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Using Attachment Theory to Study Satisfaction in Father-Daughter Relationships

Narissra Maria Punyanunt-Carter
Department of Communication Studies
Texas Tech University
P.O. BOX 43083
Lubbock, TX 79406-3083
(806) 742-3273
n.punyanunt@ttu.edu

Narissra Maria Punyanunt-Carter (Ph.D., Kent State University, 2002) is an assistant professor in the department of communication at Texas Tech University. This article is based on the dissertation completed by the first author under the direction of Dr. Rebecca Rubin.

Abstract

The objective of this study was to investigate attachment theory in father-daughter relationships and levels of satisfaction. Two hundred and seven father-daughter dyads participated in the study. It was predicted that secure attachment styles would have higher satisfaction than other attachment styles. This finding was only partially supported. The only significant relationship was that secure daughters had higher communication satisfaction than avoidant daughters. Fathers' satisfaction levels did not differ among attachment styles.

Key words: fathers, daughters, satisfaction, and attachment theory

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Socha and Stamp (1995) stated that “communication is certainly an integral part of the process of attaining stability, satisfaction, and fulfillment in contemporary parent-child relationships” (p. xi). Yet, very little research has looked at the communication behaviors between fathers and daughters. Furthermore, little research has looked at the father-daughter relationship using attachment theory. More research is needed to investigate father-daughter communication and their satisfaction levels with each other. Hence, the objective of this study is to understand how attachment theory affects perceptions of satisfaction in father-daughter relationships.

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988) is a useful framework for father-daughter relationships and the dynamics of these relationships. Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) noted that attachment theory helps explain the importance of communication in relationships. Moreover, Guerrero and Burgoon (1996) believed that attachment styles are highly related to communication behavior. Hence, it is a useful theory to study the communication aspects within the father-daughter relationship

Attachment theory, created by Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1975, 1979), has been used to understand individuals’ first relationships or attachment bonds and the impact they have later in life (Bowlby, 1979). Bowlby (1977) explained that attachment theory refers to, “the propensity of human beings to make strong affectional bonds to particular others” (p. 201). Bowlby believed that the bonds between the infant and caretaker develop into prototypes for other relationships. Bowlby maintained that attachment styles play a vital role from childhood through adulthood. Based on research dealing with children and adults, researchers have developed a three-category model of adult attachment styles (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

The three attachment styles for adults are: secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent. Hazan and Shaver (1987) defined secure adults as individuals who have a positive self perception and positive perception of others. In general, secure adults do not worry about being deserted or oppressed in relationships. Secure attachment styles form relationships with others easily and are competent. Avoidant adults do not trust others and do not enjoy being immediate with others. Avoidant individuals often worry about being involved in oppressed relationships. Anxious/ambivalent adults are individuals who desire close relationships. However, they tend to view themselves as incompetent and think that others will view them as incompetent. These different attachment styles have been used for research.

Hazen and Shaver (1987) found that secure individuals perceive other people are more trustworthy than avoidant and anxious/ambivalent individuals. Moreover, Mikulincer and Nachson (1991) reported that secure individuals self-disclose more than avoidant and anxious/ambivalent individuals. Results also showed that anxious/ambivalent individuals disclosed topics of personal importance. Avoidant individuals had the lowest amount of self-disclosure compared to anxious/ambivalent and secure individuals. Overall, the three attachment styles vary from each other.

Bartholomew (1990) argued that attachment styles fall into a continuum of two dimensions. The first dimension looks at the self-image of the individual and the degree that he/she feels worthy of affection. The second dimension looks at the individual’s perspective on other people and the degree that he/she feels worthy of affection from others. Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) used these two dimensions to create four different attachment styles. Secure attachment styles are high on both dimensions. Preoccupied attachment styles perceive

themselves poorly, but view others highly. Because they are so focused on obtaining others' approval, they are called preoccupied. Fearful attachment styles are low on both dimensions. Fearful individuals view themselves negatively and expect others to treat them poorly. Dismissing attachment styles have a high self-image, but low image of others. Dismissing individuals project an impression of independence in order to safeguard bad relationships.

Becker, Billings, Eveleth, and Gilbert (1997) argued that Hazan and Shaver's (1987) and Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) secure attachment styles were the same. They also noted that fearful and dismissing attachment styles are the same as avoidant attachment because these individuals do not like being involved with close relationships. The authors declared that the anxious/ambivalent attachment style is similar to the preoccupied attachment style. Nonetheless, the authors maintained that the bulk of attachment style literature mainly used the three attachment styles.

The main assumption of attachment theory is that behaviors are determined by attachment styles (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Wegel and Polcar (2000) noted that several research studies have linked attachment styles to adult perceptions of their relationship. Moreover, Wegel and Polcar discovered a link between attachment and communication behavior. Specifically, Wegel and Polcar found that attachment styles varied in their amount of self-disclose and level of communication competence.

Main and Cassidy (1988) discovered that secure children have higher communication competence than avoidant and anxious/ambivalent children. Also, Rholes, Simpson, and Blakely (1995) examined attachment styles of mothers to their infant children. They found that avoidant mothers were not supportive in interactions with their child, and mothers felt distant from their children compared to the other attachment styles. Past research has shown that attachment theory is useful in explaining parent-child relationships.

Viviona (2000) reasoned that attachment theory provides a theoretical paradigm to study different aspects across individuals' lifespan. Viviona stated that secure attachment styles are especially important for college adjustment. She also stated that, "lack of a self-report measure of late adolescent parental attachment style has threatened to hinder expansion of the empirical basis of attachment theory" (p. 316). Viviona observed that securely attached late adolescents were less depressed, anxious, and fearful than insecurely attached late adolescents. She also found sex differences among attachment styles. Insecurely attached women reported low levels of intimacy development and low levels of college adjustment. Viviona argued that the parental attachment style plays a major role in explaining late adolescent development. For that reason, attachment theory was used as a theoretical framework for this study.

Even though fathers may not be the primary attachment figure in a daughter's life, fathers are nevertheless an important attachment figure (Collins & Read, 1990). Krause and Haverkamp (1996) mentioned that attachment styles help to explain parent-child relationships. Krause et al. found that parental attachment styles determine the type of relationships that parents and children will have with each other. For instance, Whitbeck, Simmons, and Conger (1991) noticed that avoidant attachment individuals were less likely to communicate with their parents. Thus, one can assume that attachment theory can be used to predict relational outcomes and relationship quality in parent-child relationships.

Because most of the research looking at attachment styles has concentrated on romantic relationships, there may be differences in family relationships. Research on family communication has found certain characteristics that separate families from other types of relationships.

Fathers and daughters can be categorized by their attachment styles. Past research on attachment theory has shown that attachment styles are related to empathy (Mikulincer, Gillath, Halevy, Avihou, Avidan, & Eshkoli, 2001), anger (Mikulincer, 1998), information-processing (Mikulincer, 1997) and self-disclosure (Mikulincer & Nachson, 1991). Research has indicated that individuals with secure attachment styles display more empathy, less anger, and process information better than individuals with avoidant attachment styles.

This literature suggests that attachment style should influence relational subsequent outcomes. Specifically, satisfaction should be related to style. Father and daughter communication relationships can help us understand family relationships (Fitzpatrick, 1988). Overall, these father-daughter attachment styles should affect the level of satisfaction.

In order to understand satisfaction in the father-daughter relationship, attachment theory is used in this study. Bowlby (1977) claimed that attachment styles could describe communication behavior from childhood to adulthood. From past research dealing with both children and adults' attachment styles, Hazen and Shaver (1987) found three attachment styles--secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent--and a relationship between these attachment styles and perceptions concerning their relationships with others. These attachment styles can also affect communication behaviors and relational outcomes (Bowlby, 1988).

Satisfaction

There are two types of satisfaction: relational and communication. Dainton, Stafford, and Canary (1994) defined relational satisfaction as the feelings toward another and the quality of the relationship. Hecht (1978b) explained that satisfaction is an internal reinforcer and based on expectations. In other words, Hecht believed that communication satisfaction is the fulfillment of expectations. Thus, ratings of satisfaction can be assessed by analyzing levels of relational and communication satisfaction.

Communication is essential to relational satisfaction (Dindia, 1994; Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1990). Lewis and Spanier (1979) stated that the satisfaction of a relationship is due to how effective and frequent communication is. Gottman and Carrere (1994) contended that negative perceptions of satisfaction affect the long-term stability of the relationship. Martin and Anderson (1995) reasoned that if the relationship is not satisfactory, then the relationship may be terminated. Thus, both relational and communication satisfaction will be analyzed in this study.

Satisfaction is an outcome gained from perceptions of the communication interaction (Spitzberg & Hecht, 1984). The greater the interaction, the higher the level of relationship satisfaction (Lewis & Spanier, 1979). Hinde (1997) agreed, stating that satisfaction is related to communication and the attributions of the communication. Based on this research, not only the type of communication, but the amount of communication is associated with satisfaction.

Furthermore, Richards (1989) noted that high levels of satisfaction occur in families that display more supportive, agreeable, and positive statements. Satisfaction should be higher in relationships that have daughters with secure attachment styles. Thus, father-daughter satisfaction will be the dependent variable and father-daughter attachment types will be the independent variables in this study.

Rationale

All in all, this study is warranted for three reasons. First, past research has mainly focused on romantic relationships. The reasons fathers and daughters have for communicating with each other may be very specific to the father-daughter relationship. Second, father and daughter satisfaction may vary depending on the type of relationship they have. Third, the attachment styles in the father-daughter relationship may influence the level of satisfaction.

Hypotheses

Past literature has demonstrated that father-daughter relationships are important to look at because of the effects that fathers have on their daughters (Siegel, 1987). Research has also shown that fathers communicate with their daughters differently than with their sons (Buerkel-Rothfuss et al., 1995). Thus, the goal of this study is to understand the father-daughter relationship through examination of satisfaction.

Guided by attachment theory, I assume in this study that each father-daughter relationship has a unique attachment style. In turn, the father attachment style should influence levels of daughters' and fathers' communication and relational satisfaction. An initial step to understanding father-daughter satisfaction is to look at the father-daughter attachment styles. Marcus (1997) looked at premarital couples and newlyweds in regards to their attachment style and communication patterns. Marcus discovered that individuals who have secure attachment styles also have higher amounts of satisfaction. Moreover, Marcus noted a strong relationship between communication and satisfaction, yet this study only dealt with marital couples and did not specifically focus on communication satisfaction.

However, I proposed the following hypotheses:

- H1a: Daughters with secure attachment styles will have significantly higher levels of communication satisfaction than those with avoidant attachment styles.
- H1b: Daughters with secure attachment styles will have significantly higher levels of communication satisfaction than those with anxious/ambivalent attachment styles.
- H1c: Fathers of daughters with secure attachment styles will have significantly higher levels of communication satisfaction than those with avoidant attachment styles.
- H1d: Fathers of daughters with secure attachment styles will have significantly higher levels of communication satisfaction than those with anxious/ambivalent attachment styles.

Tucker and Andres (1999) looked at attachment styles and relationship satisfaction in romantic couples. They found that anxious men and avoidant men and women were more likely to report low levels of satisfaction. Yet, secure men and women reported high levels of satisfaction. Because Tucker and Andres (1999) found a relationship between attachment styles and relationship satisfaction in romantic couples, the following four hypotheses were created:

- H2a: Daughters with secure attachment styles will have significantly higher levels of relationship satisfaction than those with avoidant attachment styles.
- H2b: Daughters with secure attachment styles will have significantly higher levels of relationship satisfaction than those with anxious/ambivalent attachment styles.
- H2c: Daughters with secure attachment styles will have significantly higher levels of father relationship satisfaction than daughter relationships with avoidant attachment styles.
- H2d: Fathers of daughters with secure attachment styles will have significantly higher levels of relationship satisfaction than those with anxious/ambivalent attachment styles.

Sample

Research participants were 250 female college students from a variety of majors (with a living father) enrolled in an introductory communication course at Kent State University (KSU) and their fathers. Daughters ranged in age from 18 to 35 years old ($M = 20.2$, $SD = 2.50$), and fathers ranged in age from 38 to 72 ($M = 49.6$, $SD = 6.16$). This sample was advantageous

because the participants are at an age where they can remember past interactions with their fathers. So, a sample of fathers and daughters who live apart was appropriate for this study.

Out of the 250 female participants, 207 of their fathers completed and returned their questionnaires. This was an 83% response rate, which is higher than most studies (e.g., Stafford, Dainton, & Haas, 2000). The father-and-daughter data were paired together by a number given to each father-daughter dyad.

Procedures

Once the study was approved by KSU Human Subjects Review Board, the following procedures were used in the data collection process. Two hundred and fifty college-aged female participants enrolled in the basic communication course were asked to complete this survey. These participants were told that their responses would be kept confidential and anonymous. Female students who participated were offered course research credit.

After participants volunteered to participate in the study, they read and signed consent forms. Then, the participants were given a questionnaire with a special number that matched the number on the father questionnaire. Daughters completed the questionnaire during a designated research time period. Then, each daughter was given a sealed envelope, which contained the father's questionnaire. Each daughter was instructed to write her name and a persuasive note to her father (encouraging and instructing him to complete the questionnaire) on the back of the envelope. Then, the daughters were told to address the front envelopes to their fathers.

Fathers were instructed to report on the relationship with the daughter whose name appeared on the back of the envelope. An envelope was included so that fathers could mail their responses to me directly. Questionnaires were collated according to their respective father-daughter dyads. Then, the questionnaire responses were entered in SPSS for data analysis.

Instruments

Attachment Styles

There have been many scales developed to assess adult attachment styles (e.g., Feeney & Noller, 1990; Hazen & Shaver, 1987). Most of these instruments provide a few paragraphs and ask respondents to rate which paragraph is closely related to him or her. To determine the attachment styles present in the father-daughter relationship, I used Becker, Billings, Eveleth, and Gilbert's (1997) attachment styles scale. Because other measures of attachment styles have been viewed as ipsative and low in reliability, the attachment style scale is the best alternative (Becker et al., 1997). Moreover, Becker et al. examined several attachment style measures and found low Cronbach alphas, low internal consistency, and bias wording. Becker et al.'s scale combines into one scale all the attachment measures that other scholars have used. Hence, the scale has a high internal consistency compared to other instruments.

The scale consisted of 25 Likert-type items that ranged from 1 (*very characteristic of me*) to 7 (*not at all characteristic of me*). All items that needed to be reverse-coded were recoded before I began data analysis. I also reversed coded the range so that the higher number represents level of agreement for the characteristic.

Each item was placed into the appropriate subscale. The Cronbach alpha reliabilities for each subscale were acceptable: Secure had a coefficient alpha of .80 ($M = 40.53$, $SD = 9.86$), avoidant (fearful/dismissing) had a .79 alpha ($M = 23.08$, $SD = 8.12$), and ambivalent/anxious (preoccupied) had a .82 alpha ($M = 22.97$, $SD = 7.44$). Out of the 250 questionnaires, 53.2% had secure attachment types ($n = 133$), 32.8% had avoidant attachment types ($n = 82$), and 14.0% had

ambivalent/anxious attachment types ($n = 35$). Attachment types were determined by the highest mean score from the three subscales. Table 1 contains the means and standard deviations for each item.

Table 1: Attachment Styles Scale

Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Secure		
1. I am relatively confident that other people will accept me as I am.	5.53	1.49
2. I am nervous when anyone gets too close.	4.60	1.88
3. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.	3.59	1.87
4. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely.	3.51	1.94
5. I do not often worry about other someone getting too close to me.	4.72	1.59
6. I do not often worry about other people letting me down.	4.21	1.68
7. I do not often worry about being abandoned.	4.53	1.17
8. I find it relatively easy to get close to others.	4.86	1.16
9. I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others.	4.93	1.70
Avoidant		
10. I am not sure that I can always depend on others to be there when I need them.	4.27	1.84
11. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on others.	4.46	1.87
12. I am comfortable depending on others.	4.24	1.74
13. People are never there when you need them.	3.00	1.65
14. I know that others will be there when I need them.	2.93	1.47
15. I find it difficult to trust others completely.	4.08	1.99
Anxious/Ambivalent		
16. I find others are reluctant to get as close as I would like.	3.44	1.66
17. Sometimes people do not want to get close to me because I want so much to be close to them.	2.62	1.68
18. I want to merge completely with another person.	3.87	2.01
19. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others do not value me as much as I value them.	4.41	1.87
20. I often want to get closer to others than they want to get to me.	3.08	1.56
21. 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.	3.11	1.58
22. My desire to merge sometimes scares people away.	2.54	1.46

Note. $N = 250$.

Satisfaction

Two scales were used to measure father-daughter satisfaction. One scale assessed relationship satisfaction and the other scale assessed communication satisfaction. The scale that assessed relationship satisfaction was used in Beatty and Dobos's (1992) study to measure relationship satisfaction between fathers and sons. This scale uses five 7-point bi-polar items to

measure relational satisfaction: Satisfying-Dissatisfying, Fulfilling-Disappointing, Rewarding-Punishing, Positive-Negative, and Good-Bad. Beatty and Dobos's Cronbach alpha reliability for their relationship satisfaction scale was .98.

Responses to the five items were summed and averaged to create an index of relational satisfaction. Daughters ($M = 5.86$, $SD = 1.30$, $\alpha = .96$) and fathers ($M = 6.30$, $SD = .98$, $\alpha = .95$) were given the same scale and asked to rate their relationship with the other person. Table 2 contains the satisfaction scale items and the daughters' and fathers' means and standard deviations.

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations of Daughters' and Fathers' Relational Satisfaction

Items	Daughter ^a		Father ^b			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
1. Satisfying	<u>1 ; 2 ; 3 ; 4 ; 5 ; 6 ; 7</u>	Unsatisfying	2.24	1.45	1.77	1.09
2. Fulfilling	<u>1 ; 2 ; 3 ; 4 ; 5 ; 6 ; 7</u>	Disapproving	2.28	1.46	1.86	1.36
3. Positive	<u>1 ; 2 ; 3 ; 4 ; 5 ; 6 ; 7</u>	Negative	2.11	1.39	1.67	1.06
4. Rewarding	<u>1 ; 2 ; 3 ; 4 ; 5 ; 6 ; 7</u>	Punishing	2.08	1.29	1.66	1.06
5. Good	<u>1 ; 2 ; 3 ; 4 ; 5 ; 6 ; 7</u>	Bad	1.98	1.37	1.54	0.97

^a $N = 250$. ^b $N = 207$.

The second scale is the Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction Inventory (Com-Sat) created by Hecht (1978a, 1978b). The inventory is useful to previous conversations with relationship partners. Com-Sat has been used with other scales as well. For instance, Onyekwere, Rubin, and Infante (1991) and Allman, O'Hair, and Stewart (1994) found a positive relationship between communication competence and communication satisfaction. The inventory has also been applied in different contexts.

In addition, R. B. Rubin and Rubin (1989) found a negative relationship between communication apprehension and communication satisfaction in interpersonal relationships. In the instructional context, Prisbell (1985) found that satisfaction between teachers and students affects students' learning. In the health context, Buller and Buller (1987) found that physicians' communications patterns greatly affect their patients' satisfaction levels. Overall, the inventory has shown to be both valid and reliable.

The scale consists of Likert items that assess participants' agreement with 19 statements ranged from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 7 (*strongly disagree*). The scale is both reliable and valid. Hecht (1978a) reported an alpha reliability of .97 for participants who assessed real conversations and .90 for participants who assessed recalled conversations. Other studies have also reported high levels of reliability. A. M. Rubin (1993) reported an alpha reliability of .86. In addition, the scale has been adapted and still produced reliable results. In this study, the scale's reliability was .94 for the daughters and .89 for the fathers. Zakahi (1985) found that the inventory is reliable not only as a self-report measure, but also as a dyadic assessment. In other words, both partners can assess their communication satisfaction with each other in an accurate

manner. In this study, both fathers and daughters completed this scale. The scale was used to assess the fathers and daughters' general conversations with each other. By looking at both the fathers' and daughters' responses, I was able to discern their satisfaction levels with each other. Table 3 contains the daughters' and fathers' means and standard deviations for the Com-Sat scale items.

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations for the Interpersonal Communication Satisfaction Inventory

Items	Daughter ^a		Father ^b	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. My father lets me know that I am communicating effectively.	4.86	1.72	5.42	1.35
2. Nothing is accomplished in our typical conversations.	5.48	1.69	5.27	1.38
3. I would like to have other conversations with my father like the ones we typically have.	5.21	1.62	5.56	1.50
4. My father genuinely wants to get to know me.	5.68	1.73	5.85	1.35
5. I am very <i>dissatisfied</i> with our typical conversations.	5.75	1.65	5.74	1.77
6. I usually have something else to do.	4.13	1.72	5.36	1.87
7. I feel that during our typical conversations, I am able to present myself as I want my father to view me.	5.49	1.64	5.60	1.50
8. My father shows me that he understands what I say.	5.44	1.58	5.75	1.26
9. I am very satisfied with our typical conversations.	5.45	1.58	5.76	1.25
10. My father expresses a lot of interest in what I have to say.	5.54	1.49	5.38	1.52
11. I do <i>not</i> enjoy our typical conversations.	5.75	1.67	5.90	1.71
12. My father does <i>not</i> provide support for what he says.	5.58	1.75	5.53	1.75
13. I feel I could talk about anything with my father.	4.12	1.92	5.54	1.71
14. We usually get to say what we want.	5.27	1.71	5.81	1.41
15. I felt that we could laugh easily together.	5.91	1.49	6.24	1.07
16. Our typical conversations flow smoothly.	5.29	1.59	5.73	1.23
17. My father changes the topic when his feelings are brought into the conversation.	5.08	1.72	4.95	1.93
18. My father frequently said things, which add little to the conversation.	5.23	1.79	5.74	1.72
19. We usually talk about things I am not interested in.	5.32	1.53	5.69	1.64

Note. Items 2, 5, 6, 11, 12, 17, 18, and 19 were reverse-coded prior to analysis. For the father version, Items 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 17, and 18 were worded "daughter" instead of "father."

^a *N* = 250. ^b *N* = 207.

Data Analysis

Before the data were analyzed, all negatively worded items that needed to be reverse-coded were reverse-coded. In addition, Cronbach alpha reliability tests were calculated on all the measures mentioned earlier. Additionally, the scores were computed so that the higher number reflected higher frequency or agreement with the item.

In addition, all the fathers' and daughters' data were matched by a distinct log number given to each dyad. Then, the data were analyzed to determine attachment style type. In order to determine attachment styles, the items were categorized into the appropriate attachment style subscale: secure, avoidant, anxious/ambivalent. Each subscale was calculated to determine the mean. The higher score based on all the subscales determined that particular attachment style.

None of the participants had equal means on all or two of the attachment styles. The data were used to test the various hypotheses.

Before these analyses, however, I computed a Pearson product-moment correlation between communication satisfaction and relationship satisfaction. I found a strong relationship between the two variables ($r = .82, p < .001$). It appears that daughter communication satisfaction was significantly related to daughter relationship satisfaction. Furthermore, father communication satisfaction was significantly related to father relationship satisfaction ($r = .61, p < .001$). Thus, multivariate analyses were warranted.

For Hypothesis 1a, 1b, 1c, and 1d, I determined the father-daughter's attachment styles based on the daughters' perception. As previously stated, communication satisfaction and relational satisfaction are related. Thus, a one-way MANOVA was conducted to examine differences between the three father-daughter attachment types (secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent) and daughters' and fathers' communication satisfaction, separately.

For Hypothesis 2a, 2b, 2c, and 2d, I computed another one-way MANOVA to see if secure attachment styles differ from avoidant and anxious/ambivalent styles in terms of daughters' and fathers' relationship satisfaction. The hypotheses will be supported if the secure attachment style is significantly higher in satisfaction than the others.

Results

Hypotheses 1 and 2

The first two hypotheses predicted that fathers and daughters in secure attachment styles would report higher levels of satisfaction than those in avoidant and anxious/ambivalent attachment styles. To test the first two hypotheses, one one-way MANOVA was computed with attachment style (secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent) as the independent variable. Father and daughter communication satisfaction and relational satisfaction were entered as repeated-measure dependent variables. The overall MANOVA results for Hypotheses 1 and 2 are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Multivariate Analysis of Variance for Communication Satisfaction and Relationship Satisfaction

Source	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	η^2	<i>p</i>
Daughters' Between Effects				
Communication Satisfaction	2	3.15*	0.03	.04
Relationship Satisfaction	2	0.99	0.01	.37
Fathers' Between Effects				
Communication Satisfaction	2	1.45	0.00	.26
Relationship Satisfaction	2	0.36	0.00	.69

Note. Daughter $N = 250$, Father $N = 207$.

* $p < .05$.

The MANOVA revealed a significant multivariate effect for attachment styles on daughters' communication satisfaction with their fathers, Wilks' $\lambda = .96$, $F(2, 241) = 3.16$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .03$. For Hypothesis 1a, a Tukey HSD post-hoc test revealed that daughters with secure styles were significantly higher in communication satisfaction than daughters with avoidant styles. Hypothesis 1a was supported. The overall means from H1 and H2 are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Means of Communication and Relationship Satisfaction Scores for Attachment Styles

Attachment Styles	Daughter		Father	
	Communication	Relationship	Communication	Relationship
Secure	5.47 _a	5.96	5.68	6.36
Avoidant	5.10 _a	5.70	5.67	6.27
Anxious/Ambivalent	5.17	5.90	5.63	6.20

Note. Means in the same column that share subscripts differ at $p < .05$ in the Tukey honestly significant difference comparison.

For Hypothesis 1b, anxious/ambivalent attachment styles were not significantly different from secure attachment styles on daughters' communication satisfaction. Hypothesis 1b was not supported.

Hypotheses 1c and 1d predicted that fathers with daughters who had a secure attachment style would report higher levels of relationship and communication satisfaction than those in avoidant and anxious/ambivalent attachment relationships. Another MANOVA was conducted on daughters' attachment styles and fathers' communication satisfaction. However, there were no significant differences among the attachment styles for fathers' communication satisfaction with their daughters, Wilks' $\lambda = .96$, $F(2, 185) = 1.45$, $p = .24$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Thus, Hypothesis 1c and Hypothesis 1d were not supported.

Hypothesis 2a predicted that daughters with secure attachment styles would report higher levels of relationship satisfaction than those with avoidant attachment styles. Hypothesis 2b predicted that daughters with secure attachment styles would report higher levels of relationship satisfaction than those with anxious/ambivalent attachment styles. To test these hypotheses, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was computed with father-daughter attachment styles (secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent) as the independent variable and relationship satisfaction as the dependent variable. The MANOVA yielded no significant differences among the attachment styles for daughters' relationship satisfaction, Wilks' $\lambda = .98$, $F(2, 241) = 0.99$, $p = .38$, $\eta^2 = .01$. Hypotheses 2a and 2b were not supported.

Hypothesis 2c predicted that daughters with secure attachment styles would have fathers with higher levels of relationship satisfaction than daughters with avoidant attachment styles. Hypothesis 2d predicted that daughters with secure attachment styles would have fathers with higher levels of relationship satisfaction than daughters with anxious/ambivalent attachment styles. To test these hypotheses, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was computed with attachment styles (secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent) as the independent variable and daughters' relationship satisfaction as the dependent variable. The MANOVA yielded no

significant differences among the attachment styles for daughter relationship satisfaction, Wilks' $\lambda = .98$, $F(2, 185) = 0.36$, $p = .69$, $\eta^2 = .01$. Hence, Hypotheses 2c and 2d were not supported.

Discussion

Attachment styles develop between children and their primary caretaker (Bowlby, 1973, 1977, 1979, 1988). It is through the child-caregiver relationship that children learn about relationships with others and themselves. Collins and Read (1984) have mentioned that what children learn from these experiences results in stable personality characteristics that stay constant regardless of relationship type. These characteristics or attachment styles can be classified as: secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Hazan and Shaver (1987) explained that each of the attachment styles is unique. Secure individuals develop close relationships with others very easily. Secure individuals do not worry about being alone or being emotionally hurt. Avoidant individuals are untrusting of others and are often independent. Anxious/ambivalent individuals perceive that other people are hesitant to get close with them. Anxious/ambivalent individuals are often perceived as non-committal in relationships. Each attachment style is viewed as mutually exclusive from the others.

Further, Wegel and Polcar (2000) described secure individuals as confident and competent communicators. Secure individuals value communication and believe that it is important in maintaining relationships. Avoidant individuals prefer to shy away from relationships. Avoidant individuals are reluctant to express their emotions and are distrustful of others. Anxious/Ambivalent individuals do not feel like competent communicators and are less apt to find interpersonal situations satisfying.

The results of this study indicated that daughters reporting secure attachment styles had higher levels of communication satisfaction than those from avoidant and anxious/ambivalent attachment styles. This finding supports previous research that found that secure attachment styles have higher satisfaction levels than other attachment styles (Feeney & Noller, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Simpson, 1990). Thus, secure attachment styles are more satisfied overall.

Mikulincer and Nachson (1991) found that secure individuals were more likely to self-disclose and were more receptive to their partners than avoidant and anxious/ambivalent individuals. Moreover, avoidant individuals reported low self-disclosure and anxious/ambivalent individuals tended to only self-disclose topics that were important to them. Based on Mikulincer and Nachson's results, one could assume that secure daughters would disclose more to their fathers than avoidant and anxious/ambivalent daughters. For that reason, secure daughters might experience more communication satisfaction than avoidant and anxious/ambivalent daughters because they are able to tell their fathers whatever they want and are not restrained from talking about certain topics. After all, Martin and Anderson (1995) found a strong positive relationship between father-young adults' self-disclosure and communication satisfaction.

The results of this study demonstrated that fathers' communication satisfaction was not affected by attachment styles. Fathers' communication satisfaction could come from the fact that fathers just enjoy their daughters' company regardless of their daughters' attachment style.

Still, one could argue that the results could be due to the fact that only the daughters filled out the attachment scale. Hence, the fact that it was a one-sided perspective may have influenced the results. Fathers may view their attachment with their daughters one way and the daughters may view their attachment with their fathers in a completely different way. Nevertheless, Senchak and Leonard (1992) found that attachment styles were usually consistent with the other person. Looking at marital couples, they noticed that individuals who reported having a secure attachment style also had a spouse who had a secure attachment style. Thus, attachment styles

may have been an assessment about how daughters bond with their fathers. Yet, the fathers' communication satisfaction was not a result of the daughters' attachment style.

My second hypothesis predicted that secure attachment style daughters would report higher levels of relational satisfaction than avoidant and anxious/ambivalent attachment style daughters. The second hypothesis was not supported, which could indicate that attachment styles do not necessarily differ in relational satisfaction. This finding was a bit surprising considering the fact that Hazan and Shaver (1987) found a strong positive correlation between secure attachment styles and happiness. This may suggest that satisfaction is a low level of happiness (like minimal competence). In addition, Levy and Davis (1988) found strong positive correlations between dating couples' secure attachment styles and relationship satisfaction. At the same time, Levy and Davis noticed negative correlations between avoidant and anxious/ambivalent attachment styles with relationship satisfaction. This finding could mean that fathers' and daughters' relationship satisfaction is not affected significantly by attachment styles, which is more of a psychological perspective.

Because Levy and Davis (1988) found strong correlations between secure attachment styles and relationship satisfaction, I did a follow-up analysis and computed a Pearson correlation on attachment styles and satisfaction. I discovered that there was a significant relationship between secure attachment styles and daughters' communication satisfaction ($r = .26, p < .01$). Also, another relationship was between secure attachment styles and daughters' relationship satisfaction ($r = .14, p < .05$). The results from Hypothesis 2 indicated that attachment styles do not differ in relationship satisfaction. However, the results from the Pearson correlations show that there is a significant relationship between secure attachment styles and relationship satisfaction.

Feeney, Noller, and Callan (1994) suggested that relationship satisfaction is influenced by communication. They noted that relationship satisfaction is often a result of communicating positive and supportive messages. Because attachment styles only ascertain how the person feels, they neglect to uncover what the person says. Thus, what daughters and fathers say to each other could be a major influence on how they feel about each other. Although I did a preliminary analysis looking at communication time between fathers and daughters, I found that the amount of communication does not influence satisfaction. This finding seems to indicate that the quality of communication is more valuable than the quantity of communication.

Overall, results indicated that attachment styles do not greatly affect satisfaction. Daughters with secure attachment styles reported higher communication satisfaction with their fathers than did daughters with avoidant attachment styles. This could be due to the predispositions of daughters with secure attachment styles. Attachment styles did not differ on daughters' relationship satisfaction or fathers' satisfaction.

Limitations

The first limitation is the generalizability of this study to the general population because the participants were female college students. The second potential limitation of this study could be due to social desirability. The third limitation could be due to the fact that some students chose not to participate because they did not have particularly good relationships with their fathers or did not have fathers. Hence, certain father-daughter relationships could not be tested because certain daughters may have refused to get their fathers involved with this study and/or did not feel like talking about their relationships with their fathers.

Implications

The primary purpose of this study was to examine attachment theory and satisfaction levels in father-daughter relationships. Results indicated that the only significant relationship was that secure daughters had higher communication satisfaction than avoidant daughters. Fathers' satisfaction levels did not differ among attachment styles.

Moreover, daughters with secure attachment styles have high levels of satisfaction. Thus daughters who are confident and find it easy to get close to others also develop satisfying bonds with their fathers. After all, Kobak and Hazan (1991) found that secure attachment types were more self-reliant and more satisfied than other attachment types.

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