

THE RELATIONSHIP OF LOVE STYLES AND
ROMANTIC ATTACHMENT STYLES IN GAY MEN

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ROMANTIC ATTACHMENT STYLES IN GAY MEN

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Love and Love Styles

Love has been defined in a number of ways, but has typically been defined as an emotional and passionate experience, usually between two individuals (Berscheid & Walster, 1974). From a developmental perspective, love is typically experienced and expressed toward family members early in life, followed by the development of friendships in which love and support are offered, and then love experienced in romantic, dating relationships, usually culminating into long-term committed love toward partners and spouses (Sternberg & Grajek, 1984; Sternberg, 1986).

Researchers have also explored styles and dimensions of love tied to specific theories of love. Lee (1973/1976) was a love style theorist who identified six different ways in which people tend to experience and express love with their romantic partners. Lee (1973) theorized six basic love styles including Eros (i.e. passionate love), Ludus (i.e. game-playing love), Storge (i.e. friendship love), Pragma (i.e. logical, “shopping list” love), Mania (i.e. possessive, dependent love), and Agape (i.e. all-giving, selfless love).

Eros is also known as passionate love. Individuals who identify with this love style are searching for their ideal physical type of lover.

Ludus is also known as game-playing love. Individuals who identify with this love style carefully control their involvement in relationships, are often involved in multiple relationships, avoid jealousy, and their relationships tend to be short-lived.

Storge is described as a type of love based on friendship. Individuals who identify with this love style typically develop affection towards and companionship with others in a slow manner. These individuals tend to gradually engage in self-disclosure, avoid self-conscious passion, and expect long-term friendship commitments.

Mania is defined as possessive, dependent love. Individuals who identify with this love style have a need for a constant reassurance of being loved. This is also described as an emotionally intense love style distinguished by preoccupation with the beloved and these individuals are also obsessive and jealous.

Agape is all-giving, selfless, altruistic love. Individuals who identify with this love style see it as their duty to love without expectation of reciprocity. The love given is guided by reasons more than emotions and is gentle and caring in nature.

Pragma is a logical type of love style. Individuals who identify with this love style are looking or “shopping” for partners with specific background and lifestyle characteristics, for example, education level, employment status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, race, and age. These are just some of the characteristics pragmatic lovers consider in search for their compatible partners. Other factors can also include impact of partners on one’s career, ability of the partner to be a good parent, and the mutual interests between oneself and partner. Hendrick and Hendrick (1986) developed the Love Attitude Scale (LAS) to measure people’s level of endorsement of these six different love styles originally theorized by Lee.

Love styles have been associated with a number of variables in heterosexual college student samples including personality traits (Mallandain & Davies, 1994; White, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 2004); life, work, and relationship satisfaction, including

satisfaction in one's friendships (same-sex versus opposite-sex; Yancey & Berglass, 1991); as well as aspects of emotional and/or psychological stress including eating disorder characteristics (i.e. drive for thinness; bulimia; ineffectiveness; body dissatisfaction; Raciti & Hendrick, 1992), and sexual aggression and coercion (Ludus; Sarwer, Kalichman, Johnson, & Early, 1993).

There is evidence of gender differences in endorsement of particular love styles. For example, some researchers have found that men engage in more game-playing styles of love (Ludus) compared to women (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986). On the other hand, researchers have found that women were more likely to search for a physical ideal partner (Eros), merge love and friendship (Storge), "shop" for specific background of a partner (Pragma), and be more obsessive and be jealous (Mania) compared to men (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986).

One of the major limitations with the current research on love styles is that it has primarily been the study of the love styles and experiences of heterosexual college students. Little is known about the love style experiences of gay, lesbian, bisexual individuals.

A few researchers (Adler, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1986) have explored sexual orientation group differences in love styles. Adler et al. (1986) found significant sexual orientation by geographic region group differences for Agape love styles but not for the other love styles (i.e., Eros, Ludus, Storge, Pragma, and Mania). In particular, (Adler, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1986) found that gay men from the New York area reported less Agape love compared to heterosexual men from Texas and New York as well as gay men

from Texas. Regardless of sexual orientation, younger men were more pragmatic in their love styles compared to older men.

More research is needed to explore the experience of love and styles of loving for gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals. Of particular interest in the present study is the relationship of love styles and romantic partner attachment styles in gay men.

Romantic Attachment Styles

Attachment, as conceptualized by Bowlby (1969, p. 194), is “the seeking and maintaining proximity to another individual”. Hazan and Shaver (1987) were the first group of researchers to apply Bowlby’s work on attachment in exploring romantic attachments in adolescent and adult romantic relationships. The three romantic attachment styles were identified as secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant.

Individuals who were *securely attached* in their adult romantic relationships described their love experiences in a positive way—that is “happy, friendly, and trusting” (Hazan & Shaver, 1987, p. 515). Their relationships also tend to last a long time. These individuals are also able to show acceptance and support towards their partners. Individuals who experience insecure attachments in their romantic relationships tend to be either avoid entering into romantic relationships or tend to feel anxious or ambivalent about getting close in romantic relationships. Researchers found that emotional highs and lows, jealousy, and fear of intimacy were found to be common with avoidant lovers. In addition, anxious/ambivalent individuals were found to experience love as involving obsession, emotional highs and lows, jealousy, extreme sexual attraction, and desire for reciprocation and union. Securely attached individuals tended to demonstrate healthier behaviors (i.e., were more committed, demonstrated more acceptance and support

towards their partners) in romantic relationships compared to individuals with avoidant or anxious/ambivalent attachment styles.

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) further expanded on romantic attachment, conceptualizing it as having a positive structure or a negative structure in reference to self and others and identified four types of romantic attachment including secure, preoccupied, fearful, and dismissive. Securely attached individuals have a positive inner working model for the self and others, and generally view others as accepting and responsive. As a result, they are generally comfortable with intimacy and autonomy.

Individuals who are preoccupied have a negative working model of themselves and positive working model of others and generally have a desire to strive for self-acceptance through the acceptance of others. These individuals are also generally preoccupied with their relationships with others.

Dismissing individuals have a positive model of self and a negative model of others. These individuals tend to avoid close relationships and try to maintain independence and invulnerability.

Fearfully attached individuals have a negative working model of self and others and have expectation that others will be rejecting and untrustworthy. In addition, these individuals are also fearful of intimacy and are socially avoidant.

Feeney and Noller (1990) conducted a study with undergraduate college students that explored attachment styles (i.e., secure, anxious-ambivalent and avoidant) as predictors of different qualities and characteristics in adult romantic relationships. Researchers in this study found that attachment styles were associated with self-esteem, beliefs about relationships, attachment history, loving, love addiction, and love styles.

Participants who were anxious-ambivalent in their attachment styles reported more Manic love style compared to individuals with the other two attachment styles (i.e., secure and avoidant). In other words, individuals who were anxious in their romantic relationships were more likely to be possessive and dependent as their love style. Participants who were secure or avoidant in their romantic attachments reported more Storgic love style (i.e., friendship love) compared to individuals with anxious-ambivalent romantic attachment styles. Participants who were avoidant style in their romantic attachment reported more Ludus love style (i.e., game-playing) compared to individuals with the other two romantic attachment styles (i.e., secure or anxious ambivalent).

Lesbian and Gay Romantic Relationships

Peplau and Fingerhut (2007) reviewed the literature regarding the experiences of close relationships for lesbians and gay men and identified common and unique findings for same-sex couples in comparison to heterosexual couples and they concluded what researchers have contributed in understanding gay and lesbian romantic relationships. Researchers have demonstrated that many negative social stereotypes towards gays and lesbians romantic relationships are not accurate. For example, the media have stereotyped these types of relationships as unstable and portray gays and lesbians as unhappy in their romantic relationships. Another social stereotype is that these gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals are unable to establish intimate, passionate kinds of love and relationships compared to heterosexual individuals despite the similarities in heterosexual couples and gay and lesbian couples in their romantic relationships in terms of satisfaction and love experiences in the research. Cultural stereotypes (i.e., “butch versus “fem”) of gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals as mimicking “husband” and “wife” roles have also

been projected in the mainstream culture, which are not accurate (Peplau and Fingerhut, 2007); gays and lesbians divide the roles by personal interests and area of expertise in terms of household labor (Peplau and Fingerhut, 2007).

In his review of the literature, Kurdek (2005) summarized the research to date regarding the experiences of lesbian, gay, and heterosexual individuals in partnered/martial relationships. He noted similarities and differences in terms of how lesbian, gay, and heterosexual individuals manage household responsibilities as well as conflicts with their partners/spouses, and how they perceive social support, stability, and satisfaction in those relationships. Gay and lesbian couples appear to negotiate their needs more effectively and experience more support, stability, and satisfaction in their relationships with their partners/spouses compared to heterosexual couples.

Romantic Attachment in Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Couples

Romantic attachment has been assessed using the Relationship Questionnaire (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) as well as the Experiences of Close Relationships Revised Questionnaire (Fraley, Walker, & Brennan, 2000). The romantic attachment literature is similar to the love style literature in that most of what we know about correlates of romantic attachment is based on heterosexual experiences. Little is known about romantic attachment styles among gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals.

Ridge and Feeney (1998) explored sexual orientation group differences in general attachment styles with others as well as satisfaction in partnered relationships for men and women. Gay men reported being more preoccupied in their attachment (i.e., more negative views of self yet positive views of others) compared to heterosexual males. There were no significant differences were found for general attachment styles between

lesbian and heterosexual women (Ridge & Feeney, 1998). In addition, they found that lesbians reported experiencing more satisfaction with their relationships with others compared to gay men. Lesbians who reported that they were in exclusive relationship also reported higher levels of relationship satisfaction with people in general than those who were not in exclusive relationships.

Gaines and Henderson (2002) explored the relationship of couples' romantic attachment styles (i.e., secure/secure, secure/insecure, and insecure/insecure) and level of accommodation to their partners (i.e., individual responses to partners' criticism or anger). In particular, the researchers were interested in exploring how constructive (i.e., assertion and loyalty) and destructive responses (i.e., leaving when conflict occurs and feeling neglected) may be related to the attachment styles of individuals in their partnered relationships. For gay men, when both members of the couple reported having secure attachments with one another (secure/secure), they were more likely to engage in constructive responses to their partners' criticism or anger compared to couples wherein one or both members reported insecure romantic attachment styles (i.e., secure/insecure or insecure/insecure). However, couples' romantic attachment styles were not related to how lesbians responded to their partners' criticism or anger. The research findings of this particular study provided some support for the relationship between secure romantic attachments in gay couples and healthy communication styles, in this case, accommodating constructively to partners in response to conflict (i.e., criticism or anger).

Statement of the Problem

As previously mentioned, the media have reinforced many stereotypes in lesbian and gay romantic relationships that researchers found not to be accurate (Peplau and Fingerhut, 2007). Previous researchers have explored different experiences of love, love styles, and romantic attachment and the relationship of these variables and gender differences in heterosexual samples (Hendrick and Hendrick, 1986; Hall, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1991; Feeney & Noller, 1990; Levy & Davis, 1988; Gaines & Henderson, 2002; Fricker & Moore, 2002). Only a few researchers have explored the relationship of sexual orientation and love styles (Adler, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1986) and sexual orientation and attachment styles (Ridge & Feeney, 1998). To date, no researchers have explored the relationships between love styles and romantic attachment styles in gay men and lesbians.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the present study is to explore the relationships between romantic attachment styles and love styles in gay men. The research questions for this study are: 1) Is there a relationship between romantic attachment style and love styles in gay men?, and 2) What is the linear relationship of the six love styles with each type of romantic attachment for gay men?

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Participants

A total of 72 self-identified gay men participated in an on-line study regarding love and relationships. The mean age of the participants was 33.50 years old (SD = 11.52), with a range of 18-71. The majority of the participants identified themselves as White (86.1%, n = 62); 8.3% (n = 6) identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino/a; 6.3% (n = 6) reported they were American Indian/Alaskan Native; 5.6% (n = 4) identified themselves as Asian/Asian American; 2.8% (n = 2) identified themselves as Black/African American; 1.4% (n = 1) reported they were Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander.

In terms of relationship status, 44.4% (n = 32) reported themselves as partnered/common law; 41.7% (n = 30) identified themselves as single; 8.3% (n = 6) reported themselves to be married; 4.2% (n = 3) identified themselves as divorced; and 1.4% (n = 1) identified themselves as widowed. The average length of the current or more recent relationship was approximately 6 years. Participants were asked if they were currently in love and 62.5% (n = 45) answered yes and 37.5% (n = 27) answered no.

The majority of participants were from the following states: Oklahoma (23.6%), Texas (8.3%), California (5.6%), Ohio (5.6%), Kansas (5.6%), and New York (5.6%). They were primarily from urban areas (n =29 ; 40.3%), but some were from suburban (n =21 ; 29.2%) and rural (n = 7; 9.7%) areas.

On average, participants reported an income level of \$40,001 to \$50,000 with a range of less than \$10,000 to \$80,000 or more. The majority of the participants were college graduates (n = 17; 23.6%); some identified themselves having a master's degree (n = 12; 16.7%); some reported having a PhD or professional degree (n = 11; 15.3%). Some of the participants were pursuing either an undergraduate degree (n = 17; 23.6%) or a graduate degree (n = 10; 13.9%). A small percentage had completed a 5.6% high school diploma or the GED (n = 4; 5.6%).

Measures

Demographic Page. A series of demographic questions were used to ask the participants various demographic variables such as: age, sexual orientation, gender, race, relationship status, length of current and previous relationship, geographic location, educational attainment, and family income.

Love Attitudes Scale Short Form (LAS-SF; Hendrick, Hendrick, & Dicke 1998). The LAS-SF is a 24-item scale that measures an individual's style of loving based on Lee's (1973) six love styles, including Eros, Ludus, Pragma, Agape, Mania, and Storge. There are four statements for each love style that participants rate on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree). Examples of items from statements are: "My partner and I have the right physical "chemistry" between us" (Eros), "I have sometimes had to keep my partner from finding out about other lovers" (Ludus),

“Our love is the best kind because it grew out of a long friendship” (Storge), “One consideration in choosing my partner was how he/she would reflect on my career” (Pragma), “When my partner doesn’t pay attention to me, I feel sick all over” (Mania), and “I would rather suffer myself than let my partner suffer” (Agape). Lower scores indicate a stronger endorsement on each of the six love style subscales.

The original LAS included seven items for each love style (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986). Principle components analysis with varimax rotation of the original LAS items resulted in a six factor solution accounted for 44% of the variance in love styles. All item loadings on each factor were .50 or higher. These love style factors have been upheld in other studies on love styles (Hendrick et al., 1998).

The LAS-SF reflects the highest factor loadings from the original LAS measure (Hendrick et al., 1998). The LAS-SF includes the top four items on each love style subscale from the original LAS. Principle components analysis of this LAS-SF items resulted in the same six factors, explaining 63% of the variance in love styles.

The LAS-SF is a reliable measure of love styles. Test-retest reliabilities for the LAS subscales range from .63 to .73 (Hendrick et al., 1998). The internal consistency reliability coefficients of the subscales ranged from .65 to .85 (Hendrick et al.). The love style with the lowest test-retest reliability was Pragma.

The LAS has convergent validity with other measures and aspects of love such as, Rubin’s Loving and Liking Scale, Lee’s Typology of Love, Sternberg Triangular Theory of Love Scale, Passionate Love Scale, and the Relationship Rating Form (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1989).

The Relationships Questionnaire (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). The RQ is a 4-item self-report measure of attachment styles. Participants read each item (one paragraph per item) and rated the extent to which they identified with each. Each item measures one of the attachment styles: secure, preoccupied, fearful, and dismissing. Participants rate each item on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = not at all like me, 7 = very much like me). For the purposes of this study, the four items will be used to measure participants' level of endorsement of each type of attachment style with their romantic partners. Higher scores indicate stronger endorsement of that particular attachment style.

The RQ has adequate test-retest reliability (coefficients ranging from .74 to .88; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Internal consistency reliability estimates were not been calculated given that each of the four items represents a different attachment style (i.e., one item subscales).

The RQ has convergent validity with the Family Attachment Interview and discriminant validity with the Peer Attachment Interview (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994).

Experience in Close Relationship Questionnaire - Revised (Fraley, Walker, & Brennan, 2000). The ECR-Revised is a 36-item scale used to assess attachment-related anxiety and avoidance in close relationships. Anxiety refers to the extent to which individuals feel insecure regarding their partner's availability and responsiveness. Avoidance refers to the extent to which individuals are uncomfortable being close to others and depend on others. Participants answer each item using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). An example of an anxiety item is "I worry a lot about my relationships". An example of an avoidance item is "I am nervous when partners get too close to me".

The ECR-R has adequate test-retest reliability (anxiety scale = .93, avoidance scale = .95; Fraley, Walker, & Brennan, 2000). Internal consistency tends to be .90 or higher for both scales of the ECR-R (Fraley et al., 2000).

Results of factor analyses revealed a two-factor solution for the ECR-R which explained 48% of the variance in scores. The factors were named anxiety and avoidance. (Sibley, Fischer, & Liu, 2005).

The ECR-R has convergent validity with the Relationship Questionnaire (Sibley et al., 2005) and other measures of anxiety and avoidance including the Adult Attachment Scale and Simpson's attachment questionnaire (Fraley et al., 2000).

Higher scores on the anxiety and avoidance scales indicate higher levels of anxiety and avoidance respectively.

Procedure

The primary investigators recruited a sample of LGBT individuals from across the United States using a snowball method of collecting data, inviting them to participate in an online research study on romantic relationship experiences. They were recruited as part of a larger study exploring romantic relationship experiences of gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals. The e-mail invitation was sent to various LGBT individuals and communities across the nation (i.e. LGBT organizations on different college campuses; American Psychological Association, Divisions 17, 45, and 44; American Counseling Association-Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender Issues in Counseling).

A snowball method was used for data collection purposes. Individuals who were friends, acquaintances, or who were affiliated with the professional divisions of APA and

ACA were invited to participate and were encouraged to forward this e-mail invitation to college students and community members who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Individuals who are interested in participating will be directed to click on a link to an informed consent page explaining the purpose of the study as well as the potential benefits and risks of participating in this study. By clicking to the next page, they agreed to consent to participation.

Participants completed an on-line survey including a demographic sheet and a few questionnaires including the Relationship Questionnaire, the Experiences in Close Relationships, the Love Style Questionnaire, and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. For the purposes of this thesis project, all measures except for the Dyadic Adjustment Scale was scored and used in the analyses of this study. In addition, only the gay male participants' responses was examined for the purposes of this thesis project.

Participants did not include their name on any of the surveys to ensure that what they share is confidential and anonymous. When they submit their completed surveys, they were directed to a site with a list of counseling resources in case they wanted support as a result of participating in this study. They were also encouraged to forward the e-mail invite to other gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals they know to see if their friends, colleagues, or acquaintances would like to participate in this study. All of the information entered directly into a database. This database is kept in a confidential website that is only accessible by the researchers involved in this study.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Prior to conducting the analyses for this study, the datafile was inspected to explore potential missing data. Some of the gay male participants ($n = 20$) had some missing data; however, it was not substantial (typically one item or two items). The mean scores for the missing data (questionnaire item) for the overall sample of gay men were entered if participants were missing less than 10% of the items for a particular measure. The few missing data points were fixed and no gay male participants were excluded in the final analyses of the study.

Internal consistency reliability estimates for subscale scores

The internal consistency reliability estimates were calculated for all the subscales and overall scores for this sample. For the LAS-SF, the internal consistency reliabilities ranged from .64 (Ludus) to .85 (Agape). The Cronbach alphas for the other subscales were as follows: .70 for Eros, .71 for Mania, .73 for Pragma, and .83 for Storge. For the ECR-R, the internal consistency reliability estimates were .94 for the anxiety and .94 for the avoidance subscales. Internal consistency reliability estimates were not calculated on the one-item measures of partner attachment (i.e., secure, preoccupied, fearful, and dismissive).

Correlations

Pearson correlational analyses (two-tailed) were conducted to explore the bivariate relationships between and among attachment styles, love styles, and avoidance and anxiety in relationships. To answer the primary research question, correlations between love styles and attachment subscales were conducted for this gay male sample. See Table 1 for a correlation matrix.

Correlations Between Love Styles and Attachments to Partners/Spouses. The Mania love style was significantly related to preoccupied attachment style ($r = -.42$, $p < .001$). The need for a constant reassurance of being loved was associated with more preoccupation in romantic relationships (i.e., having a more negative view of self and a more positive view of partner/spouse). Agape love style was also significantly related to preoccupied attachment style ($r = -.43$, $p < .001$). Participants who were more likely to be all-giving, selfless, and altruistic love were also more likely to be preoccupied with their relationships; those who were less preoccupied tended to report less all-giving, selfless, and altruistic love.

Eros love style was significantly related to fearful attachment style ($r = .24$, $p < .01$). Individuals who were less passionate with their partners were more likely fear intimacy and are socially avoidant; those who were more passionate with their partners were less likely to fear intimacy or to be socially avoidant.

In terms of the relationships between love styles and partner attachment as defined by the ECR, Eros love style was significantly related to avoidance ($r = .34$, $p < .001$). Individuals who were less passionate in their love style are more likely to be avoidant in their relationships. Ludus love style was significantly related to avoidance (r

= -.33, $p < .01$). Individuals who gets involved with “game-playing” love are more likely to be avoidant in their relationships. Pragma love style was significantly related to anxiety ($r = -.27$, $p < .05$). This means that individuals who were more practical in their views about their partner and love were more likely to experience anxiety in their relationships. Mania love style was significantly related to anxiety ($r = -.71$, $p < .001$). Individuals who were more dependent and possessive with their partners tended to experience more anxiety in their relationships. Agape love style was significantly related to anxiety ($r = -.36$, $p < .01$). Individuals who were more selfless in their love style tended to report more anxiety in their relationships.

Other correlational findings of interest were noted between and among the attachment subscales as well as the love style subscales which will be presented next.

Correlations between and among attachment subscales. Secure attachment style was significantly and negatively related to fearful attachment style ($r = -.53$, $p < .001$). Participants who were more secure in their attachments with partners/spouses were less likely to be fearful in those relationships, meaning individuals who view their partner as accepting and responsive, were less likely to view their partners/spouses as rejecting and untrustworthy and were less likely to have negative views of themselves.

Secure attachment style was also significantly and negatively related to dismissive attachment style ($r = -.26$, $p < .05$). Participants who viewed their partners/spouses as accepting and responsive were less likely to avoid close relationships with them. Fearful attachment style was significantly and positively related to preoccupied attachment style ($r = .40$, $p < .01$) and dismissive attachment style ($r = .34$, $p < .001$). Being fearful in

romantic relationships (i.e., negative view of self and partner) was related to anxiety (i.e., preoccupation) and avoidance (i.e., dismissive).

In terms of the relationship between the RQ attachment subscales and the ECR attachment subscales, secure attachment style was significantly correlated with avoidance ($r = -.49$, $p < .001$). Individuals who identified themselves as more securely attached were less likely to be avoidant in their relationships; individuals who were more insecurely attached were more avoidant in their relationships.

Fearful attachment style was significantly correlated with anxiety ($r = .34$, $p < .01$) and avoidance ($r = .36$, $p < .01$). Individuals who viewed themselves and their partners/spouses negatively were more likely to be anxious and avoidant in their relationships.

Preoccupied attachment style was significantly correlated with anxiety ($r = .519$, $p = .000$). Individuals who are preoccupied with their relationship with partners/spouses were more likely to be anxious in their relationships. Dismissive attachment style was found to be significantly related to avoidance ($r = .272$, $p < .05$). Individuals who tend to have a more positive view of themselves but a more negative view of their partners/spouses tend to be more avoidant in their relationships.

Correlations Between and Among the Love Style Subscales. Eros love style was significantly related to Ludus love style ($r = -.34$, $p < .001$), Storge love style ($r = .25$, $p < .05$), and Pragma love style ($r = -.27$, $p < .05$). Individuals who reported higher levels of passion toward their partners also reported they were less likely to be involved in multiple relationships and engage in “game-playing” love and were less likely to “shop” for partners with specific background and lifestyle characteristics. In addition,

individuals who were less likely to be passionate with their partners were also less likely to base their love on friendship. Pragma love style was significantly correlated with Mania love style ($r = .34, p < .001$). Individuals who are less likely to “shop” for partners were also less likely to be possessive, dependent, obsessive, and be jealous with their partners. Agape love style was significantly related to Mania love style ($r = .48, p < .001$). Individuals who were less likely to endorse in selfless love were also less likely to be possessive; individuals who reported more selfless love with their partners/spouses also reported more possessive love.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between love styles and romantic attachment in gay men. While previous researchers have explored the relationship between love styles and romantic attachment in heterosexual college students (i.e., Feeney & Noller, 1990; Levy & Davis, 1988; Fricker & Moore, 2002) this was the first study to explore these variables in a sample of gay men.

Gay men who tend to need constant reassurance of being loved (Mania) were more likely to be preoccupied in romantic relationships which confirms that Manic lovers are also defined as an emotionally intense love style distinguished by preoccupation with the beloved (Lee, 1973). In addition, gay men who identified themselves as manic lovers were also found to more likely experience anxiety in their relationships, which confirms previous research findings that explored this relationship with undergraduate heterosexual sample (Fricker & Moore, 2002; Levy & Davis, 1988).

Similar to previous studies with heterosexual individuals (Fricker & Moore, 2002; Levy & Davis, 1988), passionate love (Eros) was negatively related avoidant attachment style for the gay men in the present study. Gay men in the present study who identified themselves as erotic lovers were also less likely to be avoidant in their relationships, and in particular, were less fearful in their attachments.

In addition, gay men who were more involved with “game-playing” love (Ludus) were more likely to be avoidant in their relationships, which was also found in previous

research with undergraduate heterosexual individuals (Levy & Davis, 1988; Fricker & Moore, 2002).

While some researchers have found that Agape love to be related to avoidant attachment in heterosexual individuals (Levy & Davis, 1988), Agape love was not related to avoidant attachment for the gay men in the present study. However, this style of love was related to anxious attachment in general and in particular preoccupied attachment for gay men in the present study. Gay men who tend to feel more anxious in their relationships with partners and who have more negative views of themselves yet more positive views of their partners may be compensating for their anxiety in their relationships by being more selfless or altruistic.

In summary, there were some significant findings for love styles and romantic attachment that were found for gay men in this study that were not found in previous research with heterosexual samples. Gay men who were more likely to be all-giving, selfless, and altruistic in their style of loving (i.e., Agape) were also more likely to be preoccupied and anxious in their relationships with partners/spouses. Furthermore, gay men who were less passionate with their partners were more likely fear intimacy and are socially avoidant; those who were more passionate with their partners were less likely to fear intimacy or to be socially avoidant. These findings may be unique to gay men in romantic relationships. While this is the first study of its kind to explore the relationships between love styles and attachment styles in gay men, more research is needed to confirm these findings. Areas for further research will be discussed in a latter section.

Attachment Styles

There were some significant relationships between and among the attachment variables of interest in this study. Gay men who viewed their partner as accepting and responsive were less likely to view their partners as rejecting and untrustworthy, were less likely to have negative views of themselves, and were less likely to avoid close relationships with their partners. In addition, gay men who viewed themselves negatively and viewed their partners as rejecting and untrustworthy were more likely to avoid closeness in relationships and more likely to strive towards self-acceptance through acceptance of others.

Gay men who identified themselves as securely attached were less likely to be avoidant in their relationships; gay men who were more insecurely attached were more avoidant in their relationships. In addition, gay men who viewed themselves and their partners/spouses negatively were more likely to be anxious and avoidant in their relationships. Furthermore, gay men who were preoccupied with their relationship with their partners/spouses were more likely to be anxious in their relationships; gay men who were dismissive in their style of attachment were more likely to be avoidant in their relationships.

The relationship of these variables gives us a better understanding of the level of avoidance and anxiety that gay men experience in their romantic relationships in relation to their attachment style with their partners/spouses.

Love styles

Some of the love style subscales were significantly related to one another. Gay men who reported higher levels of passion toward their partners (i.e., Eros) also reported that they were less likely to be involved in multiple relationships and engage in “game-

playing” love (i.e., Ludus), were less likely to “shop” for partners with specific background and lifestyle characteristics (i.e., Pragma), and were also less likely to base their love on friendship (i.e., Storge). In addition, gay men who were less likely to “shop” for partners (i.e., Pragma) were also less likely to be, dependent, obsessive, and be jealous of their partners (i.e., Mania). Gay men who were less likely to endorse in selfless love (i.e., Agape) were also less likely to be possessive towards their partners (i.e., Mania); gay men who reported more selfless love (i.e., Agape) with their partners also reported more possessive love (i.e., Mania).

These relationships are interesting because as previously noted, this is the first study to explore Lee’s theory of love with gay men.

Implications for practice

This information could be discussed in support groups, in counseling, as well as in educational/prevention programs that focus on enhancing gay men’s romantic relationships with partners. Based on the results of the present study, there appear to be love styles (i.e., Eros, Pragma, Agape) that are associated with more secure romantic attachments that gay men could benefit from knowing and understanding. In addition, couple’s counseling for gay men is more than likely different from heterosexual couple’s experience (i.e., factors that are only related to gay men and not with heterosexual individuals such as level of outness) and by assessing their endorsement of each love style and attachment style, mental health counselors could have a better understanding of factors that may influence gay men’s experiences in romantic relationships with partners. Furthermore, if a gay couple is coming in for couple’s therapy, mental health counselor

may assess for their love styles and their history of romantic attachment styles and this information can be used in treatment.

The roles of love styles and attachment styles may be important areas to explore with gay men, especially if the quality and nature of men's romantic relationships becomes an area of focus or concern when seeking counseling services. An understanding of a gay man's love style may give us a better understanding how he approaches and views "love" with others; exploring levels of anxiety or avoidance in relationships, more specifically views of self in relation to partners, may give us a better understanding of how a gay man might approach romantic relationships from an attachment perspective.

Anxiety in relationships could possibly hurt the relationship. This may also cause various problems in the relationships. Mental health counselors can help decrease anxiety levels in relationships by having an understanding how the person views love and how they are attached to their partners. Love styles and attachment styles are great tools that mental health counselors could use in providing services to gay men.

Limitations

There are several limitations that need to be noted with the present study. Most of the participants were White/Caucasian and highly educated individuals. Therefore, these findings may not generalize to other gay men who does not have degrees in higher education and/or who are diverse in terms of race/ethnicity.

Another potential limitation of this study is that the participants in this study were, on average, in relationships with their partners for approximately 6 years. The findings of this study may reflect the love and attachment experiences of gay men who have been

with partners for a while which may not reflect the experiences of gay men in earlier phases of their love and romantic relationship experiences.

Given that self-report measures were used, it is possible that participants responded to the items in more socially desirable ways. Another limitation of this study is that not everyone may have access to computers and online resources which may limit who participated in the study. Even those who have access to these resources may not have been aware of this study. In addition, a snowball technique was used for this study which reflects a convenience sampling strategy and therefore is also another limitation of the study.

Another limitation of the study is the total number of participants that were in the analyses ($n = 72$). Involving more participants may yield to different results than what was found. In addition, although two forms of attachment measures were used, it may be possible to include more than one measure of love styles and other attachment measures. Lastly the study was correlation in nature, therefore, cause and effect cannot be assumed in this study in regards to its findings.

Areas for Further Research

Further research could be conducted to explore the similar and different experiences of love styles and romantic attachment for gay and heterosexual men. It might be interesting to see if there are any similarities or difference in both communities.

In addition, a longitudinal study of the love styles and attachment experiences of gay men could be another area for future research. It would be interesting if any of these love styles or attachment styles change over a period of time depending on the length of the relationship. Given the number of gay male participants who were White, more

research is needed to better understand how these variables related to one another in more racially and ethnically diverse samples of gay men as well as gay men from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Future research is needed to explore the effectiveness of support groups as well as educational and counseling programs that address love and attachment experiences of gay men.

CHAPTER V

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Types of Love and Love Styles

Many researchers have attempted to theorize and conceptualize the ideology of love. Blau (1964) proposed that the development of love is based on a consistent exchange of rewards and mutuality between two partners in a balanced way (Exchange Theory). Romantic, passionate love has also been described as a physiological arousal that is accompanied by different cognitive cues and the label for the arousal is “passionate love” (Berscheid, & Walster, 1974).

Love can be experienced in romantic and familial relationships as well as in friendships. A common and general factor of love has been found in these types of relationships (Sternberg, & Grajek, 1984). In other words, the people experience love in similar ways in different kind of relationships (i.e. friendships, familial, and romantic), yet the intensity of this love is different for different relationships. According to Walster and Walster (1978), there are two general kinds of love: passionate love and companionate love. Passionate love is based in emotional, physical, and sexual attraction and reflects a desire for another individual; whereas companionate love is love that

begins as a friendship or a close platonic relationship that then evolves into a passionate love over time.

Love has also been conceptualized in other ways. Sternberg's (1986) triangular theory of love consists of three components: intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment. In loving relationships, intimacy is defined as feelings of connectedness, closeness, and bondedness. Passion relates to the drives that lead to physical attraction, romance, sexual consummation, and other related phenomena. Decision/Commitment refers to the decision to love someone else and commit to maintain that particular love for that person. To understand love, we need to know how close people feel in their romantic relationship, how passionate they are in those relationships, and how committed they are to that person. These three components interact with each other and the amount and strength of love one experience forms a unique love experience for each individual.

Lee (1973) theorized six basic love styles including Eros (i.e. passionate love), Ludus (i.e. game-playing love), Storge (i.e. friendship love), Pragma (i.e. logical, "shopping list" love), Mania (i.e. possessive, dependent love), and Agape (i.e. all-giving, selfless love).

Eros is also known as passionate love. Individuals who identify with this love style are searching for their ideal physical type of lover.

Ludus is also known as game-playing love. Individuals who identify with this love style carefully control their involvement in relationships, are often involved in multiple relationships, avoid jealousy, and their relationships tend to be short-lived.

Storge is described as a type of love based on friendship. Individuals who identify with this love style typically develop affection towards and companionship with others in a slow manner. These individuals tend to gradually engage in self-disclosure, avoid self-conscious passion, and expect long-term friendship commitments.

Mania is defined as possessive, dependent love. Individuals who identify with this love style have a need for a constant reassurance of being loved. This is also described as an emotionally intense love style distinguished by preoccupation with the beloved and these individuals are also obsessive and jealous.

Agape is all-giving, selfless, altruistic love. Individuals who identify with this love style see it as their duty to love without expectation of reciprocity. The love given is guided by reasons more than emotions and is gentle and caring in nature.

Pragma is a logical type of love style. Individuals who identify with this love style are looking or “shopping” for partners with specific background and lifestyle characteristics, for example, education level, employment status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, race, and age. These are just some of the characteristics pragmatic lovers consider in search for their compatible partners. Other factors can also include impact of partners on one’s career, ability of the partner to be a good parent, and the mutual interests between oneself and partner.

Correlates of Love Styles. There are many ways of conceptualizing love as mentioned previously and many researchers have focused on Lee’s theory of love styles. Love styles have been associated with a number of variables in heterosexual college student samples including personality traits (Mallandain & Davies, 1994; White, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 2004); life, work, and relationship satisfaction, including

satisfaction in one's friendships (same-sex versus opposite-sex; Yancey & Berglass, 1991); as well as aspects of emotional and/or psychological stress including eating disorder characteristics (i.e. drive for thinness; bulimia; ineffectiveness; body dissatisfaction; Raciti & Hendrick, 1992), and sexual aggression and coercion (Ludus; Sarwer et. al., 1993).

Gender differences in Love Styles. A few researchers have found gender differences in love styles. Hendrick & Hendrick (1986) explored gender differences in love styles with heterosexual undergraduate students (n = 807 for study 1, and n = 567 for study 2). College students completed measures of love styles and demographic questionnaire which includes questions about their views of self-esteem, the number of times they have been in love, and if they are currently in love or not. They found that men were more Ludic compared to women, indicating that they were more likely to play games in their dating relationships and were more likely to be involved in other romantic relationships compared to women. Women were more Erotic, Storgic, Pragmatic, and Manic on their love style identifications compared to men, indicating that women were more likely to search for a physical ideal partner, merge love and friendship, "shop" for specific background of a partner, and be more obsessive and be jealous than men. One limitation of this study was that the majority of college students in this study were White and also heterosexual, which limits the generalizability of these findings to other culturally diverse students as well as gay, lesbian, or bisexual college students.

Hall, Hendrick, and Hendrick (1991) explored gender differences in love styles and personal construct systems regarding romantic relationships in a sample of heterosexual undergraduate students. Participants completed the Love Attitudes Scale and

Repertory Grid Test, which was used to assess the different constructs in romantic relationships. Results indicated that college men with Pragma, Eros, Storge, and Agape love styles had more stable views of and feelings toward their partners compared to college men with Mania (i.e., jealous, obsessive) and Ludus (i.e., game-playing) love styles. College women with Agape love styles viewed their relationships with partners the way they wanted them to be (i.e., real matched ideal). For both men and women, Agape love styles were linked with perceptions of relationship stability.

There were gender differences for only one love style of love, Ludus. College men reported engaging in more game playing love (i.e. Ludus) than college women which is consistent with previous research findings (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986). Overall, college women in this study were more satisfied in their relationships and felt deeply in love more so than the college men.

Sexual orientation group differences in love styles. Only one group of researchers has explored heterosexual and gay men's attitudes toward love and sex (Adler, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 1986). There were 60 males who participated in this study; 12 gay male and 16 heterosexual male were from New York City and 32 male were from West Texas, 16 males in each group. Participants completed the Love Attitudes Scale (LAS; measure of love styles), Sexual Attitudes Scale (SAS), and a demographic questionnaire, and two likert-type Kinsey scales to determine sexual orientation preference. There was a significant sex orientation group difference by geographic location in Agape love styles but not for the other love styles. New York gay men reported less Agape love compared to the other three groups (i.e., New York and

Texas heterosexual men, and Texas gay men). Younger men were more Pragmatic in their love styles compared to older men regardless of their sexual orientation.

In summary, love styles are associated with relationship qualities, including relationship satisfaction. Certain love styles also are related to healthier and positive romantic relationships, whereas others are not. Furthermore, certain love styles are more common in male and females in heterosexual samples. Little is known within the LGBT community regarding their experience of love styles and how these love styles might be related to their attachments in romantic relationships, which is the purpose of the present study.

Romantic Attachment

Bowlby (1969) and Ainsworth et al. (1978) were the original theorists and researchers who defined and conceptualized attachment as the bonds or relationships that are established early in life with parents/caregivers and their children (i.e., infants, toddlers). Ainsworth et al. (1978) were able to identify three types of attachment styles based on their experimental study “strange situations”: secure, anxious-ambivalent, and avoidant attachment styles. Infants in this study were put into different “strange situations.” Infants who were securely attached acted somewhat distressed when the mother returned in the room. Infants who were anxious-ambivalent on their attachment style acted distraught and protested both when the mother left the room and when she returned. Infants who were avoidant in their attachment styles showed actions of not being distressed when the mother left the room and when she returned.

Hazan and Shaver (1987) applied Bowlby’s (1969) attachment theory in conceptualizing and conducting research on adolescent and adult romantic relationships

as an attachment process. Different attachment styles correlated with different experiences in love and different characteristics of romantic relationships. The three romantic attachment styles were identified as secure, anxious/ambivalent and avoidant. Individuals who were *securely attached* in their adult romantic relationships described their love experiences in a positive way—that is “happy, friendly, and trusting” (Hazan & Shaver, 1987, p. 515). Their relationships also tend to last a long time. These individuals are also able to show acceptance and support towards their partners. *Avoidant* lovers tended to report emotional highs and lows, jealousy, and fear of intimacy were found to be common. *Anxious/ambivalent* individuals were found to experience love as involving obsession, emotional highs and lows, jealousy, extreme sexual attraction, and desire for reciprocation and union. Securely attached individuals tended to be more committed in their romantic relationships and accepted and supported their partners more so than individuals with avoidant or anxious/ambivalent attachment styles.

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) further expanded on romantic attachment, conceptualizing it as having a positive structure or a negative structure in reference to self and others, and identified four types of romantic attachment including secure, preoccupied, fearful, and dismissive. Securely attached individuals have a positive inner working model for the self and others, and generally view others as accepting and responsive. As a result, they are generally comfortable with intimacy and autonomy. Individuals who are preoccupied have a negative working model of themselves and positive working model of others and generally have a desire to strive for self-acceptance through the acceptance of others. These individuals are also generally preoccupied with their relationships with others. Dismissing individuals have a positive model of self

and a negative model of others. These individuals tend to avoid close relationships and try to maintain independence and invulnerability. Fearfully attached individuals have a negative working model of self and others and have expectations that others will be rejecting and untrustworthy. In addition, these individuals are also fearful of intimacy and are socially avoidant.

Ridge and Feeney (1998) explored sexual orientation group differences in general attachment styles with others as well as satisfaction in partnered relationships for men and women. There were gay males ($n = 77$), lesbians ($n = 100$), and self-identified heterosexual individuals ($n = 150$) that participated in this study and completed questionnaires assessing attachment styles (Relationship Questionnaire), their early relationships with parents (adjective checklist adapted from Hazan and Shaver) as well as their relationships with their current partners (self-report questionnaire the authors made for the study), and their relationship status and functioning, and also the history of their romantic relationships (Quality of Marriage Index, Sexual Attitudes Scale) Aspects of their “coming out” process was also assessed by asking questions the authors made.

Gay men reported being more preoccupied in their attachment (i.e., more negative views of self yet positive views of others) compared to heterosexual males. There were no significant differences were found for general attachment styles between lesbian and heterosexual women (Ridge & Feeney, 1998). In addition, they found that lesbians reported experiencing more satisfaction with their relationships with others compared to gay men. Lesbians who reported that they were in exclusive relationship also reported higher levels of relationship satisfaction with people in general than those who were not in exclusive relationships.

Overall, the findings of Ridge and Feeney (1998) suggest that insecure attachment style may not be over-represented in gay and lesbian samples. Insecurity in romantic relationships may be associated with problems in romantic relationships, leading individuals less satisfied in their romantic relationships. In reviewing the findings of this study and considering the implications of these findings, gay men may be experiencing some insecurities (i.e., preoccupied) in their relationships with romantic partners compared to heterosexual men because being gay has been stereotyped and devalued in our society. Gay men may experience less satisfaction in their romantic relationships compared to lesbians as a result of preoccupation or they may experience less relationship satisfaction because they may have different expectations for their relationships. More research is needed in these areas to better understand the romantic attachment experiences of gay men, which is one of the purposes of the present study.

Feeney and Noller (1990) conducted a study with undergraduate college students (N = 374) exploring different attachment styles as a predictor of different correlates in adult romantic relationships. Several measures were used in this study to assess attachment and other relationship variables including the Coppersmith Self-esteem Inventory-adult form, the Hazan and Shaver Three Category Measure of Attachment, Rubin's 9-item Love Scale, the Love Attitudes Scale, and measures adapted from various scales to assess love addiction and limerence. Researchers in this study found relationships between the three attachment styles and other factors in romantic relationships (i.e. self-esteem, beliefs about relationships, attachment history, loving, love addiction, and love styles). Participants who were anxious-ambivalent in their attachment styles reported more Manic love style compared to individuals with the other two

attachment styles. Participants who were secure and avoidant style in their attachments reported more Storgic love style compared to individuals with anxious-ambivalent attachment style. Participants who were avoidant style in their attachment reported more Ludus love style compared to individuals with the other two attachment styles. This study provided research support and a better understanding of the usefulness of the attachment styles in application to romantic relationships. In addition, this study also provided useful information in understanding different correlates of the different attachment styles.

Gaines and Henderson (2002) explored the relationship of couples' romantic attachment styles (i.e., secure/secure, secure/insecure, and insecure/insecure) and level of accommodation to their partners (i.e., individual responses to partners' criticism or anger) in a sample of 115 same-sex couples (61 gay and 54 lesbian couples). In particular, the researchers were interested in exploring how constructive (i.e., assertion and loyalty) and destructive responses (i.e., leaving when conflict occurs and feeling neglected) may be related to the attachment styles of individuals in their partnered relationships. The authors used a three paragraph, categorical attachment style measure that was developed by Hazan and Shaver (1987), and a 12-item measure assessing constructive and destructive behaviors in response to their partners' anger or criticism (Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1991). For gay men, when both members of the couple reported having secure attachments with one another (secure/secure), they were more likely to engage in constructive responses to their partners' criticism or anger compared to couples wherein one or both members reported insecure romantic attachment styles (i.e., secure/insecure or insecure/insecure). However, couples' romantic attachment styles were not related to how lesbians responded to their partners' criticism or anger. The research findings of this

particular study provided some support for the relationship between secure romantic attachments in gay couples and healthy communication styles, in this case, accommodating constructively to partners in response to conflict (i.e., criticism or anger).

Based on these previous studies, certain styles of romantic attachment are related to different factors in romantic relationships such as satisfaction, intimacy, and an individual's attachment history with their parents. Gay men in couples relationships who are secure in their romantic attachments are more likely to be in a positive and healthy romantic relationship than gay men in couples relationships who experience insecurities in their romantic attachments.

Love Styles and Romantic Attachment Styles

Levy and Davis (1988) explored the relationship of love styles, romantic attachment styles, and various romantic relationships characteristics. There were a total of 166 (50 men and 116 women) undergraduate, heterosexual college students that participated in this study 1 and 117 undergraduate, heterosexual college students participated in study 2. Participants completed a variety of measures including the LAS and the Sternberg Triangular Love Scale (STLS). The LAS was used to assess the participants' style of loving. The STLS was used to assess intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment, and Hazan and Shaver's measure of attachment was also used. Levy and Davis (1988) found significant correlations between love styles and romantic attachment styles. In particular, secure attachment style was found to be positively related to Eros and Agape love styles while Avoidant attachment style was negatively related to Eros and Agape love styles. Ludus love style was positively related to Avoidant attachment style and negatively related to Secure attachment style. Mania love style was

positively related to anxious/ambivalent attachment style. Eros love style was negatively related to anxious/ambivalent attachment style. The findings suggest a relationship between love styles and romantic attachment styles. In particular, as previously mentioned, certain attachment styles predicts relationship satisfaction and these findings supports that certain love styles are also related to relationship satisfaction and healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Fricker and Moore (2002) explored the relationship of adult attachment styles and love styles in predicting sexual and relationship satisfaction with 111 undergraduate, first year psychology students. Participants completed The Love Schemas Scale (Singelis, Choo, & Hatfield, 1995), the Love Attitudes Scale (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1986), the Global Measure of Relationship Satisfaction (Lawrance & Byers, 1998), and the Global Measure of Sexual Satisfaction (Lawrance & Byers, 1998). They found that secure attachment style was positively associated with Eros love style and anxious attachment style was positive related with Mania love style. In addition, a negative correlation was found between avoidant attachment style and Eros love style. Furthermore, Eros and Agape were found to be positively associated with relationship satisfaction and Ludus and avoidant attachment style were negative correlates. Lastly, Eros, Agape, Ludus, and avoidant attachment style are found to be predictors of relationship satisfaction. These results indicate that individuals who were securely attached were also more likely to endorse in a passionate love and searches for their ideal physical type of lover. Individuals who had anxious attachment style were more likely to endorse in a possessive, dependent, obsessive, and jealous love. Individuals who were avoidant as their attachment style were less likely to endorse a passionate love style. Individuals who

were satisfied with their relationships were more likely to endorse a passionate and altruistic love style. Game playing and avoidant individuals were less satisfied with their relationships.

Love styles have been primarily been studied with undergraduate, heterosexual samples. Only a few studies have explored love styles within the LGBT community. To date, there have not been any studies that explored romantic attachment styles and love styles in the LGBT community. These previous studies provided information regarding different romantic relationship constructs with the heterosexual community.

Lesbian and Gay Romantic Relationships

In his review of the literature, Kurdek (2005) summarized the research to date regarding the experiences of lesbian, gay, and heterosexual individuals in partnered/martial relationships. He noted similarities and differences in terms of how lesbian, gay, and heterosexual individuals manage household responsibilities as well as conflicts with their partners/spouses, and how they perceive social support, stability, and satisfaction in those relationships. Gay and lesbian couples appear to negotiate more effectively their needs and experience more support, stability, and satisfaction in their relationships with their partners/spouses compared to heterosexual couples. A more detailed discussion of these findings follows next.

In terms of household labor distribution, traditional gender roles seem to impact heterosexual couples more than lesbian and gay couples (Carrington, 1999). For heterosexual couples, men and women had specific gender role expectations (“wife” roles versus “husband” roles) about household tasks; gay and lesbian individuals in partnerships/marriages were less likely to assign household chores to “wife” and

“husband” roles, but rather, were more likely to assign tasks based on personal preferences and scheduling issues. Kurdek (2005) interpreted these findings to reflect that lesbian and gay couples may be more accommodating of their partners’ desires and better negotiators in balancing the distribution of household tasks between themselves and their significant other compared to heterosexual couples. This also provides some evidence that gender role expectations may not be relevant to gay and lesbian couples since they are of the same gender.

There were similarities and differences in terms of the types of conflicts experienced and how they resolved these conflicts in partnered/marital relationships (Gottman et al., 2003). Gay, lesbian, and heterosexual individuals reported similar types of conflicts in their relationships including money, sex, driving style, criticism, and household tasks. However, gay and lesbian couples tended to resolve conflicts by addressing the conflict directly more so than heterosexual couples, providing evidence that lesbian and gay couples may be more effective in conflict resolution skills than heterosexual couples.

Furthermore, gay, lesbian, and heterosexual individuals identified different sources of social support outside of the partnered/marital relationship; gay and lesbian couples are more likely to identify their friends as their primary source of support in general whereas heterosexual couples were more likely to identify their family members as their primary source of support (Kurdek, 2004).

In terms of relationship satisfaction, gay, lesbian, and heterosexual couples reported, on average, being satisfied and this level of satisfaction in their relationships

was similar. In addition, their level of satisfaction in their partnered/marital relationships was stronger at the beginning of the relationship, but decreased over time (Kurdek, 1998).

In terms of relationship stability (i.e., length of the relationship), there have been mixed findings in both gay and lesbian couples and heterosexual couples. Researchers found that most gay and lesbian couples have less relationship stability, in terms of the duration of the relationship, compared to heterosexual couples (Kurdek, 1998). These findings may reflect the lack of institutional supports to maintain these relationships. However, Kurdek (2005) interpreted these findings to reflect the enduring nature of romantic relationships among gay and lesbian couples despite the lack of support for these relationships in society even today.

Peplau and Fingerhut (2007) reviewed the literature regarding the experiences of close relationships for lesbians and gay men and identified common and unique findings for same-sex couples in comparison to heterosexual couples and they concluded what researchers have contributed in understanding gay and lesbian romantic relationships. Researchers have showed that many negative social stereotypes towards gays and lesbians romantic relationships are not accurate. For example, the media have stereotyped these types of relationships as unstable and portray gays and lesbians as unhappy in the relationship. Another social stereotype is that these gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals are unable to establish intimate, passionate kinds of love and relationships compared to heterosexual individuals despite the similarities in heterosexual couples and gay and lesbian couples in their romantic relationships in terms of satisfaction and love experiences in the research. Cultural stereotypes (i.e., “butch versus “fem”) of gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals as mimicking “husband” and “wife” roles have also

been projected in the mainstream culture, which are not true (Peplau and Fingerhut, 2007); gays and lesbians divide the roles by personal interests and area of expertise in terms of household labor (Peplau and Fingerhut, 2007).

Researchers have explored topics such as love and satisfaction, sexuality, conflict and partner violence, commitment and relationships stability, division of household labor and power, and relationship formation in same-sex couples. There were some significant differences between same-sex couples and heterosexual couples in terms of their relationship formation. For example, lesbians and gay men are more likely to stay friends with their ex-lovers than heterosexual couples (Solomon et al., 2004; Weinstock, 2004).

In lesbian relationships, there appears to be a developmental process of love that moves from friendships to loving, romantic relationships. Rose et al. (1993) found that lesbians typically start their romantic relationships as friendships which later turns into a loving relationship which becomes sexual in nature as the relationship matures.

In summary, love is experienced in different ways in heterosexual, gay, and lesbian romantic relationships. Researchers have also explored the attachment process in these groups but little is known about the relationship of these two variables in gay and lesbian romantic relationships. Many researchers have attempted to explore gender differences in love styles and attachment styles in heterosexual romantic relationships but none have explored in gay men and lesbian sample. Little research has been conducted in applying Lee's theory of love styles in gay men and lesbians.

The purpose of the present study is to explore the relationship between romantic attachment styles and love styles in gay men and lesbians.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHICS SHEET

Directions: Please answer each question by filling in the blank, checking the blank, or clicking on the circle or box that best describes you.

1. What is your current age? _____
2. What is your gender? _____ Male _____ Female _____ Other
3. What is your racial or ethnic background? Please check ALL that apply.
_____ Hispanic or Latino/a _____ American Indian/Alaskan Native
_____ Asian or Asian American _____ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
_____ Black or African American _____ White
Other (Please specify) _____
4. What is your current relationship status? _____ Single _____ Married
_____ Partnered/Common Law _____ Divorced _____ Separated
_____ Widowed
5. If you are currently in a dating/partnered/marital relationship, how long have you been with this person? ____ years ____ months
6. If you are not currently in a dating/partnered/marital relationship, how long was your previous romantic relationship? ____ years ____ months
7. Are you currently in love? ____ yes ____ no

8. What is your sexual orientation? _____ Gay Man _____ Lesbian
_____ Bisexual _____ Other

9. In which state do you currently live? _____

10. Geographic Location _____ Urban _____ Rural
_____ Suburban _____ Midwest
_____ Northeast

11. What is your highest educational attainment?

- ___ Less than high school graduate
- ___ High school graduate or GED
- ___ Current College freshman
- ___ Current College sophomore
- ___ Current College junior
- ___ Current College senior
- ___ College graduate
- ___ Currently pursuing a graduate degree
- ___ Master's degree
- ___ PhD or professional degree (MD, JD, etc.)

12. What is your annual family income level?

- ___ Less than \$10,000
- ___ \$10,001 to \$15,000
- ___ \$15,001 to \$20,000
- ___ \$20,001 to \$25,000
- ___ \$25,001 to \$30,000
- ___ \$30,001 to \$40,000
- ___ \$40,001 to \$50,000
- ___ \$50,001 to \$60,000
- ___ \$60,001 to \$70,000
- ___ \$70,001 to \$80,000
- ___ \$80,001 or more

APPENDIX B: LOVE ATTITUDES SCALE

Listed below are several statements that reflect different attitudes about love. For each statement fill in the response on the answer sheet that indicates how much you agree or disagree with that statement. The items refer to a specific love relationship. Whenever possible, answer the questions with your current partner in mind. If you are not currently dating anyone, answer the questions with your most recent partner in mind. If you have never been in love, answer in terms of what you think your responses would most likely be.

For each statement:

- 1 = Strongly agree with the statement
- 2 = Moderately agree with the statement
- 3 = Neutral – neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = Moderately disagree with the statement
- 5 = Strongly disagree with the statement

1. My partner and I have the right physical “chemistry” between us.
2. I feel that my partner and I were meant for each other.
3. My partner and I really understand each other.
4. My partner fits my ideal standards of physical beauty/handsomeness.
5. I believe that what my partner doesn’t know about me won’t hurt him/her.
6. I have sometimes had to keep my partner from finding out about other lovers.
7. My partner would get upset if he/she knew of some of the things I’ve done with other people.
8. I enjoy playing the “game of love” with my partner and a number of other Partners.
9. Our love is the best kind because it grew out of a long friendship.
10. Our friendship merged gradually into love over time.
11. Our love is really a deep friendship, not a mysterious, mystical emotion.
12. Our love relationship is the most satisfying because it developed from a good friendship.
13. A main consideration in choosing my partner was how he/she would reflect on my family.
14. An important factor in choosing my partner was whether or not he/she would be a good parent.
15. One consideration in choosing my partner was how he/she would reflect on my career.
16. Before getting very involved with my partner, I tried to figure out how compatible his/her hereditary background would be with mine in case we ever had children.

17. When my partner doesn't pay attention to me, I feel sick all over.
18. Since I've been in love with my partner, I've had trouble concentrating on anything else.
19. I cannot relax if I suspect that my partner is with someone else.
20. If my partner ignores me for a while, I sometimes do stupid things to try to get his/her attention back.
21. I would rather suffer myself than let my partner suffer.
22. I cannot be happy unless I place my partner's happiness before my own.
23. I am usually willing to sacrifice my own wishes to let my partner achieve his/hers.
24. I would endure all things for the sake of my partner.

1 2 3 **4** 5 6 7

not at all like me

somewhat

very much like me

4. 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

havthens depend on me.

1 2 3 **4** 5 6 7

not at all like me

somewhat
like me

very much like me

APPENDIX D: THE EXPERIENCES IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS REVISED QUESTIONNAIRE

The statements below concern how you feel in emotionally intimate relationships. We are interested in how you *generally* experience romantic relationships, not just in what is happening in a current relationship. Respond to each statement by clicking a circle to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement.

1 = Strongly Disagree

4 = Neutral/Mixed

7 = Strongly Agree

1. I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love.
2. I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me.
3. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me.
4. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.
5. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him or her.
6. I worry a lot about my relationships.
7. When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he or she might become interested in someone else.
8. When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me.
9. I rarely worry about my partner leaving me.
10. My romantic partner makes me doubt myself.
11. I do not often worry about being abandoned.
12. I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.
13. Sometimes romantic partners change their feelings about me for no apparent reason.
14. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.
15. I'm afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he or she won't like who I really am.
16. It makes me mad that I don't get the affection and support I need from my partner.
17. I worry that I won't measure up to other people.
18. My partner only seems to notice me when I'm angry.
19. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.
20. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.
21. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.
22. I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners.

23. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.
24. I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.
25. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.
26. I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.
27. It's not difficult for me to get close to my partner.
28. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.
29. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.
30. I tell my partner just about everything.
31. I talk things over with my partner.
32. I am nervous when partners get too close to me.
33. I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.
34. I find it easy to depend on romantic partners.
35. It's easy for me to be affectionate with my partner.
36. My partner really understands me and my needs.

APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT

We would like to invite you to participate in a survey study exploring the experiences of love and romantic relationships among gay men, lesbians, and bisexual individuals. Participation would involve completing an on-line survey which should take you no more than 20-30 minutes of your time.

There are many benefits to this study. We hope this information will give us a better understanding of how gay men, lesbians, and bisexual individuals experience love, including their sense of connection with dating partners, and how satisfied they are in their romantic relationships. We want to gain a better understanding of the resilient aspects of romantic relationships for the GLB community in hopes to provide more effective services to gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals. Given that little research has been conducted in this area with GLB individuals, we hope the results of the study will educate people in society regarding love and relationship experiences for GLB people and guide researchers to new areas of study.

There are no foreseeable risks in participating. As a result of completing the survey, you may become more aware of how you experience love, how secure you feel in your romantic relationships with others, and how satisfied you are in those relationships.

Your responses will be confidential and anonymous. We will not ask you to write your name anywhere on the survey so there is no way to connect your responses to your identity.

By filling out the survey, you are agreeing to participate in the study. If you have any questions or concerns about this project, contact Dr. Carrie Winterowd, Associate Professor in Counseling Psychology at (405) 744-6040 or at carrie.winterowd@okstate.edu or Rich Zamora at (405) 744-6040 or at Richard.zamora@okstate.edu. This study has been approved by the Oklahoma State University IRB. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may also contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, Chair of the Institutional Review Board at OSU Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-1676 or irb@okstate.edu. Thank you for your willingness to assist us with this very important research project.

If you agree to participate, please click the submit button below to begin the survey.

APPENDIX F: TABLE OF CORRELATIONS

Correlations Between Loves Styles And Attachment Styles

	SECURE	FEARFUL	PREOCCUPIED	DISMISSIVE	EROS	LUDUS	STORGE	PRAGMA	MANIA	AGAPE	ANXIETY	AVOIDANCE
SECURE	1.00											
FEARFUL	-.53**	1.00										
PREOCCUPIED	-.06	.40**	1.00									
DISMISSIVE	-.26*	.34**	-.12	1.00								
EROS	-.19	.24*	.14	.19	1.00							
LUDUS	.11	.02	.07	.12	-.34**	1.00						
STORGE	-.11	-.16	.03	.10	.25*	-.20	1.00					
PRAGMA	.09	-.17	-.18	.03	-.27*	.14	-.02	1.00				
MANIA	.15	-.22	-.42**	.16	-.00	.12	-.16	.34**	1.00			
AGAPE	-.22	-.00	-.43**	.22	.23	-.17	.10	-.04	.48**	1.00		
ANXIETY	-.21	.34**	.52**	-.02	.17	-.07	-.02	-.27*	-.71*	-.36**	1.00	
AVOIDANCE	-.49**	.36**	.03	.27*	.34**	-.33**	.12	-.15	-.20	.15	.28*	1.00

*p < .05

**p < .01

***p < .001

(note: lower scores of love styles indicates higher endorsement of that love style)

APPENDIX G: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Tuesday, March 16, 2010
IRB Application No ED1034
Proposal Title: Relationship of Love Styles and Romantic Attachment Styles in Lesbians, Gays, and Bisexuals

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 3/15/2011

Principal Investigator(s):
Carrie Winterowd Richard Zamora
409 Willard 1104 S. Blakely
Stillwater, OK 74078 Stillwater, OK 74074

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Shelia Kennison, Chair
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Richard Calleja Zamora

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: THE RELATIONSHIP OF LOVE STYLES AND ROMANTIC
ATTACHMENT STYLES IN GAY MEN

Major Field: Counseling

Biographical:

Personal Data: B.A. in Psychology, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas,
May 2008.

Education: Completed the requirements for the Master of Science in
Counseling, Community Track, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2010.

Experience: University Counseling Center at Oklahoma State University,
Practicum Intern from June 2009 to May 2010.

Professional Memberships: Chi Sigma Iota Honor Society
Psi Chi Honor Society
Master's Counseling Society, President

Name: Richard Calleja Zamora

Date of Degree: May, 2010

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: THE RELATIONSHIP OF LOVE STYLES AND ROMANTIC
ATTACHMENT STYLES IN GAY MEN

Pages in Study: 68

Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science

Major Field: Counseling

Scope and Method of Study: This study examined the relationship of love styles and romantic attachment styles in 72 self-identified gay men.

Findings and Conclusions: The results indicated significant relationships between different love styles, romantic attachment styles, and avoidance and anxiety in romantic relationships for gay men. In particular, fearful attachment style was significantly related to Eros love style, preoccupied attachment style was significantly related to Mania and Agape love styles. In addition, anxiety in romantic relationships was significantly related to Pragma, Mania, and Agape love styles and avoidance in romantic relationships was significantly related to Eros and Ludus love styles. Implications and areas for further research are discussed.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Dr. Carrie Winterowd
