

Adolescent Romantic Relationships: Attachment and Emotion Regulation

Marsha Jordyn

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts (Psychology)

University of Canterbury
2004

Abstract

This study investigates adolescent conceptualizations of romance, and explores some preliminary data on relational demographics in order to test the applicability of relevant developmental theories to the New Zealand context. The primary focus however, is an examination of conceptual and statistical associations between attachment, emotion regulation and romantic relationship satisfaction. A sample of 70 females and 35 males aged 14-19 was drawn from 5 Christchurch high schools, as well as a first stage course at the University of Canterbury. Respondents provided basic information about their current or last romantic relationship, and assessed it using the Perceived Relationship Quality Components Inventory (Fletcher, Simpson & Thomas (2000). Collins & Read's (1990) Adult Attachment Scale was used to establish a dimensional attachment orientation, and the use of reappraising and suppressive emotion regulation strategies was measured using Gross & John's (2003) Emotion Regulation Questionnaire.

Results indicate general reliance on emotional suppression, however securely attached girls were more likely to employ reappraising strategies than anxious or avoidant females. Girls' relationship satisfaction was strongly associated with reduced levels of emotional suppression, suggesting a link between attachment style, regulatory efficacy, and relational satisfaction. The strong gender differences apparent from these data are explored within their social context. Methodological and philosophical limitations of this work are discussed, which may be considered in future research on the subject.

Acknowledgements

A great number of people played vital roles in the completion of this project, as well as the years of study which preceded it. I would like to thank the following people:

Firstly my family, for providing the solid base on which to build. My grandmother Raisa, for demonstrating the courage and strength of spirit which inspires me to succeed. You are my hero.

My mother Maya, for unconditional love and support, friendship and honesty. Yefim, my father, for his kindness and love, both explicit and implied, and grandfather Yefim, for incorrigible idealism and fervent encouragement. My sister, Esther, thank you for believing in me. My wonderful, daughters, Xavia for your strength and courage, and Alexis for your incorrigible spirit and sense of humor. Your shining faces inspire me to succeed, and to inspire you!

Next, sincere thanks to the people who made this effort possible. My primary supervisor, Professor Ken Strongman, mentor, guide and role model. Thank you for asking all the right questions, offering wise observations, and occasional statements of inescapable fact, and for demonstrating that work can (and should be) enjoyed! Co-supervisor, Dr. Victoria Grace for modeling excellence and exactitude.

My partner Charles, the present and future lie with you. Thank you for tirelessly cheering me on, and sharing the load, for being my best friend, lover and tickle

therapist. My stepsons Sam, for keen interest and enthusiastic support, Tom, for your sense of wonder and Liam, for being a shining source of love and joy.

Deep gratitude also goes to all those people who took the time and effort to participate in this research. This really could not have happened without you.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Adolescent Romantic Relationships: Attachment and Emotion Regulation | i |
| Abstract | ii |
| Acknowledgements | iii |
| List of Tables and Figures..... | v |
| Chapter One: Introduction..... | 1 |
| 1.1 Outline | 1 |
| 1.2 Adolescent Romance | 3 |
| 1.3 Attachment | 13 |
| 1.3.1 A Brief History of Attachment Theory..... | 14 |
| 1.3.2 Developmental Applications of Attachment Theory | 15 |
| 1.4 Emotion Regulation..... | 23 |
| 1.4.1 Definitions of Emotion | 23 |
| 1.4.2 The Regulatory Process | 27 |
| 1.4.3 Development of Regulatory Capacity | 39 |
| 1.4.4 Gender Differences in Emotion and Regulation..... | 41 |
| 1.5 A Dynamic Model of Attachment, Emotion Regulation and Relationship Satisfaction..... | 43 |
| 1.6 Current Hypotheses | 49 |
| Chapter Two: Method | 51 |
| 2.1 Overview | 51 |
| 2.2 Procedure..... | 51 |
| 2.3 Participants | 54 |
| 2.4 Measures..... | 55 |
| 2.4.1 Relational Conceptualisation and Demographics | 55 |
| 2.4.3 Perceived Relationship Quality Components Inventory..... | 56 |
| 2.4.4 Adult Attachment Scale..... | 57 |
| 2.4.5 Emotion Regulation Questionnaire..... | 58 |
| Chapter Three: Results..... | 60 |
| 3.1 Demographics..... | 60 |
| 3.2 Relationship satisfaction | 62 |
| 3.3 Attachment | 68 |
| 3.4 Emotion regulation | 70 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Chapter Four: Discussion | 75 |
| 4.1 Summary of Results | 75 |
| 4.1 Demographic and Contextual Factors | 77 |
| 4.2 Conceptualisations of Romantic Relationships | 82 |
| 4.3 Attachment, Emotion Regulation and Relationship Satisfaction..... | 83 |
| 4.4 The Gendered Experience of Emotion | 93 |
| 4.5 Limitations of This Project and Suggestions for Further Research | 97 |
| 4.6 Conclusions | 102 |
| Appendix A: Letter of Introduction for Schools..... | 104 |
| Appendix B: Information and Consent Form..... | 105 |
| Appendix C: Background and Relationship Information..... | 106 |
| Appendix D: Perceived Relationship Quality Components Inventory..... | 107 |
| Appendix E: Adult Attachment Scale..... | 108 |
| Appendix F: Emotion Regulation Questionnaire..... | 109 |
| Appendix G: Debrief Form..... | 110 |
| References | 111 |

Tables

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 2.1: Decile Rating and Roll Size of Participating Schools..... | 53 |
| Table 3.1: Pearson Correlations Between PRQC and Relationship Duration..... | 64 |
| Table 3.2: Pearson Correlations Between PRQC Subscales and Attachment Style... | 65 |
| Table 3.3: Fisher Test for Difference in Correlation Coefficients Between Attachment Style and PRQC Subscales (Males)..... | 67 |
| Table 3.4: Fisher Test for Difference in Correlation Coefficients Between Attachment Style and PRQC Subscales (Females)..... | 68 |
| Table 3.5: Pearson Correlations Between Attachment Styles..... | 69 |
| Table 3.6: Pearson Correlations Between Emotion Regulation and Attachment Style..... | 71 |
| Table 3.7: Pearson Correlations Between Emotion Regulation Style and Relationship Satisfaction..... | 81 |

Figures

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Figure 3.1: Age Distribution..... | 60 |
|-----------------------------------|----|

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Outline

This study explores the intersection of three conceptually distinct, but functionally inter-related constructs. Each of these will be reviewed in turn, prior to an examination of the interconnecting literature.

Adolescent romantic relationships are identified as an important arena for a variety of exploratory processes, which facilitate the development of identity and a wide range of interpersonal skills. Adolescent conceptions of romance are explored, as well as demographic characteristics of the relationships themselves. Gender differences are acknowledged as possible indicators of socialisation processes which shape and define both ideology and practice. Satisfaction is measured in order to assess the potential impact of attachment style and emotion regulation on the adolescent experience of relationships.

The scope of this project allows for only a cursory glance at the vast literature on attachment theory. However, the impact of attachment style on relational satisfaction will be more closely examined, as it pertains to the current study. Developmental aspects of attachment will also be considered, as well as relevant gender differences identified in previous research.

The emotional development that takes place during adolescence is reviewed, with particular emphasis on emotion regulation. A conceptual framework that distinguishes between two primary forms of regulation provides the focal point for this study. Although the relative youth of this specific field of inquiry precludes direct comparison with previous research, the exploration of inter-related constructs provides conceptual coherence with existing literature. Gender differences in the expression and regulation of emotion are examined, and the potential impact of various socialisation practices noted.

Regulatory differences (as possible indicators of emotional development) are explored between individuals endorsing varying attachment styles. The impact of various forms of emotion regulation on interpersonal relationships is considered.

This research seeks to explore the possibility that securely attached individuals are provided with greater opportunity to develop regulatory competence than their anxious or avoidant counterparts. As romantic relationships are inherently emotional, it is expected that individuals higher in emotional sophistication may experience greater satisfaction in these relationships.

1.2 Adolescent Romance

Although young love appears to be the obsession of contemporary popular media (as well as the classical literature that preceded it), the dearth of psychological research on this subject has been lamented by many authors (e.g. Levesque, 1993; Furman & Wehner, 1994; Feiring, 1996; Brown, Feiring & Furman 1999).

In this context, it is important to note the distinction between adolescent sexuality and romance. The former has received a great deal of attention from researchers, who are concerned primarily with the potential consequences of sexual activity such as pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted disease (e.g. Chewning & Van Koningsveld, 1998; Rodgers, Rowe, & Buster 1998; Corcoran, 1999). These issues are unquestionably vital to the wellbeing of both adolescents and their communities, and are well suited to the measures employed by scientific methodology. The number of teen pregnancies and STD cases is easily monitored, and while reports of contraceptive use may not always be reliable, they nevertheless yield concrete statistical data. Naturally, the relationships in which sexual activity occurs have been monitored (e.g. Kalof, 1995; Whitaker, Miller & Clark 2000), but only insofar as they impact on the relevant measures of behaviour and outcome.

In contrast, the study of adolescent romance offers fewer tangible measures of less publicised phenomena, and therefore comparatively smaller potential rewards for academics (Brown, Feiring & Furman, 1999). Brown et al elaborate on a variety of reasons for the apparent avoidance of research on adolescent romance. Theoretical trends in the study of relationships are noted, with a large number of theorists

addressing questions of mate selection from the early 1960's. This field of inquiry focuses on long-term, committed relationships – labels which don't usually apply to adolescent romance, thereby excluding adolescents from the research sample. This same ephemeral and unstable quality of young love in turn makes it elusive to conventional scientific methods of inquiry, and has led to its dismissal as being too frivolous to warrant serious attention.

Brown et al note that the logistical problems associated with this subject also make it less than appealing. Access to large groups of teens may be restricted by over-extended schools, particularly when the subject of research is personal in nature, and when approached, the teens themselves are sometimes reluctant to discuss such an emotionally charged and private area of their lives. These authors conclude that:

most researchers have overlooked adolescent romance because it did not fit neatly into their theoretical frameworks or provide a reliable source of research funding, or because they felt that related topics such as teenage sexuality and pregnancy were more pressing, or because adolescent romance just did not seem to be important – particularly in view of the challenges of defining and measuring its various manifestations. (pg 12)

Despite the theoretical and logistical difficulties associated with this subject, a growing number of researchers are rising to the challenge of studying love-struck teens, and with good reason. The profound impact of romantic involvement on adolescents' socio-emotional development is detailed by Connolly & Goldberg

(1999), who insist that these encounters are vital in forming the frameworks within which future adult relationships are conducted. This work builds on seminal research by Erikson (1968), who suggests that relational patterns learned in adolescence may have a powerful impact on subsequent adult relationships, including marriage. Sullivan (1953) also focuses on adolescent romance as a vehicle for integrating heterophilic intimacy, with the biologically driven lust dynamic.

The formation of gender identity is another developmental task that is intrinsically linked to romantic relationships (Feiring, 1999) – particularly with regard to girls, who tend to invest much of their self-image in their value on the romantic marketplace (Feiring, 1999). The formation of romantic relationships has also been identified as a clear marker of sexual maturation, thereby signalling potential crises within the adolescent's family (Gray & Steinberg, 1999).

The importance of studying teen romance is further boosted by its potential to cause damage. Larson & Asmussen (1991) identify relations with the opposite sex as the primary reason for the elevation in negative emotion between childhood and adolescence. Furthermore, premature romantic involvement has been linked to higher occurrence of depression (Joyner & Udry, 2000), as well as drug use, delinquency, psycho-emotional maladjustment, and impeded academic achievement (Brown et al, 1999). It is clear therefore, that both the positive and negative consequences of adolescent romance require careful consideration.

One of the fundamental errors of previous studies of adolescent love is the tendency to conceptualise adolescent relationships in the same way as those of adults

(Levesque, 1993; Feiring, 1996). This approach neglects the developmental processes which shape not only the relationship itself, but also the way it is established, and with whom.

To remedy this omission, Brown (1999) proposes a four stage model of adolescent relationships “from a developmental-contextual perspective” (p291). Brown proposes a four phase sequence which marks the changes in perspective that follow age and experience. Pubertal changes and the accompanying emergence of sexual drives facilitate the initiation phase. A new awareness of opposite sex peers (or same sex for gay/lesbian youth) as potential romantic/sexual partners leads to changes in the adolescent’s perception of self to accommodate the possibility of a new role – that of someone’s romantic partner. During this time, the primary focus is on qualities of the self which may help or hinder the potential development of a relationship. This conception of adolescent psychosocial orientation fits well with foundational literature on the egocentrism which typifies the beginning of each cognitive developmental phase (Inhelder & Piaget, 1958). Observations of behaviours more specific to adolescence also appear to support this theory. Elkind (1967) for example, proposes that teenage ego-centrism creates the belief that others are as preoccupied with the individual as they are with themselves. The adolescent thereby constructs a critical imaginary audience, leading to a spiralling increase in self-consciousness.

Brown claims that this phase entails the development of social skills necessary for attracting potential partners and initiating relationships. Long-lasting bonds are not expected to form at this stage, however even brief and apparently superficial relationships may be enough to satisfy individual needs for social acceptance.

The second phase of development proposed by Brown is characterised by a preoccupation with social status. Partners are therefore chosen on the basis of their standing within the peer-group, or the image they help the individual to create or maintain. The normative function of peer groups is particularly important at this stage (Siefert, Hoffnung & Hoffnung, 1997; Newman & Newman, 2003), and partners may be selected as a means of conforming to group expectations, or entering into another peer group. This preoccupation with the social context in which the relationship exists may preclude the development of genuine intimacy due to selection of a high status but incompatible partner, or a concern with appearances at the expense of relational dynamics.

Development of individual identity and the accompanying decline in peer group influence enable the growth of more affectionate relationships as described in Brown's third phase. Greater confidence in the self as a romantic partner, as well as the social skills learned in previous relationships allow the individual to explore greater levels of intimacy and emotional engagement. Only at this stage does the partner and the relationship itself become the primary focus, thus facilitating the kind of preoccupation for which young love is famous. Brown argues that the greater comparative depth of these relationships allows for the formation of the first true romantic attachment – a subject which will be further examined in the subsequent section on attachment.

Although the intense romance of the affection stage may be sufficient to inspire long-term commitment and/or marriage, Brown's final (bonding) phase

describes a more rational approach to family formation. While the author concedes that many couples never reach this phase, a pragmatic appraisal of the relationship's potential to satisfactorily meet the needs of both partners on a long-term basis ensures a more conscious and realistic form of commitment. Despite some adolescent's claims of eternal love, this phase is not expected to occur before early adulthood. In fact premature commitment to a romantic partner has been linked to emotional maladjustment and academic decline (Neeman, Kojetin & Hubbard, 1992), and may stifle identity development (Erikson, 1968).

The increasing depth of romantic relationships described by Brown is also noted in research examining intimacy as a developmental construct. American research on dating patterns suggests that recreation and status seeking are important motivating factors for young teens, however, intimacy and companionship needs are mentioned more frequently by college (university) students (Roscoe, Diana & Brooks, 1987). This growing capacity and desire for intimacy is the result of identity formation processes, as well as the self-confidence that comes from inter-personal skills honed in previous relationships (Paul & White, 1990; Fischer, Munsch & Greene, 1996). Increasing levels of interdependence have also been noted as a result of age-related differences in self-disclosure and support seeking (Adams, Laursen & Wilder, 2001).

The changing needs and relational orientations of adolescents are also reflected in their conceptualisation of romance, and the traits or properties of the ideal partner (Feiring, 1996). The long-held view that early romantic pairings occur within the context of mixed peer groups has been supported in a wide range of studies on

teenage dating (e.g. Savin-Williams & Berndt, 1990; Zani, 1993). These authors describe the superficial and short-term relationships that grow out of continuing group activity. Feiring (1996) maintains that these early romances can be conceptualised as an extension of previous same-sex friendships due to the similar emphasis placed on companionship, intimacy and support. Shulman & Scharf (2000) concur that teens reporting high levels of affective intensity with a same sex friend, are likely to experience similarly intense romantic relationships. Consistent with Brown's developmental model, the importance of shared values and interests, as well as a more sophisticated questioning of compatibility is characteristic of older adolescents' relational expectations (Collins & Sroufe, 1999).

Feiring's research with a sample of American 15 year olds reveals that the stimulus characteristics of the partner are the primary elements of romantic conceptualisations. Partners at this age are selected on the basis of physical attractiveness, and positive personality traits. In contrast, Levesque (1993) found that adolescent relationships in a sample of 14-18 years olds bore all the positive markers of adult relationships (such as commitment, communication, passion and companionship), and differed only in their greater optimism and refusal to be influenced by negative events or affect.

These seemingly contradictory findings clearly require further investigation. Feiring's work provides a snapshot of the kinds of relationships that occur at age 15 in America. Strong evidence is shown of the basis of romantic involvement in peer group activity, and the normative influence of the peer group. Levesque's research however, offers information on the conceptualisation of romance among a wider age

range, but neglects the contextual influences on relationship formation and maintenance. One factor that is overlooked in these studies however, is the length of the acquaintanceship period prior to dating. This measure would have been useful in confirming the peer group basis of emergent dating couples. An extended acquaintanceship would lend support to Feiring's emphasis on the formation of dating couples within larger and well established peer groups. Such a finding would also support Brown's model of relationship evolution, proposing a hormonally driven shift in the way known peers are perceived. A short period of acquaintanceship however, may be indicative of a shift away from one's familiars, and an acceptance of people outside the established peer group. It may be expected that a stronger sense of identity as well as social and romantic skills learned from previous relationships may enable older adolescents to form relationships in defiance of peer group norms. This question is explored in the current study with the expectation that although the duration of acquaintanceship prior to relationship formation will decrease with age, an optimal degree of familiarity might be found in regard to relationship satisfaction. Further demographic issues will also be explored with regard to the age difference between partners (possibly also an indication of dating outside the peer group), and the duration of romantic involvements.

Such demographic information is important in exploring the cross-cultural generalisability of previous research. Whilst the increasingly informal dating practices of American teens have been monitored (Brown, Feiring & Furman, 1999), no systematic research appears to have been carried out on the courtship practices of NZ teens. Although the current study is not concerned with the structure or protocol of

these romances, some demographic information is collected as a starting point for subsequent research.

Feiring's work regarding teens' conceptions of romance is also extended in this project. As mentioned previously, younger adolescents are expected to place greater emphasis on the physical attractiveness of a prospective partner, as well as those traits which are considered necessary for a 'good personality' (in itself an interesting question for further research). Feiring describes these as stimulus characteristics. Older teens are expected to stress the importance of affiliative relational dimensions (as expected by Brown), such as shared values and interests, commitment, intimacy and even possibly love!

Gender differences in the conceptualisation of romance have also been identified, partly due to girls' tendency to place greater value on social relations (Schiedel & Marcia, 1985; Mellor, 1989; Gilligan, 1992; Shulman & Scharf, 2000). Feiring suggests that girls' greater expectancy of communicative intimacy and support is based on the deeper nature of previous same-sex friendships, while boys prefer the kind of intimacy facilitated by shared activities rather than self-disclosure. While the intensification of gender roles during adolescence (Hill & Lynch, 1983) may contribute to differences in males and females relational orientations (Feiring, 1996), gender differences among adult samples have also been consistently found. Adolescents offer a magnified version of more goal-oriented relationships described by men, compared to the greater relational emphasis of women (e.g. Bailey, Hendrick & Hendrick, 1987; Hendrick, Hendrick, Foote, & Slapion-Footes, 1984).

Research based on university student samples reveals that, consistent with evolutionary perspectives, men place greater importance on sexual intercourse as an act of romance than do women (Hong & Faedda, 1994), and are strongly motivated by the prospect of low-investment sexual activity (Landolet, Lalumiere & Quinsey, 1995). Women were also found to consider traditional romance, family and commitment more important in their relationships, while men's preferred forms of romance included sex, aberrant sexual behaviour and drugs (Cimbalo & Novell, 1993). Other researchers however, have found fewer differences in relational orientation between genders. Levesque (1993) discusses an apparent switch in gender roles, as the boys in his sample were increasingly engaging in emotional and communicative interaction, while girls were seeking sexual passion. One possible explanation for this scenario may be related to the intense coverage of sexuality and romance by media aimed at girls and young women, proclaiming that physical attraction and passion is necessary for both attracting, and keeping the attentions of boys (McRobbie, 1994, Carpenter, 1998, Durham, 1998).

The abundance of stereotypical gender representations in contemporary media (Pierce, 1993; Duffy & Gotcher, 1996; Garner, Sterk & Adams, 1998; Willemsen, 1998) provides a rich source of normative gender role material at a time when adolescents are most concerned with negotiating to the standards of their sex (Erikson, 1968; Katchadourian, 1990). The intensification of gender roles at this age (Galambos, Almeida & Petersen, 1990; Huston & Alvarez, 1990) compels girls to attend to questions of their own attractiveness and value on the romantic marketplace (Pipher, 1994; Shih, Pittinsky & Ambady, 1999). Peer groups also become instrumental in setting and policing norms of romantic and sexual behaviour (Brown,

1999; Connolly & Goldberg, 1999; Feiring, 1999), and relational scripts are developed as a means of conceptualising romantic activity (Gagnon & Simon, 1973).

These age and gender differences in the conceptualisation of romance are explored in the current study. It is anticipated that physical and personality characteristics of the ideal partner will be the primary focus of early adolescents in the sample, while older participants are more likely to include affiliative and relational constructs such as shared values, mutual support and various aspects of emotional engagement.

Another perspective on the developmental trajectory of adolescent romantic relationships is provided by research based on various permutations of attachment theory. Several examples of this approach will be examined in the subsequent section on attachment, providing further extensions of the model proposed by Brown, and enhancing the rationale offered for expectation of age graded differences in relationship conceptualisation.

1.3 Attachment

Since the vast body of literature on attachment theory and its applications can not be adequately covered here, only a brief synopsis of its development will be presented. Of greater relevance to the current work is the developmental dimension of attachment theory, particularly as it pertains to romantic relationships. This will therefore be the primary focus of the following section.

1.3.1 A Brief History of Attachment Theory

Attachment Theory was first cohesively formulated by John Bowlby in his 1969 volume titled simply *Attachment*. This work was preceded by seven publications which focused on early childhood experiences of maternal care, and the potential long-term effects of the childhood environment on the individual (Bretherton, 1991). These articles show the developmental trajectory of the theory itself, which was further expanded in Bowlby's subsequent publications *Separation: Anxiety & Anger* (1973) and *Loss: Sadness & Depression* (1980) which make up the seminal *Attachment and Loss* trilogy. Bowlby's theory represented a fusion of traditional psychoanalysis in which he was trained, and the more empiricist approach advocated by ethological science (e.g. Lorenz, 1952 cited in Holmes, 1993). Biographers note the possible influences of Bowlby's own childhood experiences on his life-long passion for research on the effects of maternal distance and loss, since his own mother was removed from childcare duties (characteristic of upper class English families of the early 1900's) until her death when John was eight years old (Bretherton, 1991). Bowlby's own reluctance to publicly discuss his childhood experiences lends credence to this notion, as such dismissal typifies the insecurely attached adult (Holmes, 1993).

Stimulated by observations of maladjusted children and delinquents (Holmes, 1993), Bowlby's work integrates the findings of developmental research into cognitive and social processes, with ethological conceptions of socially activated response systems (Bretherton 1991, and see Tinbergen, 1951). The resulting theory postulates an in-born behavioural system which seeks to regulate the proximity of a

primary caregiver (usually the mother) in order to fulfill both security, and exploratory needs of the child. This attachment system remains latent while caregiver availability is maintained, however the system is activated if the child's expectations of caregiver proximity are not met (Hazan & Zeifman, 1994). Bowlby asserts that individuals form working models and therefore expectations of relational dynamics based on their experiences of need fulfillment (or otherwise) during infancy and early childhood.

Although Bowlby focused on identifying normative and universal stages of development, Mary Ainsworth's operationalisation of attachment theory diverted the path of attachment research to an exploration of individual differences and deviations from the norm (Simpson & Rholes, 1998). Ainsworth's research using the Strange Situation led to the classification of individuals as either securely, anxiously, or ambivalently attached to the primary caregiver (Bretherton, 1991), and this empirical extension of Bowlby's theoretical endeavours inspired a flood of research on the formation and maintenance of attachment in infancy.

1.3.2 Developmental Applications of Attachment Theory

Although Bowlby himself stressed the life-long application and stability of attachment patterns (e.g. Bowlby, 1979), this developmental dimension of the theory remained unexplored until the publication of the widely used Adult Attachment Interview (George, Kaplan & Main, 1985 cited in Simpson & Rholes). Although this measure addressed the attachment behaviours of adults, it was originally formulated to predict the attachment style of the subject's infant, rather than examining the

attachment patterns of the subject themselves. Naturally, this instrument has subsequently been utilized in studies which focus on the subject of the interview, however much of this research draws on the conceptual work of Hazan & Shaver (1987), who proposed that romantic love was the result of attachment processes similar to those found in infancy.

The idea that the dynamics of romantic and peer relations may be influenced or even dictated by an attachment style based on early childhood experience has inspired an enormous amount of literature on the subject. In fact, Simpson & Rholes (1998) claim that “In the last decade, no single area of research in personality/social psychology has attracted more interest than the application of attachment theory to the study of adult relationships” (p3). Hazan & Shaver’s translation of Ainsworth’s infant classifications into adult behavioural styles provoked a multitude of questions about the continuity of attachment styles, their development and the ways they influence social interaction.

This line of thought allows for a closer examination of Bowlby’s claims regarding the stability of attachment style throughout the life-span, as well as exploration of the ways in which working models formed in infancy may translate into adult patterns of behaviour. Since Bowlby’s theory of infant attachment is predicated on cognitive and social development functions, it seems reasonable to expect that such processes will exert some influence on the formation and maintenance of attachments at various stages of life. This highlights the need for research which looks at the factors that distinguish childhood attachments from those formed in other developmental stages (Ainsworth, 1991; Thompson, 1999). A

growing number of researchers have therefore addressed the factors which distinguish adolescent attachments from those formed at other times (e.g. Hazan & Zeifman, 1994; Batgos & Leadbeater, 1994; Fischer, Munsch & Greene, 1996; Cooper, Shaver & Collins, 1998). Subsequent discussion will therefore focus on differentiating between the nature of infantile attachments and those formed in adulthood. Adolescent romance is seen as a vehicle for the development of various dimensions of adult attachment, though early relationships may not contain all the elements expected of a mature attachment bond.

The core characteristics of infant attachment are clearly delineated by Weiss (1991). Three fundamental elements are identified as following from Bowlby's own work, as well as that of subsequent authors (West, Sheldon & Reiffer, 1987, Rutter, 1981, cited in Weiss, 1991). Proximity seeking describes the child's desire to remain within an optimal of a caregiver to fulfil basic security needs. The secure base effect allows the child to engage in exploratory play whilst knowing that the caregiver is on hand should the need arise. Separation protest occurs upon perception of threat to caregiver availability, and will give rise to action aimed at maintaining optimal proximity.

Weiss proposes a further five properties however, to extend the range of behaviour that may be understood with reference to attachment theory:

1. "Elicitation by threat" (p66). This describes the seeking out of parents or caregivers upon perception of danger. Attachment figures who may be ignored

or utilised as playmates in periods of calm become the target of an activated attachment system in anxiety provoking situations.

2. “Specificity of attachment figure”. Attachments are non-transferrable. Although other well-intentioned individuals may be able to offer temporary companionship and play, the proximity seeking, secure base and separation protest functions can only be met by the person with whom the original attachment was formed.

3. “Inaccessibility to conscious control” (p67). Attachment related emotions are not subject to cognitive manipulation and usually continue even in event of death or other permanent separation.

4. “Persistence”. Attachments do not subside with habituation. The attachment system is activated by threat of separation in long-term relationships to an even greater extent than it is in freshly formed ones. Prolonged absence of the loved one produces melancholy which never truly dissipates, but instead is incorporated into the emotional world of the one left behind.

5. “Insensitivity to experience with the attachment figure”. Abusive or neglectful treatment does little to reduce attachment. The negative affect associated with maltreatment may become integrated with the attachment framework, and although conflict may result from recognition of abuse, the attachment figure will be sought as a source of security when threatened.

Weiss proposes that adult romantic relationships exhibit the same characteristics, and perform functions largely similar to infantile attachment bonds. Relationships (such as those with friends or co-workers) that do not include the above properties are therefore excluded from the attachments category.

Several key distinctions have been proposed between the role of parental attachment figures, and subsequent romantic partners. Although many of the properties of attachment listed by Weiss appear to be present in adult romantic attachments, the last characteristic of 'insensitivity to experience' may be questioned in light of the rising divorce rate in contemporary Western cultures (Newman & Newman, 2003). The fact that romantic relationships may be curtailed by either (or both) of the individuals involved, serves to highlight several vital points of difference between these relationships and the classic attachment bonds described by Weiss.

Brown, Feiring & Furman (1999) elaborate on the features of romantic relationships which serve to distinguish them from any other close relationships the adolescent may experience. In contrast to infantile attachments, romantic relationships are entered into voluntarily (with the notable exception of coerced involvement), on the basis of some kind of attraction, which usually contains elements of physical or sexual desire. Companionship, intimacy and caring functions may also develop, thus increasing the likelihood of relational longevity, which may culminate in a long-term commitment. This reciprocity of care-giving and support is fundamental to the symmetrical nature of adult romantic attachments in contrast to the one-sided provision of care by adult for child (Weiss, 1982; Hazan & Zeifman, 1994; Sperling

& Berman, 1994; Brown et al, 1999; Thompson, 1999). Although the parental attachment figure is expected to be a source of wisdom and almost infinite strength (Brown et al 1999), other (peer) attachment figures are not endowed with the same expectations (Weiss, 1982).

Other developmental shifts arising from the cognitive development of middle childhood facilitate greater self-regulation when the attachment system is activated. The temporary separation from attachment figures that was once unbearable becomes routine (provided reunion is certain). And we are usually able to maintain some degree of normal functioning under attachment activation rather than being overwhelmed with emotion as is evidenced in childhood (Weiss, 1982; Hazan & Zeifman, 1994).

From a developmental perspective, attachment is viewed as a behavioural system, which is transferred gradually from parental figures, to friends, temporary short-term romantic partners, and finally the spouse (or committed partner). This process was examined by Hazan & Zeifman (1994), who focused on four components of the attachment bond: “proximity seeking, separation protest, safe haven and secure base” (p152). This conceptualisation bears strong resemblance to Weiss’s (1991) framework, and therefore requires little further explanation. Hazan & Zeifman observed that “attachments are transferred from parents to peers component by component in a sequence that begins with proximity seeking, followed by safe haven, and finally separation protest and secure base.” (p160). These authors note that proximity seeking and safe haven related behaviours appear in childhood friendships. The final two elements are reserved for parental attachment figures until the

development (in late adolescence) of the first complete peer attachment which occurs in the context of a reciprocal romantic relationship. The developmental path of these relationships was also explored with reference to the same constructs. Unsurprisingly, proximity seeking was identified as the first element of attachment present in a budding romance, and was followed by the safe haven function as emotional support and comfort is sought from, and provided for the object of affection. Consistent with Brown's model (described earlier), full attachment bonds including the separation protest and secure base functions were only reported by older teens in relationships of at least two years duration.

The stability of attachment style across the life-span claimed by Bowlby has been questioned with reference to the developmental perspective on relationships, and the adjustments to working models made in response to life events. Thompson (1999), for example, examines changes in the attachment bond resulting from shifts in the parent-child relationship. Similarly, novel experiences with attachment figures (such as romantic partners) can lead the individual to reassess their expectations of relational dynamics. An otherwise securely attached adolescent may therefore exhibit avoidant behaviours for some period of time, following betrayal or mistreatment by a significant other (Furman & Simon, 1999).

A comprehensive review of the literature on attachment stability, and the predictive value of childhood attachment on subsequent relational function leads Thompson (1999) to conclude that "it depends" (p270). Thompson suggests that a wide variety of factors bear significant influence on the attachment style held by an individual at any one time, and on the potential shifts that may occur – be they temporary or permanent. This leads to the conclusion that "relationships are multi-

influential, outcomes are multi-determined, and continuity is complex and multi-faceted.” (p266).

One potentially influential factor that has received surprisingly little attention, is the impact of gender on attachment processes - research on this subject appears to be scarce. Some authors however, do highlight the need to explore the impact of gendered socialisation on girls’ vulnerability to attachment dysphoria (Batgos & Leadbeater, 1994). In contrast with boys’ autonomy and independence orientation (Newman & Newman, 2003), girls’ emphasis on relational competence can lead to comparatively greater sensitivity to social events and stronger emotional responses to situations of interpersonal conflict or stress (Compas & Wagner, 1991). Although this model might suggest a tendency toward anxious attachment among teenage girls, a contradictory finding from Cooper, Shaver & Collins (1998) complicates the issue. These authors did not expect to find gender differences in attachment style distribution, and while this hypothesis was supported in the older, white, educated sample of teens, younger, non-white and less educated girls showed a higher tendency toward avoidant attachment than the boys of their cohort.

These findings serve to highlight the importance of studying attachment within its social and developmental context. The current study therefore attempts to locate attachment in the context of adolescent relationships, and explores potential links to emotion regulation styles.

1.4 Emotion Regulation

Any discussion of regulatory process must include an understanding of the phenomenon being regulated. Since a summary of proposed explanations of emotion is well beyond the scope of this project, a brief exploration will be offered of the features (as identified by the author) as being common to most contemporary definitions of emotion. Since emotion in the context of social interaction is particularly relevant to the current study, the relational function of emotion will be a primary focus. Subsequent literature review will highlight pertinent issues in the definition of emotion regulation, leading to an introduction of the constructs measured in this project.

1.4.1 Definitions of Emotion

The plurality indicated in the above heading should alert the reader to the multiplicity of attempts to define emotion. The volumes canvassing theories of emotion (e.g. Strongman, 1996 and 2003) attest to the variety of perspectives which yield attempted explanations of emotional function. However, an integrative approach seeking to combine cognitive, behavioural, physiological and phenomenological elements appears to characterise many contemporary offerings.

In a comprehensive review of the subject, Gross (1998), lists a number of factors which are usually included in contemporary definitions of emotion. James' (1884, 1894) explanation of emotion as a flexible response sequence in the face of significant environmental change has been particularly influential in highlighting the

adaptive and signalling function of emotional reactions. Accordingly, some of the recurring themes in mainstream theories of emotion are:

~ conception of emotion as a flexible sequence of physiological, cognitive and behavioural reactions to change in the internal or external environment.

~ emotions are elicited only by environmental changes which are perceived as relevant and important for the well-being of the individual (implying some form of appraisal or evaluation).

~ the emotional response is situation specific and comparatively short lived (in contrast with the diffuse and prolonged nature of moods).

~ the response sequence is subject to conscious modulation, various forms of which may be used to avoid, transform or reduce intensity of affect, or to produce more socially acceptable behaviour.

~ emotions perform a variety of functions including the facilitation of decision making process, preparation for physical action, facilitation of judgement and decision making, signalling of others' intentions and reactions to self, and regulating social behaviour (see Gross, 1996 for citations of supporting authors).

One particularly appealing definition which encompasses some of the features mentioned above is offered by Walden & Smith (1997), in their interpretation of

Cicchetti, Ackerman & Izard's (1995) work: "The emotion system is a dynamic organization of psychological, cognitive, and behavioural responses that occur both inside and outside of conscious awareness. The main function of the emotion system is to motivate and organise behaviour" (p. 8). This definition is intriguing in its acknowledgement of subconscious emotional experience, however the nature of the response eliciting stimulus is not indicated. Mention of the 'main functions' of emotion also begs the question of which secondary functions may be served - phenomenologists and social theorists may have some suggestions on this matter.

Although a conclusive definition of emotion would be desirable at this point, the breadth and complexity of the subject preclude confident investment in any one theory, however the nature of the current study necessitates a closer look at the social dimensions of emotional experience.

A number of theories have been posited to explore the interactional dimensions of emotion. Facial expressions and body language used to signal emotional states (in dyads, and larger groups) have been catalogued, cross-culturally compared (Ekman, 1992; Heise & O'Brien; Frijda, 1969), and described (Davitz, 1970). Social relationships have been examined for event sequences which give rise to emotion when interrupted (Berscheid, 1983), and which are themselves the embodiment of emotion (de Rivera, 1986). However, none of these theories account adequately for the subjective feeling, and its elicitation, and therefore offer at best, an incomplete analysis (Strongman, 2003).

In comparison, Campos, Campos & Barrett's (1989) relational theory provides comprehensive coverage of emotions as "*processes of establishing, maintaining, or disrupting the relations between the person and the internal or external environment, when such relations are significant to the individual*" (p. 395, italics authors').

The significance (or otherwise) of an event is determined in reference to three dimensions: the emotional communication of others, the event's impact on the goals or motives of the individual, and its hedonic value. Although such appraisals are indicative of the cognitive mediators in the emotional response sequence, the authors resist a componential analysis of the factors leading to emotionally expressive behaviour, claiming that "cognition, action, and physiology are ingredients in the generation of emotion." (p395). This theory seeks to integrate motives, external social signals, hedonic stimulation and ecological factors as dimension of emotion generation, and emphasises a relational view of emotion and the accompanying social behaviour. Campos et al propose that every aspect of the emotional response (including the autonomic) is embedded in social action and communication, thereby attributing an interpersonal function to even the most subjective elements of emotion. Although this theory is highly relevant to the study of emotional processes in adolescent relationships, its breadth and complexity can not be adequately addressed in the scope of this project. Therefore, while the implications of this perspective for discussion of regulatory processes will be addressed briefly in the following section on emotion regulation, Campos et al's approach is not used to guide the current study.

Several final distinctions should be made in order to clarify the theoretical orientation of the current study. Although the terms 'mood', 'affect' and 'emotion' are

sometimes used interchangeably (e.g. Erber & Erber, 2000; Tice & Bratslavsky, 2000), the current research is based on Gross's conception of emotion as a subset of the affect family. Gross distinguishes the comparatively discrete and situation specific emotion, from the diffuse and lingering nature of mood. Emotion is also viewed as a subset of the complex chain of events and protagonists included in an 'emotional episode'. The term 'emotion' in the following text, will therefore be used in reference to a complex set of conscious or unconscious, physiological and cognitive responses to change in the internal or external environment, that may serve to motivate intra- or interpersonal action.

1.4.2 The Regulatory Process

As described by Gross (1998), contemporary study of emotion regulation has developed from two distinct sources. Psychoanalytic theory was predominantly concerned with the reduction of maladaptive anxiety, and the search for individual differences in personality or experience which predisposed clients to such problems. This perspective grew to focus on the pathological consequences of dysregulation, and the accompanying disruption to social and intimate relationships (e.g. Shields & Cicchetti, 1998; Shields & Cicchetti, 2001).

In a comprehensive treatise on the subject, Gross (1998) offers some guiding principles for the study of emotion regulation:

1. Emotions (both positive and negative) may be magnified or reduced

2. Neurological research suggests the possibility of qualitative differences in the regulation strategies used in response to different emotions.

3. In order to maintain clarity on the subject, the term 'emotion regulation' is applied only to self-regulation, rather than including attempts to modify others' behaviour.

4. Although most forms of emotion regulation occur on a conscious level, some responses may include an element of subconscious or reflexive regulation due to the strength of a learned behavioural pattern (such as expressing gratitude for small favours). Since physiological homeostasis is also the product of largely unconscious processes, Gross proposes a continuum typology, with highly effortful strategies at one end, and subconscious processes at the other. I would suggest however, that regulation be conceptualised as a multi-level process encompassing both conscious effort (e.g. reappraisal strategies – to be discussed later), and accompanying physiological change which is not consciously engineered.

5. The regulation or moderation of emotion is not judged as inherently positive or negative. This point is made in response to claims by coping theorists that defense mechanisms are in themselves maladaptive (e.g, Parker & Endler, 1996), or the quest by therapeutic individualism (a movement which promotes psychological health by reversion to the authentic, unregulated self) for raw emotion as the ultimate form of authenticity (Erickson, 1997). Emotion

regulation is therefore seen as a complex set of tools which may be used in positive or negative ways, but are not in themselves either one or the other.

Based on these assumptions, the following section is divided roughly (and with inevitable conceptual overlap) into three sections dealing with (a) motives for emotional regulation (b) an analysis of the target of regulation, and (c) specific regulatory strategies. Developmental and gender related considerations will also be addressed.

Since the regulation of an emotional response frequently (but not always) requires some degree of attention and/or effort, we must assume that such endeavours serve a purpose and offer some reward. The nature of this reward has been suggested by some authors to be purely hedonistic. As an example of this approach, Tice & Bratslavsky (2000), assume that the unpleasant subjective experience of negative emotion is enough to motivate various forms of avoidance. Conversely, feeling good is its own reward, and provides sufficient motive for action – whether in the short term, or by ensuring future gratification.

In contrast to this pleasure seeking principle, Erber & Erber (2000), advocate a more socially driven process whereby extreme (positive or negative) emotional states are neutralised in order to avoid discomforting others. According to this view, intense emotion is in itself socially problematic because others may feel compelled or pressured to engage with the source and offer a complementary response. Erber & Erber claim that this is particularly true of strangers, whereas friends or romantic partners are more tolerant of each other's heightened affect. According to this

perspective, optimal degrees of neutrality are expected in social situations, which prompt individuals to either alter subjective feeling, or restrain emotional display.

Social norms regarding the appropriate nature and intensity of emotional display are of course culturally bound. Individualistic societies may therefore allow greater emotional expressivity in seeking to promote physical and psychological health. In contrast, collectivist societies encourage suppression of intense affect in order to maintain harmonious group function (Eisenberg & Zhou, 2000). The significance and meaning attributed to specific emotions is also culturally dependent, giving rise to wide variation in social practices surrounding emotional events (Bonnano, 2001). Although the stability, longevity and distinctiveness of Eastern and Western civilisations facilitate research on differences in emotional practice, subcultures which may be transient (and therefore inhospitable to scrutiny) should not be ignored. A variety of emotion related norms have been revealed in studies of criminal subculture (Ferrell, 1999), female collegiate gymnasts (Snyder, 1990) and a wide range of mainstream subgroups (Gallois, 1994). These social psychological and sociological studies highlight the plasticity of emotional meanings and display norms, drawing attention to a potentially rich field of research on the process by which such norms are developed.

A more subjectivist approach suggests that emotions are regulated in order to reduce the discrepancy between actual and desired state of being (Larsen, 2000; Tice & Bratslavsky, 2000). Such a perspective assumes a continuous internal monitoring process, which instigates regulatory processes when felt emotional reactions deviate significantly from the individual's optimal or desired state. A similar concept is

advanced by Bonnano(2001), who claims that emotion is regulated in order to maintain homeostasis, described as “schematised goals pertaining to the optimal experience and expression of emotion” (p256). This perspective is interesting in that it encompasses both the experiential and expressive dimensions of emotion, indicating that one might regulate felt emotion in order to curtail potentially undesirable behaviours. This requires some level of “meta-emotive understanding” (Thompson, 1991, p289), and may also involve moderation of emotional reactions which are likely to undermine subsequent functioning.

This possibility leads to further questions regarding the targets of regulatory endeavours – what exactly are we trying to change? Walden & Smith (1997) delineate four components of the emotion process which may respond to modulation. Firstly, these authors make a strong argument for the links between cognitive appraisal and the resulting subjective experience or feeling. This felt dimension is frequently the target of cognitive regulatory strategies which serve to reduce negative affect, or promote pleasurable sensations.

Secondly, the physiological factors associated with emotional reactions may be consciously mediated. Although return to physiological homeostasis after an emotional reaction is usually controlled by subconscious mechanisms, some conscious control may be exerted over the heart-rate, and other communicative physical responses such as blushing, or facial expressions.

Thirdly, the expression of emotion may be modified to meet social demands. This category includes the inhibition or exaggeration of body language and/or facial,

and vocal expressions. The felt emotion may in this way be concealed, or replaced with one deemed more appropriate for the situation.

The final category outlined by Walden & Smith is closely related to the third. This is concerned with the behavioural outcome of the regulatory process. This entails the strategies used to deal with the emotion provoking situation – whether to flee or take reparative action for example. The authors relate this perspective to the literature on coping styles, as providing a framework for understanding behavioural patterns in response to emotional arousal.

Thompson's (1990) analysis focuses on the subjective experience of emotion. From this perspective, one may wish to change the emotional tone (namely the specific emotion experienced e.g. fear, anger). Or the dynamic of the emotion, this includes factors such as intensity, duration, and lability.

So how do we go about achieving such a change of state? Bonnano (2001), suggests three distinct processes including:

- (a) control over impulses, or emotion related behaviour. Specific regulatory mechanisms in this category include dissociation (shifting attention away from the undesirable stimulus, or introducing a competing stimulus), suppression (the repression of expressive behaviours), expression (displaying or sharing the emotional state), and laughter.

(b) anticipatory regulation which includes behavioural modification in order to pre-empt a projected control need (e.g. resisting an alcohol purchase to prevent bingeing). Emotional expression is also utilised as a means of establishing positive social interactions, or preventing the occurrence of negative events. Laughter may also be used to improve relationships and forge social bonds in order to prevent disruptions. Ecological strategies may be used to avoid unpleasant people or situations, as well as seeking out positive environments. Regulatory skills may also be developed in anticipation of trying events (e.g. anger management), and forewarning of an unpleasant stimulus might lead one to reappraise the impending event, in order to reduce its impact. Expressing trauma related emotion through writing or talking with others may also aid in negotiating subsequent emotional episodes.

(c) exploratory regulation, which entails participation in new and potentially rewarding activities. Participating in activities that require emotional control may lead to development of or improvement in self-management techniques (e.g. bungee jumping). An interesting facet of Bonnano's work is the inclusion of media and literature as avenues of vicarious emotional exploration and learning. This is of particular relevance to the current study, as adolescents make extensive use of media as a socialisation tool in the search for behavioural norms (Arnett, 1995).

Another explanation of the regulatory process is offered by Feldman Barrett & Gross, (2001; see also Gross, 1998; Gross & Oliver, 2003). The basis for this construction is the identification of five points in the generative process at which intervention is possible. These bear some resemblance to Bonnano's work in highlighting first the anticipatory process of environmental choice, but Feldman Barrett & Gross emphasise the possibility of subsequently altering a situation to suit emotional needs. If this proves ineffectual, the third strategy involves attentional deployment to redirect focus from the undesired stimulus. Should this prove difficult, cognitive changes may be made in order to construct a less provocative meaning, and finally, the behavioural expression may be tailored to suit the environment.

Within this framework, the antecedent-focused strategies of situation selection and modification, attentional deployment, and cognitive change are distinguished from response modulation which is deemed a response-focused mechanism, since it occurs after the emotional response tendency is triggered. Much of Gross's work focuses on the relative benefits of antecedent-focused strategies (particularly cognitive reappraisal), as opposed to the response focused-strategy of emotional suppression (e.g. Gross & Levenson, 1997; Gross, 1998; Gross, John & Richards, 2000), which Gross claims is cognitively taxing, ineffective and potentially physically harmful. The use of antecedent-focused strategies is linked to emotional intelligence (Feldman Barrett & Gross, 2001), because such strategies require greater forethought and cognitive flexibility, as well as providing a better long-term outcome.

The current study examines the use of reappraisal and suppression strategies discussed by Gross, but conceptualised in a slightly different manner. Gross's

assumption that cognitive reappraisal can take place before the emotion response tendency is triggered indicates that in his view, cognitive appraisal precedes physiological and subjective feeling:

an emotion begins with an evaluation of emotion cues. When attended to and evaluated in certain ways, emotion cues trigger a coordinated set of response tendencies that involve experiential, behavioural, and physiological systems (Gross & John, 2003, p348).

This assumption pertains to a core debate in the study of emotion regarding the relationship between affect and cognition. Can an emotional reaction occur only in response to cognitive appraisal, or could it be the first indicator of an event that requires attention? In a comprehensive review of this debate, Lazarus (1999) traces its origins to classic Greek philosophy, before asserting that while instinctive reactions may result without apparent thought, some form of situational assessment must be made in order to instigate a full emotional response. Lazarus' most vocal contemporary opponent however, claims that an emotional response may actually serve a signalling function, preceding cognition, and alerting the individual to a situation that requires attention (Zajonc, 1980, 1984). Both of these authors agree however, that the reaction speed of many emotional responses prevents easy separation of thought and affect.

In contrast, Gross proposes not only that an appraisal is conducted, but also that this particular appraisal was selected from a range of possible meanings,

indicating some kind of decision making process. The examples cited to support this argument seem appropriate. In experimental studies (Gross, 1998) participants were forewarned about the disgusting material they were about to see, and asked to reframe it in a way that would minimise emotional reactivity. This process might occur in preparation for a job interview, which can be reconceptualised in order to reduce anticipatory stress, and hopefully improve performance. In this instance, we might down play the attractiveness of the post, preferring to focus on the long commute it entails, or debating the likelihood of a tyrannical boss or colleague and therefore minimising the risk of disappointment if we don't get the job.

This is a reasonable argument, and one we can probably all relate to, however I believe that we are rarely afforded the luxury of being able to methodically select, from a range of options the way we read an emotive situation – before experiencing physiological change. Imagine, if you will arriving on the day of the above mentioned interview, strolling nonchalantly into the meeting room only to find that the head of the interviewing panel is the man you shared an elevator with just minutes before, chatting about the insignificance of this interview in an effort to calm your nerves. How likely is it that you would cognitively list a variety of potential meanings, and settle on the most adaptive – before your heart sank?

Gross's argument is flawed in several ways. Firstly because it assumes that we will have time to appraise a situation before responding on a physiological and affective level. Secondly, this model advocates the selection of a suitable meaning from a range of possibilities, indicating that (a) we can formulate a range of suitable options to choose from, and (b) decide which is optimal, thereby choosing the

emotion we wish to feel. Gross's label for this process is 'reappraisal', and that is also questionable since it implies a *second* appraisal procedure. This would be appropriate if, having selected our first meaning, and found it lacking, we repeated the process to settle on a better one. Surely, the chance of completing this procedure before experiencing an affective response is minimal!

The other end of this argument is also vulnerable to criticism. Gross suggests that if successful reappraisal does not occur, the only available recourse is inhibition of expression – the domain of those lacking in emotional intelligence. However, the distinction between suppression of experiential feeling, and outward expressivity is not made, and requires further exploration. I would argue that emotional expression may be modulated at any time during the regulatory process and is not in itself an indicator of unsuccessful reappraisal.

Although there remains a lot to be said on this subject, this is not the appropriate forum. While I do not agree with the sequential response model proposed by Gross, the idea of individual preference for either reappraisal or suppression strategies remains intriguing. I would therefore suggest an alternative sequence, illustrated by the following situation: a mother is busy in the house when she hears her child cry out from the garden. An instinctive reaction propels her toward the child, and in the time it takes to run through the house she replays the sound in her mind trying to establish whether it signalled distress or excitement. She tries to remember whether she closed the pool gate, insisted on sandals to prevent insect stings, and put away any sharp gardening tools, while trying to resist panic. When she

reaches the child who is proudly holding a newly found four-leaf clover, her relief is immense.

In this scenario, an emotive reaction is instigated by the possibility of danger. Rapid reappraisal takes place *after* the initial response, and the subsequent emotions (fear and relief) may be expressed fully, or subdued in order to maintain cognitive function and avoid overwhelming the child. Thus, I would argue that situational reappraisal can take place at any stage of the emotional reaction, as can the effort to restrain expression. This version of the argument results in a complex and dynamic interplay between reappraisal and suppression, which may take place on both conscious and subconscious levels, and is not necessarily driven by rational decision making processes.

The aim of this study is to test Gross's assertion that individuals tend to prefer one regulatory style over the other. Apparently, some individuals prefer more cognitively effortful reappraisal strategies in dealing with their emotions (at any point in the process), while others make more use of the avoidant suppressive style which seeks to eliminate feeling by inhibiting its expression (e.g. Gross & John, 2003). If so, what possible correlates are there between preferred regulatory strategy, attachment style and relationship satisfaction? The conceptual links between these constructs will be described later, however before proceeding, a closer examination is required of the developmental literature concerning emotion regulation, and the potential impact of gender differences.

1.4.3 Development of Regulatory Capacity

The ability to manage one's own emotion is inextricably linked to cognitive function. The developmental trajectory of regulatory competence in middle childhood is clearly described by Thompson (1991). At this age, children gain the ability to accept and analyse various perspectives on the same situation, an awareness of emotional display norms, and growing understanding of the consequences of emotional expression. The potential to feel several emotions simultaneously is also acknowledged.

A growing desire for social acceptance and psychological compatibility with peers necessitates a greater emphasis on conformity to emotional display norms, in order to avoid potential embarrassment or exclusion. A number of regulatory strategies are therefore developed, including attention deployment (described as dissociation by Bonnano, 2001), focus on potential (positive or negative) consequences of regulation, or a reinterpretation process very similar to the one described by Gross. Counter-emotive action may also be taken, such as engaging in a distracting activity. Such processes are intertwined with growing awareness and understanding of emotion. Conceptualisation of confusion or ambivalence can occur in response to conflicting feelings, and arousal may be modulated to account for a reassessment of causation (e.g. resisting anger when discovering that pain was inadvertently inflicted).

Thompson goes on to discuss "a theory of personal emotion in adolescence" which emerges from the self-monitoring and analysis typical of early identity development. The exploratory aspects of regulation described by Bonnano seem

particularly relevant at this stage, in terms of exploring a range of activities, and subjecting oneself to experiences which require regulation (e.g. watching scary movies). Greater understanding of one's emotional responses can also facilitate the kinds of anticipatory measures described by Bonnano, and allows for increasingly effective regulation of emotion under duress.

Having achieved some sense of emotional consistency during adolescence, the focus of self-regulatory process in adulthood changes from social conformity, to a more individualistic orientation:

It seems likely that a history of experiences of emotional self-regulation culminates by the adult years in the development of an effective repertoire of strategies that are enlisted in creating a more unique, personalised emotional life.

-Thompson (1991, p295)

Such a shift may entail specialised strategies that relate to specific emotions, and a greater pre-emptive selectivity in regard to one's environment. The increasing capacity to regulate emotion found in studies of life span development (Gross, Carstensen, Tsai, Skorpen & Hsu, 1997; McConatha & Huba, 1999) indicates that regulatory processes, once developed need not be rigid or static:

the optimal developmental outcome with respect to emotion regulation is not affective homeostasis, but rather a dynamic flexibility in emotional experience, the ability to pursue and prioritise different goals, and the capacity to selectively and

proactively mobilise emotions and cognitions in the service of context-specific and developmentally specific goals.

-Diamond & Aspinwall (2003, p125).

Taking into consideration these aspects of regulatory development, we can predict that the current sample of adolescents is likely to exhibit a wide range of regulatory strategies, consistent with this exploratory phase. The clear preference found by Gross & John (2003) in an adult sample, for either the reappraisal or suppression strategy may not be replicated within this age group due to the likelihood that both strategies may be employed in developing the regulatory repertoire.

1.4.4 Gender Differences in Emotion and Regulation

Although actual gender differences are notoriously difficult to extricate from stereotypic expectations and biases (Brody & Hall, 1993), a number of reliable effects have been reported. Women consistently lay claim to greater intensity of emotion, and a wider range of affect (Allen & Haccoun, 1976; Fujita, Diener & Sandvik, 1991). In regard to specific emotions, women appear to experience more positive feelings than men, and are generally kinder in their evaluations of others (Brody & Hall, 1993), however emotions that pertain to self evaluations (anxiety, fear, shame, guilt and sadness) are felt more keenly and frequently by women (e.g. Tangney, 1990). Of particular relevance to the current study is the finding that adolescent girls are most prone to elevated levels of shame (Stapley & Haviland, 1989). The only emotion which men appear to endorse (slightly) more than women is anger (Wintre, Polivy &

Murray, 1990), however this finding has not been consistently replicated (Brody & Hall, 1993).

Women are also more generally expressive (Hall, 1984; Brody, 1999), earning the label of 'externalisers', while men take greater effort to mask or suppress emotional expression, thereby 'internalising' the reaction (Gross & John, 1998; Kring & Gordon, 1998).

These differences have been attributed to the socialisation of greater emotional awareness and understanding in girls, due to the emphasis on relational capability inherent in the female gender role (e.g. Maccoby, 1998). Indeed, women discuss emotion to a greater extent than men (Fischer, 1995), exhibit a wider emotional vocabulary (Dindier & Allen, 1992; Brody, 1999), and a greater capacity for emotional differentiation (Feldman Barrett, Lane, Sechrest & Schwartz, 2000), which in turn is linked with higher levels regulatory competence (Feldman Barrett, Gross, Christensen & Benvenuto, 2001).

Consistent with the above results, women's regulatory practice reveals a distinct pattern of socialised responses. Timmers, Fischer & Manstead (1998), report that women's regulatory pattern was based on relational enhancement motives, thereby allowing greater expression of vulnerability related emotions such as fear, sadness or disappointment, whereas men were reluctant to show powerlessness in favour of anger. Conversely, women were disinclined to express anger or aggression, for fear of causing relational conflict, and used reappraisal strategies to facilitate a

more socially acceptable emotional response (i.e. one of sadness or disappointment) (Brody, 1999).

Notably absent from the above summary, are studies of gender difference in adolescent emotionality. This would seem to be a particularly salient subject in light of the sharp increase in negative affect at puberty, combined with heightened emphasis on gender role conformity, and the vigilant monitoring of emotional behaviour by peers. However, little evidence has been presented to support the logical assumption that girls may be more likely to display emotions associated with vulnerability and support seeking, thereby necessitating reappraisal of anger inducing situations, whereas boys are likely to suppress anything betraying vulnerability, showing higher levels of power-asserting emotion such as anger. In the current study however, specific emotions are not differentiated, instead girls' greater emotional competence and relational motivation is expected to produce higher levels of reappraisal, whereas boys are expected to be higher on suppression.

1.5 A Dynamic Model of Attachment, Emotion Regulation and Relationship Satisfaction

The impact of attachment style (both historical and current) on romantic relationships has been documented in a wide array of studies, with highly consistent results. Securely attached individuals report higher levels of happiness, friendship, trust, satisfaction (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Feeney & Noller, 1990), stability and longevity (Feeney, Noller & Patty, 1993). They are comfortable with closeness, able to depend on others, and confident that they will not be abandoned or betrayed

(Collins & Read, 1990). Securely attached individuals also perceive higher levels of support from others, and rate their interactions as more intimate and positive (Kafetsios & Nezlek, 2002). These individuals seek out, and endeavour to build positive relationships with others, and expect to establish dynamics of mutual support and reciprocity (Rholes, Simpson & Stevens, 1998). Although such orientations typically arise from childhood experiences of consistently accessible, nurturing and interactive parenting (Bowlby, 1969; Feeney & Noller, 1990), they may be subject to change through experience. Therefore, the loss of a loved one may result in temporary (or permanent) reluctance to form another such bond, while mistreatment in a relationship might lead to avoidant behaviour in response to one particular individual (Furman & Simon, 1999; Thompson, 1999).

In contrast, anxiously attached respondents report inconsistent access to caregivers, and/or erratic responses to distress (Bowlby, 1980). These individuals strive to develop the stable relationships they desire, but fear abandonment and rejection. Cooper, Shaver & Collins (1998) note that this attachment style is characterised by low self-confidence, and a mistrust of others, which results in elevated levels of jealousy and anger. Romantic relationships are frequent and intense, but relatively short-lived and unstable (Feeney, Noller & Patty, 1993). Anxiously attached individuals strive to create profound commitment and dependence in their romantic relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Feeney & Noller, 1990), resulting in obsessive and enmeshed dynamics (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1989), plagued by perceived misunderstandings and negative affect (Rholes, Simpson & Stevens, 1998).

In response to a rejecting, unsupportive or abusive childhood environment, the avoidantly attached individual strives for self-sufficiency and independence (Bowlby, 1980). Not surprisingly, romantic relationships are comparatively less frequent and intense (Feeney, Noller & Patty, 1993), characterised by low levels of self-disclosure and intimacy (Cooper, Shaver & Collins, 1998; Fischer, Munsch & Greene, 1996). This reflects the avoidants' discomfort with proximity to others, and suspicious response to offers of support (Rholes, Simpson & Stevens, 1998).

The above descriptions typify those individuals who most strongly exhibit the characteristics of each attachment style, however the scale adopted for this study (Collins & Read, 1990) allows for measurement of attachment tendencies on a continuum, acknowledging the simultaneous endorsement of all attachment styles to varying degrees. Individuals may therefore be predominantly secure, and yet display anxious tendencies under some circumstances, or avoid particular forms of contact under others.

It should be obvious from the above descriptions, that the emotional experiences encountered and created by individuals within the various attachment styles are central to our understanding of the construct. As we have seen, secure attachment is usually accompanied by higher levels of positive feeling, while insecurely attached individuals experience more fear, jealousy, anger and hostility. This leads to inevitable questions of causation – do securely attached individuals simply feel more positive emotion, or do they deal with negative affect in a way that reduces its impact/occurrence?

Studies of emotion regulation have shown clear differences in the regulatory capacity and practices of individuals of various attachment styles. Securely attached respondents consistently display better social skills in conflict or problem-solving situations (Creasey, Kershaw & Boston, 1999) and express higher self-efficacy with regard to emotion-regulation (Bandura, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Gerbino & Pastorelli, 2003). In contrast, the higher levels of negative emotion (particularly hostility) experienced by anxious teens provoked greater engagement in risky and problem behaviour as a means of expressing emotion (Cooper, Shaver & Collins, 1998). Securely attached individuals consistently show higher levels of emotional competence and the capacity to deal with negative affect in a socially acceptable manner (Rholes, Simpson & Stevens 1998).

The rationale offered for the above differences in regulatory competence includes the findings that families characterised by secure attachment styles are more willing to address the experience of negative emotion, and discuss alternative methods of regulation. Laible & Thompson (2000), report that mothers of securely attached preschoolers include more references to emotion and moral evaluatives in discussing their child's behaviour, resulting in interactions which serve to develop the child's regulatory, empathic and moral capacity. Also, the problem solving behaviours in securely attached mother/son dyads (Kobak, Cole, Ferenz-Gillies, Fleming & Gamble, 1993) reveal that such interactions are characterised by comparatively low levels of dysfunctional anger and avoidance of problem solving, as well as optimal levels of maternal input.

Surprisingly, although a great deal of attention has been paid to the links between attachment style and romantic relationship satisfaction, and the correlation between attachment and emotional regulation, few researchers have sought to connect all three. However, building on her own prior research, Judith Feeney (1998), proposed that the association between attachment and relationship satisfaction may be mediated by emotion regulation, and although her hypotheses were only partially supported, this work provides an appropriate basis for the current study.

Predating Gross & John's conception of the reappraisal/suppression distinction, Feeney (1995) found that securely attached individuals generally exerted less control over their emotions, compared to anxious respondents who reported inhibiting the display of negative affect, while avoidants strove to suppress negative feeling altogether. Feeney suggests that insecurely attached individuals may seek to idealise their romantic relationships, and strive to maintain an image of happiness and contentment. Furthermore, expressions of negative emotion (particularly anger) were seen as potentially destructive by anxiously attached partners, who therefore exerted greater control over their emotions.

In an extension of the above findings, Feeney (1998) found that high levels of relationship satisfaction were reported by women whose partners were comfortable with closeness (securely attached), and therefore expressed their feelings in an appropriate manner. Relating this finding to the current study, we would expect to find that securely attached individuals make little use of suppressive strategies and display higher levels of satisfaction, while insecure respondents report inhibiting negative emotion, to the detriment of their relationship.

Differences in the use of reappraisal strategies may be conceptualised in reference to the classic study by Simpson, Rholes & Nelligan (1992) which explored differences in support seeking and giving behaviours among couples, in relation to attachment. These authors found that securely attached women sought support from their partners under stressful circumstances, while avoidant women were distant from their partner, and strove to distract themselves from the situation. In response, securely attached men offered more verbal and physical support than their avoidant counterparts. In response to their partner's distress, "more securely attached men in this study offered greater reassurance and emotional support and made more supportive comments" (p444).

I suggest that in expressing their distress, securely attached women were seeking their partner's help with reappraisal attempts. Although the exact nature of the men's responses was not recorded, one would expect that comments expressing reassurance might entail minimising the anticipated risks, or highlighting their partner's capacity to deal with such situations. Even the simplest offers of emotional or physical support would entail some element of reappraisal by offering positive affect in order to counter distress. Therefore, we can assume that securely attached women were expressing their anxiety in order to facilitate a dynamic reappraisal process, indicating greater willingness to engage in the problem solving behaviours associated with emotional intelligence. In contrast, avoidant women inhibited their emotional reaction, consistent with reliance on suppressive regulatory strategies. Interestingly, no significant effects were found in the anxiously attached sample.

Following Gross & John's (2003) assertion that preference for reappraisal strategies is associated with better interpersonal functioning, we can assume that individuals using such strategies would experience greater levels of satisfaction in their romantic relationships.

A distinction will also be made between regulatory strategies associated with positive and negative emotions. Since no research has been located on expressivity in adolescence, the norms of this age group require attention. While it is commonly believed that only negative feeling requires regulation, social pressure and group politics may also serve to inhibit display of positive emotion.

1.6 Current Hypotheses

This study seeks to consolidate and extend the research on the link between attachment and emotion regulation by measuring individual's preference for suppressive vs. reappraisal strategies. It is also suggested that greater use of reappraisal strategies (whether intra- or interpersonally) will engender behaviours that promote satisfaction within the romantic relationship. Therefore, it is anticipated that:

1. Secure attachment style will be correlated with relationship satisfaction.
2. Securely attached adolescents will report greater use of reappraisal strategies than their avoidant and anxious counterparts.

3. Securely attached adolescents will make greater use of reappraisal than suppression strategies.

4. Avoidant and anxious individuals will show greater use of suppressive strategies than securely attached adolescents.

5. High use of emotional reappraisal will be associated with relationship satisfaction.

6. Although gender differences do not feature prominently in Feeney's work, Gross & John (2003) reported higher rates of suppressive practice in the male sample. This finding, combined with previously mentioned research leads to the prediction that women's greater relational motivation and emotional eloquence may result in comparatively higher rates of reappraisal among adolescent girls, while boys make more use of suppressive strategies.

Chapter Two

Method

2.1 Overview

Research was conducted as part of a larger project commissioned by an independent researcher within the Psychology Department of the University of Canterbury. Data were collected by means of questionnaire (Appendices B-G). This was distributed by classroom teachers in 4 Christchurch high schools, while a fifth school requested that the researcher conduct the process in person. Data were also collected through the University of Canterbury, where students in a stage 2 Gender Studies paper were invited to participate by the researcher. No inducements were offered to any of the participants.

This study was approved by University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, and participants' consent was sought in writing before beginning the questionnaire. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw their data after completing the questionnaire if they chose to do so.

2.2 Procedure

Participants were recruited by teachers in 5 Christchurch high schools, although initially it was hoped that one school would suffice. Hagley Community College was chosen for its wide range of students in terms of both socio-economic status, and cultural/ethnic background. First, contact with the school's secretary was

made by phone in order to identify the most appropriate person to deal with this subject. The Dean of Students was recommended, and in a subsequent phone conversation she expressed willingness to co-operate.

The Dean of Students then recruited appropriate teachers. Questionnaires were distributed in class to all consenting students, who were asked to return them upon completion. Unfortunately, the length of the questionnaire precluded its completion during class time, and students were therefore asked to complete the questionnaires at home and return them to the relevant teacher. This strategy produced a 16% response rate (16 complete questionnaires), and teachers expressed annoyance at the addition of an extra task to their working day.

Subsequently, eight more high schools were contacted, only four of which agreed to participate. This is consistent with the experience of other researchers who report struggling to enrol schools for research participation (McCormick, Crawford, Anderson, Gittelsohn, Kinglsey & Upston, 1999). McCormick et al encountered resistance from schools due to the number of competing research requests. This factor was also mentioned by the schools contacted in this study, some of whom refused to participate on the basis that they were already involved in extensive research. One school refused to participate in research unless it was directly aimed at improving conditions within the school.

In most cases, initial phone contact was followed by a letter to the relevant staff member outlining the study (Appendix A), which was then presented to the school's principal in order to obtain formal approval for the project.

In three of the schools (Papanui High School, Christchurch Boys High School and St. Margarets College) the participant recruitment process was the same as Hagley Community College, with teachers distributing and collecting the questionnaires. The Christchurch Rudolf Steiner Area School differed from this format, in its request that the researcher administer the questionnaire, having first introduced the subject matter fully. The students completed the questionnaire in class time, with the researcher present, and a wide ranging discussion followed as a form of debrief.

It was hoped that students from a wide range of socio-cultural and socio-economic backgrounds would participate in this study, and a wide range of schools were approached to facilitate this. As data collection progressed, it became apparent that boys were less likely to participate than girls. A single-sex boys' school was therefore sought to provide more input from males.

Table 2.1 Decile Rating and Roll size of Participating Schools

| | Gender | Decile | Roll Size* | Participants |
|----------------------------------|--------|--------|------------|--------------|
| Hagley Community College | Co-ed | 6 | 1792 | 16 |
| Papanui High School | Co-ed | 6 | 1073 | 24 |
| St. Margarets College | Girls | 99** | 638 | 12 |
| Chch. Boys High School | Boys | 10 | 1251 | 11 |
| Chch. Rudolf Steiner Area School | Co-ed | 7 | 347 | 21 |

Based on 2002 enrolments as recorded by the Ministry of Education.

** Indicates private institution.

As the above table shows, a rather narrow decile range was sampled. This reflects a greater reluctance on behalf of low decile schools to participate in research, citing high levels of stress and anxiety among teachers.

A further 20 participants were recruited from a second stage class at the University of Canterbury. An announcement was made in lecture, inviting students in the appropriate age range to complete the questionnaire in their own time, and return it at the next lecture. Upon hearing of this study, one lecturer asked her own adolescent son to complete a questionnaire.

2.3 Participants

A total of 105 completed questionnaires were used in this study. A further 8 questionnaires were incomplete, and therefore excluded from analysis. Five respondents indicated that they had not experienced a romantic relationship. These questionnaires were used only in the analysis of attachment and emotion regulation dimensions of this study.

A further 23 questionnaires were also rejected due printing error. This included the reversal and extension of the Likert scales used in one of the questionnaires. Although it would have been possible to adjust the data so it resembled that of the other respondents, this process would have involved an unacceptable level of conjecture regarding the participants' thoughts on the subject.

The final data set included questionnaires from 70 females and 35 males, ranging in age from 14.83 to 19.75 years. Participants were not requested to state their racial identity as questions on this subject were not expressly considered in the research hypotheses.

2.4 Measures

2.4.1 Relational Conceptualisation and Demographics

The adolescents' own conceptualisation of romantic relationships was explored by inviting them to list the characteristics necessary for a romantic relationship. This question was intentionally ambiguous in order to allow answers regarding characteristics of the other partner, or the relationship itself. Responses were coded in reference to the categories proposed by Feiring (1996). The number of references to physical or personality characteristics of a prospective partner (e.g. hot body, good sense of humour) was recorded, as well as the number of relational constructs (e.g. communication, trust).

Subsequent questions related to the current or last romantic relationship, establishing acquaintanceship duration prior to relationship commencement, relationship duration, and age of both partners at relationship commencement. The term 'going out' was used in reference to the relationship because this term clearly denotes the construct in NZ, especially among this age group.

2.4.3 Perceived Relationship Quality Components Inventory

Relationship satisfaction was measured by the Fletcher, Simpson and Thomas (2000) Perceived Relationship Quality Components Inventory (PRQC). This scale seeks to elicit a subjective evaluation of the relationship based on five dimensions that Fletcher et. al. identify as being robust and consistent components of relationship appraisal.

Fletcher et al report that Likert scale ratings of commitment, trust, intimacy and love correspond strongly with general measures of relationship satisfaction, and this is also directly addressed as the fifth dimension of the scale.

This questionnaire reflects the authors' findings that although in some cases ratings of the various relationship dimensions may be slightly disparate from each other, the individual's desire for cognitive coherence will motivate them to seek some level of consistency within their relationship evaluation. It should follow therefore, that a relationship which is judged to be severely lacking in some areas, but satisfactory in others, will receive an overall satisfaction rating which reflects this inconsistency.

The recent development of the PRQC has precluded its use in other research, meaning that the scale has not yet been validated by researchers other than the authors. Fletcher et al are confident however that this measure allows the evaluation of "domain-specific and quasi-independent constructs, that nevertheless load on a second-order factor of overall perceived relationship quality." (pg. 341).

2.4.4 Adult Attachment Scale

This measure, developed by Collins and Read (1990) is based on the earlier instrument designed by Hazan & Shaver (1987) to categorise individuals into three discrete attachment styles – secure, avoidant and anxious. This was to be achieved by assessing the respondents' level of agreement with a paragraph descriptive of each style, based on Ainsworth Blehar, Waters and Wall's (1978) theory of attachment.

Collins & Read criticised this instrument on several levels. Firstly, as each paragraph contained a number of statements, these could potentially elicit varying levels of agreement. Also, this instrument presumes the existence of three mutually exclusive and discrete attachment styles, a construction deemed potentially problematic by Collins & Read. Hazan & Shaver's measure has therefore been reconstructed by Collins & Read, who broke the original 3 paragraphs into a 15 item Likert response questionnaire, enabling more precise assessment of the various dimensions of each attachment style. Three further items were added to assess the extent to which the respondent felt comfortable depending on others – an aspect of attachment that Collins & Read identify as being important to the original Ainsworth et al model. The resulting Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) provides a continuous measure of attachment, yielding scores for each of the three factors measured.

The effectiveness of the AAS has subsequently been assessed by a number of researchers, who have reported high levels of internal consistency, within the scale, and strong intercorrelations with other measures of continuous attachment (Sperling, Foelsch & Grace, 1996; Crowell, Fraley & Shaver, 1999).

The AAS yields scores for 3 dimensions that (in contrast with most measures of attachment) Collins & Read label Close, Depend and Anxious. These labels indicate the nature of the questions which define each category, as the first deals with comfort with intimacy, the second looks at issues of trust, and the third focuses on fears of abandonment. However, the fact that the items in this scale originated from the secure, avoidant and anxious styles described by Hazan & Shaver allows for flexibility of labelling. In the current study, the original anxious, avoidant and secure categories were used, as these can be more easily related to the body of literature on attachment.

2.4.5 Emotion Regulation Questionnaire

This 14 item scale (Gross & John, 2000) was a preliminary version of the instrument used in subsequent research by Gross & John (2003). Each item in this scale states explicitly the emotion regulation strategy being assessed, but makes no reference to the timing dimension included in the antecedent vs. response focused model proposed by Gross et al. In fact, questions are phrased in a way that implies reappraisal *subsequent* to emotional activation, as well as in anticipation of stressful events. Although this indicates a conceptual error on the authors' part, it increases flexibility of the scale, allowing measurement of reappraisal or suppression tendencies regardless of where they occur in the emotional response process.

The preliminary version used here differs from the final form primarily by its inclusion of items regarding frequency of emotion regulation, and perceived

capability to control emotion; both of these constructs were relevant to the current study.

A further distinction was made with regard to participants' management of positive and negative emotions. The tendency to promote positive emotion through use of reappraisal strategies was examined in question 8, while reappraisal as a means of reducing negative emotion was scored in question 14. These questions are conceptually similar – in both cases there is an orientation toward a more positive state, however the second item presupposes the existence of negative emotion, which the individual then chooses to engage with using reappraisal. In question 8 however, the presence of negative emotion is not assumed, only the desire to facilitate positive emotion is measured. The use of suppressive strategies was also examined in this manner. Suppression of positive emotion was measured by question 5, and the tendency to suppress negative emotion was the focus of question 11.

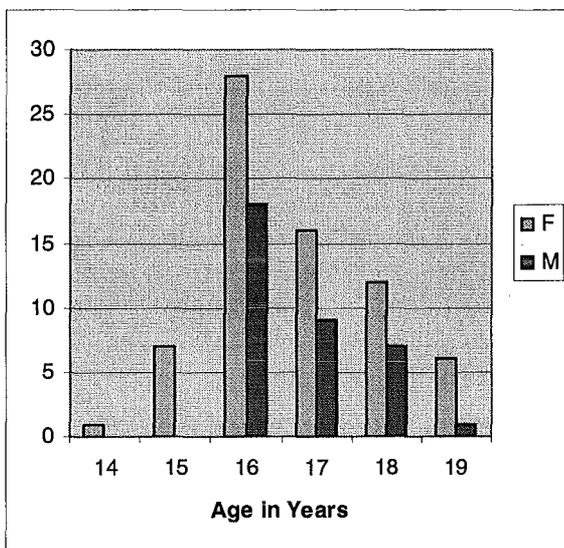
Chapter 3

Results

3.1 Demographics

Respondents ranged in age from 14.83 to 19.75 years. Although teachers at participating schools were requested to recruit students over 16 years of age, 8 questionnaires were returned from girls who were 14-15 years old. The average age of participants was 17.11 years ($SD = 1.07$), with a median of 16.92 years. There was no significant age difference between males and females.

Figure 3.1 Age Distribution



The respondents' age at the time of the focal relationship could not be established with the same degree of accuracy as their age at the time of the study. This is because participants were asked to indicate how old they were when the relationship began, and the majority chose to relate this in years, rather than being more specific. Therefore, the approximate average age at the beginning of the focal

relationship was 15.57 years ($SD = 1.23$), with a median age of 16 years. Again, there was no significant difference between genders.

The average age of respondent's romantic partners was 16.21 years ($SD = 1.75$), and there were no gender differences in this respect either. The average age difference between romantic partners was .64 years ($SD = 1.48$). However, girls' romantic partners were on average .95 years older than themselves ($SD = 1.58$), and boys partners were .06 years younger ($SD = .93$), $t(33) = 3.32$, $p < .05$ (two-tailed). The higher standard deviation for girls reflects the presence of several outliers – four girls who indicated an age difference of 4-7 years between themselves and their partner. Excluding these cases from analysis does not greatly effect the outcome – girls partners were on average .67 years older than themselves, which varies from the minimal and reversed difference between boys and their partners, $t(70) = 3.21$, $p < .05$. Girls with a high anxious attachment score provided the only exception to these general findings. A negative correlation was found between anxious attachment and age difference between the individual and their partner ($r = -.25$, $p < .05$), indicating that these girls tended to have relationships with boys who were either younger than themselves, or approximately the same age.

No sex differences were revealed in length of acquaintanceship preceding the start of the relationship. This was measured in months, and it was found that adolescents knew their romantic partner for an average of 19.66 months before they began going out with them. The large standard deviation of 35.05 is an indicator of the variety of relationships described. While 5 respondents chose not to disclose biographical data, 13% of the boys and 17% of girls began seeing their partner

romantically within one week of meeting 39% of all relationships began within 1 month of first meeting, and 59% commenced within 6 months. 25% of girls and 36% of boys however, reported knowing their partner for 2 or more years before the relationship began, and 4% had known their partner for over 8 years.

The duration of reported relationships also showed no gender differences, however there was less variation in this factor than the previous one. The relationships ranged in length from .25 to 36 months, with an average lifespan of 8.24 months, ($SD = 8.16$). 16% of these relationships lasted just 1 week or less, and 40% were finished within a month. Although 60% of all relationships lasted 6 months or less, 35% of the female respondents and 25% of males reported relationships of 2 years duration or more.

3.2 Relationship satisfaction

No gender differences were found with regard to the levels of relationship satisfaction measured by the PRQC, or any of the subscales in this instrument. Total relationship satisfaction scores ranged from 25-105 (the lowest score possible was 15, while the highest was 105), with a mean of 74.46, $SD = 18.63$. High levels of internal consistency were found between the satisfaction, commitment, trust, intimacy and love subscales, with correlations ranging from .63 to .90, all significant at the .01 level.

In accordance with expectations based on previous research (Joyner & Udry, 2000), gender differences were found when age was taken into account. Whilst boys showed no correlation between age and any dimension of relational satisfaction, girls' total satisfaction was strongly correlated with age ($r = .238, p < .05$). This finding was not consistent among all subscales, with the satisfaction dimension showing only a .04 correlation with age, and the commitment and intimacy subscales .20 and .18 respectively. The trust and love components however, showed moderate correlations with age of .27 and .25, both significant at .05 levels. A similar finding with regard to age related increase in secure attachment lends further credence to suggestions of developmental gender differences, and this will be further examined in the next section.

Relationship satisfaction was not directly linked to partner's age for either gender, however boys who reported a greater difference in age between themselves and their partner showed lower levels of relationship satisfaction ($r = -.39, p < .05$).

The effects of acquaintanceship duration prior to relationship commencement also differed between genders. Boys showed a significant correlation between total relationship satisfaction and length of acquaintanceship ($r = .34, p < .05$), while the correlation for girls – though positive, did not reach significance. Upon closer examination, only two subscales correlate significantly with acquaintanceship duration for boys – commitment and love ($r = .37$ and $.40$ respectively, $p < .05$), whereas for girls, acquaintanceship duration correlates moderately with intimacy, $r = .25, p < .05$.

The association between satisfaction and relationship duration also showed marked gender differences, as shown below.

Table 3.1 Pearson Correlations Between PRQC and Relationship Duration

| | Males | Females |
|--------------------|-------|---------|
| Total Satisfaction | .21 | .38** |
| Satisfaction | .14 | .24 |
| Commitment | .22 | .27* |
| Intimacy | .35* | .34** |
| Trust | .06 | .36** |
| Love | .12 | .41** |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

An attempt was made to examine the effects of time and memory on participants' assessment of their relationship. This was based on a fairly crude procedure, whereby the respondent's age (reported in years) at the time of relationship commencement was subtracted from their age at the time of questionnaire completion. The intention was to see whether the passage of time mellowed perceptions of past relationships, or worked in the opposite direction, causing adolescents to denigrate previous partners.

Interestingly, boys showed a strong negative correlation between time elapsed and total satisfaction of $-.47$ ($p < .01$). Time elapsed also correlated with the satisfaction subscale ($r = -.51$), commitment ($r = -.42$), trust ($r = -.47$), and love

($r = -.46$), all significant to the .01 level. Notably, the intimacy subscale did not show a significant correlation, and no similar effects were found for girls.

The relationship between the various dimensions of the PRQC and attachment style was also complex, showing a number of significant gender differences.

Table 3.2 Pearson Correlations Between PRQC Subscales and Attachment Style.

| | Anxious | | Avoidant | | Secure | |
|--------------------|---------|--------|----------|------|--------|------|
| | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| Total Satisfaction | -.19 | -.24* | -.65** | -.13 | .25 | .14 |
| Satisfaction | -.44** | -.13 | -.49** | -.14 | .14 | .11 |
| Commitment | -.01 | -.21 | -.57** | -.17 | .16 | .07 |
| Intimacy | -.11 | -.19 | -.49** | -.13 | .25 | .10 |
| Trust | -.27 | -.34** | -.56** | -.03 | .34 | .26* |
| Love | .02 | -.14 | -.52** | -.14 | .18 | .07 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

For girls, anxious attachment style is clearly related to inhibited relationship satisfaction, however only the trust subscale reveals this link at a significant level. Notably, this is also the only subscale which distinguishes the securely attached group from the anxious and avoidant.

For boys however, avoidant attachment style is most strongly linked to low satisfaction levels, with only the satisfaction subscale registering a relationship between satisfaction and anxious attachment.

Stepwise regression analysis was also used to examine which factors best predicted total relationship satisfaction. Gender differences became apparent here also, with boys showing a strong negative correlation between total satisfaction and avoidant attachment style ($r = -.81, p < .01$). For girls however, the anxious attachment style was most predictive of reduced satisfaction $r = -.30, p < .05$.

Fisher tests were also performed to explore the differences in correlations between satisfaction and attachment style. With regard to males, the correlation between secure attachment and total satisfaction of .21 was significantly different from the correlation between anxious attachment and satisfaction of $-.23, p < .05$. A more pronounced divergence was found in the correlation between the securely and avoidantly attached boys with regard to total satisfaction – the difference between these correlations was significant at the .001 level. This finding was consistent across all subscales of the PRQc, when looking at the correlation coefficients of securely vs. avoidantly attached boys. Comparing securely and anxiously attached males however, only differences on the satisfaction and trust subscales are revealed, each at the .01 level of significance. These results support the hypothesis that securely attached individuals experience higher relational satisfaction than their insecurely attached counterparts.

Table 3.3 Fisher Test for Difference in Correlation Coefficients Between Attachment Style and PRQC Subscales (Males)

| | Sec | Anx | z | Sec | Avoid | z | Anx | Avoid | z |
|----------------|-----|------|------|-----|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|
| T.Satisfaction | .21 | -.23 | .04 | .21 | -.61 | .0002 | -.23 | -.61 | .03 |
| Satisfaction | .11 | -.46 | .009 | .11 | -.46 | .009 | -.46 | -.46 | .5000 |
| Commitment | .12 | -.05 | .27 | .12 | -.53 | .003 | -.05 | -.53 | .02 |
| Intimacy | .21 | -.15 | .07 | .21 | -.46 | .003 | -.15 | -.46 | .09 |
| Trust | .33 | -.26 | .009 | .33 | -.56 | .0001 | -.26 | -.56 | .07 |
| Love | .16 | -.01 | .25 | .16 | -.49 | .003 | -.01 | -.49 | .02 |

A similar pattern emerged with regard to girls. The correlation between anxious attachment and total satisfaction was significantly different from that between secure attachment and total satisfaction ($p < .05$), but no difference was found between the secure and avoidant correlations with total satisfaction. Although no differences were found amongst correlations on the satisfaction subscale, the correlation between anxious attachment style and every other subscale of the PRQC differed significantly from those relating to secure attachment. This shows that securely attached girls do in fact report higher levels of relational satisfaction than anxiously attached individuals, although little difference is revealed between securely and avoidantly attached females. The considerable overlap between anxious and avoidant attachment styles should also be noted, particularly since this finding differs from the pattern exhibited by males, where avoidant and anxious attachment styles are clearly distinct from each other.

Table 3.4 Fisher Test for Difference in Correlation Coefficients Between Attachment Style and PRQC Subscales (Females)

| | Sec | Anx | z | Sec | Avoid | z | Anx | Avoid | z |
|----------------|-----|------|-------|-----|-------|-----|------|-------|-------|
| T.Satisfaction | .15 | -.23 | .10 | .15 | -.12 | .06 | -.23 | -.12 | .26 |
| Satisfaction | .11 | -.12 | .09 | .11 | -.13 | .08 | -.12 | -.13 | .48 |
| Commitment | .09 | -.20 | .05 | .09 | -.16 | .07 | -.20 | -.16 | .41 |
| Intimacy | .12 | -.18 | .04 | .12 | -.12 | .08 | -.18 | -.12 | .36 |
| Trust | .24 | -.34 | .0004 | .24 | .01 | .09 | -.34 | .01 | .02 |
| Love | .08 | -.14 | .10 | .08 | -.14 | .10 | -.14 | -.14 | .5000 |

Emotion regulation factors were also found to have high predictive validity, with strong negative correlations for both genders between use of suppressive strategies, and total satisfaction (boys $r = -.33, p < .05$, girls $r = -.36, p < .01$). Boys total satisfaction was also predicted by the frequency of emotion regulation ($r = .48, p < .01$). These findings were consistent among the subscales of the PRQC. The subject of emotion regulation will be explored in greater depth below.

3.3 Attachment

Given the dimensional nature of the AAS, a Pearson correlation was carried out to examine the degree of overlap between the three attachment styles. When looking at the entire sample, anxious attachment scores show a strong negative correlation with secure scores ($r = -.43, p < .01$), but a strong positive correlation is found between the anxious and avoidant styles ($r = .30, p < .05$). Again, gender differences are revealed under closer examination.

Table 3.5 Pearson Correlations Between Attachment Styles

| | Anxious | | Secure | |
|----------|---------|--------|--------|------|
| | M | F | M | F |
| Anxious | | | | |
| Secure | -.47** | -.39** | | |
| Avoidant | .22 | .35** | -.39* | -.23 |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

As table 3.5 shows, both genders report a clear distinction between secure and anxious attachment styles, but for boys, the difference between secure and avoidant scores is greater than for girls. Girls also show a significant overlap between avoidant and anxious attachment style, and although a similar trend is evident for boys, this statistic does not reach significance.

For girls, a negative correlation of $-.33$ was found between age and levels of anxious attachment ($p < .01$), as well as a corresponding positive correlation between age and secure attachment, $r = .26$, $p < .05$. No similar effects were apparent for boys. This is consistent with Joyner & Udry's claim that relationships become easier for girls as they get older, and that the first relationship is often most problematic. The current study does not allow for exploration of this factor, as respondents were not asked to provide a relationship history, or indicate whether the focal relationship was their first. However it can be assumed that older participants are more likely to have been involved in relationships prior to the focal one than are younger respondents, in which case a difference in satisfaction may be due to lessons learned from previous romantic experiences.

Although this finding may point to a gender difference in developmental processes, it may also reflect an overall tendency for girls to display higher levels of anxious attachment than boys $t(103) = 2.35, p < .05$. No similar differences were found with regard to secure or avoidant attachment styles.

3.4 Emotion regulation

Marked gender differences were apparent with regard to some measures of emotional regulation, although the frequency item, showed no significant difference between the sexes. Boys claimed to have greater overall capability to regulate their emotions, $t(103) = 2.43, p < .05$.

Emotional suppression was found to be the preferred means of regulation among adolescents of both genders, $t(208) = 5.51, p < .0001$. Further t-tests reveal the consistency of this result across sex – for girls, $t(138) = 3.70, p < .001$, and boys $t(68) = 4.57, p < .00001$. The failure to identify a significant negative relationship between reappraising and suppressive strategies suggests that individuals do not favour one regulatory style over the other as found by Gross & John (2003).

The current findings support previous research (e.g. Timmers, Fischer & Manstead, 1998), which asserts that boys report suppressing their emotions to a greater extent than girls. This was found to be the case with regard to the measure of general suppression $t(103) = 2.46, p < .05$, and the suppression of positive emotions,

$t(103) = 4.26, p < .01$, however no gender difference was found when focusing on the suppression of negative emotion. There was no significant gender difference in the use of reappraisal strategies in general, and focus on positive or negative emotion in particular had no effect on this finding.

It was anticipated that differences in emotion regulation practice would be associated with varying attachment styles. In particular, securely attached adolescents were expected to prefer reappraisal to suppression strategies, and to utilise reappraisal to a greater extent than insecurely attached individuals. Again, Pearson correlations showed marked gender differences.

Table 3.6 Pearson Correlations Between Emotion Regulation and Attachment Style

| | Anxious | | Secure | | Avoidant | |
|-------------|---------|------|--------|--------|----------|------|
| | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| Frequency | -.06 | .09 | .13 | -.07 | .20 | .00 |
| Capability | .03 | -.09 | .08 | -.06 | -.11 | .10 |
| Reappraisal | | | | | | |
| Positive | -.01 | .07 | .01 | .26* | .17 | .09 |
| Negative | -.06 | -.04 | .15 | -.02 | .11 | -.05 |
| Suppression | | | | | | |
| Positive | .27 | .20 | .14 | -.38** | .13 | .21 |
| Negative | .13 | .13 | -.02 | -.36** | .11 | .11 |
| Negative | .44** | .25* | -.26 | -.27* | .08 | .25* |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

As these results show, use of reappraisal strategies was only associated with reappraisal toward positive emotion for securely attached girls, while (contrary to

hypothesis 2) boys showed no significant relationship between secure attachment and reappraisal. The suppression of negative emotions however appears to be characteristic of anxious attachment for both genders, with a similar relationship evident for avoidant girls. Secure attachment for females however, is strongly associated with reduced suppression.

These findings are consistent with hypothesis 4, which focused on the expectation of higher rates of suppression amongst avoidantly attached adolescents. Fisher test for difference between correlations also show a stronger link between anxious attachment and negative suppression for boys, than that between secure attachment and suppression of negative emotion. Girls show similar results, in that associations between both insecure attachment styles and all forms of emotional suppression are significantly stronger than those between secure attachment and all dimensions of suppression (all significant to .01).

Hypothesis 3 focused on the expectation that securely attached teens would show greater use of reappraisal than suppressive strategies. Support for this hypothesis was found amongst girls. The Fisher test for difference between correlations reveals that the correlation between secure attachment and reappraisal is significantly different from that between secure attachment and suppression ($p < .05$), showing that although securely attached girls make minimal use of reappraisal strategies, they are even less likely to employ suppressive ones. No similar relationship was found amongst boys.

Further analyses were conducted which explored the emotion regulation styles of individuals who showed attachment scores significantly higher or lower than the mean. Accordingly, scores one standard deviation higher or lower than the mean within each of the three categories used. Consistent with previous results, t-tests showed no differences in emotion regulation between highly anxious, secure and avoidant boys, and their low attachment scoring counterparts. For girls however, highly anxious girls reported greater use of suppressive strategies than girls who were low on the anxious scale $t(29) = -2.17, p < .05$. Highly secure girls also showed reduced rates of suppression compared with low security girls, $t(15) = 2.3, p < .05$, while no differences were found between girls who were high or low on the avoidance subscale.

For girls, emotion regulation style was also strongly associated with relationship satisfaction, whereas boys showed no significant correlation between these factors.

Table 3.7 Pearson Correlations Between Emotion Regulation Style and Relationship Satisfaction

| | Reappraisal | | Suppression | |
|--------------------|-------------|-------|-------------|--------|
| | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls |
| Total Satisfaction | -.10 | -.08 | -.02 | -.33** |
| Satisfaction | -.11 | .05 | -.20 | -.29* |
| Commitment | -.03 | -.10 | -.01 | -.30* |
| Intimacy | -.09 | -.05 | -.04 | -.33** |
| Trust | .02 | -.10 | .15 | -.16 |
| Love | -.08 | -.09 | .07 | -.36** |

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Looking specifically at the reappraisal or suppression of positive and negative emotions, it was found that for boys, suppression of negative emotion correlated only with the satisfaction subscale $r = .40, p < .05$. For girls however, suppression of positive emotion was correlated with total satisfaction ($r = .26, p < .05$), the satisfaction subscale ($r = .26, p < .05$) and commitment ($r = .29, p < .05$).

Chapter Four

Discussion

4.1 Summary of Results

The data collected from this sample reflect the expectedly wide variety of relationships, and individual experience. Adolescents report having romantic relationships that last from 1 week to 3 years. Some respondents grew up with the person they later went out with, while others embarked on a relationship within days of meeting. Girls reported having slightly older partners (unless they are anxiously attached), while boys generally formed relationships with same age, or younger girls.

Relationship satisfaction shows a strong association with age for the girls in this sample, who also display links between satisfaction and relationship duration. This finding may be conceptually linked to an association between age and secure attachment style. For boys, the length of the relationship is associated only with increasing intimacy. Boys however, appear to form more committed and loving relationships with girls that they knew for a longer period before starting the relationship, while for girls, length of acquaintanceship is associated only with intimacy.

Boys also reported a link between frequency of emotion regulation and relationship satisfaction, although a negative correlation between satisfaction and suppression shows that this particular regulation strategy may not be productive. Both

sexes reported using more suppressive than reappraising regulation strategies, although boys showed higher overall rates of suppression than girls.

Consistent with the first hypothesis, securely attached individuals reported greater relationship satisfaction than their insecurely attached peers. Specifically, anxiously attached girls reported lower levels of trust, and although the same was not true of anxiously attached boys, these respondents showed lower satisfaction on the PRQC subscale. Avoidantly attached girls revealed no significant effects, however their male counterparts appeared highly dissatisfied with every aspect of their relationship.

The second hypothesis was partially supported in that securely attached girls reported higher use of reappraisal strategies to promote positive feeling, than did their insecurely attached counterparts. However, no similar differences were found among boys.

Similarly, girls scoring high on attachment security were more inclined to make use of reappraising than suppressive strategies (in accordance with the third hypothesis), while anxious and avoidant teens exhibited elevated rates of suppression in dealing with negative emotions (supporting the fourth hypothesis).

Although the fifth hypothesis was not supported (no link was found between reappraisal and relationship satisfaction), a strong negative correlation was found between use of suppressive strategies and relationship satisfaction for girls. The final

hypothesis also received partial support – while girls did not show higher rates of reappraisal, boys endorsed suppressive strategies more than girls.

4.1 Demographic and Contextual Factors

Mixed support was obtained for the models proposed by Brown and Feiring. Although these authors suggest a reappraisal of ones' peers following pubertal change, they do not make any assumptions regarding the prior nature of these relationships. Although Feiring describes romantic dyads as forming within a larger peer group, she does not explore the longevity of such associations. Studies of adolescent peer relations in the US however, suggest that long-term friendships based on residential proximity and shared schooling or extra-curricular activity involvement provide the basis for stable adolescent cliques and crowds (Levitt, Guacci-Franco & Levitt, 1993). These peer groups maintain rigid membership regulations, and serve to construct and reinforce both external and internal social hierarchies (Adler & Adler, 1996). Such findings are consistent with Brown's suggestion that in the second phase of relationship formation, romantic partners are selected on the basis of their social and political value. This implies that potential partners are known to the individual for some period of time prior to relationship formation – especially as new entrants may encounter difficulty in establishing peer group acceptance and the accompanying social status.

In the current study, acquaintanceship duration prior to relationship formation was measured in order to ascertain whether romantic partners were selected from

within an established peer network, or from outside the regular clique or crowd, indicating a more flexible social structure. The fact that over 40% of all relationships began with 1 month of meeting appears to indicate some degree of openness within peer groups. This is consistent with Gray's work of 1988, which is one of the few New Zealand studies of the adolescent experience. Although long-standing friendship groups maintained some degree of separatism, Gray found that teens in rural environments and co-educational schools rejected the idea of romantic involvement with someone they had grown up with or knew well. It appears that romance requires an element of mystery. Potential partners were therefore introduced by siblings or acquaintances outside the regular peer group.

This rapid acceptance of newcomers may indicate a climate of social mobility unlike that found in the US, and comparatively lower peer pressure over partner choice. However acquaintanceship duration was also linked with the commitment and love subscales for boys, and increased intimacy for girls, showing some advantages of familiarity prior to relationship commencement.

Informal conversations with both teachers and students at participating high schools also seemed to indicate a less rigid social hierarchy than that described by US researchers. Although a variety of social groups could easily be identified by appearance (e.g. punks and goths), strict communication boundaries were not enforced. Further research into adolescent social networks would help in understanding the dynamics of group inclusion, as well as the types of exclusionary practices involved in bullying. Adler & Adler also note the impact of social position on identity formation and self-concept, and the relevance of these factors in the New

Zealand social climate warrants further attention, particularly with regard to ethnic minority youth.

The fact that girls prefer (at least) slightly older partners also comes as no surprise. The two year difference in physical maturation gave rise to derogatory comments from the girls in Gray's sample, who perceived boys their age as annoyances rather than potential partners. This might also explain boys' tendency to form relationships with girls younger than themselves – even though (as the current study shows) such relationships may not be entirely satisfactory. Disparity of purpose may occur for example between an affiliation seeking boy, and a status seeking girl who may be well matched in terms of physical, but not psychological development. Anxiously attached girls were exceptional in this regard due to their preference for same age or younger partners. These girls might feel a greater sense of control and safety with someone comparatively immature.

An important developmental process is highlighted by the finding that girls report greater levels of secure attachment and relational satisfaction in their late teens. Pipher, (1994), describes the crash in self-esteem and relational competence which often accompanies pubertal change. While flexible childhood gender roles facilitate the exploration and development of a variety of skills and interests, Pipher details the effects of rigidly enforced social norms which come into effect during early adolescence. The negotiation of femininity, sexual dynamics and teen culture can be problematic. Paradoxically, girls exhibiting high levels of adaptive androgyny in childhood suffer most from their encounters with the exaggerated gender differentiation of adolescence. Pipher also reports a growing awareness of

institutional gender inequality and the commercial exploitation of femininity, which results in feelings of powerlessness and a preoccupation with physical appearance. Pipher's work is based on her own experience with clinical patients, and raises a number of important questions regarding girls' awareness and interpretation of gender differences in the public arena, workplace and media. Systematic research is required to ascertain societal differences in the endorsement and visibility of gender stereotypes, as well as the extent to which such information effects girls' identity formation. The finding that girls sampled in this study reported generally higher rates of anxious attachment than boys appears to support Pipher's hypothesis that while teenage boys discover the advantages of being male, girls become increasingly aware of the limitations placed on their gender, and the pressure to conform to standards of physical appearance. I hasten to add that conforming to the masculine gender role is also potentially problematic, and this issue will be discussed further, particularly in reference to the higher rates of emotional suppression reported by boys in the current study.

Although Pipher documents clinical levels of distress among girls between 13 and 19 years of age, respondents in the current project reported growing levels of secure attachment and relationship satisfaction with age. This is consistent with Joyner & Udry's (2000) finding that the first romantic relationship is often problematic for girls, and romantic involvement prior to age 17 correlates with elevated rates of depression. Interestingly, parental disapproval appears to be the primary mediating factor between relational involvement and depression, indicating that parental distress may be more damaging to the adolescent than the focal relationship itself. The picture is further complicated however, by the increase in

alcohol related problems and delinquent behaviour among romantically involved teens. Whether these behaviours were the source of parental concern, or the adolescents' response to parental disapproval is unclear from Joyner & Udry's research, and is just one of the issues arising from this work that requires further study.

These studies indicate that a number of factors are implicated in early teenage girls' vulnerability to anxious attachment and involvement in low satisfaction relationships. The age related rise in levels of secure attachment seems to indicate that some respondents were able to successfully negotiate potential disenfranchisement, oppressive gender roles, and family crises, and create a more satisfying romantic relationship. Unfortunately, the relevance (or otherwise) of the above factors to New Zealand adolescents is not explored in the current project, and the dearth of local research on normative adolescence precludes speculation. The prominence of women in New Zealand's public arena may serve dilute the gender stereotypes that Pipher identifies as particularly destructive – those of passivity and victimhood. However, media portrayals of stereotypical gender roles (e.g. in music videos, films and television) may serve to complicate the process of identity formation.

This subject would benefit from research focusing on both content and delivery of gendered messages in New Zealand media. The ways in which these messages are read and interpreted by teens should also be examined in order to measure the impact of such material. Preadolescent measures of attachment style would also be required to ascertain the full effects of pubertal change and the

accompanying identity formation process on what appears to be a fluid construction of attachment.

The finding that secure attachment tendencies increase with age reinforces a view of attachment that is more flexible and dynamic than that offered by Bowlby. An alternative model will be explored in section 4.3 which allows for such temporary shifts in response to a variety of relational experiences.

4.2 Conceptualisations of Romantic Relationships

The conceptual definitions of romance offered by this sample showed strong gender differences, but not in the expected direction. While younger girls emphasized the physical and personality traits that they consider attractive, older girls were more concerned with relational dynamics such as communication and comfort. Boys however did not show the same developmental pattern, listing predominantly relational factors. If these responses were genuine, we may be witnessing a shift in masculine relationship orientations – increased flexibility of gender roles and egalitarian attitudes in the home may provide a model of relationships as a source of friendship, intimacy and support. Whether the views expressed by this group of boys reflect wider opinion is a matter requiring consideration. Boy's lower response rate in this study suggests that those who participated were a minority group of boys who were more communicative and comfortable with the subject than their peers, indicating perhaps a deeper level of comfort and reflexivity. It appears likely that a

study such as this would attract teens with a comparatively high level of relational self-efficacy, an idea supported by the scarcity of avoidantly attached respondents.

A cautionary note may also be required regarding the distinction between romance and sexuality. Although the boys in this study appeared largely uninterested in the sexual dimensions of romance, casual sexual activity may occur outside this framework, guided by a different relational model.

In general however, these findings provide support for Levesque's work in questioning the dominant perspective of single-minded male sexuality. The optimistic nature of adolescent love is also confirmed by the current sample, as no mention was made (by either gender) of conflict related subjects (e.g. resolution strategies), or management of negative affect.

4.3 Attachment, Emotion Regulation and Relationship Satisfaction

This study follows a well established route of inquiry into the effects of attachment style on relational satisfaction. Although significant differences were observed between the satisfaction ratings of high security individuals and their insecurely attached peers, the absence of strong correlations between secure attachment and satisfaction may indicate that this link is not as strong for teens as it appears to be in adult samples. One possibility may be that individuals reporting high levels of anxious and avoidant attachment are in effect handicapped by their own belief systems, thereby limiting their potential to create satisfying relationships.

Conversely, high levels of secure attachment do not guarantee satisfaction as a wide range of relationships may be sampled in keeping with the exploratory confidence characteristic of securely attached individuals. Securely attached teens may therefore engage in relationships which are not entirely satisfactory, but are a source of relational experience and learning.

The relational dissatisfaction of avoidantly attached boys (although seemingly tautological) has received little attention from other authors, in fact the experiences of avoidant individuals are frequently under-examined. It would be easy to assume that boys who are generally uncomfortable with closeness would be motivated to form romantic relationships purely on the basis of access to sex. However if this were the case, they might report satisfaction with a relationship low in trust, intimacy, commitment and love, which they did not. It may be possible that these individuals are not experiencing the level of sexual activity they desire due to their unwillingness to engage in intimacy building behaviours, however if this were true they would have no reason to continue the relationship. We can assume therefore, that avoidantly attached boys may have a variety of reasons for entering romantic relationships, and the influence of contextual factors such as peer expectations, and social norms require consideration in conjunction with a closer examination of intrinsic motives.

Although it would appear that avoidant orientation alone is enough to cause dissatisfaction in relationships, the role of the other partner should also be considered. Several authors (e.g. Collins & Read, 1990; Brennan & Shaver, 1995) have observed a tendency toward partner matching on attachment, with securely attached individuals likely to bond with similarly oriented partners etc. Collins & Read however suggest

that anxiously attached individuals may be drawn to avoidant partners who inadvertently support their mistrust of others by resisting intimacy and commitment. It seems likely that such a union would be increasingly claustrophobic to the avoidant partner, causing them to retreat further, thus provoking an escalation in fearful behaviour from their mate. Further research into partner matching would be useful in establishing the longitudinal effects of such relational experiences. For example, an individual's tendency toward avoidant attachment may be exacerbated through experience of an anxious partner, thereby entrenching resistance to intimacy.

This suggestion engenders a more flexible and dynamic view of attachment than that proposed by Bowlby, and this requires closer examination. In an extensive review of the subject, Thompson (1999) concludes that attachment styles may remain stable over an extended period of time, or under some circumstances change dramatically. Clearly, this stance serves to complicate the issue, and stimulate further research on the conditions which may provoke fluctuations in attachment orientations.

Furman & Simon, (1999) emphasise the value of a flexible conceptualisation of attachment in regard to adolescent relationships. These authors propose a system of relational views, in which attachment related beliefs are developed through relationships with particular individuals, and experiences of specific situations. Within this model, an individual endorsing primarily secure attachment orientations may be highly avoidant of a specific person following an experience of rejection or betrayal. This attitude may also be extended to include other individuals who in some way resemble the offending partner, based on the assumption that they are likely to exhibit similar behaviours. Using the example mentioned above, an adolescent with

avoidant tendencies may reject potential partners who appear clingy or jealous, based on prior experiences with an anxious partner.

Furman and Simon also suggest a hierarchical model of relationship views which distinguishes between the primary orientation to relationships in general, and the more specific beliefs surrounding parents, friends and romantic partners. Further distinctions are subsequently made between specific individuals who fill those roles. Such a model allows for the assimilation of relational experience within a specific context, without necessarily contaminating other social environments. Therefore, the adolescent who suffers betrayal in their romantic relationship can maintain intimate and supportive friendships by limiting their feelings of distrust to the romantic sphere, or a specific individual.

As well as accommodating discrimination between relational contexts, this model facilitates exploration of the dynamic and interactive development of relational beliefs based on changes in the social environment of the individual. The authors explain that specific relational views give rise to congruent behaviours, which elicit responses from others that may reinforce or challenge the existing belief system. This model can therefore be used in explaining the stability of an entrenched attachment style as it gives rise to pervasive and persistent beliefs about ones social environment, leading to behaviours consistent with such a view, and eliciting consistently reinforcing responses. However, individuals holding a more moderate view of their social environment may exhibit a wider range of behaviour, and greater flexibility in their expectations of others. Clearly, this model is particularly useful in examining the often turbulent relational world of adolescence, as it allows for conceptualisations of

simultaneous stability and flux. The interactive nature of relationships is also acknowledged, facilitating an examination of reciprocal processes. This approach facilitates the development of two distinct threads of research – one focusing on the factors which promote stability of attachment orientation, and the other examining the psychological and environmental catalysts of change.

One of the mechanisms that apparently maintains attachment continuity is individual attribution style. Mikulincer (1998), reports that after viewing three scenarios depicting either no hostility, ambiguous hostility, or a clear-cut instance of hostile intent, secure individuals attributed hostile motives only in the scenario which clearly depicted such events. In contrast, anxiously attached participants perceived hostility under ambiguous circumstances as well as in the obviously hostile scenario, while avoidant individuals sensed hostile intent in all three situations. Findings like this serve to support conceptualisations of attachment as providing a framework within which events are perceived and interpreted according to the individuals' expectations, which in some cases lead to inaccurate representations of the event.

Similar results are reported by Feeney & Cassidy (2003), who report that securely attached teens enhanced their memory of conflictual events by filling in forgotten details in a positive manner. These respondents rated a past conflict as more constructive than their insecurely attached peers who focused on the negative elements of the situation and augmented their memories of it in a way that exaggerated negative affect.

Research in this area aids in explaining the comparatively high levels of negative affect and accompanying behaviour consistently found among insecurely attached individuals (Kobak & Sceery, 1988; Rholes, Simpson & Stevens, 1998), and highlights the experience of emotion as a primary differentiating factor in the lives of individuals endorsing various attachment orientations. The individual's response to their own affective reactions is the focal point of the current study.

Mikulincer's (1998) work focusing on the experience and expression of anger provides an excellent example of the different strategies employed by individuals of various attachment orientations. Securely attached participants appeared more willing to engage in problem solving strategies to resolve the anger-provoking situation, they laid claim to more positive affect in the midst of the emotional episode, and reported lower levels of anger experience in general. Mikulincer labelled this response as indicative of adaptive anger – that which signals the need for constructive action, without overwhelming the cognitive resources of the individual.

Anxiously attached participants however, revealed a tendency to internalise anger, ruminating on both the situation, and the associated feeling. Rather than being confined to the affect inducing situation, the anger experiences of these people contaminated the wider emotional system, causing them to become overwhelmed. Avoidant individuals show similar inhibition of emotional expression to the anxiously attached group, and report feeling no more anger than the secure individuals. The distinction between emotional experience and expression is most relevant to this group however, as their physiological responses betray high levels of arousal and reactivity. Mikulincer terms this dissociative anger because the person's desire to

appear unaffected leads to attempted suppression of both emotional display, and the very feeling itself.

Regulatory differences in response to attachment style have also been studied in the context of social interaction. Allen, Marsh, McFarland, McElhaney, Land, Jodl, & Peck (2002) note that insecurely attached adolescents show greater likelihood of misinterpreting events in ways that provoke negative reactions against others. This recurring scenario leads to a pattern of distorted perceptions and negative expectations of future experiences. Subsequently, insecure individuals tend to display poor social skills and higher rates of engagement in delinquent behaviours. Similarly, a range of regulatory behaviours collectively termed 'coping' were found to mediate between attachment and peer competence in middle childhood (Contreras, Kerus, Weimar, Gentzler & Tomich, 2000), showing a clear sequential effect.

Although an alternative ordering of these factors may be conceivable, the likelihood of such a scenario effecting the current results is slim. As Mikulincer (1998) points out, attachment orientations result predominantly from very early experiences of emotion, and Thompson's (1991) discussion of external regulation processes (involving reduction of unpleasant stimuli by caregivers) is consistent with the hypothesis that ineffective regulation (in the form of unreliable or negligent care) at an early stage precludes the development of secure attachment. Thus, the individual's expectations of others are formed on the basis of emotional experiences, and fall (roughly) into the three categories described by attachment theory. The idea that emotion regulation experiences shape attachment orientations is less plausible however due to the demonstrated power of attachment styles to shape expectations

and experiences of social interactions. This ordering of factors is also bolstered by the finding that attachment orientations are associated with varying levels of cognitive complexity. Securely attached individuals seem determined to interpret others' behaviour in a positive manner, and are willing to explore a wider variety of motives before forming an opinion. In contrast, anxious and avoidant respondents show less complexity in their understanding of others, and are more receptive to information which confirms their suspicions of others' intended betrayal or hostility (Weger & Polcar, 2000).

While the factors mentioned above to serve to explain the consistency of attachment orientations, several authors (Hammond & Fletcher, 1991; Fuller & Fincham, 1995) contend that attachment orientations appear to be flexible even within the context of long term committed relationships. Unfortunately, the specific causes of such shifts are not examined in the two studies mentioned, largely because the finding was incidental to the main topic of both studies. The most obvious explanation of course is expressed by the old adage: it takes two to tango. Human relationships are infinitely complex, and the behaviour of one partner (no matter how well-meaning) can never ensure harmony. Fuller & Fincham suggest that attachment styles may be reconceptualised as relational schemas that are adjusted to accommodate the changing dynamics of a relationship. This approach (similar to Furman & Simon's model of relational views) is particularly useful in studying adolescents, because romance presents a new relational domain, the rules and potential outcomes of which are uncertain. The potential for change in attachment may therefore be greater within this developmental period, as a wide range of relational behaviours are explored in order to understand the new terrain – with varying results.

The study of attachment and related behaviour could therefore benefit from a more flexible approach, integrating both stability and flux perspectives. The dimensional measure of attachment used in the current project may be particularly valuable in identifying a balance between primary and secondary attachment orientations, exploring the possibility that the two are differentially employed (e.g. a secure individual showing anxiety related behaviours when distressed). Several orienting questions can therefore be fruitfully pursued: what events are most likely to cause attachment change? How are such events experienced/explained by the subject? How stable are the changes in attachment orientation? What impact (if any) do such changes have on the attribution style or emotional regulation tendencies of the individual?

The study most closely resembling the current project is that of Feeney, Noller & Roberts (1998), who proposed that emotion regulation could function as a direct mediator in the association between attachment and satisfaction in romantic relationships. This research focused on the degree to which emotions are controlled, and the extent to which marital partners believed their spouse wanted them to control specific emotions. These authors distinguished between emotional experience and expression, and found that although felt emotion alone did not mediate the link between attachment and satisfaction, men's securely attached orientation was associated with greater disclosure of negative affect, which in turn raised the satisfaction level of their partner. Clearly, the current study offers further clarification by examining specific control strategies, and focusing on the satisfaction of the individual. The impact of expression inhibition on interpersonal dynamics has also

been specifically examined (Butler, Egloff, Wilhelm, Smith, Erickson & Gross, 2003). These authors report that when one member of a female dyad was instructed to suppress her emotional behaviour the interaction was disrupted, relationship development was stunted, and both partners experienced negative physiological reactions (elevated blood pressure). The current findings validate this line of inquiry, suggesting that the complex nature of this subject requires a variety of conceptual and methodological approaches.

The trajectory of attachment and various forms of emotion regulation have also been implicated in a variety of negative and distressing outcomes for adolescents and young adults. In a meta-analysis of the field, Nottell (2002) finds that while childhood family dysfunction plays a substantial role in the development of anti-social personality disorder in adolescents, factors associated with attachment and emotionality require careful investigation. This suggestion is consistent with earlier findings implicating low tolerance for negative emotion in adolescents prone to ill health and injury (Caspi, Begg, Dickson, Langley, Moffitt, McGee & Silva, 1995). Furthermore, teenage delinquency and engagement in risk behaviours has been associated with attachment style (Cooper, Shaver & Collins, 1998), and a combination of negative emotionality and inadequate emotional constraint (Moffitt, Caspi, Silva, Stouthamer-Loeber, 1995). Brennan & Shaver (1995) also report a correlation between insecure attachment and eating disorders, drinking motivation, and engagement in non-intimate sexual behaviour, all of which are considered mechanisms of affect regulation.

New Zealand research focusing on predictors of delinquency confirms the international generalisability of this subject, finding that poor parental attachment is a primary risk factor for mental health problems, juvenile offending and substance abuse/addiction at age 18 (Fergusson & Lynskey, 1998). The role of emotion related factors is clarified in a study which reports high levels of neuroticism and novelty-seeking in adolescence arising from low SES, marital disruption and poor attachment development in childhood, and leading to an increased risk of suicidal behaviour (Fergusson, Woodward & Horwood, 2000). In this context, the potential for flexibility in attachment orientations and associated regulatory practices is an important focus for therapists and mental health workers.

4.4 The Gendered Experience of Emotion

The emotion regulation practices reported by this sample of Christchurch teens appear completely consistent with the theory that gender roles are exaggerated and policed during adolescence. In an extensive review of gender differences in emotion, Brody (1999) reports that women place greater emphasis on building relational harmony, and tailor their emotional reactions appropriately. This intimacy motive takes precedence over power, control, and individualism drives, which are expressed in such a way as to maintain positive relationships. Brody argues that men value power, control and individuality (as a form of independence) more highly, thereby resisting the display of emotions which might undermine their image by making them appear vulnerable.

Gender differences in expressivity are also explained with reference to differential power and status. Like Pipher, Brody describes women's acknowledgement of their subordinate position, and the resulting feelings of shame, embarrassment, and distress. Women's reluctance to express anger at their predicament (for fear of causing conflict), then leads to the redirection of aggression and hostility into more socially acceptable emotions such as sadness and fear.

I suggest that such a process implies the use of reappraisal strategies. Furthermore, securely attached individuals who place a high value on intimacy and have the cognitive capacity for effective regulation may engage in such activities to a greater extent – as was found in this study. Although achievement and maintenance of intimacy is a primary motivating factor for the anxiously attached, these people tend to perceive themselves as socially incompetent and unworthy of others' attention. This self-image is consistent with the high rates of emotional suppression because the individual has little faith in being able to express themselves in an acceptable manner, and yet places a high premium on the relationship. The case of avoidantly attached women is superficially similar in that negative emotion is suppressed, however drawing on Mikulincer's work, we may assume that the motivation for suppression includes a dissociative element – wanting to distance oneself from the emotional experience. The fact that for girls, avoidant attachment showed no correlation (positive or negative) with relationship satisfaction is also indicative of a gender difference in relationship function. These teens may wish to project an image of normality (whether or not their relationship is genuinely satisfying), based on their motivation to appear competent.

This motive is remarkably similar to the one attributed to men. Wegner & Erber (1993) contend that men's power and individuation motives are manifested in the image of an autonomous and private inner world, which is independent of the social environment. Brody explains that since emotional expressivity indicates that one has been affected in some way by contextual events, the maintenance of autonomy necessitates the appearance of neutrality. Subsequently, incongruity between the internal state and external projection is reduced as the individual strives to suppress emotional experience as well as expression. This model seems to refer to an internalisation process whereby perceived standards of behaviour promoting emotional neutrality are translated into norms governing internal experience.

The absence of attachment related differences in boys' use of emotion regulation strategies may testify to the inflexibility of gender roles. It seems reasonable to assume that the confidence and social skills of securely attached boys allow their acceptance into achievement oriented arenas governed by hegemonic masculine practices which uphold rigorous standards of emotional repression. Paradoxically, those most capable of appropriate expression may also be the most constrained. In contrast, Gerschick and Miller describe the freedoms of men who by reason of disability can not conform to traditional standards of masculinity, and thereby feel exempt from emotionally repressive norms. Three themes, or patterns are identified by these authors, which may be employed in renegotiating masculinity norms. While some men reformulated masculine ideals to suit their own situation, others internalised their beliefs consistent with the hegemonic model, thereby ensuring their failure to meet the standard, and suffering the consequences. The third coping strategy involves rejection of commonly held beliefs about the meaning of

masculinity, thereby allowing a greater range of expression and the development of a more androgynous identity.

This sociological literature is supported by Jakupcak, Salters, Gratz & Roemer (2003), who find that men who subscribe to traditional masculine gender roles report fearing their own affective reactions:

...men who endorse less traditional ideologies of masculinity may experience their primary emotions intensely, whereas extremely traditionally masculine men serve as a social prototype by avoiding their emotions (p119).

Such results contribute to delineating the intersection between social norms, individual agency, and the practices associated with the chosen stance. The experience of anxiously and avoidantly attached males require further examination, because their comparatively high rates of negative affect serve to complicate adherence to traditional gender roles. Furthermore, sustained efforts to suppress negative affect have been linked to increased chance of depression and impaired psychological well-being (Gross & John, 2003).

Clearly, the above discussion refers to gender differences in the very broadest terms, omitting mention of individual experience. This tendency to generalise across large groups or populations will be addressed briefly in section 4.5 which looks at methodological problems, and suggests alternative courses of action. Utilising a wide range of methodologies, future research is required in charting the inevitable shifts in

social norms emotion related behaviour. The centrality and exaggeration of gender roles in this developmental phase allows researchers to investigate the negotiation of pressure to conform (both actual and perceived). Following Gagnon & Simon's (1973) model, current scripts of romantic conduct can be observed in order to monitor the relative acceptability of various emotions and their expression. This approach would be particularly fruitful in the adolescent context because although gender roles may be heavily emphasised, the performance of these roles has not been perfected, and the trials and tribulations of role adherence may serve to illuminate the developmental trajectory.

4.5 Limitations of This Project and Suggestions for Further Research

This section will first address the methodological flaws of the current study, before exploring the philosophical orientation of the work which served to limit both data and interpretation.

Clearly, this study did not provide data from a truly random sample. The return rate of questionnaires (approximately 35%) suggests some difference between those who were and were not willing to participate. Although the sample was limited to people who had experienced a relationship, it is likely that only those individuals who were comfortable in discussing these issues responded. This is also evidenced by the small number of highly avoidant participants, which is to be expected considering these individuals' tendency to shirk introspection.

The social norms that apparently shape much of adolescent experience bore considerable influence on the data collected for this study. The potential impact of social desirability biases was highlighted when questionnaires were administered by the researcher as part of a scheduled class. Participants occasionally exchanged ideas and discussed their answers with others (including their romantic partner) before arriving at a decision. The potential for partner/peer influence was probably even greater when questionnaires were completed outside the classroom, indeed, some questionnaires included notes and other contributions from interested parties. Further integration with schools' health programs enabling questionnaire completion in class would serve to reduce such input from others, as well as instructing individuals to avoid communicating with surrounding students while working on the questionnaire.

Even under the best conditions however, the possibility that relational satisfaction is over-rated should not be ignored. Some individuals may be inclined to offer an idealised view of their relationship. This would be consistent with both anxious and avoidant individuals who may strive to create an image of happiness to either allay their own insecurity, or deny any problems which they wish to avoid.

The instability of romantic relationships at this time is also potentially problematic, as satisfaction levels change dramatically over short periods of time. In one version of the current questionnaire, the PRQC was mistakenly included three times. The responses of one young man were particularly instructive – the initial satisfaction score was 75, but had dropped to 48 on the second form. The last score however was a triumphant 100, complete with a small note to the researcher that the couple were planning to marry.

This single questionnaire elegantly draws our attention to some of the fundamental assumptions which shape traditional empiricist psychology in general, and the methodology employed by this study in particular. The fact that such dramatic shifts occur in adolescent relationships is not in itself surprising – the turbulence and fragility of these liaisons served to disqualify them from serious scientific consideration (Brown, Feiring & Furman, 1999). What is interesting however, is that positivist science attempts to measure such dynamic and fluid entities *as if* they were stable, assigning scores which are deemed representative and can therefore be compared to measurements of other (similarly fluid) phenomena (Grace, personal communication). Although such an approach is valuable in capturing a snapshot of the ways in which traits or belief structures are inter-related, a wider perspective is required in exploring not only the changes within these relationships. but also the developmental trajectory of the constructs themselves.

Haig (2002) elucidates this point in drawing the distinction between data and phenomena:

Phenomena are relatively stable, recurrent general features of the world that we seek to explain. By contrast, data are idiosyncratic, ephemeral, and pliable and serve as observable evidence for phenomena. Phenomena comprise a varied ontological bag that includes objects, states, processes, events, and other feature [sic] that are hard to classify. It is, therefore, more useful to characterize phenomena in terms of their *role* in relation to explanation and prediction. (in press)

The current study offers some preliminary evidence of an association between several phenomena which have been conceptualised by psychologists in ways that facilitate measurement. While it would be tempting to conclude this project with the construction of a model describing causal links between attachment style, cognitive complexity, attribution style and relationship satisfaction, this approach would not do justice to the dynamic complexity of the subject matter. Although we can use statistical procedures to establish the existence of connections between some dimensions of personal experience, the temptation to conceptualisation of such links in a reductivist linear manner offers an incomplete picture (at best) of the intricate processes which may in fact be taking place.

The limitations of positivistic psychology have been addressed by a number of authors advocating a philosophical shift in perspective, to accommodate a more holistic view of human experience and behaviour (e.g. Manicas & Secord, 1983; Kukla, 1989). While this is not an appropriate forum for a philosophical critique of empiricist psychology, the limitations of such a perspective should be noted. Manicas & Secord (1983) offer 'scientific realism' as an alternative philosophy, and suggest that "explaining the behaviour of particular individuals requires not only psychological theory but also situational, biographical and historical information." (p399).

Consistent with this wider view of scientific inquiry, an alternative theoretical framework is offered by the relatively new, but promising application of chaos theory to the study of psychology. This approach rejects linear causation as an unrealistic representation of both the physical and psychological domains, in favour of an exploration of complexity. A relational example of this tactic is provided by Goerner

(1995), who describes interdependence as a combination of processes taking place within an interaction:

Interdependence has to do with whether two things mutually affect each other. For example, a conversation is an interdependent (or interactive) communication between two people; both people are affected and the exchange becomes a reciprocating mutual effect system. Interdependence can be (1) instantaneous, as in X and Y affect each other; (2) circular, as in X affects Y, which affects Z, which affects X; (3) self-reflexive, as in X affects itself; or (4) networked, where X, Y, and Z have complex interrelationships. (p5)

While the practical application of this theory to mainstream questions of psychology is currently problematic due to the immaturity of appropriate measurement strategies, its acknowledgment of natural complexity problematises conventional reductivist research. In the current context, openness to complexity would facilitate the exploration of a range of processes by which individuals integrate relational information into existing belief structures. The conditions under which such structures shift (e.g. changes in attachment orientation) could also be examined. While this subject has previously been ignored by researchers, chaos theory is well equipped (at least theoretically) to deal with such issues. Self-organization theory describes a process in which periods of stability are followed by turbulence (in response to some stimulus or event), and result in a systemic reorganization, integrating the new material (Butz, 1997). This concept is especially pertinent to developmental processes, described as “punctuated equilibrium, periods

of stable sameness broken by sudden rapid reorganizations into a new form.” (Goerner, 1995, p9). Both stability and change in attachment orientations are encapsulated in this framework, which also allows for similar fluctuations in choice of regulatory strategies, and relational satisfaction. Such an approach would therefore be useful in examining the changing associations between these three constructs, as well as accommodating the idea of complimentary stasis and flux.

Clearly, such studies present methodological challenges. A wide range of contextual and biographical information would need to be considered in order to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics involved. The employment of grounded theory (Strauss, 1987) and qualitative methods is therefore recommended as a means of exploring the territory unburdened by assumptions of which factors are, and are not relevant. This study offers further support to a body of work which identifies statistical relationships between a number of robust, but artificially constructed factors, as they are manifested during adolescence. Further research is needed to animate this static image, by allowing individuals to describe the processes which are captured by these data.

4.6 Conclusions

This study confirms the utility of attachment theory for identifying a variety of frameworks, which may be strategically (though often not consciously) employed to interpret social interactions, determine appropriate emotion regulation measures, and create relational dynamics providing varying levels of satisfaction.

By focusing on adolescents, the developmental dimensions of this area are highlighted, as well as gender differences which pervade this stage of the life-cycle more explicitly than any other. Paradoxically, the same elements of flux and growth that stimulate developmental research, also serve to restrict and qualify interpretation of data.

The mercurial nature of this subject matter is used to highlight the need for a wide range of research strategies in order to gain deeper understanding of this complex and dynamic subject. The current study therefore offers support for an association between attachment, emotion regulation, and relationship satisfaction, indicating the need for further research to strengthen our conceptual understanding of these factors, explore the influences of temporal and social context, and examine the processes and mechanisms that link them.

APPENDIX A: Letter of Introduction for Schools

Dear Mike,

thank you for your willingness to help with my data gathering efforts, the support of people like yourself is invaluable.

As I mentioned on the phone, I am a masters student in the psychology department at the University of Canterbury. I am working under the supervision of Prof. Ken Strongman, Dr Mark Byrd, and Dr Victoria Grace. The subject of my research is the identity development and emotion regulation strategies of adolescents, in the context of their romantic relationships. This topic has been selected because recent psychological research has (unsurprisingly) identified romantic relationships as a major source of both satisfaction and conflict for adolescents, sometimes with serious long-term consequences. As the 30 year old mother of 2 girls, I am concerned at the future my children face, and would like to gain a deeper understanding of the impact that early romantic experiences have on our young people.

I have optimistically included 40 copies of the questionnaire. Naturally, this has been approved by the university's Human Ethics Committee. The students are asked to reflect on either their current, or their last romantic relationship (in whatever way they choose to define this!). They are then asked to think about the way they relate to others around them, and how they feel about issues which are important in their identity development process.

My vision for this study is that it should benefit not only our understanding of the emotional world of adolescents, but also contribute something to the participants' understanding of themselves. To this end, I would be happy to participate in any group discussions relating to this subject, or the study of psychology in general.

If you have any questions or comments please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Marsha Jordyn

APPENDIX B: Information and Consent Form

PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS OF ADOLESCENTS

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT: One of the major developmental milestones that typically occurs in adolescence is the development of an romantic relationship with another person. This study seeks to examine what psychological characteristics of an adolescent's personality go into establishing this bond of romantic attachment between two individuals. It is important that you note that this study is not concerned with the sexual relations that may, or may not, develop between these two people. This study is concerned with your romantic experiences and not your physically intimate experiences.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire in which you answer some questions about yourself, the relationships you have with others, and the way you choose to regulate your emotions. We also ask that you fill out a background information sheet that will give us some information necessary to interpret your answers.

As mentioned before, aim of this study is to identify the manner in which adolescents' psychological characteristics are associated with the type of romantic relationships they experience. It is hoped that this information may be used to identify some possible ways to help adolescents overcome the difficulties they may have in this area.

RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PROJECT: NONE ARE FORESEEN

TIME REQUIRED: Approximately 30 minutes

The project is being conducted by Marsha Jordyn who may be reached by telephoning 366-7001, ext. 7886.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in the project described above, on the understanding that at any time I wish to withdraw from the study I may, without prejudice, do so. I further understand that if I withdraw I have the right to have any data collected from me returned. All information collected will be kept confidential and will be destroyed at the end of the study. I understand that any information gathered from this study will be reported only in terms of group averages and that my name will not be associated with any particular piece of data. Lastly, I understand that I will be given the opportunity to review my decision after I have completed my participation in this study and discussed the details of the study with the researcher. You are entitled to have a copy of this form if you wish.

NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____

APPENDIX C: Background and Relationship Information

Psychological characteristics of the romantic relationships of adolescents

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “Psychological characteristics of the romantic relationships of adolescents” by completing the following questionnaire.

The questionnaire is anonymous, and you will not be identified as a participant without your consent. You may at any time withdraw your participation and have any information you have provided returned to you. By completing this questionnaire, however, it will be understood that you have consented to participate in the project, and that you consent to publication of the results as long as the data are reported only in terms of group averages and that your name will not be associated with any particular piece of data. You will be given the opportunity to review this decision after you have completed the survey and the rationale of the study has been explained fully to you.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Date of Birth:

GENDER: M - F (please circle)

As mentioned above, this study is concerned with the feelings you experienced during the current or last romantic relationship you had with another person. Before we get started, we need to know some background information about your relationship:

First, please list some of the characteristics that you think are necessary for a romantic relationship:

How long did you know your romantic partner before you started going out with him or her?

How long did you go out with this person?

How old were you started going out with this person?

How old was she/he?

APPENDIX E: Adult Attachment Scale

Listed below are a number of statements concerning the relationship you have with others. Please read each statement and indicate your level of agreement or disagreement by circling the appropriate number.

(all statements were scored on a 5 point Likert scale as below)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |

1. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on others.
2. People are never there when you need them.
3. I am comfortable depending on others.
4. I know that others will be there when I need them.
5. I find it difficult to trust others completely.
6. I am not sure that I can always depend on others to be there when I need them.
7. I do not often worry about being abandoned by others.
8. I often worry that my partner does not really love me.
9. I find others are reluctant to get as close to me as I would like.
10. I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me.
11. I often want to merge completely with another person.
12. My desire to merge sometimes scares people away.
13. I find it relatively easy to get close to others.
14. I do not often worry about someone getting too close to me.
15. I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others.
16. I am nervous when anyone gets too close.
17. I am comfortable having others depend on me.
18. Often my partner wants me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.

APPENDIX F: Emotion Regulation Questionnaire

In this section of the questionnaire, we would like to ask you some questions about your emotional life. In particular, how you control (i.e. manage or regulate) your emotions. We are interested in two aspects of your emotional life. One is your emotional experience, or what you felt like inside, the other is your emotional expression, or how you show your emotions in the way you talk or behave. Although some of the questions may seem similar to one another, they differ in important ways.

For each item, please read each statement and circle the number that indicates how much you agree or disagree with the statement. Do not deliberate too long over any one item – first impressions are best.

(all statements were scored on a 6 point Likert scale as below)

| | | | | | |
|----------------|------------------|-------|----------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Strongly Agree | Moderately Agree | Agree | Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

1. I tend to control my emotions most of the time.
2. When I want to feel more positive emotions (such as joy or amusement), I change what I'm thinking about.
3. I keep my emotions to myself.
4. When I want to feel less negative emotions (such as sadness or anger), I change what I'm thinking about.
5. When I am feeling positive emotions, I am careful not to express them.
6. When I am faced with a stressful situation, I make myself think about it in a way that helps me stay calm.
7. I control my emotions by not expressing them.
8. When I want to feel more positive emotion, I change the way I'm thinking about the situation.
9. I almost never try to inhibit my emotional expression.
10. I control my emotions by changing the way I think about the situation I'm in.
11. When I'm feeling negative emotions, I make sure not to express them.
Overall, I have a great deal of control over my emotions.
12. When I want to control my emotions, I'm not likely to change the way I'm thinking about the situation.
13. When I want to feel less negative emotion, I change the way I'm thinking about the situation.

APPENDIX G: Debrief Form

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY

Thank you for taking time to fill out the survey. Without the co-operation of individuals such as yourself, scientific research would be impossible.

As mentioned in the consent form, this study was concerned with the emotional experiences and patterns of romantic intimacy experienced by adolescents. This study sought to establish the manner in which different people deal with the problems of romantic intimacy. Some of the questions that will be looked at when we analyse the data are: What types of emotional attachment do adolescents have with their romantic partners? Do different types of adolescents have deeper, more emotionally intense, romantic relationships than do others? What types of romantic relationships do adolescent women have and how are they different from those of adolescent men. How do adolescents regulate their emotions in a romantic relationship?

You should also be aware that many individuals experience problems with such issues during adolescence. If you are experiencing difficulties and would like some help with resolving them, please make contact with Youth Health Centre at 379-4800 (a free service for people aged 10-25).

If you have any questions about this survey or you would like further information about it, please do not hesitate to telephone Marsha Jordyn at 366-7001, extension 7886.

Remember, at this point you have a right to review your decision to participate in the study and, if you choose, withdraw from the study. If you wish, you may ask to have all data collected from you returned.

AGAIN, THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP WITH THIS STUDY

References

- Adams, R.E., Laursen, B & Wilder, D. (2001). Characteristics of closeness in adolescent romantic relationships. *Journal of Adolescence*, v24(3), p353-364.
- Adler, P.A. & Adler, P. (1996). Preadolescent clique stratification and the hierarchy of identity. *Sociological Inquiry*, v66(2), p111-143.
- Ainsworth, M.D., (1991). Attachments and other affectional bonds across the life cycle. In Parkes, Stephenson-Hinde & Marris (Eds) *Attachment Across The Life Cycle*. London: Routledge.
- Ainsworth, M.D., Blehar, M.C., Waters, E., and Wall, S. (1978). *Patterns of Attachment: A Psychological Study of the Strange Situation*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Allen, J.G. & Haccoun, D.M. (1976). Sex differences in emotionality: A multidimensional approach. *Human Relations*, v29, p711-722.
- Allen, J.P., Marsh, P., McFarland, C., Boykin McElhaney, K., Land, D.J., Jodl, K.M. & Peck, S. (2002). Attachment and autonomy as predictors of the development of social skills and delinquency during midadolescence. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, v70(1), p56-66.
- Arnett, J.J. (1995). Adolescent's uses of media for self-socialization. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, v24(5), p519-533.

Bailey, W.C., Hendrick, C. & Hendrick, S. (1987). Relation of sex and gender role to love, sexual attitudes and self-esteem. *Sex Roles*, v16, p637-648.

Batgos, J. & Leadbeater, B.J. (1994). Parental attachment, peer relations, and dysphoria in adolescence. In Sperling & Berman (Eds), *Attachment in Adults*. London: The Guilford Press.

Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment & Loss: Vol. I. Attachment*. London: Hogarth Press.

Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment & Loss, Vol. II. Separation: Anxiety & Anger*. London: Hogarth Press.

Bowlby, J. (1980). *Attachment & Loss, Vol. III. Loss: Sadness & Depression*. London: Hogarth Press.

Brennan, K.A. & Shaver, P.R. (1995). Dimensions of adult attachment, affect regulation, and romantic relationship functioning. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, v21(3), p267-283.

Bretherton, I. (1991). The roots and growing points of attachment theory. In Parkes, Stephenson-Hinde & Marris (Eds) *Attachment Across The Life Cycle*. London: Routledge.

Brody, L. (1999). *Gender Emotion and the Family*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Brody, L. & Hall, J. (1993). Gender and Emotion. In M Lewis & J. Haviland, (Eds). *Handbook of Emotions*. New York: Guilford.

Brown, B.B. (1999). "You're going out with *who?*": Peer group influences on adolescent romantic relationships. In Furman, Brown & Feiring (Eds.), *The Development of Romantic Relationships in Adolescence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, B.B., Feiring, C., & Furman, W. (1999). Missing the love boat: Why researchers have shied away from adolescent romance. In Furman, Brown & Feiring (Eds.), *The Development of Romantic Relationships in Adolescence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Butler, E.A., Egloff, B., Wilhelm, F.H., Smith, N.C., Erickson, E.A. & Gross, J.J. (2003). The social consequences of expressive suppression. *Emotion*, v3(1), p48-67.

Butz, M. R. (1997). *Chaos and Complexity: Implications for Psychological Theory and Practice*. Washington: Taylor & Francis.

Campos, J.J., Campos, R.G. & Barrett, K.C. (1989). Emergent themes in the study of emotional development and emotion regulation. *Developmental Psychology*, v25(3), p394-402.

Carpenter, L.M. (1998). From girls to women: scripts for sexuality in Seventeen magazine. *Journal of Sex Research*, v25(2), p158-168.

Caspi, A. Begg, D., Dickson, N., Langley, J., Moffitt, T.E., McGee, R. & Silva, P.A. (1995). Identification of personality types at risk for poor health and injury in late adolescence. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, v5(4), p330-350.

Chewning, B. & Van Koningsveld, R. (1998). Predicting adolescents' initiation of intercourse and contraceptive use. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, v28(14), p1245-1285.

Cimbalo, R.S. & Novell, D.O. (1993). Sex differences in romantic love attitudes among college students. *Psychological Reports*, v73, p15-18.

Collins, W.A & Sroufe, L.A. (1999). Capacity for intimate relationships. In W. Furman, B.B. Brown & C. Feiring (Eds.), *The Development of Romantic Relationships in Adolescence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Compas, B.E. & Wagner, B.M. (1991). Psychosocial stress during adolescence: Intrapersonal and interpersonal processes. In M.E. Colton & S. Gore (Eds), *Adolescent stress: causes and consequences*. New York: Aldine/De Gruyter.

Connolly, J. & Goldberg, A. (1999). Romantic relationships in adolescence: The role of friends and peers in their emergence and development. In W. Furman, B.B. Brown & C. Feiring (Eds), *The Development of Romantic Relationships in Adolescence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Contreras, J.M., Kerus, K.A., Weimar, B.L., Gentzler, A.L. & Tomich, P.L. (2000). Emotion regulation as a mediator of associations between mother-child attachment and peer relationships in middle childhood. *Journal of Family Psychology*, v14(1), p111-124.

Cooper, M.L., Shaver, P.R. & Collins, N.L. (1998). Attachment styles, emotion regulation, and adjustment in adolescence. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, v74(5), p1380-1397.

Corcoran, J. (1999). Ecological factors associated with adolescent pregnancy: A review. *Adolescence*, v34(135), p603.

Crowell, J.A., Fraley, R.C., & Shaver, P.R. (1999). Measurement of individual differences in adolescent and adult attachment in J. Cassidy and P. Shaver (Eds.) *Handbook of attachment: Theory, Research and Clinical Applications*. New York: Guilford Press.

Diamond, L.M. & Aspinwall, L.G. Emotion regulation across the life span: An integrative perspective emphasising self-regulation, positive affect, and dyadic processes. *Motivation and Emotion*, v27(2), p125-156.

Dindia, K. & Allen, M. (1992). Sex differences in self-disclosure: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, v112, p106-124.

Douvan, E., & Adelson, J. (1966). *The Adolescent Experience*. New York: Wiley.

Duffy, M. & Gotcher, J.M. (1996). Crucial advice on how to get the guy: The rhetorical vision of power and seduction in the teen magazine YM. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, v20, p32-48.

Durham, M.G. (1998). Dilemmas of desire: representations of adolescent sexuality in two teen magazines. *Youth and Society*, v29(3), p369-390.

Erber, R. & Erber, M.W. (2000). The self-regulation of moods: Second thoughts on the importance of happiness in everyday life. *Psychological Inquiry*, v11(3), p142-148.

Elkind, D. (1967). Egocentrism in adolescence. *Child Development*, v38, p1025-1034.

Ellis, B.J., Bates, J.E., Dodge, K.A., Fergusson, D.M., Horwood, J., Pettit, G.S., & Woodward, L. (2003). Does father absence place daughters at special risk for early sexual activity and teenage pregnancy? *Child Development*, v74(3), p801-822

Erikson, E.H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. New York: Norton.

Feeney, B.C. & Cassidy, J. (2003). Reconstructive memory related to adolescent-parent conflict interactions: The influence of attachment-related representations on immediate perceptions and changes in perception over time. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, v85(5), p945-955.

Feeney, J.A. & Noller, P. (1990). Attachment style as a predictor of adult romantic relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, v58(2), p281-291.

Feeney, J.A., Noller, P & Patty, J. (1993). Adolescents' interactions with the opposite sex: Influence of attachment style and gender. *Journal of Adolescence*, v16(2), p169-187.

Feiring, C. (1996). Concepts of romance in 15-year-old adolescents. *Journal of Research On Adolescence*, v6(2), p181-200.

Feiring, C. (1999). Gender identity and the development of romantic relationships in adolescence. In W. Furman, B.B. Brown & C. Feiring (Eds), *The Development of Romantic Relationships in Adolescence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Feldman Barrett, L. Lane, R.D. Sechrest, L. & Schwartz, G.E. (2000). Sex differences in emotional awareness. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, v26(9), p1027-1035.

Fergusson, D.M., & Lynskey, M.T. (1998). Conduct problems in childhood and psychosocial outcomes in young adulthood: A prospective study. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioural Disorders*, v6(1), p2-18.

Fergusson, D.M., Woodward, L.J. & Horwood, L.J. (2000). Risk factors and life processes associated with the onset of suicidal behaviour during adolescence and early adulthood. *Psychological Medicine*, v30(1), p23-39.

Ferrell, J. (1999). Cultural criminology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, Annual 1999, p395.

Fischer, J.L., Munsch, J. & Greene, S.M. (1996). Adolescence and Intimacy. In G.R. Adams, R. Montemayor & G. P. Gullotta (Eds), *Psychosocial Development During Adolescence*. Thousand Oakes: Sage.

Fletcher, G.J.O., Simpson, J.A., & Thomas, G. (2000). The measurement of perceived relationship quality components: A confirmatory factor analytic approach. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, v26 (3), p340-354.

Fujita, F., Diener, E. & Sandvik, E. (1991). Gender differences in negative affect and well-being: The case for emotional intensity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, v61, p427-434.

Furman, W. & Wehner, E.A. (1994). Romantic views: Toward a theory of adolescent romantic relationships in R. Montemayor, G.R. Adams & G.P. Gullotta (Eds), *Personal Relationships During Adolescence*. California: Sage.

Gagnon, J., & Simon, W. (1973). *Sexual Conduct: The social sources of human sexuality*. Chicago: Aldine.

Galambos, N.L., Almeida, D., & Petersen, A.C. (1990). Masculinity, femininity, and sex role attitudes in early adolescence: Exploring gender intensification. *Child Development*, v61, p1905-1914.

Gallois, C. (1994). Group membership, social rules, and power: A social-psychological perspective on emotional communication. *Journal of Pragmatics*, v22(3-4), p301-324.

Gerschick, T & Miller, A. (1997). Men's health, masculinity and heteronormativity. In M. Gergen & S. Davis (Eds), *Toward a New Psychology of Gender*. New York: Routledge.

Gilligan, C. (1993). *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Goerner, S.J. (1995). Chaos and deep ecology. In F.D. Abraham & A.R. Gilgen, (Eds), *Chaos Theory in Psychology*. London: Greenwood Press.

Gordon, M., & Miller, R.L. (1984). Going steady in the 1980's: Exclusive relationships in six Connecticut high schools. *Sociology and Social Research*, v68, p463-479.

Gray, M.R. & Steinberg, L. (1999). Adolescent romance and the parent-child relationship: A contextual perspective. In W. Furman, B.B. Brown & C. Feiring

(Eds), *The Development of Romantic Relationships in Adolescence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gross, J.J. (1998). Antecedent- and response-focussed emotion regulation: Divergent consequences for experience, expression, and physiology. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, v74, p224-237.

Gross, J.J. Carstensen, L.L., Tsai, J., Skorpen, C.G. & Hsu, A.Y. (1997). Emotion and aging: Experience, expression, and control. *Psychology and Aging*, v12(4), p590-599.

Gross, J., & John, O. (2000). Emotion Regulation Questionnaire. Unpublished scale.

Gross, J.J. & John, O.P. (2003). Individual differences in two emotion regulation processes: Implications for affect, relationships, and well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, v85(2), p348-362.

Gross, J.J., John, O.P. & Richards, J.M. (2000). The dissociation of emotion expression from emotion experience: A personality perspective. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, v26, p712-726.

Gross, J.J., & Levenson, R.W. (1997). Hiding feelings: The acute effects of inhibiting positive and negative emotions. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, v106, p95-103.

Haig, B.D. (2002). Towards an abductive theory of scientific method. In N. Stephenson, (Ed), *Theoretical issues in Contemporary Psychology*. Boston: Kluwer (in press).

Hall, J.A., (1984). *Nonverbal sex differences: Communication accuracy and expressive style*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Hammond, J.R. & Fletcher, G.J.O. (1991). Attachment styles and relationship satisfaction in the development of close relationships. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, v20, p56-62.

Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. (1987). Romantic love conceptualised as an attachment process. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, v52 p511-524.

Hazan, C. & Zeifman, D. (1994). Sex and the psychological tether. *Advances in Personal Relationships*, v5, p151-177.

Hendrick, C., Hendrick, S. S. (1989). Research on love: Does it measure up? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, v56, p784-794.

Hendrick, C., Hendrick, S. S., Foote, F.H., & Slapion-Footes, M.J. (1984). Do men and women love differently? *Journal of Social and Personal Relations*, v1, p177-195.

Holmes, J. (1993). *John Bowlby and Attachment Theory*. London: Routledge.

Hong, S.M. & Faedda, S. (1994). Ranking of romantic acts by an Australian sample. *Psychological Reports*, v74, p471-474.

Huston, A.C. & Alvarez, M.M. (1990). The socialisation context of gender role development in early adolescence. In R. Montemayor, G.R. Adams & G.P. Gullotta (Eds), *From childhood to adolescence*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Inhelder, B. & Piaget, J. (1958). *The growth of logical thinking from childhood to adolescence*. New York: Basic Books.

Jakupcak, M., Salters, K, Gratz, K.L. & Roemer, L. (2003). Masculinity and emotionality: An investigation of men's primary and secondary emotional responding. *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, v49(3-4), p111-121.

Joyner, K. & Udry, J.R. (2000). You don't bring me anything but down: Adolescent romance and depression. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, v41(4), p369-391.

Kalof, L. (1995). Sex, power and dependency: the politics of adolescent sexuality. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, v 24(2), p229-250.

Katchadourian, H. (1990). Sexuality. In S.S Feldman & G.R. Elliott (Eds), *At the threshold: The developing adolescent*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Kukla, A. (1989). Nonempirical issues in psychology. *American Psychologist*, v44(5), p785-794.

Laible, D.J. & Thompson, R.A. (2000). Mother-child discourse, attachment security, shared positive affect, and early conscience development. *Child Development*, v71(5), p1424.

Landolet, M.A., Lalumiere, M.L. & Quinsey, V.L. (1995). Sex differences in intrasex variations in human mating tactics: An evolutionary approach. *Ethology and Sociobiology*, v16 p 3-23.

Larson, R & Asmussen, L. (1991). Anger, worry and hurt in early adolescence: An enlarging world of negative emotions. In M.E Colten & S. Gore (Eds.), *Adolescent stress, causes and consequences*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Lazarus, R.S. (1984). On the primacy of cognition. *American Psychologist*, v39, p124-129.

Lazarus, R.S. (1999). The cognition-emotion debate: A bit of history. In T. Dalgleish & M.J. Power (Eds.), *Handbook of cognition and emotion*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Levesque, R.J.R. (1993). The romantic experience of adolescents in satisfying love experiences. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, v22(3), p219-251.

Levitt, M.J., Guacci-Franco, N & Levitt, J.L. (1993). Convoys of social support in childhood and early adolescence: Structure and function. *Developmental Psychology*, v29, p811-818.

Lorenz, K. (1952). *King Solomon's ring*. London: Methuen.

McCormick, L. K. Crawford, M; Anderson, R.H.; Gittelsohn, J; Kingsley, B; Upson, D. (1999). Recruiting Adolescents into Qualitative Tobacco Research Studies: Experiences and Lessons Learned. *Journal of School Health* v69(3), p 95.

McRobbie, A. (1982). "Jackie": an ideology of adolescent femininity. In B. Waites, T. Bennett & G. Martin (Eds), *Popular culture: Past and present*. London: Croom Helm.

Maccoby, E. (1998). *The Two Sexes*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.

Manicas, P.T. & Secord, P.F. (1983). Implications for psychology of the new philosophy of science. *American Psychologist*, v44(4), p399-413.

Manstead, A.S.R. & Fischer, A.H. (2000). Emotion regulation in full. *Psychological Inquiry*, v11(3), p142-148.

Mellor, S. (1989). Gender differences in identity formation as a function of self-other relationships. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, v18, p361-375.

Mikulincer, M. (1998). Adult attachment style and individual differences in functional versus dysfunctional experiences of anger. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, v74(2), p513-524.

Moffitt, T.E., Caspi, A., Silva, P.A. & Stouthamer-Loeber, M. (1995). Linked to crime: Cross-context evidence from nations, neighbourhoods, genders, races and age cohorts. *Current Perspectives on Aging and the Life Cycle*, v4, p1-34.

Newman B.M & Newman, P.R. (2003). *Development Through Life*. Belmont: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning.

Nottell, A.N. (2002). Childhood indicators of developing anti-social personality disorder: A meta-analysis of published research. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B; The Sciences and Engineering*, v62 (12-B), p6011.

Paul, E.L. & White, K.M. (1990). The development of intimate relationships in late adolescence. *Adolescence*, v25(98), p375-401.

Peirce, K. (1990). A feminist theoretical perspective on the socialisation of teenage girls through Seventeen magazine. *Sex Roles*, v23(9-10), p491-500.

Pipher, M.B. (1994). *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Lives of Adolescent Girls*. New York: Putnam.

Rodgers, J.L., Rowe, D.C., & Buster, M. (1998). Social contagion, adolescent sexual behaviour, and pregnancy: A nonlinear dynamic EMOSA model. *Developmental Psychology*, v34(5), p1096-1113.

Roscoe, B., Diana, M.S. & Brooks, R.H., (1987). Early, middle and late adolescent's views on dating and factors influencing partner selection. *Adolescence*, v22, p59-68.

Savin-Williams, R.C. & Berndt, T.J. (1990). Friendship and peer relations. In S.S. Feldman & G.R. Elliott (Eds), *At the Threshold: The Developing Adolescent*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Schiedel, D.G & Marcia, J.E. (1985). Ego identity, intimacy, sex-role orientation, and gender. *Developmental Psychology*, v21, p149-160.

Seifert, K.L., Hoffnung, R.J. & Hoffnung, M. (1997). *Lifespan Development*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company

Shields, A. & Cicchetti, D. (1998). Parental aggression among maltreated children: The contributions of attention and emotion dysregulation. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, v27(4) p381.

Shields, A. & Cicchetti, D. (2001). Parental maltreatment and emotion dysregulation as risk factors for bullying and victimisation in middle childhood. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, v30(3), p349.

Shih, M., Pittinsky, T.L. & Ambady, N. (1999). Stereotype susceptibility: identity salience and shifts in quantitative performance. *Psychological Science*, v 10(1), p80-84.

Shulman, S., & Scharf, M. (2000). Adolescent romantic behaviours and perceptions: Age and gender related differences, and links with family and peer relationships. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, v10(1), p99-118.

Simpson, J.A. & Rholes, W.S. (1998). Attachment in Adulthood. In J.A. Simpson & W.S. Rholes (Eds) *Attachment Theory and Close Relationships*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Snyder, E.E. (1990). Emotions and sport: A case study of collegiate women gymnasts. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, v7(3), p254-270.

Sperling, W.H. & Berman, M.B. (1994). The structure and function of adult attachment. In W.H. Sperling & M.B. Berman (Eds), *Attachment in Adults: Clinical and Developmental Perspectives*. New York: Guilford Press.

Sperling, M.B., Foelsch, P., & Grace, C. (1996). Measuring adult attachment: Are self-report instruments congruent? *Journal of Personality Assessment*, v67(1), p37-51.

Stapley, J.C. & Haviland, J.M. (1989). Beyond depression: Gender differences in normal adolescents' emotional experiences. *Sex Roles*, v20, p295-308.

Tangney, J.P. (1990). Assessing individual differences in proneness to shame and guilt: Development of the self conscious affect and attribution inventory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, v59, p102-111.

Thompson, R.A., (1999). Early attachment and later development. In J. Cassidy & P.R. Shaver (Eds), *Handbook of Attachment Theory*. New York: Guilford

Tice, D.M. & Bratslavsky, E. (2000). Giving in to feel good: The place of emotion regulation in the context of general self-control. *Psychological Inquiry*, v11(3), p142-148.

Tinbergen, N. (1951). *The Study of Instinct*. London: Clarendon Press.

Timmers, M., Fischer, A.H. & Manstead, A.S.R. (1998). Gender differences in motives for regulating emotions. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, v24(9), p974-986.

Walden, T.A & Smith, M.C. (1997). Emotion regulation. *Motivation and Emotion*, v21(1), p7-25.

Weger, H.J.R. & Polcar, L.E. (2000). Attachment style and the cognitive representation of communication situations. *Communication Studies*, v51(2), p149.

Weiss, R.S. (1982). Attachment in adults. In C.M. Parkes & J. Stevenson-Hinde (Eds), *The Place of Attachment in Human Behaviour*. New York: Basic Books.

Weiss, R.S. (1991). The attachment bond in childhood and adulthood. In C.M Parkes, J. Stevenson-Hinde & P. Marris (Eds), *Attachment Across the Life Cycle*. London: Routledge

Whitaker, D.J., Miller, K.S. & Clark, L.F., (2000). Reconceptualising adolescent sexual behaviour: Beyond did they or didn't they? *Family Planning Perspectives*, v32(3), p111.

Willemsen, T.M. (1998). Widening the gender gap: Teenage magazines for girls and boys. *Sex Roles; A Journal of Research*, v38(9), p851-862.

Winstanley, A., Thorns, D.C., & Perkins, H.C. (2002). Moving house, creating home: Exploring residential mobility. *Housing Studies*, v17(6), p813-832.

Wintre, M.G., Polivy, J. & Murray, M. (1990). Self predictions of emotional response patterns: Age, sex, and situational determinants. *Child Development*, v61, p1124-1133.

Zani, B. (1993). Dating and interpersonal relationships in adolescence. In Jackson & Rodriguez-Tome (Eds), *Adolescence and its Social Worlds*. Hillsdale NJ:Erlbaum.

Zajonc, R.B. (1980). Feeling and thinking: Preferences need no inferences. *American Psychologist*, v35, p151-175.

Zajonc, R.B. (1984). On the primacy of affect. *American Psychologist*, v39, p117-123

Any correspondence regarding this work may be addressed to Marsha Jordyn,
c/o University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Ilam, Christchurch, NZ.
Electronic mail may be directed to mta34@student.canterbury.ac.nz.