herself as matching one of the four styles of attachment, it should be interpreted to mean that their experiences have generally lead to outcomes which left them with images of self and other that best fit one of the prototypes better than the other three (Bartholomew, 1990).
Disengagement Strategies

As previously defined, disengagement strategies are the communicative strategies which facilitate the termination of relationships. Cody (1982) created a typology of relationship disengagement strategies that consists of positive tone, de-escalation, behavioral de-escalation (withdrawal), justification, and negative identification management.

Positive tone messages are identified by the disengager attempting to attend to the other person's feelings in order to avoid ending the relationship on a sour note. An example of a positive tone message in Cody's (1982) itemization is "I told him/her that I was very, very sorry about breaking off the relationship" (p. 163). De-escalation strategies are those which express advantages to be gained from seeing less of each other, and leave the possibility of some kind of future relationship. An example of a de-escalation item is "I said that the relationship was becoming a strain on me and that we're just going to call it off for now. Maybe some day we can get back together and things will work out" (p. 163).

Behavioral de-escalation tactics (also called withdrawal/avoidance tactics) involve the disengager withdrawing from the other person and avoiding contact with them. One of Cody's (1982) behavioral de-escalation items is "I didn't say anything to the partner, I avoided contact
with him/her as much as possible" (p. 163). Justification strategies give the other person a reason for full termination of the relationship. An example of a justification item is "I fully explained why I felt dissatisfied with the relationship, that it hasn't been growing and that I believe we will both be happier if we didn't date anymore" (p. 163). Negative identity management involves the disengager leaving the relationship without offering a reason for the breakup that attends to the other's feelings, and negatively altercasting the other person as the problem in the relationship. One of Cody's negative identity management items is "I told him/her that life was too short and that we should date other people in order to enjoy life" (p. 163).

Studies investigating relationship disengagement strategies have mainly focused on the choice of strategy and the way in which it was used to produce the end of the relationship. Baxter (1982) examined the relational situations that could possibly predict the choice of a particular strategy. Baxter's results indicate that when intimacy is high, disengagers felt obligated to use more verbal strategies rather than behavioral de-escalation (withdrawal). Cody's (1982) study also found that behavioral de-escalation strategies were used typically in less intimate relationships. Banks, Altendorf, Greene, and Cody (1987) replicated these results when they discovered
that when intimacy was high, respondents did not usually report using strategies such as behavioral de-escalation. Another study examined the importance of a partner's verbal directness/indirectness in terminating relationships (Wilmot, Carbaugh, & Baxter, 1985). Wilmot et al. found that people who reported initiating the disengagement did so with verbally direct strategies, rather than using indirect hints or behavioral de-escalation (withdrawal) to end the relationship.

Banks et al. (1987) came closest to researching possible disengagement consequences when they examined a person's felt anger, freedom, depression, and the extent to which the partners remained friends (Banks et al., 1987). The authors found that disengagers felt more freedom after using negative identity management, and less freedom when they used positive tone strategies. Respondents reported that they remained friends with their partner when they had used de-escalation tactics, and were less likely to remain friends if the disengager had used justification or behavioral de-escalation strategies. The use of negative identity management was not found to be a significant factor in determining whether or not the partners remained friends. Banks et al. also found that depression was reported following the use of de-escalation strategies, and less depression occurred after the use of justification strategies. While this is certainly important research, it
only examines how the partners feel about each other following a break-up. Research has yet to address questions of how people generally feel about relationships, and how willing they are to develop and maintain close relationships after a break-up.

The break-up of a relationship probably can have an effect on a person's subsequent relationships. Carnelly and Janoff-Bulman (1992) found that past relationship success or failure may determine a person's general optimism about future romantic relationships. Perceived failure in a past romantic relationship was a predictor of pessimism concerning future romantic relationships, and perceived success in past relationships predicted optimism in future relationships. Carnelly and Janoff-Bulman believe their research suggests that people do learn important lessons from their previous dating experiences. When an individual pictures him/herself in a dating relationship, they draw on past relationships for references. If these experiences in the past are negative, then the person is more likely to have negative images and reduced optimism about relationships. If the images are positive, so will be their feelings about their future relationships.

To say that relationship disengagement strategies can influence subsequent relationships is illuminating, and perhaps obvious. In order to understand how the outcomes of a past break-up can be carried over into a subsequent
relationship, research must investigate how a person's perceptions of themselves and others as relational partners are influenced by the disengagement process. One way of doing this is by studying how current attachment styles are related to previous relationship disengagements. However, as noted previously, there are also attributional factors surrounding the disengagement process which could possibly intervene in the relationship between attachment styles and previous disengagement strategies.

Attributions to the Causes of Relationship Disengagement

Attributions for interpersonal events between partners in a close relationship reflect how people assign blame, predict behavior, and describe one another (Sillars & Scott, 1983). When discussing an interpersonal event such as the disengagement of a close relationship, attributions that assign blame and/or responsibility for the break-up give relational partners answers to the questions of "why" that Kelley (1982) mentioned. Because the answers to these "why" questions might influence the consequences of the disengagement process, the attributions made concerning the disengagement process are of particular importance to the study proposed here.

Research has found that attributions which individuals make concerning their own behavior are usually very different from the attributions they make concerning their partners' behavior. When making attributions about negative
interpersonal events, Thompson and Kelley (1981) found that members of dating and married couples accepted less personal responsibility for negative relationship events than for positive events. These results suggest that partners in a relationship are "prone to minimize self attributions for relationship difficulties and are more apt to assign blame to the traits and behaviors of the partner" (Sillars & Scott, 1983, p. 158). Based upon these findings, it would be expected that, individuals would attribute the cause of the relationship disengagement to the other person rather than to themselves. However, studies have shown that individuals do sometimes attribute the cause of the break-up to themselves, and these attributions can greatly affect how the individual deals with the aftermath of the break-up (Stephen, 1987).

Stephen (1987) studied relationship terminations from an attributional standpoint. He stated that relational partners try to make attributions of responsibility for the relationship failure in order to reduce the ambiguity they have about the break-up. Stephen found that if the people attribute the cause of the break-up to themselves, they may have a definition of self as "an active agent operating under personal volition" (p. 48), which is a positive outcome. A possible negative outcome of attributing self as the cause of the breakup is a feeling of guilt for rejecting and leaving the other person. (Stephen seems to be
referring to those who attribute the cause of the relationship to self, and are also the ones who initiate the breakup). If the cause of the breakup is attributed to the other person, the partner may suffer from perceptions that "they are the type of person rejected by others, and that they cannot adequately control their own world" (Stephen, 1987, p. 49). These findings suggest that attributions made concerning the cause of the breakup of relationships can have differing influences on an individual's perception of self and others, depending on the attribution made.

Self and other attributions are not the only possible attributions that an individual might make when seeking a causal explanation for the termination of a relationship. The breakup may also be attributed to situational factors. Stephen (1987) identified three types of situational factors to which individual's might attribute the demise of the relationship. The first is labeled as interpersonal attribution, and describes interactional problems such as "we argued constantly" or "we had a lack of communication" (p. 53). Stephen refers to the second and third situational factor as external attributions. External attribution type 1 addresses some external force or occurrence that was beyond the control of either partner, but still connected to the person such as "his job" or "pressure from her parents" (p. 53). External attributions type 2 describe reasons that were beyond the control of
either relational partner and external to the relationship such as "these economic hard times" or "separated by distance" (p. 53).

Stephen's (1987) results indicated that when the attributions made were situational, individuals tended to cope more effectively with the breakup of the relationship. These results are in line with a previous study by Newman and Langer (1981) which found that individuals who attributed the termination of the relationship to situational factors reported being happier than others, more socially active, optimistic, confident, successful, and socially skilled. These findings suggest that situational attributions offer the possibility of more positive outcomes than do attributions of self or other.

No matter who or what the disengagement of the relationship is attributed to, the attribution itself could play a key role in determining the kinds of perceptions that an individual forms concerning their relational experiences. As the previously discussed studies have shown, causal attributions about breakups may have positive or negative effects on a person's views of self and others. Because attachment styles vary in respect to these views of self and others (Bartholomew, 1990), the attributions made about relationship disengagements should not be overlooked when investigating the relationship between attachment styles and previous disengagement strategies.
Attributions About the Primary Cause of the Relationship Breakup

The primary cause of the breakup of the relationship may be attributed to self, other, or situation. Research on causal attribution suggests that these attributions can have different outcomes in terms of individuals' views of self and other. Because the views of self and other are the main factors in determining attachment styles, attributions about the primary cause of the breakup are important in the study proposed here.

As previously discussed, persons with secure attachment styles are those who have positive views of both self and other, and are seemingly the healthiest in terms of their attitudes about relationships (Bartholomew, 1990). Recall also that the study by Newman and Langer (1981) found that people who attributed the cause of the breakup to situational factors were more socially active, confident, happier, successful, and more socially skilled than those who attributed the cause of the breakup to self or other. People with secure attachment styles, therefore, appear to share similar characteristics with those who attribute the cause of the relationship breakup to the situation. If so, persons with secure attachment styles would be more likely to attribute the primary cause of the relationship breakup to the situation, rather than to self or other. Based upon this rationale, the following hypothesis was offered:
H1: Persons with secure attachment styles will more frequently attribute the primary cause of the relationship breakup to situational factors, than to self or to other.

Persons with dismissing attachment styles have "developed a model of self as fully adequate" (Bartholomew, 1990, p. 164). As previously discussed, the dismissing attachment style is characterized by a positive view of self and a negative view of others, and often emerges as a way to deal with past rejections (Bartholomew, 1990). Persons with this attachment style place little value on relationships, and more importance on independence. Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) found that the dismissing attachment style was also correlated with high levels of self-confidence. Due to such a positive view of self, people with dismissing attachment styles would probably attribute relational problems to the other partner, rather than to self.

The dismissing attachment style has not been found to encompass the same positive characteristics that are associated with people who attribute the cause of the breakup to situational factors. Therefore, persons with dismissing attachment styles would not be expected to attribute the cause of the relationship breakup to situation. Based upon the relationship between the dismissing attachment style and the possible causal attributions to self, other, and situation, the following
hypothesis was posited:

H2: Persons with dismissing attachment styles will more frequently attribute the primary cause of the relationship breakup to others, than to self or to situational factors.

The preoccupied attachment style is identified by a positive view of others and a negative view of self. Persons with a preoccupied attachment style desperately want others' approval, but believe that their own unworthiness is the cause for any rejection they experience (Bartholomew, 1990). Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) also found that the preoccupied attachment style was characterized by a reliance on others for a secure base. Because persons with this attachment style have such a negative view of themselves as relational partners, it is likely that they would attribute the cause of the breakup to themselves. Furthermore, like the dismissing style, the preoccupied attachment style does not share the positive characteristics of persons who attribute the cause of the breakup to situational factors. Therefore, the following hypothesis was offered:

H3: Persons with preoccupied attachment styles will more frequently attribute the primary cause of the relationship breakup to self, rather than to other or to situational factors.

As noted earlier, the fearful attachment style is characterized by both a negative view of self and other.
Persons with fearful attachment styles distrust others and believe that they will be hurt and rejected by others. However, they also believe that the rejection is due to their own unworthiness. To avoid the possibility of rejection, persons with fearful attachment styles try actively to avoid close relationships (Bartholomew, 1990). Due to such negative views of self, other, and relationships in general, it was difficult to predict causal attribution tendencies associated with the fearful attachment style. Thus, the following research question was asked:

RQ1: Do persons with fearful attachment styles have a tendency to attribute the primary cause of the relationship breakup to self, to other, or to situational factors?

Attributions of Who Initiated the Relationship Breakup

Although the cause of the relationship breakup may be attributed to self, other, or situation, one of the relational partners must initiate the disengagement process itself. Even if the cause of the breakup is attributed to situational factors, one of the partners will inevitably initiate the breakup. Obviously, the breakup of a relationship can be initiated by either of the relational partners. In the research presented here, the initiator of the breakup was defined as the person who actually employs a disengagement strategy for the purpose of ending the relationship. Therefore, when discussing a past breakup,
the initiation of the breakup could be attributed to either self or other. This attribution of initiation clarifies whether the person in question was on the receiving end of a disengagement strategy, or was the person employing the strategy to breakup with another person.

Influences on attachment styles may vary according to who the initiation of the breakup is attributed to. Therefore, attributions as to who initiated the disengagement process could be important in determining the relationship between current attachment styles and previous disengagement strategies. Attachment styles should first be considered in terms of how each style is related to attributions about the initiation of the breakup.

A dismissing attachment style is characterized by a strong sense of independence and autonomy. Recall that the dismissing attachment style is an attempt to shut down the attachment process and avoid relying on others (Bartholomew, 1990). Furthermore, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) found that people with dismissing attachment styles exercised more control and demonstrated more self-confidence in their romantic relationships. Because of their need to be in control of relationships and their willingness to avoid relationships in favor of independence, it is likely that persons with dismissing attachment styles would initiate the breakup of a relationship. Therefore, people with dismissing attachment styles would be expected to attribute
the initiation of the breakup to self, rather than to other. Thus, the following hypothesis was posited:

H4: Persons with dismissing attachment styles will more frequently attribute the initiation of the breakup to self than to other.

The preoccupied attachment style is characterized by an over dependence on others (Bartholomew, 1990). People with this attachment style "strive for self-acceptance by gaining the acceptance of valued others" (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991, p. 227). Furthermore, recall that people with preoccupied attachment styles have an insatiable desire to gain others' approval (Bartholomew, 1990). If gaining approval and acceptance from others are the defining characteristics of persons with preoccupied attachment styles, then it is probable that they would not be the ones who initiate the breakup of the relationship. Therefore, persons with preoccupied attachment styles would be expected to attribute the initiation of the breakup to other, rather than to self. Based upon this rationale, the following hypothesis was offered:

H5: Persons with preoccupied attachment styles will more frequently attribute the initiation of the breakup to other than to self.

The fearful attachment style is also identified by a view of self as unworthy of love and acceptance. People with fearful attachment styles do have a strong desire for social
contact, but they have strong fear of rejection as well (Bartholomew, 1990). Furthermore, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) found that persons with fearful attachment styles reported problems reflecting a lack of assertiveness, and had a "tendency to assume a subservient role in close relationships" (p. 230). Because of their desire for social contact, and their lack of assertiveness, persons with fearful attachment styles would not be expected to initiate the breakup of a relationship. Therefore, like the preoccupied style, people with fearful attachment styles would be expected to attribute the initiation of the breakup to other, rather than to self. The following hypothesis predicted this relationship:

H6: Persons with fearful attachment styles will more frequently attribute the initiation of the breakup to other than to self.

The secure attachment style is characterized by a positive view of both self and others. People with secure attachment styles are equally comfortable depending on others and having others depend on them (Bartholomew, 1990). Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) found that the secure attachment style was not associated with a strong desire to control relationships, nor was it associated with a tendency to play subservient roles in relationships. These findings do not offer evidence as to whether or not persons with secure attachment styles would be more likely to initiate
the breakup of relationships. Therefore, when discussing persons with secure attachment styles, the attributions about who initiated the breakup were not easily hypothesized. For this reason, the following research question was asked:

RQ2: Do persons with secure attachment styles have a tendency to attribute the initiation of the breakup to self or to other?

Attachment Styles and Disengagement Strategies

Attachment theory suggests that people have working "mental models" of love. These models contain a person's beliefs and perceptions about how relationships should function, and how they should behave as a relational partner. These models are not stagnant, but accommodate new experiences as people go through life (Bowlby, 1973). Carnelly and Janoff-Bulman (1992) found that with each relationship, people integrate personal experiences into their own relationship schemata. Thus, their mental model of love is often modified.

Stating that people modify their mental models of love as they experience different relationships (Carnelly & Janoff-Bulman, 1992) implies that most people experience more than one important relationship in their lifetime. Therefore, some of the relationships were inevitably terminated. The manner in which these relationships were terminated (the disengagement process) are part of the experiences that are
integrated into a person's model of love and relationships. As noted, the disengagement process is usually an experience that stands out in a person's mind, and can have potentially devastating effects. Therefore, it is possible that the disengagement process has an effect on a person's mental model of love, thus influencing the development and possible modification of the person's attachment style.

Research has suggested that adult attachment styles can be modified by various love experiences. Collins and Read (1990) found that new relational partners can often help assimilate new images of self and other into a person's current attachment style. Kobak and Hazan (1991) pointed out that attachment styles must be accommodated to fit models of self and other that are produced by new relational experiences. These findings are in line with Bowlby's (1973) work, which was clear to point out that working models must be updated to accommodate changing circumstances. Bowlby believed that one of these circumstances which often requires an update in attachment style is the loss of an adult attachment relationship.

Romantic relationships have been studied as some of the most important attachments that people experience (Simpson, 1987, 1990; Kobak & Hazan, 1991; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Collins & Read, 1990). Therefore, the demise of such a relationship could possibly illicit the type of attachment style modification that Bowlby (1978) referred to, or a
shift from one prototype to another as Bartholomew (1990) discussed. Previous research suggests that the use of disengagement strategies does have the potential to alter views of self and other (Wilmot, et al., 1985; Baxter, 1982; Stephen, 1987). If attachment styles are developed in part by a person's past experiences (Bowlby, 1973, Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bartholomew, 1990), then attachment styles might vary in according to the attributions a person makes about the disengagement strategy used to end the relationship.

In order to examine the possible relationship between attachment styles and previous experiences with disengagement strategies, each strategy must be examined in terms of its potential influences on a person's views of self and other. Attributions concerning who initiated the breakup must also be considered. As discussed previously, a person may attribute self or other as the initiator who employed the disengagement strategy to end the relationship. Therefore, attachment styles may vary according to attributions about the strategy the initiator employed, and whether or not the initiator (person employing the strategy) is attributed as self or other.

The attributions about the cause of the relationship breakup could be closely linked to a person's attachment style. For instance, persons might attribute the cause of the breakup to other because they have a dismissing attachment style that holds a negative view of others.
Attributions about who initiated the breakup might also be linked to attributions about the cause of the breakup. For example, the person with the dismissing attachment style who attributes the cause of the breakup to the other, might also initiate the breakup because they believe the other person has given them cause to do so. It is possible then, that attributions of cause and attributions of who initiated the breakup are related. Likewise, if the attributions of who caused the breakup are controlled for, then the expected differences due to influences of attributions about attachment style might not be observed. Therefore, the attributions about the cause of the relationship breakup were not covaried, so as to avoid a reduction in the true variance attributed to the "independent variables" of attachment style and initiation of the breakup.

Although a link between causal attributions, attachment styles, and attributions about who initiated the breakup was expected, the influences of this link were not clear. Perhaps attributions about the cause of the breakup have an influence on attributions of initiation, or even the choice of a particular disengagement strategies. For this reason, the following research question was asked:

RQ3: How are attributions about the cause of the breakup related to attributions of who initiated the breakup, and attributions about the use of disengagement strategies?
The last five hypotheses are concerned with the relationship between disengagement strategies, attachment styles, and attributions of initiation of the breakup. Each hypothesis deals with the probability that a particular disengagement strategy would be employed more often considering individuals' attachment styles, and whether or not initiation of the breakup is attributed to self or other. Figure 2 diagrams the hypothesized relationship between these variables.

Positive tone and de-escalation strategies take into consideration the partner's feelings, and are used when the disengager does not want to hurt the other person (Cody, 1982). Both the positive tone and de-escalation strategies appear to be employed when the disengager has a concern for the other person. This view of others as worthy of concern is also present in the secure and preoccupied attachment styles (Bartholomew, 1990). It would seems probable then, that persons with secure and preoccupied attachment styles would make attributions to the use of positive tone or de-escalation strategies. However, that attributions of who initiated the breakup should also be considered.

As stated above, persons with secure attachment styles have positive views of both self and others. They would be more likely to report experiences with disengagement strategies that did not harm their own or others' self-esteem and sense of self-value. The use of positive tone or
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*Means are predicted to be higher in these cells for these disengagement strategies.

**Figure 2.** Hypothesized Relationship Between Attachment Styles, Attribution of Initiation and Disengagement Strategies.
de-escalation strategies increases the likelihood that both relational partners leave the relationship without developing negative views of self or other. Therefore, whether or not the attribution of initiation of the breakup is to self or other, persons with secure attachment styles would be expected to make more attributions to the use of positive tone or de-escalation strategies than to other disengagement strategies.

As discussed previously, persons with preoccupied attachment styles have negative views of self, but positive views of others. If persons with preoccupied attachment styles attributed the initiation of the breakup to self, then it would be expected that they would also report taking steps not to hurt the others feelings or damage their self-esteem. However, because persons with preoccupied attachment styles have such negative views of self, it is possible that others have not been so kind to them when initiating the breakup of a relationship. Based upon this reasoning, it would be expected that persons with preoccupied attachment styles would make more attributions to the use of positive tone or de-escalation strategies when they have attributed the initiation of the breakup to self, but not when they have attributed the initiation of the breakup to others.

By combining the influences on views of self and other associated with the use of positive tone and de-escalation
strategies with attributions of who initiated the breakup, the following hypotheses were created:

H7: The attribution of the use of positive tone disengagement strategies will be greater for persons with secure attachment styles and for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attribute the initiation of the breakup to self, than for persons with dismissing and fearful attachment styles, and persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attribute the initiation of the breakup to other.

H8: The attribution of the use of de-escalation disengagement strategies will be greater for persons with secure attachment styles and for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attribute the initiation of the breakup to self, than for persons with dismissing and fearful attachment styles, and persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attribute the initiation of the breakup to other.

Behavioral de-escalation tactics are characterized by the disengager withdrawing from the relationship without offering an explanation for the breakup (Banks, 1982). The disengager using this strategy does not take the feelings of the other person into consideration when ending the relationship. Persons who attribute the initiation of the breakup to self would be expected to report the use behavioral de-escalation only if they held negative views of
others. Persons with dismissing and fearful attachment styles do have negative views of others. Therefore, it seems likely that persons with dismissing and fearful attachment styles who attribute the initiation of the breakup to self would also tend to make more attributions to the use of behavioral de-escalation strategies to end the relationship.

When a disengager withdraws from a relationship without offering an explanation or addressing the other's concerns, the other person is left to comprise his/her own reason for the breakup. As Stephen (1987) pointed out, partners often search for causal accounts as to why the relationship ended. When the disengager has not provided a reason, it is possible that the person would assume that he/she is not desirable, is unworthy of love, or incapable of sustaining a relationship. These assumptions could lead to a lowering of the person's self-esteem, resulting in a negative view of self. Because persons with fearful and preoccupied attachment styles have negative views of self, it is quite possible that they might have been on the receiving end of behavioral de-escalation strategies in the past. Therefore, when the initiation of the breakup is attributed to other, persons with fearful and preoccupied attachment styles would be expected to make greater attributions to the use of behavioral de-escalation strategies.

Recall that the dismissing attachment style identifies persons who perceive relationships as being less important
than personal autonomy (Bartholomew, 1990). Although persons with dismissing styles have positive views of self, their negative views of others may be related to negative experiences with previous relational partners. Therefore, if past relational partners have employed behavioral de-escalation strategies to end the relationship, persons with dismissing attachment styles may have developed attribution about others as uncaring people who end relationships without offering any kind of explanation. Furthermore, because persons with a dismissing attachment style have positive views of self, the reasoning that they comprise for the breakup may involve negative attributes or faults of the other person, not themselves. Thus, the dismissing person might not interpret the partner's withdrawal as a reflection of their own unworthiness, but more as a negative characteristic of others as relational partners. Therefore, if the initiation of the breakup is attributed to other, it would be probable that persons with dismissing attachment styles might make more attributions to the use of behavioral de-escalation strategies to end the relationship.

By considering the possible attributions of who initiated the breakup and the relationship between the dismissing, fearful, and preoccupied attachment styles and the possible influences of behavioral de-escalation on views of self and other, the following hypothesis was suggested:
H9: The attribution of the use of behavioral de-escalation strategies will be greater for persons with dismissing attachment styles, for persons with fearful attachment styles, and for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attribute the initiation of the breakup to other, than for persons with secure attachment styles and persons with preoccupied styles who attribute the initiation of the breakup to self.

When a disengager uses justification strategies, they do offer the other partner a reason for the termination. However, this reason does not necessarily take the other person's feelings into consideration (Cody, 1982). The reason given by the disengager may contain negative comments about the other person and their abilities as a relational partner. Although the partner has offered a reason for the breakup, the reason could be damaging to the partners' self-esteem. Because of this lack of concern for the other partner, it would be expected that persons with negative views of others would be more likely to employ this type of strategy when initiating a breakup.

Because of their negative views of others, persons with dismissing and fearful attachment styles would initially appear to be the most likely to make attributions to the use of justification strategies when the initiation of the breakup is attributed to self. However, the fearful
attachment style is also identified by a negative view of self; consequently, persons with a fearful attachment style would feel less confident in using justification strategies. As discussed earlier, persons with a fearful attachment style believe that their own unworthiness is the cause of relationship failures. Their negative views of others may not be a result of others' bad behavior in relationships, but rather a perception of others as a source of possible rejection. Therefore, persons with fearful attachment styles would probably make fewer attributions to a strategy which has the potential of placing the other partner at fault for the demise of the relationship. For this reason, only the dismissing attachment still would be expected to make greater attributions to the use of justification strategies when the initiation of the breakup is attributed to self.

As noted earlier, it is possible that persons with dismissing attachment styles may have negative views of others and relationships in general as a possible consequence of previous negative relational experiences. For instance, persons with dismissing attachment styles might have developed a view of others as uncaring if past relational partners had used justification strategies that made personal attacks or blamed them for the breakup. Therefore, if the initiation of the breakup is attributed to other, it appears probable that persons with dismissing
attachment styles would make more attributions to the use of justification strategies.

As previously mentioned, persons with preoccupied and fearful attachment styles do have negative views of self (Bartholomew, 1990). Because the use of justification strategies can be damaging to a person's self-esteem, it is probable that persons with preoccupied and fearful attachment styles might have experienced a disengager employing justification strategies which damaged their sense of self-worth and value. Therefore, if the initiation of the breakup is attributed to other, persons with preoccupied and fearful attachment styles would be likely to make more attributions to the use of justification strategies.

Based upon the relationship between the dismissing, fearful, and preoccupied attachment styles and the ways in which justification strategies may influence views of self and other, the following hypothesis was posited:

H10: The attribution of the use of justification disengagement strategies will be greater for persons with dismissing attachment styles, and for persons with preoccupied and fearful attachment styles who attribute the initiation of the breakup to other, than for persons with secure attachment styles and persons with preoccupied and fearful attachment styles who attribute the initiation of the breakup to self.
Negative identity management strategies are those which do not show concern for the other person, do not offer a full explanation for the breakup, and often make the person feel that the breakup of the relationship is due to their own unworthiness (Banks et al., 1982). Banks et al. refer to these strategies as the rude behavior that is usually a last resort when other attempts at ending the relationship have failed. Obviously, persons who might employ this strategy do not show concern for the feelings of others. Therefore, persons with negative views of others would seem more likely to employ this type of strategy.

While persons with both dismissing and fearful attachment styles have negative views of others, persons with fearful attachment styles also have negative views of self. Therefore, there may be differences in how these two attachment styles are related to the use of negative identity management strategies.

As noted above, persons with dismissing attachment styles have negative views of others, and prefer independence over relationships. It seems likely that if a person with a dismissing attachment style were the one who initiated the breakup, they would be willing to resort more often to negative identity management if necessary to end the relationship. Therefore, it would seem that when the initiation of the breakup is attributed to self, persons with dismissing attachment styles would make greater
attributions to the use of negative identity management strategies.

While persons with fearful attachment styles do have negative views of others, they remain fearful that the failure of the relationship is due to their own faults and unworthiness. For this reason, it seems improbable that persons with fearful attachment styles would often resort to actively manipulating others into believing that the breakup was their fault. Therefore, it would not be expected that persons with fearful attachment styles would make attributions to the use of negative identity management if the initiation of the breakup is attributed to self.

As in the case of justification strategies, negative identity management strategies have the ability to leave the person on the receiving end of the strategy with damaged self-esteem, and a feeling of inadequacy as a relational partner. Because of the negative views of self held by the preoccupied and fearful attachment styles, it seems quite possible that persons with these styles might have experienced (or attributed) a disengager employing negative identity management to end a relationship with them. Therefore, persons with preoccupied and fearful attachment styles would be expected to make more attributions to the use of negative identity management when the initiation of the breakup is attributed to other.

The final hypothesis addresses the relationship between
negative identity management, attributions of who initiated the breakup, and influences on views of self and other which are associated with dismissing, preoccupied, and fearful attachment styles.

**H11:** The attribution of the use of negative identity management disengagement strategies will be greater for persons with dismissing attachment styles, and for persons with preoccupied and fearful attachment styles who attribute the initiation of the breakup to other, than for persons with secure attachment styles and persons with preoccupied and fearful attachment styles who attribute the initiation of the breakup to self.

It should be noted that despite the negative view of others held by the fearful attachment style, only the behavioral de-escalation strategy was expected to be more highly associated with breakups that are initiated by self. Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) pointed out that fearful persons are low in self-confidence and do not feel comfortable controlling relationships. Because the justification and negative identity management strategies require the disengager to openly address the relational problems and/or place blame on the other partner, it seems improbable that persons with fearful attachment styles would very often choose to use these types of strategies.
Recall that persons with fearful attachment styles were not expected to attribute the initiation of the breakup to self in the first place. In the case that they do attribute self as the initiator, it would be expected that, because of their negative views of others, they would not go out of their way to ensure the others feelings are taken into consideration by using positive tone or de-escalation strategies. However, it would also not be probable for them to feel confident enough to use such verbally direct and potentially accusatory strategies such as justification or negative identity management. Therefore, the fearful person who initiates the breakup might choose a strategy that is somewhere in the middle, such as behavioral de-escalation. By withdrawing from the relationship and avoiding the other partner, persons with fearful attachment styles can end the relationship without direct confrontation. This avoidance of others is characteristic of the fearful attachment style that Bartholomew (1990) identified.

The above hypotheses were based upon the possible influences of previous disengagement strategies on current attachment styles. They were not intended to predict a direct causal relationship between past disengagement strategies and current attachment styles. If there is a causal link between disengagement strategies and attachment styles, it is most likely to occur when the other person initiates the breakup. In this situation, persons views' of
self and other could possibly be affected by the strategies others have employed to end a relationship.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature concerning attachment styles, disengagement strategies, and attribution theory. The hypotheses and research questions for the study were also provided. Chapter 3 will discuss the procedure used to obtain the sample, the measurements employed to gather the research data, and the method used to analyze each hypothesis and research question.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The previous chapter provided a review of the literature concerning attachment styles, disengagement strategies, and attribution theory. The hypotheses and research questions were also introduced. This chapter will discuss the procedure used to obtain the sample, the measurements used to collect the necessary data, and the methods employed for the analysis of the hypotheses and research questions.

Sample and Procedure

A total of 532 undergraduate students at the University of North Texas were surveyed for this study. From this total, 472 were enrolled in an introductory communication course, 24 were enrolled in a small group communication course, and 36 were enrolled in an interpersonal communication course. It was necessary to survey such a large number of students due to the criteria that the study's sample had to meet.

The researcher first obtained approval for the use of human subjects from the University of North Texas Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A). The course instructors distributed the measurement packet which
included a demographic questionnaire, the measures for attachment styles, attribution of who initiated the breakup, attributions about the cause of the relationship breakup, and attributions about the use of disengagement strategies (see below & Appendices B, C, D, E, & F). The students were allowed 20 minutes to complete the forms. The instructors then collected the measurement forms and returned them to the researcher.

The final sample consisted of 213 respondents who met the criteria of having had a romantic relationship breakup within the past year, and who's previous and current romantic relationships were heterosexual relationships. To determine whether or not the breakup had occurred within the last year, the researcher examined how long ago the breakup began, and how long ago the breakup finally ended the relationship. To be selected, the larger of these two numbers could not exceed one year. The researcher then inspected each measurement packet to ensure that the biological sex of the former partner represented a heterosexual relationship. If the respondent indicated being in a current relationship, the researcher checked to see that the biological sex of the current partner also represented a heterosexual relationship.

Of the 213 respondents, 204 students were enrolled in an introductory communication course, 6 students were enrolled in an interpersonal communication course, and 3 students
were enrolled in an undergraduate small group communication course. Eighty-nine of the respondents in the sample were males and 124 were females. The average amount of time since the breakup began was .50 years. The average amount of time since the breakup finally ended the relationship was .40 years.

A sample was also taken to provide test-retest reliability on respondents' primary attachment style, attribution of initiation of the breakup, and attribution to the cause of the breakup. One hundred and fifty of the previously described measurement packets were paired with 150 smaller packets which contained only the demographic questionnaire, the attachment style measure, and the measures for initiation of the breakup and cause of the breakup. The smaller packets were numbered to correspond to the larger packets, and were attached accordingly to the back of each larger packet. Students were asked to fill out the larger packet in class and return it to their instructor. They were asked to complete the smaller packet just before the beginning of their next class meeting, and then return it to their instructor. When the students had completed the questionnaires, the instructor returned both sets of packets to the researcher.

A total of 107 test-retest packets were returned to the researcher. Of this 107 returned, 33 of the respondents also met all of the criteria for the main study. However,
the remaining 74 of the respondents did not meet the criteria for the study. These responses were used only for test-retest reliability procedures.

**Measurements**

Attachment styles were measured using a rank order form. Respondents were asked to rank each of Bartholomew's (1990) four attachment style prototypes according to how well each best described their feelings (Appendix B). The prototype that the respondent ranked as a 1 was considered the respondent's primary and current attachment style. Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) had reported inter-rater reliabilities with alpha coefficients ranging from .87 to .95. This study found a test-retest correlation for 107 respondents' ranked attachment styles produced a Spearman Rho coefficient of .76, \( p < .05 \).

Attributions as to who initiated the breakup of the relationship were measured by asking respondents to choose either their partner or themselves as the person who initiated the breakup (Appendix C). The test-retest correlation for initiation of breakup for 107 respondents produced a phi coefficient of .94, \( p < .05 \).

Attributions about the primary cause of the relationship were rank ordered. Respondents were asked to rank three statements according to how well each statement best described the primary cause of the relationship breakup (Appendix D). The statements allowed the respondents to
choose themselves, their partner, or situational factors as the primary cause of the breakup. Test-retest correlations for the causes of the breakup for 107 respondents yielded a Spearman Rho coefficient of .82, p < .05.

Attributions to the use of disengagement strategies were measured by using Cody's (1982) categorization of five different types of disengagement strategies. The five strategies vary with respect to the degree that each considers the other partner's feelings when ending the relationship. The scale included six items which measured the use of positive tone strategies, six items which measured the use of de-escalation strategies, four items which measured the use of behavioral de-escalation strategies, six items which measured the use of justification strategies, and six items which measured the use of negative identity management strategies. Cody (1982) reported the following alpha coefficients for each type of strategy: positive tone = .79, de-escalation strategies = .80, behavioral de-escalation strategies = .91, justification strategies = .81, negative identity management strategies = .84.

Respondents were given a 5-point response format to rate either their partner's use (Appendix E) or their use (Appendix F) of the different strategies (5 = I (or he/she) definitely did/said this), depending on who initiated the breakup. The reliabilities for 213 respondents in terms of
alpha coefficients for the five different categories were as follows: positive tone strategies = .84, de-escalation strategies = .81, behavioral de-escalation strategies = .90, justification strategies = .84, negative identity management strategies = .88.

Method of Analysis

A one-way chi square for the primary cause (self, other, situational factors) for persons with secure attachment styles was used to test the first hypothesis. A one-way chi square for the primary cause (self, other, situational factors) for persons with dismissing attachment styles was used to test the second hypothesis. Hypothesis three was tested with a one-way chi square for the primary cause (self, other, situational factors) for persons with preoccupied attachment styles. The first research question was examined with a one-way chi square for the primary cause (self, other, situational factors) for persons with fearful attachment styles.

A one-way chi square for the initiation (self, other) of the breakup for persons with dismissing attachment styles was used to test the fourth hypothesis. The fifth hypothesis was tested by using a one-way chi square for the initiation (self, other) of the breakup for persons with preoccupied attachment styles. A one-way chi square for the initiation (self, other) of the breakup for persons with fearful attachment styles was used to test the sixth
hypothesis. The second research question was examined with a one-way chi square for the initiation (self, other) of the breakup for persons with secure attachment styles.

A two-way chi square for the primary cause (self, other, situational factors) of the breakup and attributions of initiation (self, other) was used to examine the first part of research question three. A one-way analysis of variance of the primary cause of the breakup (self, other, situational factors) in relation to the use of each disengagement strategy (positive-tone, de-escalation, behavioral de-escalation, justification, negative identity management) was used to analyze the second part of research question three.

Hypothesis seven was tested with a two-way analysis of variance of the four attachment styles (secure, preoccupied, dismissing, fearful) and the two attributions as to who initiated the breakup (self, other) with the measured (dependent) variable being attributions about the use of positive-tone disengagement strategies.

Hypothesis eight was tested with a two-way analysis of variance of the four attachment styles (secure, preoccupied, dismissing, fearful) and the two attributions as to who initiated the breakup (self, other) with the measured (dependent) variable being attributions about the use of de-escalation disengagement strategies.
The ninth hypothesis was tested with a two-way analysis of variance of the four attachment styles (secure, preoccupied, dismissing, fearful) and the two attributions as to who initiated the breakup (self, other) with the measured (dependent) variable being attributions about the use of behavioral de-escalation disengagement strategies.

The tenth hypothesis was tested with a two-way analysis of variance of the four attachment styles (secure, preoccupied, dismissing, fearful) and the two attributions as to who initiated the breakup (self, other) with the measured (dependent) variable being attributions about the use of justification disengagement strategies.

Hypothesis eleven was tested with a two-way analysis of variance of the four attachment styles (secure, preoccupied, dismissing, fearful) and the two attributions as to who initiated the breakup (self, other) with the measured (dependent) variable being attributions about the use of negative identity management disengagement strategies.

Pre-planned t-tests and Scheffe's t-tests were calculated in order to test for significant differences in attributions about the use of disengagement strategies between persons with different attachment styles and different attributions of initiation. These tests were employed for hypotheses seven, eight, nine, ten and eleven.

Summary

Chapter three has described the sample and the procedure
used to obtain the data for the study. The measurements employed and the method of analysis were also explained. The next chapter will report the results obtained from the analysis of each hypothesis and each research question.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

Chapter 3 described the sample and procedures used to collect the data for this study. The method used to analyze each hypothesis and research question was also explained. This chapter will report the results obtained from the analysis of the data. Included in this chapter will be the results of the tests for homogeneity of variance, the results observed for each hypothesis, and the findings observed from the examination of each research question.

Results for Homogeneity of Variance

Tests for homogeneity of variance were run on the two-way analysis of variance (4 styles X 3 initiation categories) on the five dependent variables (disengagement strategies). For positive tone disengagement strategies alpha = .96. For de-escalation disengagement strategies alpha = .50. For behavioral de-escalation disengagement strategies alpha = .31. For justification disengagement strategies alpha = .86. For negative identity management disengagement strategies alpha = .56. Because none of the values exceeded the critical value of .05, no lack of homogeneity of variance was detected.
Results for First Hypothesis

A one-way chi square for the primary cause (self, other, situational factors) of the breakup for persons with secure attachment styles was used to test the first hypothesis. The first test using equal probabilities was significant \([\chi^2(1) = 14.30, p < .05, \text{ one-tailed}]\). Of the people with secure attachment styles, 39 attributed the cause of the breakup to situational factors and 12 attributed the cause of the breakup to self (see Table 1). The second test using equal probabilities was significant \([\chi^2(1) = 3.06, p < .05, \text{ one-tailed}]\). Of the people with secure attachment styles, 39 attributed the cause of the breakup to situational factors and 25 attributed the cause of the breakup to other (see Table 1). Hypothesis one was supported.

Results for Second Hypothesis

A one-way chi square for the primary cause (self, other, situational factors) for persons with dismissing attachment styles was used to test the second hypothesis. Because the frequencies were equal to or opposite of the direction predicted, the chi square test was inappropriate and the hypothesis was not supported. Of the people with dismissing attachment styles, 11 attributed the cause of the breakup to self, which was the same as the attribution of the cause to other, and 24 people attributed the cause of the breakup to situational factors (see Table 1).
Table 1

Frequencies of the Attributed Cause of the Breakup for Each Attachment Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attachment Style</th>
<th>Attributed Cause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismissing</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fearful</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results for Third Hypothesis

A one-way chi square for the primary cause (self, other, situational factors) for persons with preoccupied attachment styles was used to test the third hypothesis. Because the frequencies were opposite of the direction predicted, the chi square test was inappropriate and the hypothesis was not supported. Of the people with preoccupied attachment styles, 4 attributed the cause of the breakup to self, 17 attributed the cause of the breakup to other, and 14 attributed the cause of the breakup to situational factors (see Table 1).
Results for First Research Question

A one-way, two-tailed chi square for the primary cause (self, other, situational factors) of the breakup for persons with fearful attachment styles was used to examine the first research question. The first test produced no significant differences between attributions of cause to self and attributions of cause to other [$x^2(1) = 2.20, p < .05$, two-tailed]. The second test produced no significant differences between attributions of cause to other and attributions of cause to situational factors [$x^2(1) = 2.55, p < .05$, two-tailed]. The third test produced no significant differences between attributions of cause to self and attributions of cause to situational factors [$x^2(1) = 1.06, p < .05$, two-tailed]. Of the people with fearful attachment styles, 6 attributed the cause of the breakup to self, 25 attributed the cause of the breakup to other, and 21 attributed the cause of the breakup to situational factors.

Results for Fourth Hypothesis

A one-way chi square for the initiation (self, other) of the breakup for persons with dismissing attachment styles was used to test hypothesis four. The test using equal probabilities was significant [$x^2(1) = 9.38, p < .05$, one-tailed]. Of the people with dismissing attachment styles, 34 attributed the initiation of the breakup to self and 13 attributed the initiation of the breakup to other (see Table
Because significantly more people attributed the initiation of the breakup to self than to other, the hypothesis was supported.

**Results for Fifth Hypothesis**

A one-way chi square for the initiation (self, other) of the breakup for persons with preoccupied attachment styles was used to test hypothesis five. Because the frequencies were opposite the direction predicted, the chi square test was inappropriate and the hypothesis was not supported. Of the people with preoccupied attachment styles, 18 attributed the initiation of the breakup to self and 19 attributed the initiation of the breakup to other (see Table 2).

**Results for Sixth Hypothesis**

A one-way chi square for the initiation (self, other) of the breakup for persons with fearful attachment styles was used to test hypothesis six. The test using equal probabilities was not significant \[x^2(1) = 1.24, p < .05,\] one-tailed]. Of the people with fearful attachment styles, 22 attributed the initiation of the breakup to self and 30 attributed the initiation of the breakup to other (see Table 2). The hypothesis was not supported.

**Results for Second Research Question**

A one-way chi square for the initiation (self, other) of the breakup for persons with secure attachment styles was used to examine research question two. The test produced no significant differences between attributions of initiation
Table 2
Frequencies of Attributed Initiation for Each Attachment Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attachment Style</th>
<th>Initiator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismissing</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fearful</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

to self and attributions of initiation to other \([x^2(1) = 0.0002, p < .05, two-tailed]\). Of the people with secure attachment styles, 42 attributed the initiation of the breakup to self and 35 attributed the initiation of the breakup to other (see Table 2).

Results for Third Research Question

A two-way chi square for the primary cause (self, other, situational factors) of the breakup and attributions of initiation (self, other) was used to examine the first part of research question three. The overall chi square was significant \([x^2(2) = 11.95, p < .05, two-tailed]\). A post hoc comparison of who initiated the breakup (self, other) when the cause of the breakup was attributed to self produced
significant differences between attributions of initiation to self and attributions of initiation to other \[x^2(2) = 9.90, p < .05, \text{two-tailed}\]. Of the people who attributed the primary cause of the breakup to self, 27 attributed the initiation of the breakup to self and 6 attributed the initiation of the breakup to other (see Table 3). Analysis of variance (1-way) of the primary cause of the breakup (self, other, situational factors) was used to analyze the second part of research question three concerning the relationship between the primary cause of the breakup and the use of a particular disengagement strategy (positive tone, de-escalation, behavioral de-escalation, justification, negative identity management). A significant main effect for cause on positive tone was observed \[F (2, 206) = 5.36, p = .0054\]. No significant main effect for cause on de-escalation was observed \[F (2, 206) = 1.01, p = .3661\]. The analysis found a significant main effect for cause on behavioral de-escalation \[F (2, 206) = 4.64, p = .0107\], but not for cause on justification \[F (2, 206) = 2.23, p = .1101\] or cause on negative identity management \[F (2, 206) = 1.98, p = .1410\].

The use of positive tone disengagement strategies was observed to be greater for persons who attributed the cause of the breakup to self (\(M = 21.61\)) than for persons who attributed the cause of the breakup to the other partner (\(M = 17.41\)). The use of positive tone disengagement strategies
Table 3

Frequencies of Attributed Initiation of the Breakup for Each Attributed Cause of the Breakup

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Initiator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational Factors</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

was also observed to be greater for persons who attributed the cause of the breakup to situational factors \( M = 20.22 \) than for persons who attributed the cause of the breakup to the other partner \( M = 17.41 \) No differences were observed in the use of de-escalation disengagement strategies between people who attributed the cause of the breakup to self, other, or situational factors (see Table 4).

The use of behavioral de-escalation disengagement strategies was observed to be greater for persons who attributed the cause of the breakup to other \( M = 9.22 \) than for persons who attributed the cause of the breakup to self \( M = 6.39 \). The use of behavioral de-escalation disengagement strategies was also observed to be greater
Table 4

Means for Each Disengagement Strategy for Each Attributed Cause of the Breakup

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disengagement Strategy</th>
<th>Attributed Cause</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Situational Factors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Tone</td>
<td>21.61&lt;sub&gt;a&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>17.41&lt;sub&gt;ab&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>20.22&lt;sub&gt;b&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De-escalation</td>
<td>14.97</td>
<td>13.14</td>
<td>13.32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral De-escalation</td>
<td>6.40&lt;sub&gt;a&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>9.22&lt;sub&gt;ab&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>7.28&lt;sub&gt;b&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification</td>
<td>19.03&lt;sub&gt;a&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>15.89&lt;sub&gt;a&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>16.95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Identity Management</td>
<td>14.12</td>
<td>11.54</td>
<td>11.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Row means with same subscripts are significantly different, p < .05, two-tailed.

for persons who attributed the cause of the breakup to other (M = 9.22) than for persons who attributed the cause of the breakup to situational factors (M = 7.28).

The use of justification disengagement strategies was observed to be greater for persons who attributed the cause of the breakup to self (M = 19.03) than for persons who
attributed the cause of the breakup to other (M = 15.89).

No differences were observed in the use of negative identity management disengagement strategies between people who attributed the cause of the breakup to self, other, or situational factors (see Table 4).

Results for Seventh Hypothesis

Analysis of variance (2-way) of attachment styles (secure, dismissing, preoccupied, fearful) X initiation (self, other) with appropriate pre-planned t-tests was used to test the seventh hypothesis regarding the use of positive tone disengagement strategies. No significant attachment style X initiation interaction effect on positive tone was observed [F (3, 205) = 0.21, p = .8918]. No significant main effect for initiation on positive tone was observed [F (1, 205) = 0.70, p = .4048]. A significant main effect for attachment style on positive tone was observed [F (3, 205) = 3.08, p = .0284].

The use of positive tone disengagement strategies was not observed to be greater for persons with secure attachment styles than for persons with dismissing attachment styles; rather the means were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 5). The use of positive tone disengagement strategies, however, was observed to be greater [t(127) = 2.7, p < .05] for persons with secure attachment styles (M = 20.12) than for persons with fearful attachment styles (M = 16.62), accounting for five percent
Table 5

Means on Positive Tone Disengagement Strategies Among Hypothesized Attachment Style and Initiation Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesized Category</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Significance Test*</th>
<th>Direction of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secure 20.12 (N=77)</td>
<td>Dismissing 20.83 (N=47)</td>
<td>no test</td>
<td>opposite direction hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure 20.12 (N=77)</td>
<td>Fearful 16.62 (N=52)</td>
<td>p&lt;.05 direction</td>
<td>hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure 20.12 (N=77)</td>
<td>Preoccupied other initiator 20.16 (N=19)</td>
<td>no test</td>
<td>opposite direction hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupied self initiator 20.39 (N=18)</td>
<td>Dismissing 20.83 (N=47)</td>
<td>no test</td>
<td>opposite direction hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupied self initiator 20.39 (N=18)</td>
<td>Fearful 16.62 (N=52)</td>
<td>p&lt;.05 direction</td>
<td>hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupied self initiator 20.39 (N=18)</td>
<td>Preoccupied other initiator 20.16 (N=19)</td>
<td>p&gt;.05 direction</td>
<td>hypothesized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significance of t-ratios for planned comparisons, one-tailed.
of the variance. The use of positive tone disengagement strategies was not observed to be greater for persons with secure attachment style than for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other; rather the means were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 5).

The use of positive tone disengagement strategies was not observed to be greater for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self than for persons with dismissing attachment styles; rather the means were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 5). The use of positive tone disengagement strategies was observed to be greater \[t(68) = 1.89, p < .05\] for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self (\(M = 20.39\)) than for persons with fearful attachment styles (\(M = 16.62\)), accounting for five percent of the variance. The use of positive tone disengagement strategies was not observed to be greater for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self than for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other (see Table 5). Only two of the six sub-hypotheses were supported.

**Results for Eighth Hypothesis**

Analysis of variance (2-way) of attachment styles
(secure, dismissing, preoccupied, fearful) × initiation (self, other) with appropriate pre-planned t-tests was used to test the eighth hypothesis regarding the use of de-escalation disengagement strategies. No significant attachment style × initiation interaction effect on de-escalation was observed \[F (3, 205) = 0.49, p = .6874\]. No significant main effect for initiation on de-escalation was observed \[F (1, 205) = 3.36, p = .0681\]. A significant main effect for attachment style on de-escalation was observed \[F (3, 205) = 3.89, p = .0099\].

Means on the use of de-escalation disengagement strategies between persons with secure attachment styles and persons with dismissing attachment styles were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 6). The use of de-escalation disengagement strategies was not found to be greater for persons with secure attachment styles than for persons with fearful attachment styles (see Table 6). The use of de-escalation disengagement strategies was not found to be greater for persons with secure attachment styles than for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other (see Table 6).

Means on the use of de-escalation disengagement strategies between persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self
Table 6

Means on De-escalation Disengagement Strategies Among Hypothesized Attachment Style and Initiation Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesized Category</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Significance Test*</th>
<th>Direction of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>Dismissing</td>
<td>no test</td>
<td>opposite hypothesized**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.20 (N=77)</td>
<td>16.84 (N=47)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>Fearful</td>
<td>p&gt;.05 direction</td>
<td>hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.20 (N=77)</td>
<td>11.40 (N=52)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
<td>p&gt;.05 direction</td>
<td>hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.20 (N=77)</td>
<td>other initiator</td>
<td>12.37 (N=19)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
<td>Dismissing</td>
<td>no test</td>
<td>opposite direction hypothesized**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self initiator</td>
<td>13.85 (N=18)</td>
<td>16.84 (N=47)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
<td>Fearful</td>
<td>p&gt;.05 direction</td>
<td>hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self initiator</td>
<td>13.85 (N=18)</td>
<td>11.40 (N=52)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
<td>p&gt;.05 direction</td>
<td>hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self initiator</td>
<td>other initiator</td>
<td>13.85 (N=18)</td>
<td>12.37 (N=19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significance of t-ratios for planned comparisons, one-tailed.

**The critical K for Scheffe's LSD was computed for post hoc comparisons to the significant t obtained for the differences between these means. The differences were not significant [K < K (3.78), p < .05, two-tailed].
and persons with dismissing attachment styles were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 6). The use of de-escalation disengagement strategies was not found to be greater for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self than for persons with fearful attachment styles (see Table 6). The use of de-escalation disengagement strategies was not observed to be greater for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self than for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other (see Table 6). The hypothesis received no support.

Results for Ninth Hypothesis

Analysis of variance (2-way) of attachment styles (secure, dismissing, preoccupied, fearful) X initiation (self, other) with appropriate pre-planned t-tests was used to test the ninth hypothesis regarding the use of behavioral de-escalation disengagement strategies. No significant attachment style X initiation interaction effect on behavioral de-escalation was observed [$F(3, 205) = 0.90, p = .4425$]. A significant main effect for initiation on behavioral de-escalation was observed [$F(1, 205) = 9.15, p = .0028$]. No significant main effect for attachment style on behavioral de-escalation was observed [$F(3, 205) = 1.58, p = .1947$].
The use of behavioral de-escalation disengagement strategies was not observed to be greater for persons with dismissing attachment styles than for persons with secure attachment styles; rather, the means were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 7). The use of behavioral de-escalation disengagement strategies was not observed to be greater for persons with dismissing attachment styles than for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self (see Table 7).

The use of behavioral de-escalation disengagement strategies was observed to be greater \( [t(127) = 2.21, p < .05] \) for persons with fearful attachment styles (\( M = 9.42 \)) than for persons with secure attachment styles (\( M = 7.34 \)), accounting for four percent of the variance. The use of behavioral de-escalation disengagement strategies was found to be greater \( [t(68) = 2.12, p < .05] \) for persons with fearful attachment styles (\( M = 9.42 \)) than for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self (\( M = 6.33 \)), accounting for six percent of the variance.

The use of behavioral de-escalation disengagement strategies was observed to be greater \( [t(94) = 2.33, p < .05] \) for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other (\( M = 10.53 \)) than for persons with secure attachment styles.
Table 7
Means on Behavioral De-escalation Disengagement Strategies
Among Hypothesized Attachment Style and Initiation Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesized Category</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Significance Test*</th>
<th>Direction of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dismissing</td>
<td>Secure</td>
<td></td>
<td>opposite test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.98 (N=47)</td>
<td>7.34 (N=77)</td>
<td>no test</td>
<td>direction hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.98 (N=47)</td>
<td>self initiator</td>
<td>p&gt;.05</td>
<td>direction hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.33 (N=18)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fearful</td>
<td>Secure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.42 (N=52)</td>
<td>7.34 (N=77)</td>
<td>p&lt;.05</td>
<td>direction hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fearful</td>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.42 (N=52)</td>
<td>self initiator</td>
<td>p&lt;.05</td>
<td>direction hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.33 (N=18)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
<td>Secure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other initiator</td>
<td>7.34 (N=77)</td>
<td>p&lt;.05</td>
<td>direction hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.53 (N=19)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
<td>other initiator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self initiator</td>
<td>6.33 (N=18)</td>
<td>p&lt;.05</td>
<td>direction hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.53 (N=19)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significance of t-ratios for planned comparisons, one-tailed.
(M = 7.34), accounting for five percent of the variance. The use of behavioral de-escalation strategies was observed to be greater [t(35) = 2.39, p < .05] for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other (M = 10.53) than for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self (M = 6.33), accounting for 14 percent of the variance. The ninth hypothesis was partially supported. Four of the six sub-hypotheses were supported.

Results for Tenth Hypothesis

Analysis of variance (2-way) of attachment styles (secure, dismissing, preoccupied, fearful) X initiation (self, other) with appropriate pre-planned t-tests was used to test the tenth hypothesis regarding the use of justification disengagement strategies. No significant attachment style X initiation interaction effect on justification was observed [F (3, 205) = 0.30, p = .8281]. A significant main effect for initiation on justification was observed [F (1, 205) = 32.82, p = .0001]. No significant main effect for attachment style on justification was observed [F (3, 205) = 0.72, p = .5425].

The use of justification disengagement strategies was not observed to be greater for persons with dismissing attachment styles than for persons with secure attachment styles; rather, the means were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 8).
# Table 8

Means on Justification Disengagement Strategies Among Hypothesized Attachment Style and Initiation Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesized Category</th>
<th>Significance Test*</th>
<th>Direction of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dismissing</td>
<td>Security</td>
<td>no test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.06 (N=47)</td>
<td>17.61 (N=77)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
<td>self initiator</td>
<td>no test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.06 (N=47)</td>
<td>20.50 (N=18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fearful</td>
<td>self initiator</td>
<td>no test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.06 (N=47)</td>
<td>18.91 (N=22)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
<td>other initiator</td>
<td>no test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.00 (N=19)</td>
<td>17.61 (N=77)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
<td>self initiator</td>
<td>no test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.00 (N=19)</td>
<td>20.50 (N=18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fearful</td>
<td>self initiator</td>
<td>no test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.00 (N=19)</td>
<td>18.91 (N=22)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesized Category</th>
<th>Significance Test</th>
<th>Direction of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fearful &gt; other initiator</td>
<td>no opposite test hypothesized**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>17.61</td>
<td>(N=77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.67</td>
<td>(N=30)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Fearful > Preoccupied self initiator | no opposite test hypothesized** |
| other initiator | 12.67 | (N=30) |
| Preoccupied self initiator | 20.50 | (N=18) |

| Fearful > Fearful self initiator | no opposite test hypothesized** |
| other initiator | 12.67 | (N=30) |
| Fearful self initiator | 18.91 | (N=22) |

*Significance of t-ratios for planned comparisons, one-tailed.

**The critical K for Scheffe's LSD was computed for post hoc comparisons to the significant t obtained for the differences between these means. The differences were not significant [t < K (3.78), p < .05, two-tailed], except for the difference between persons with fearful attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other and persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self [t(46) = 3.88 > K(3.78), p < .05, two-tailed].

Means on the use of justification disengagement strategies between persons with dismissing attachment styles and persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 8).
The use of justification disengagement strategies was not observed to be greater for persons with dismissing attachment styles than for persons with fearful attachment styles who attributed the breakup of the relationship to self; rather, the means were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 8).

Means on the use of justification disengagement strategies between persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other and persons with secure attachment styles were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 8).

Means on the use of justification disengagement strategies between persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other and persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 8).

Means on the use of justification disengagement strategies between persons with fearful attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other and persons with fearful attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 8).

Means on the use of justification disengagement strategies between persons with fearful attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other and
persons with secure attachment styles were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 8).

Means on the use of justification disengagement strategies between persons with fearful attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other and persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 8).

Means on the use of justification disengagement strategies between persons with fearful attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other and persons with fearful attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 8). The hypothesis received no support.

Results for Eleventh Hypothesis

Analysis of variance (2-way) of attachment styles (secure, dismissing, preoccupied, fearful) X initiation (self, other) with appropriate pre-planned t-tests was used to test the eleventh hypothesis regarding the use of negative identity management disengagement strategies. No significant attachment style X initiation interaction effect on negative identity management was observed [$F (3, 205) = 0.22, p = .8808$]. No significant main effect for initiation on negative identity management was observed [$F (1, 205) = 2.39, p = .1235$]. No significant main effect for attachment
style on negative identity management was observed \[ F(3, 205) = 0.91, p = .4353 \].

The use of negative identity management disengagement strategies was not found to be greater for persons with dismissing attachment styles than for persons with secure attachment styles (see Table 9). The use of negative identity management disengagement strategies was not found to be greater for persons with dismissing attachment styles than for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self (see Table 9). The use of negative identity management disengagement strategies was not found to be greater for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other than for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self (see Table 9).

The use of negative identity management disengagement strategies was not observed to be greater for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other than for persons with secure attachment styles; rather, the means were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 9). The use of negative identity management disengagement strategies was not observed to be greater for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other than for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the
Table 9
Means on Negative Identity Management Disengagement Strategies Among Hypothesized Attachment Style and Initiation Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesized Category</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Significance Test*</th>
<th>Direction of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dismissing</td>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>p &gt; .05</td>
<td>direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.88 (N=47)</td>
<td>11.65 (N=77)</td>
<td></td>
<td>hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismissing</td>
<td>Preoccupied self initiator</td>
<td>p &gt; .05</td>
<td>direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.88 (N=47)</td>
<td>12.22 (N=18)</td>
<td></td>
<td>hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismissing</td>
<td>Fearful self initiator</td>
<td>p &gt; .05</td>
<td>direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.88 (N=47)</td>
<td>11.73 (N=22)</td>
<td></td>
<td>hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupied other initiator</td>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>no test</td>
<td>opposite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.63 (N=19)</td>
<td>11.65 (N=77)</td>
<td></td>
<td>direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupied other initiator</td>
<td>Preoccupied self initiator</td>
<td>no test</td>
<td>opposite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.63 (N=19)</td>
<td>12.22 (N=18)</td>
<td></td>
<td>direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupied other initiator</td>
<td>Fearful self initiator</td>
<td>no test</td>
<td>opposite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.63 (N=19)</td>
<td>11.73 (N=22)</td>
<td></td>
<td>direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>hypothesized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesized Category</th>
<th>Significance Test*</th>
<th>Direction of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fearful other initiator &gt; Secure</td>
<td>no test</td>
<td>opposite direction hypothesized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.40 (N=30)</td>
<td>11.65 (N=77)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fearful other initiator &gt; Preoccupied self initiator</th>
<th>no test</th>
<th>opposite direction hypothesized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.40 (N=30)</td>
<td>12.22 (N=18)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fearful other initiator &gt; Fearful self initiator</th>
<th>no test</th>
<th>opposite direction hypothesized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.40 (N=30)</td>
<td>11.73 (N=22)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significance of t-ratios for planned comparisons, one-tailed.

breakup to self; rather, the means were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 9). The use of negative identity management disengagement strategies was not observed to be greater for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other than for persons with fearful attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self; rather, the means were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 9).
The use of negative identity management disengagement strategies was not observed to be greater for persons with fearful attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other than for persons with secure attachment styles; rather, the means were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 9). The use of negative identity management disengagement strategies was not observed to be greater for persons with fearful attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other than for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self; rather, the means were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 9). The use of negative identity management disengagement strategies was not observed to be greater for persons with fearful attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other than for persons with fearful attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self; rather, the means were in the direction opposite of that hypothesized (see Table 9). The hypothesis received no support.

Study-wide Error

Study-wide error tests of hypothesized comparisons, one-tailed, suggested that 1% of the hypothesized significant results could have occurred by chance. Therefore, of the nine hypothesized tests that were significant, .09 could have occurred by chance. Study-wide error tests of all
tests reported indicated that 4.05% of the significant results could have occurred by chance. For the ten tests which were significant, 4.05 could have occurred by chance.

Summary

This chapter reported the results of the tests for homogeneity of variance, the hypothesis testing, the examination of each research question, and the experimental wide error. The next chapter will summarize and further interpret these findings.
CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

The previous chapter reported the results of the hypothesis testing and the examination of the research questions. This chapter provides a summary of the entire study as well as a summary of the research findings. This chapter also interprets the results of the study, discusses limitations of the study, and addresses implications for future research.

Summary of Study

This research explored the relationship between a person's current attachment style and their past experiences with disengagement strategies. This study was also interested in the relationship between a person's attachment style and who or what they believe caused the breakup of their romantic relationship. Also, the study examined the relationship between a person's attachment style and who they believe initiated the breakup of the relationship.

Specific predictions were made which hypothesized that certain people would be more likely to attribute the cause of the breakup to themselves, the other partner, or to situational factors, depending upon their attachment style.
Predictions were also hypothesized that persons with different attachment styles would make different attributions as to whether they or their partners initiated the breakup of the relationship. Finally, it was hypothesized that there would be differences in persons' reported experiences with disengagement strategies, depending upon the combination of a person's attachment style and who the person believed initiated the breakup.

Surveys were distributed to 532 undergraduate students at the University of North Texas. The respondents were asked to answer questions about their most recent romantic relationship breakup. The questionnaire asked respondents to rank attachment styles in the order which best described their feelings about relationships. Next, respondents chose themselves or their partner as the person who initiated the breakup. Respondents were also asked to rank who or what they believed to be the cause of the breakup (self, other, or situational factors). Finally, respondents used a 5-point likert-type scale to indicate the use of positive-tone, de-escalation, behavioral de-escalation, justification, and negative identity management disengagement strategies.

From the 532 surveyed students, a sample of 213 respondents was derived. The sample consisted of people who met the criteria of having experienced a heterosexual romantic relationship breakup within the past year. Using
this sample, various statistical analyses were then performed to test the hypotheses and the research questions.

Summary of Research Findings

The first hypothesis predicted that persons with secure attachment styles would be more likely to attribute the primary cause of the breakup to situational factors, rather than to self or to other. This hypothesis was supported. For persons with secure attachment styles, the means were significantly greater for persons who attributed the primary cause of the breakup to situational factors, than for those who attributed the primary cause of the breakup to self or to other.

In the second hypothesis it was predicted that persons with dismissing attachment styles would be more likely to attribute the primary cause of the breakup to others, rather than to self or to situational factors. This hypothesis was not supported. For persons with dismissing attachment styles, the means between persons who attributed the primary cause of the breakup to situational factors and those who attributed the primary cause of the breakup to other were opposite of the direction hypothesized. The means did not differ for persons who attributed the primary cause of the breakup to self and persons who attributed the primary cause of the breakup to other.

The third hypothesis predicted that persons with preoccupied attachment styles would attribute the primary
cause of the breakup to self, rather than to other or to situational factors. This hypothesis was not supported. For persons with preoccupied attachment styles, the means were opposite of the hypothesized direction.

The first research question examined whether persons with fearful attachment styles were more likely to attribute the primary cause of the breakup to self, other, or situational factors. For persons with fearful attachment styles, results indicated no significant differences between attributions of cause to self, other, or situational factors.

The fourth hypothesis predicted that persons with dismissing attachment styles would attribute the initiation of the breakup to self, rather than to other. The study found that the means for persons with dismissing attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self were significantly higher than the means for persons who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other. Thus, the hypothesis was supported.

The fifth hypothesis predicted that persons with preoccupied attachment styles would more likely attribute the initiation of the breakup to other, than to self. This hypothesis was not supported. The study found no significant difference between the means for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self and the means for persons with
preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other.

In the sixth hypothesis it was predicted that persons with fearful attachment styles would attribute the initiation of the breakup to self rather than to other. However, the study found no significant difference between persons with fearful attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self and those who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other. Therefore, hypothesis six was not supported.

The second research question examined whether persons with secure attachment styles more frequently attributed the initiation of the breakup to self or to other. For persons with secure attachment styles, no significant difference was found between attributions of initiation to self and attributions of initiation to other.

The first part of research question three examined whether or not people make different attributions about who initiated the breakup, depending on the attributed cause of the breakup. A post hoc comparison found only one significant difference. When the cause of the breakup was attributed to self, more people attributed the initiation of the breakup to self than to other.

The second part of research question three was concerned with the relationship between the attributed primary cause of the breakup and the use of particular disengagement
strategies. The study found that the primary cause of the breakup did have a significant relation to the use of positive-tone and behavioral de-escalation strategies, but not to the use of de-escalation, justification, or negative identity management strategies. The study found that persons who reported the use of positive-tone disengagement strategies were more likely to have attributed the cause of the breakup to self or to situational factors, rather than to other. Likewise, the use of behavioral de-escalation strategies was greater for persons who attributed the primary cause of the breakup to other, than for persons who attributed the primary cause to self or to situational factors. Also, the use of justification disengagement strategies was greater for persons who attributed the primary cause of the breakup to self, than for those who attributed the primary cause to other or to situational factors.

No difference was found in the use of de-escalation strategies for persons who attributed the primary cause of the breakup to self, to other, or to situational factors. There was also no difference observed in attributions of cause for persons who reported the use of negative identity management strategies.

The seventh hypothesis predicted that attributions to the use of positive-tone disengagement strategies would be greater for persons with secure attachment styles and
persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self, than for persons with dismissing and fearful attachment styles, and persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other. There was only partial support for the seventh hypothesis. The interaction of style and initiation did not significantly relate to the use of positive-tone disengagement strategies. Nor did the attribution of initiation significantly relate to the use of positive-tone disengagement strategies. However, a person's attachment style was significantly related to the use of positive-tone disengagement strategies.

For hypothesis seven, two of the six sub-hypotheses were supported. As predicted, the use of positive-tone disengagement strategies was observed to be greater for persons with secure attachment styles than for persons with fearful attachment styles. The use of positive-tone strategies was also observed to be greater for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation to self than for persons with fearful attachment styles. However, the use of positive-tone disengagement strategies was not found to be greater for persons with secure attachment styles than for persons with dismissing attachment styles or persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self. The use of positive-tone strategies was not observed to be
greater for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation to self than for persons with dismissing attachment styles or persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other.

The eighth hypothesis predicted that attributions to the use of de-escalation disengagement strategies would be greater for persons with secure attachment styles and for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self, than for persons with dismissing and fearful attachment styles and persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other. The interaction of style and initiation was not significantly related to the use of de-escalation disengagement strategies. Attribution of initiation did not significantly relate to the use of de-escalation strategies either. A person's attachment style was, however, significantly related to the use of de-escalation disengagement strategies.

The eighth hypothesis received no support. The use of de-escalation disengagement strategies was not found to be greater for persons with secure attachment styles than for persons with dismissing attachment styles, fearful attachment styles, or preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other. The use of de-escalation disengagement strategies was not observed
to be greater for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self, than for persons with dismissing attachment styles, fearful attachment styles, or preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other.

The ninth hypothesis predicted that attributions to the use of behavioral de-escalation strategies would be greater for persons with dismissing attachment styles, for persons with fearful attachment styles, and for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other, than for persons with secure attachment styles and persons with preoccupied styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self. The interaction of attachment style and initiation did not significantly relate to the use of behavioral de-escalation. Attributions of initiation were significantly related to the use of behavioral de-escalation, but attachment style did not significantly relate to the use of behavioral de-escalation strategies.

The ninth hypothesis was partially supported. The use of behavioral de-escalation disengagement strategies was observed to be greater for persons with fearful attachment styles than for persons with secure attachment styles and persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self. The use of behavioral de-escalation strategies was also found to be
greater for persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other, than for persons with secure attachment styles and persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self. However, the use of behavioral de-escalation strategies was not observed to greater for persons with dismissing attachment styles than for persons with secure attachment styles or persons with preoccupied attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self.

In the tenth hypothesis it was predicted that attributions to the use of justification disengagement strategies would be greater for persons with dismissing attachment styles and persons with preoccupied and fearful attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other, than for persons with secure attachment styles and persons with preoccupied and fearful attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self. The interaction of attachment style and attribution of initiation was not significantly related to the use of justification disengagement strategies. Attribution of initiation was significantly related to the use of justification strategies, but a persons' attachment style was not significantly related the use of justification strategies.
There was no support for the tenth hypothesis. The use of justification disengagement strategies was not observed to be greater for persons with dismissing attachment styles and persons with preoccupied and fearful attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other than for persons with secure attachment styles and persons with preoccupied and fearful attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self.

The eleventh hypothesis predicted that the use of negative identity management disengagement strategies would be greater for persons with dismissing attachment styles and persons with preoccupied and fearful attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to other, than for persons with secure attachment styles and persons with preoccupied and fearful attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self. The interaction of attachment style and attribution of initiation was not significantly related to the use of negative identity management disengagement strategies. Likewise, neither attribution of initiation nor a person's attachment style were significantly related to the use of negative identity management strategies.

The eleventh hypothesis received no support. The use of justification disengagement strategies was not observed to be greater for persons with dismissing attachment styles and persons with preoccupied and fearful attachment styles who
attributed the initiation of the breakup to other, than for persons with secure attachment styles and persons with preoccupied and fearful attachment styles who attributed the initiation of the breakup to self.

Interpretation of Results

The support received for the first hypothesis is consistent with previous research. Persons with secure attachment styles did attribute the cause of the breakup to situational factors more than they attributed the cause of the breakup to self or to other. Previous research found that persons who attributed the cause of the breakup to situational factors coped with breakups more effectively, and were more optimistic about relationships than others (Newman & Langer, 1981; Stephen, 1987). Persons with secure attachment styles also seem to possess some of the same characteristics associated with those who attribute the cause of the breakup to situational factors. Recall that persons with secure attachment styles have positive views of self and other, and of relationships in general (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). It is not surprising then, that persons with secure attachment styles made more causal attributions to situational factors than to self or other.

The second hypothesis received no support. Persons with dismissing attachment styles did not attribute the cause of the breakup to other more often than they attributed the cause of the breakup to self or situational factors. The
results indicated a trend of persons with dismissing attachment styles attributing the cause of the breakup to situational factors, and making equal attributions to self and other. This suggests that perhaps the assignment of blame to one person is not as important to persons with dismissing attachment styles as this study proposed. Recall that persons with dismissing attachment styles value autonomy and independence over close relationships (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). It could be that persons with dismissing attachment styles believe that the demise of a relationship is not necessarily the fault of one person, but rather that relationships in general do not work. If this is true, then the attribution of blame to the other person or to themselves is not the most important issue. Persons with dismissing attachment styles might attribute the cause of the breakup to situational factors because they believe there is something inherent in romantic relationships that causes their demise. This attitude would reinforce their belief that relationships are not important, and that they are better off without them.

Providing an explanation for the results of the third hypothesis is somewhat difficult. The study found that persons with preoccupied attachment styles do not attribute the cause of the breakup to self more often than they do to other or to situational factors. Recall that persons with preoccupied attachment styles have negative views of
themselves and positive views of others. They are over-dependent on others, and actively seek out relationships (Bartholomew, 1990). Previous research has found that when persons with preoccupied attachment styles fail in relationships, they often blame their own unworthiness for any lack of approval from others (Bartholomew, 1990). Therefore, the findings of this research are puzzling. The results could be due in part to the size of the sample and the wording of the question concerning the cause of the breakup. These issues will be addressed in the discussion of the limitations of this study.

The analysis of the first research question found that for persons with fearful attachment styles, there were no significant differences between attributions of the primary cause to self, other or situational factors. These results can best be explained by previous research findings. Attributions to situational factors are probably due to the idea that persons with fearful attachment styles believe relationships are negative experiences and sources of rejection (Bartholomew, 1990). Causal attributions to self and other are also not surprising. Recall that persons with fearful attachment styles actively avoid relationships because they have been hurt and rejected by others (Bartholomew, 1990). However, they also believe that the rejection is based upon their own unworthiness (Bartholomew, 1990). Therefore, it seems understandable that persons with
fearful attachment styles were just as likely to attribute the cause of the breakup to themselves, as they were to attribute the primary cause to their partner or to situational factors.

The results obtained for the fourth hypothesis support previous research on attachment styles. This study found that persons with dismissing attachment styles were more likely to attribute the initiation of the breakup to self, rather than to other. Previous research indicates that persons with dismissing attachment styles exert more control in relationships, and are likely to avoid them altogether in favor of independence and autonomy (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Because of these characteristics, it seems only logical that persons with dismissing attachment styles attributed themselves as the person who initiated the breakup.

The results of the fifth hypothesis present another difficult interpretation. Because previous research indicates that persons with preoccupied attachment styles strive for acceptance by others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991), it was not expected that they would attribute themselves as the person who initiated the breakup. However, this study found that persons with preoccupied attachment styles were just as likely to attribute the initiation of the breakup to self, as they were to attribute the initiation of the breakup to other. Again, the sample
size limitations and the wording of the question concerning the initiation of the breakup might be responsible for this result, and will be addressed later.

The results of the sixth hypothesis present concerns similar to those of hypothesis five. While the previous research and literature on attachment styles reported that persons with fearful attachment styles are subservient and less assertive in relationships (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991), this study found that they were not more likely to attribute the initiation of the breakup to other. One plausible explanation might be that when anticipating a breakup, persons with fearful attachment styles might choose to initiate the breakup themselves, as to avoid the inevitable rejection from the other person. As with hypothesis five, the wording of the question concerning the initiation of the breakup might also have affected the results obtained for this hypothesis, and will be discussed as a possible limitation of the study.

The second research question found that for persons with secure attachment styles, there were no differences in the attribution of initiation to self or to other. Previous research seems to support such a finding. Recall that persons with secure attachment styles do not display a strong desire to control relationships, nor a tendency to play a subservient role in relationships (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Therefore it is understandable that
persons with secure attachment styles were just as likely to attribute the initiation of the breakup to self as they were to attribute the initiation to other.

The analysis of research question three indicated that persons who attributed the cause of the breakup to self also attributed the initiation of the breakup to self more than to other. This result could be interpreted as meaning that people who see themselves as the cause of the breakup believe it is their responsibility to end the relationship. However, this result also begs the question of whether or not people make a clear distinction between initiating the breakup and being the cause of the breakup. This issue will be addressed in the discussion of this study's limitations.

The results concerning the relationship between the attribution of cause and attributions about the use of disengagement strategies are of little use without the knowledge of who initiated the breakup. For example, the study found that persons were more likely to make attributions to the use of positive-tone strategies when they attributed the cause to self or to situational factors. At first, this finding seems to agree with research that indicates that people use positive-tone strategies when they do not want to hurt the other person (Cody, 1982). If the other person is not seen as the cause of the breakup, it follows that the disengager would use a strategy that would let the other person down gently. There is however, a
problem with this line of reasoning. These results are assuming that the person who attributed the cause of the breakup to self was also the initiator of the breakup, and the one who employed the disengagement strategy. If the person who attributed the cause to self was not the person who initiated the breakup, the results might be completely different. Therefore, without the knowledge of who initiated the breakup, the relationship between the attributed cause of the breakup and the attributions about the use of disengagement strategies cannot be completely understood.

The next five hypotheses concerned the relationship between attachment styles, attributions of initiation of the breakup, and attributions to the use of particular disengagement strategies. Perhaps the most important result is that the interaction of attachment style and initiation did not significantly relate to the use of any of the five disengagement strategies. Because this interaction was the basis for these last five hypotheses, it is not surprising that only two of the hypotheses received even partial support. Much of the interpretation of these results involves the researcher's somewhat narrow, pre-study views of attachment styles, the relationship between attachment styles and breakups, and the categorization of the disengagement strategies.
The results obtained for each of the last hypotheses raise some questions concerning the interpretation of previous research on attachment styles. For instance, in this research, attributions to the use of positive-tone and de-escalation disengagement strategies were not found to be greater for persons with secure attachment styles than for persons with dismissing attachment styles. For this study, the researcher interpreted persons with dismissing attachment styles as being so independent and having such negative views of others, that they would not take the feelings of others into consideration when they ended a relationship. However, the results of this study suggest that this is not necessarily true.

Perhaps the explanation for these results lies within the understanding of each attachment style, in this example, the dismissing attachment style. The leap from valuing autonomy to completely disregarding the feelings of others may be larger than this study initially assumed. The results of hypotheses nine, ten, and eleven also suggest that a person with a dismissing attachment style is not necessarily a cold-hearted individual who leaves relationships with no explanation, or provides an explanation which hurts the other partner or makes them feel that the breakup is their fault.

Recall that the rationale for the last five hypotheses centered largely around the views of self and other that
characterize each attachment style, and how the use of particular disengagement strategies might have helped to shape these views. It was posited that previous experiences with certain disengagement strategies would leave a person with positive views of self and/or others, while previous experiences with other disengagement strategies would leave a person with negative views of self and/or others. This assumption was perhaps an over-simplification of a much more complex process.

The breakup of a romantic relationship has been found to be a stressful and often traumatic experience (Frazier & Cook, 1993). It is quite possible then, that even the most amicable of breakups could have adverse effects on a person's views of self and other. It could also be possible for a person to experience a "bad" breakup, and emerge with relatively positive views of both self and others. However, this study assumed that when a disengager is considerate of the partner's feelings, both of the partners leave the relationship with positive feelings of self and/or other. Likewise, it was assumed that when the disengager ends a relationship on a sour note, both of the partners develop negative views of self and/or other. As the results of this study indicate, this interpretation of the aftermath of the disengagement process was far too narrow in scope.

While research does indicate that people modify their attachment styles as they encounter different relational
experiences (Carnelly & Jannof-Bullman, 1992), the breakup of a romantic relationship is most likely only one of several experiences which shape a person's current attachment style. Therefore, the somewhat limiting and direct relationship between a person's experiences with disengagement strategies and their current attachment style that this study proposed may not exist.

It is also important to stress that this study asked people to make attributions about past experiences. When people make causal attributions to explain why an event occurred, the attributions are affected by their perceptions of themselves and their current social situations (Kelley, 1982). For example, if a person is currently in a satisfying romantic relationship, they might describe themselves as having a secure attachment style. However, the attributions that this person makes about a previous breakup may portray a previous partner as causing the breakup and ending the relationship without concern for their feelings. This may be an accurate account of what actually happened. It could also be that the previous relationship and the breakup itself seem much more negative in light of the person's current satisfying relationship. Because attributions are related to a person's current self-perceptions and relationships, they are not always photocopies of the actual experience. This might explain why a person with a particular attachment style would make
attributions that seem uncharacteristic of that attachment style.

Another issue to address when discussing the results of the last five hypotheses is the disengagement strategies themselves. This research basically divided the strategies into categories of "good strategies" and "bad strategies". The "good strategies" were positive-tone and de-escalation strategies, and the "bad strategies" were behavioral de-escalation, justification, and negative identity management. Once again, this was related to the attempts of the study to match disengagement strategies with positive and negative views of self and other. Perhaps the best example of where this division was in error is in the tenth hypothesis.

Justification strategies are those strategies which give the partner a reason for the full termination of the relationship. This reason might involve the partner expressing that they are not satisfied with the relationship or the relational partner (Cody, 1982). Because justification strategies have the potential to damage the other person's self esteem, this study considered justification strategies as "bad strategies". Therefore, it was predicted that if a person employed justification strategies, they held negative views of others. Likewise, it was predicted that if a person had been on the receiving end of justification strategies, they held negative views of themselves. However, a closer examination of the individual
justification strategy items used for the study suggests that respondents might not necessarily interpret justification strategies as such negative tactics of disengagement.

One of the justification items from Cody's (1982) categorization of strategies is "I/he/she said that I/he/she was really changing inside and I/he/she didn't quite feel good about our relationship anymore. I/he/she said that we'd better stop seeing each other". This item could possibly be interpreted as a strategy that was damaging to the partner's self esteem. However, consider another justification strategy item: "I/he/she honestly conveyed my/his/her wish not to date anymore." It is quite possible that this item could be interpreted as not having any sort of negative connotations. For instance, it seems possible that someone could report the use of positive-tone strategies, and also report that the person honestly conveyed their wishes to end the relationship.

While the division of the disengagement strategies into "good" and "bad" categories might have facilitated the development of hypotheses, it may also explain why so many of the results were actually in the opposite direction of that hypothesized. Post hoc analysis found that some of these opposite results were even significant.

Limitations

Perhaps the most significant limitation of this study was
the small sample size. The testing of the hypotheses required individual cell comparisons for the various combinations of attachment styles, attributions of primary cause, attributions of initiation, and attributions to the use of disengagement strategies. The low numbers in many of the cells may have accounted for some of the lack of significance when the means were in the direction predicted, and certainly the lack of power when significance was obtained. An example would be in the testing of hypotheses involving persons with preoccupied attachment styles. The number of people in the sample with preoccupied attachment styles was relatively low, and could have affected the results.

Another limitation of this study concerns the wording of the questions in the measurement packets. The questions concerning who initiated the breakup and who or what caused the breakup might have been confusing to respondents, and therefore, limits the validity of the data obtained for attribution of initiation and attribution of the cause of the breakup. This might help to explain the results obtained for hypotheses three, five and six, concerning the attributions of cause and initiation made by persons with preoccupied and fearful attachment styles.

As mentioned in the previous discussion, it is quite possible that respondents had difficulty interpreting the difference between attribution of initiation and attribution
of cause. Respondents might have interpreted the person who caused the breakup as the person who initiated the breakup, and vice versa. Also, the respondents were given a somewhat forced choice of the primary cause of the breakup. It might have been more appropriate to ask an open ended question such as "Why did your relationship end?". This might have helped to differentiate between attribution of initiation and attribution of cause. Of course, this method would be subject to the researchers interpretations about the cause of the breakup.

The survey method used to obtain the data could also be a limitation of this study. Previous research on attachment styles used an interviewing process to determine a person's current attachment style (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). This could be more reliable in determining a person's attachment style than asking respondents to rank order Bartholomew's (1990) prototypes. The moderate test-retest reliability obtained for the rank ordering of attachment styles further suggests that this method was a limitation of the study.

The fact that so many hypotheses were presented and so many tests were performed presents yet another limitation. The study-wide error indicates that of the ten results which were significant, almost half could have occurred by chance. A more economical and narrowly focused study could have reduced the number of necessary tests, and thus the study-
wide error. It is possible that this study attempted to do too much.

Implications

This study explored how relationship disengagements are related to a person's relational life as a whole. Specifically, it sought to determine whether or not a person's previous experience with disengagement strategies was related to their current attachment style. Though the results were few, the study did offer an examination of concepts that were not previously related, and offers some insight into areas which future research could explore.

The study did find some differences in attributions of who initiated the breakup and attributions about the cause of the breakup. However, the strength of these findings is, at best, minimal. Future research might investigate more reliable ways of measuring attribution of initiation and attribution of cause that provide for a clear distinction between the two concepts. The distinction between who or what caused the breakup, and who actually began the disengagement process could be necessary for studies which deal with relationship disengagement and termination. Therefore, it would be worthwhile to develop a measurement which reduces the confusion that respondents might experience when asked to make attributions of initiation and attributions of cause.

This research relied on Bartholomew's (1990) four
attachment style prototypes, rather than Hazan and Shaver's (1987) previous three attachment style categories. When studying the relationship between attachment styles and various relational concepts, subsequent research might examine whether or not there are significant differences between Hazan and Shaver's avoidant attachment style and Bartholomew's division of the avoidant attachment style into dismissing and fearful attachment style prototypes. This study found that in some cases, the differences were only in magnitude, and not in the direction of the relationship. Therefore, it could be worthwhile to investigate the usefulness of dividing Hazan and Shaver's avoidant attachment style into two separate types of avoidance.

Beyond examining whether there are three or four attachment styles, there could be a need to investigate the conceptualization of adult attachment styles in general. Bartholomew (1990) describes attachment styles as one's attitudes, beliefs, and feelings about forming and maintaining close relationships. It is possible that a person's attitudes, beliefs and feelings about relationships do not fit so simply into exclusive categories of positive or negative views of self and other. Perhaps people do not hold such extreme views of themselves and others. For instance, the current categories of attachment style do not leave the possibility of a person having a somewhat negative
view of others in some situations, and relatively positive
views of themselves most of the time. If people view
relationships in the strict terms of attachment styles, then
this study certainly should have found strong differences
between persons with secure and fearful attachment styles.
The description of these two styles are polar opposites, yet
in many cases, this study found no differences in their
attributions about a past disengagement process. Despite
the limitations of this study, the findings, or lack there
of, do raise some questions about adult attachment styles.

If future research seeks to relate attachment styles with
other relational concepts and phenomenon, then the
conceptualization of attachment styles should be examined
closely. It could be that prototypes such as Bartholomew's
(1990) describe only the extreme, and that most people's
feelings, attitudes, and beliefs about relationships are
somewhere in the moderate range.

Summary

This chapter presented a summary of the entire research
project and a summary of the results obtained from the
testing of hypotheses and research questions. The
researcher's interpretations of the results were also
provided. Finally the limitations and implications of the
study were discussed.
APPENDIX A
May 23, 1995

Julie Krahl
Terrell Hall 235
Communication Studies

Dear Ms. Krahl:

Your proposal entitled “A Study of the Relationships Between Current Attachment Styles and Previous Disengagement Strategies”, has undergone exempt review and has been approved by the IRB under 45 CFR 46.110.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (817) 565-3940.

Good luck on your project.

Sincerely,

Sandra L. Terrell
Chair, Institutional Review Board
APPENDIX B
Please rank the following statements according to how they describe your feelings. Write a 1 next to the statement that best describes your feelings, a 2 beside the next best description of your feelings, a 3 beside the next best description of your feelings, and a 4 beside the statement that least describes your feelings.

_____ It is relatively easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on others and having others depend on me. I don’t worry about being alone or having others not accept me.

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

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

_____ I am somewhat uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I sometimes worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.
Think of your most recent romantic relationship break up. Although some break ups become mutual, the initiation of the break up was started by one person. In other words, one of you took the first steps toward ending the relationship. Please check ONLY ONE of the following statements concerning who initiated the break up (who took the first step):

_____ I initiated the break up of the relationship.

_____ The other person initiated the break up of the relationship.
APPENDIX D
Think of your most recent romantic relationship break up. Rank the following statements from 1 to 3 depending upon what you think caused the break up. Write a 1 beside the statement that best describes what you think caused the break up, a 2 beside the statement that next best describes what you think caused the break up, and a 3 beside the statement that least describes what you think caused the break up.

_____ The other person was the cause of the break up.

_____ I was the cause of the break up.

_____ The cause of the break up was due to other factors.
Please rate how well each of these statements describes the way your relationship ended. Write a 1 next to the statement if the other person definitely did not do this. Write a 2 next to the statement if you think the other person did not do this. Write a 3 next to the statement if you are not sure the other person did this. Write a 4 next to the statement if you think the other person did this. Write a 5 next to the statement if the other person definitely did this.

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<th>1</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>He/she definitely did not do this</td>
<td>He/she did this</td>
<td>He/she did this</td>
<td>He/she did this</td>
<td>He/she definitely did this</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I don't think he/she did this</td>
<td>Not sure if he/she did this</td>
<td>I think he/she did this</td>
<td>He/she definitely did this</td>
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_____ 1. He/She told me that he/she was very, very sorry for breaking off the relationship.

_____ 2. He/She told me that he/she regretted very much having to break off the relationship.

_____ 3. He/She told me that he/she cared very, very much for me.

_____ 4. He/She told me that he/she was very scared too and didn't want to hurt my feelings.

_____ 5. He/She tried very hard to prevent us from having "hard feelings" about the break up.

_____ 6. He/She tried very hard to prevent us from leaving on a "sour note".

_____ 7. He/She told me that there should be mutual love and understanding in a relationship and that at the moment he/she didn't feel as close as he/she should. He/She then said that he/she thought we should lay off awhile a see if we wanted to get back together. If we wanted to get back together, we will.

_____ 8. He/She told me that we have become too dependent on each other and have nothing individual to offer to this relationship and that if we take a period of time to do other things we would be capable of continuing the relationship in the future.
9. He/she told me that he/she needed to be honest with me and suggested that we break it off for awhile and see what happens.

10. He/she said that we are very close and that we shouldn't be anything but honest and open. If one is not happy, then the other wouldn't be happy either. He/she said he/she thought the best thing for us is to let things cool off for awhile and see if we want to continue.

11. He/she said that the relationship was becoming a strain on him/her and that we're just going to call it off for now. Maybe some day we can get back together and things will work out.

12. He/she said that while he/she was happy most of the time, he/she sometimes felt that he/she couldn't do all the things he/she wanted to. He/she then said that we should call it quits for now and if we still wanted to get back together we will.

13. He/she never brought up the topic of breaking off the relationship, he/she just never called me again and never returned any of my phone calls.

14. He/she didn't say anything to me. He/she avoided contact with me as much as possible.

15. Without explaining his/her intentions to break off the relationship, he/she avoided scheduling future meetings with me.

16. He/she never verbally said anything to me, but he/she discouraged our seeing each other again.

17. He/she said that a good relationship meets the needs of both people and that ours wasn't meeting his/her needs. He/she said that they didn't want to change me, and he/she would have to if he/she were going to meet his/her needs. So he/she didn't think we should see each other anymore.
18. He/She fully explained why he/she felt dissatisfied with the relationship, that it hasn't been growing and that he/she believes we will both be happier if we don't date anymore.

19. He/She fully explained how he/she felt and that he/she wanted to break things off. He/She explained that a relationship was no good unless it makes both people happy and that he/she wasn't happy and that he/she didn't want to date anymore.

20. He/She honestly conveyed his/her wish not to date anymore.

21. He/She said that he/she was really changing inside and he/she didn't quite feel good about our relationship anymore. He/She said that we'd better stop seeing each other.

22. He/She fully explained his/her reasons for why we shouldn't see each other anymore.

23. He/She told me that he/she was going to date other people and that he/she thought I should date others also.

24. He/She told me that he/she thought we should date around and left it at that.

25. He/She said it was the best thing for both of us, that we need more time to date others and that he/she wanted to be sure to find the right person.

26. He/She said that he/she thought we might ruin our relationship all together if we didn't start dating around a little because he/she was not happy.

27. He/She told me that life was too short and that we should date other people in order to enjoy life.

28. He/She told me that he/she wanted to be happy and that we should date other people.
Please rate how well each of these statements describes the way your relationship ended. Write a 1 next to the statement if you definitely did not do this. Write a 2 next to the statement if you think you did not do this. Write a 3 next to the statement if you are not sure you did this. Write a 4 next to the statement if you think you did this. Write a 5 next to the statement if you definitely did this.

1 2 3 4 5
I definitely I did not Not sure if I did this I definitely did not do this do this I did this did this

_____ 1. I told him/her that I was very, very sorry for breaking off the relationship.

_____ 2. I told him/her that I regretted very much having to break off the relationship.

_____ 3. I told him/her that I cared very, very much for him/her.

_____ 4. I told him/her that I was very scared too and didn’t want to hurt his/her feelings.

_____ 5. I tried very hard to prevent us from having "hard feelings" about the break up.

_____ 6. I tried very hard to prevent us from leaving on a "sour note".

_____ 7. I told him/her that there should be mutual love and understanding in a relationship and that at the moment I didn’t feel as close as I should. I then said that I thought we should lay off awhile and see if we wanted to get back together. If we wanted to get back together, we will.

_____ 8. I said that we have become too dependent on each other and have nothing individual to offer to this relationship and that if we take a period of time to do other things we would be capable of continuing the relationship in the future.

_____ 9. I told him/her that I needed to be honest with him/her and suggested that we break it off for awhile and see what happens.
1. I definitely did not do this. I did this. Not sure if I did this. I did this. I definitely did this.

10. I said that we are very close and that we shouldn't be anything but honest and open. If one is not happy, then the other wouldn't be happy either. I said I thought the best thing for us is to let things cool off for awhile and see if we want to continue.

11. I said that the relationship was becoming a strain on me and that we're just going to call it off for now. Maybe some day we can get back together and things will work out.

12. I told him/her that while I was happy most of the time, I sometimes felt that I couldn't do all the things I wanted to. I then said that we should call it quits for now and if we still wanted to get back together we will.

13. I never brought up the topic of breaking off the relationship, I just never called him/her again and never returned any of his/her phone calls.

14. I didn't say anything to him/her. I avoided contact with him/her as much as possible.

15. Without explaining my intentions to break off the relationship, I avoided scheduling future meetings with me.

16. I never verbally said anything to him/her, but I discouraged our seeing each other again.

17. I fully explained why I felt dissatisfied with the relationship, that it hasn't been growing and that I believed we will both be happier if we don't date anymore.

18. I said that a good relationship meets the needs of both people and that ours wasn't meeting my needs. I said that I didn't want to change him/her, and I would have to if I were going to meet my needs. So I didn't think we should see each other anymore.

19. I fully explained how I felt and that I wanted to break things off. I explained that a relationship was no good unless it makes both people happy and that I wasn't happy and I didn't want to date anymore.
I definitely did not do this. I did this. I did this. I definitely did this.

20. I honestly conveyed my wish not to date anymore.

21. I said that I was really changing inside and I didn't quite feel good about our relationship anymore. I said that we'd better stop seeing each other.

22. I fully explained my reasons for why we shouldn't see each other anymore.

23. I told him/her that I was going to date other people and that I thought he/she should date others also.

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27. I told him/her that life was too short and that we should date other people in order to enjoy life.

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