# THE ROLE OF NONSEXUAL EXCLUSIVITY IDEALS IN COLLEGE DATING RELATIONSHIPS: RELATIONSHIP QUALITY, ATTACHMENT, AND AGGRESSION

by

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**THE ROLE OF NONSEXUAL EXCLUSIVITY IDEALS IN COLLEGE DATING RELATIONSHIPS: RELATIONSHIP QUALITY, ATTACHMENT, AND AGGRESSION**

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This study explored the associations between nonsexual exclusivity ideals and relationship quality, adult attachment, and aggression in college students' dating relationships. Nonsexual exclusivity ideals were defined as the desired amount of time, emotional support, and self-disclosure engaged in exclusively with one's romantic partner. It was predicted that the discrepancy between nonsexual exclusivity ideals and perceptions would be a significant predictor of relationship quality, trust, and love, and relationship aggression; such that individuals whose perception of exclusivity in their current relationship met or exceeded their ideals would perceive significantly higher relationship quality, trust, and love for their partner and would be less likely to use aggression against their partner than those whose perception of exclusivity did not meet their ideal. Nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception discrepancy and attachment anxiety were also expected to interact in the prediction of physical and psychological aggression in the relationship. A survey was administered to 400 undergraduates in order to test these predictions. Results supported hypotheses for the prediction of relationship quality, trust, love, and psychological aggression in the participant's current relationship. Implications of these results as well as suggestions for future research are discussed.

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## PREFACE

I would like to thank Dr. William Klein for his helpful comments and suggestions and for introducing me to the field of social cognition. I'd also like to thank Dr. Elizabeth Votruba-Drzal for her invaluable advice and guidance particularly in data analyses and, of course, Dr. Irene Frieze for her good counsel and insights on the many drafts of this thesis. Special thanks go to Matt for his patience and support throughout this endeavor.

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Most people have an idea of what their ideal relationship would be like (Rusbult, Onizuka, & Lipkus, 1993). Research has shown that these ideals are used by individuals to evaluate, explain, maintain and regulate their current relationship (Fletcher, Simpson, & Thomas, 2000a). Previous research has examined characteristics of positive relationship ideals, such as intimacy, loyalty, and warmth (i.e. Fletcher, Simpson, Thomas & Giles, 1999; Sprecher & Regan, 2002). The focus of earlier research on positive ideals ignores other types of ideals such as relationship exclusivity ideals. These ideals include how much free time should be spent with the relationship partner, how much one should rely on the relationship partner for emotional support, how much one should disclose exclusively to the relationship partner, and what behaviors should be engaged in exclusively with the relationship partner (Boekhout, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 2003; Weis & Slosnerick, 1981). The purpose of this study was to explore the role that these ideals play in college students' dating relationships. Specifically, this research examined the associations between exclusivity ideals and relationship quality, adult attachment, and aggression in the relationship. Four hundred college students were administered anonymous surveys in order to test predicted associations among these variables. The predicted results will contribute to the relationship violence literature, by supporting the conceptualization of both physical and psychological aggression as exaggerated protest behavior. And will contribute to the ideal relationship literature by supporting the theory that ideals are used to evaluate the quality of

one's relationship. Many of the hypotheses of this study were previously tested in an initial Exploratory Study (see Appendix A).

## 1.1 RELATIONSHIP EXCLUSIVITY

Exclusivity in a romantic relationship can be divided into two basic components: sexual exclusivity, which refers to the exclussion of sexual behaviors to one romantic partner, and nonsexual exclusivity, which refers to the amount of time spent with the romantic partner and the exclusion of other social relationships such as friendships (Boekhout et al., 2003). Research has found very little variability in individuals' standards for sexual exclusivity. For example, Hansen (1985) found that most college students disapproved of their romantic partner's involvement in a sexual relationship outside of their own, indicating that even at an early stage in the relationship, sexual exclusivity is expected. An exploratory study revealed similar results (see Appendix A). Therefore, the current study focused on nonsexual exclusivity.

Attitudes about nonsexual exclusivity, which include how much free time should be spent with the relationship partner, how much one should rely on the relationship partner for emotional support, how much one should disclose exclusively to the relationship partner, and what nonsexual behaviors should be engaged in exclusively with the relationship partner (Boekhout, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 2003; Weis & Slosnerick, 1981), are varied. For example, many college students felt that dating partners should give up close cross-sex friendships when entering into an exclusive romantic relationship with someone (Hansen, 1985). Students expected dating partners to even give up spending time with same-sex friends as the relationship became more

committed (Hansen, 1985). However other college students have claimed that outside relationships (with friends and family) can actually strengthen their romantic relationship (Boekhout et al., 2003).

There are two primary reasons that individuals may desire nonsexual exclusivity in a romantic relationship. These are 1)to promote the specialness/sharing aspects of the romantic relationship and 2) mate guarding or jealousy. In a romantic relationship, two individuals often share aspects of themselves and their lives exclusively with one another (Weis & Felton, 1987), promoting a special bond between these two individuals that is not shared with anyone else. Thus, exclusivity in a relationship may promote the uniqueness and specialness of the relationship (Boekhout et al., 2003). Another reason for desiring exclusivity is to prevent one's mate from straying from the primary relationship. Buss (1988) conceptualized "monopolozation of mate's time", such as insisting that the mate spend allof his/her free time with his/her partner, as a mate retention tactic. Such a tactic assumes that if the mate was not able to spend time outside of the relationship, then he/she would not have access to other alternative mates (Buss, 1988). Thus, by insisting on exclusivity in the relationship, romantic partners can increase the chances that their mate stays with them.

Whether or not a high level of nonsexual exclusivity is healthy in a relationship is debatable. Rubin's (1970) conception of romantic love includes a component indicating an orientation of exclusiveness and absorption in the relationship. According to this theory, some level of exclusiveness is expected in a love relationship. However, extreme exclusivity in a relationship has been termed possessiveness and has been linked to several relationship problems (Pinto & Hollandsworth, 1984). A possessive individual often distorts the effects that separations and autonomous activities will have on the relationship and encourages dependence

on the primary relationship at the expense of other relationships (Pinto & Hollandsworth, 1984). Possessiveness has been linked with dependency (Pinto & Hollandsworth, 1984) and violence in romantic relationships (Sugihara & Warner, 2002; Bacchus, Mezey, & Bewley, 2006). Thus it seems that a high level of relationship exclusivity can be unhealthy and even dangerous.

It is clear that there is a great deal of variation in the expectations of romantic partners concerning nonsexual exclusivity (Boekhout et al., 2003; Hansen, 1985). Furthermore, couples often do not discuss their nonsexual exclusivity expectations with one another (Boekhout et al., 2003), and often experience conflict over issues like friendships, work relationships, and hobbies (Weis & Felton, 1987). Among college students, threats to relationship exclusivity, such as concerns that the partner spends too much time with his/her friends, often lead to feelings of fear, uncertainty, anger, anxiety, and/or sadness (Boon & Pasveer, 1999).

### 1.1.1 Gender Differences in Nonsexual Exclusivity

Research on gender differences in nonsexual exclusivity attitudes and expectations is mixed. Boekhout and colleagues (2003) found that female college students had greater expectations of maintaining outside friendships and perceived fewer drawbacks from these outside relationships than men. However, women have been found to be more disturbed than men by the idea of a hypothetical dating partner spending time away from them to engage in a personal hobby or spend time with his family (Hansen, 1985).

According to these results, women expect to be less nonsexually exclusive themselves, but expect a higher level of nonsexual exclusivity from their partners than men. However, it is difficult to predict how these gender differences in nonsexual exclusivity *expectations* will relate

to nonsexual exclusivity *ideals*. Women may have higher expectations for their partner's level of nonsexual exclusivity because men are less likely than women to have intimate outside relationships and therefore rely more heavily on their romantic partner for emotional support (Roy, Benenson, Lilly, 2000). This does not necessarily mean that women desire a higher level of nonsexual exclusivity than men. Although no specific hypotheses are made concerning gender differences in nonsexual exclusivity ideals, analyses will be conducted to examine possible gender differences.

Previous research has examined individuals' expectations and attitudes towards relationship exclusivity (Boekhout et al., 2003; Weis & Slosnerick, 1981). The purpose of the current study was to evaluate the role that exclusivity *ideals* play in romantic relationships. Ideals represent the positive end of evaluative dimensions rather than the average or mode (Fletcher et al., 1999). Thus, the proposed study will focus on the level of emotional and physical exclusivity that is desired in a romantic relationship, rather than what is expected. Higher exclusivity ideals refer to higher standards for exclusivity (more time spent exclusively with partner, more emotional support gained exclusively from partner, etc.). Previous research on other ideals in realtionships can aid in forming hypotheses about the ways in which exclusivity ideals are likely to operate in romantic relationships.

## 1.2 IDEALS IN RELATIONSHIPS

The role of ideals in relationships was initially investigated by Kelley and Thibaut (1978) as part of their theory of interdependence. The authors proposed that members of a dyad evaluate their relationship by comparing it to a personal standard. This standard is known as the comparison

level (CL) and is determined by the individual's past experience (both in this relationship as well as others), observations of others, and cultural ideals. If the individual finds that the outcomes of the current relationship meet or exceed the CL, then the individual is satisfied with the relationship. If, however, the outcomes do not meet the CL; the individual is dissatisfied with the current relationship and may leave the relationship (depending upon the attractiveness of alternative relationships). Thus, according to this theory, ideals function as a standard to which the current relationship is compared and important decisions are made about the relationship based upon this comparison (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978).

This theory was empirically tested by Sternberg and Barnes (1985). These researchers tested the importance of relationship partner ideals, which they referred to as "silent partners" (p.1586), to relationship quality in undergraduate dating couples. The subjects completed several measures of love with regard to (1) how he/she felt about his/her current partner, (2) how he/she believed his/her current partner felt about him/her, (3) how he/she would wish to feel about an ideal partner, and (4) how he/she would wish an ideal partner to feel about him/her. The researchers found that both absolute levels of experienced love as well as comparison levels of experienced love relative to ideal levels of love significantly predicted relationship satisfaction. Thus, what seems to be important to relationship quality is not the mere presence of relationship ideals but rather the perception that one's current relationship differs markedly from one's ideal relationship (Sternberg & Barnes, 1985). This discrepancy (between ideals and perceptions) is a key variable in more recent research on relationship ideals and in the current study.

Fletcher and colleagues (1999) have elaborated on the importance of ideal-perception consistency in their Ideal Standards Model. According to this model, relationship and partner

ideals are stable cognitive constructs which are used to guide and regulate a relationship. Fletcher and colleagues (1999) theorized that rather than making only global comparisons of one's current relationship to one's overall ideal relationship, individuals also make comparisons along specific partner and relationship dimensions. Just as Sternberg and Barnes (1985) discovered that it was not the mere presence of global relationship ideals that influenced relationship quality, but rather the consistency between these ideals and the perception of the current relationship, Fletcher and colleagues (1999) argued that consistency between specific ideals and perceptions play an important role in relationship satisfaction. According to the Ideal Standards Model, consistency between ideals and perceptions of the current partner/relationship, serve three functions: evaluation, explanation, and regulation. According to this theory, individuals make cognitive comparisons between their ideals and perceptions of their current relationship in order to evaluate the quality of the relationship, understand relationship events, and predict or control the partner or relationship (Fletcher & Simpson, 2000).

The researchers tested this theory in a longitudinal study of college students involved in new (4 weeks or less) heterosexual dating relationships (Fletcher, Simpson & Thomas, 2000a). The results indicated that the discrepancy between ideals and perceptions did, in fact, significantly predict relationship stability; such that, individuals with higher ideal-perception consistency were less likely to break-up than those with lower ideal-perception consistency. Furthermore this relationship (between higher ideal-perception consistency and a lower break-up rate) was significantly mediated by positive relationship evaluations. Thus, individuals who reported high ideal-perception consistency perceived their relationships as being more positive, which then predicted a lower rate of dissolution (Fletcher et al., 2000a).

Relationship researchers are not the only ones to predict negative outcomes from discrepancies between the actual and the ideal. According to Higgins' (1987) Self-discrepancy theory, discrepancy between the actual self and the ideal self is associated with an absence of positive outcomes which can lead to feelings of dejection, such as sadness and dissatisfaction. This is similar to the predicted association between relationship perceptions and ideals. A discrepancy between the actual relationship and the ideal relationship is related to the absence of positive relationship evaluations which may then lead to dissatisfaction and ultimately the dissolution of the relationship.

Previous relationship research has looked at either positive global relationship ideals (i.e. Sternberg & Barnes, 1985) or more specific positive partner and relationship characteristics such as warmth and trustworthiness (i.e. Fletcher et al., 1999; Fletcher et al., 2000a; Campbell, Simpson, Kashy, & Fletcher, 2001). In these studies it is assumed that ideals will either equal or exceed the individuals' perceptions of these characteristics in their current partner/relationship. However, as reported earlier, a high level of nonsexual exclusivity is not always desired (unlike a high level of warmth or trustworthiness). Therefore, some individuals may perceive their current relationship as actually exceeding their ideals for nonsexual exclusivity. For this reason it is important to consider the direction of the discrepancy between ideals and perceptions. According to interdependence theory, individuals will be satisfied with a relationship that either meets or exceeds their standards and will be dissatisfied with a relationship that does not meet their standards (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). Therefore, it is predicted that nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception consistency will be a significant predictor of perceived relationship quality; such that, individuals whose perceptions do not meet their ideals for nonsexual exclusivity

(ideals>perceptions) will report significantly lower relationship quality than those whose perceptions meet or exceed their exclusivity ideals (ideals<=perceptions).

Exploratory research has indicated specific components of relationship quality that suffer as a result of exclusivity perceptions not meeting ideals. These components are trust and love (see Appendix A). Trust is generally defined as "belief by a person in the integrity of another individual" (Larzelere & Huston, 1980 p.595). Trust requires a person to put him/herself in a position of risk (Rempel, Holmes, & Zanna, 1985). Individuals whose perceptions of nonsexual exclusivity in their relationship do not meet their ideals may be less willing to put themselves in such a risky position. As stated previously, one reason individuals desire exclusivity in their relationship is to guard against competing mates. Individuals who do not perceive their partner as being as exclusive as they desire may be more concerned about losing their partner to a potential rival and therefore trust him/her less than someone whose partner meets their exclusivity ideals. Therefore, it is predicted that nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception consistency will be a significant predictor of trust; such that, individuals whose perceptions of exclusivity are lower than their ideals will have significantly less trust in their partner than those whose perceptions of exclusivity meet or exceed their ideals.

Another reason that individuals desire exclusivity in their romantic relationships is that it promotes the specialness and uniqueness of the relationship. Individuals whose perceptions of exclusivity fall short of their ideals may therefore feel that their relationship is not as special or unique as they would like it to be. Because of this, love for their partner may suffer. Therefore, it is predicted that nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception consistency will be a significant predictor of love; such that, individuals whose perceptions of exclusivity fall short of their ideals will experience less love for their partner than those whose perceptions of exclusivity meet or

exceed their ideals. Relationship quality may suffer as a result of holding nonsexual exclusivity ideals that one's partner does not live up to, but there is another potentially dangerous consequence of exclusivity ideal-perception discrepancy, the use of aggression in the relationship.

## 1.3 AGGRESSION, ATTACHMENT, AND EXCLUSIVITY IDEALS

In order to understand how exclusivity ideal-perception consistency can affect relationship aggression, it is important to understand attachment theory. Bowlby (1969/1982) developed attachment theory through his observations of homeless and orphaned children who were lacking a mother figure. He observed that children without a mother figure experienced a "powerful sense of loss and anger" (p xiii). Bowlby (1969/1982) theorized that an attachment system evolved in humans and other primates as a way to protect infants from danger by keeping them close to their mothers. This attachment system consists of emotions and behaviors (such as crying and smiling) designed to aid the infant in maintaining close proximity to his/her attachment figure (typically the mother). If the child is confident that his/her attachment figure will be available to him/her than he/she will be less likely to feel afraid and anxious than a child who doubts the availability of his/her attachment figure. According to Bowlby, these expectations of caregiver availability form the basis of internal working models used to guide attachment behaviors. Furthermore, Bowlby felt that these internal working models were relatively stable and persisted through to adulthood. Research by Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) extended attachment theory by demonstrating individual differences in attachment behaviors in infants. Ainsworth and colleagues (1978) observed infants' behaviors

during a series of separations and reunions with their mothers. Through these observations they were able to delineate 3 different styles of attachment: secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent.

Hazan and Shaver (1987) applied attachment theory to adult romantic relationships. In this conceptualization the romantic partner serves as the attachment figure. Hazan and Shaver (1987) adapted the classification system developed by Ainsworth and colleagues to fit with romantic relationships. According to this conceptualization, secure adults find it easy to get close to others, are comfortable depending on others and having others depend on them, and don't worry about being abandoned by someone close to them. Avoidant adults are uncomfortable with closeness and have difficulty trusting others and having others depend on them. Anxious/ambivalent adults feel a desire to merge completely with another person and are afraid of abandonment.

Since Hazan and Shaver's (1987) initial research on adult attachment, great strides have been made in the measurement of attachment in adults. A majority of adult attachment measures tap two basic dimensions: avoidance (discomfort with closeness) and anxiety (over abandonment; Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). These two dimensions are sometimes combined to form four different attachment styles (see Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991); however, measurements of the continuous dimensions of anxiety and avoidance have demonstrated a better ability to capture the structure of attachment security/insecurity than the categorical model (Fraley & Waller, 1998). Therefore, these dimensions (anxiety and avoidance) were measured and analyzed as continuous variables in the current study and the hypotheses for this study reflect this method of measurement. Adult attachment styles have been linked to several social cognitive processes in relationships such as relationship beliefs (Stackert

& Bursik, 2003), attributions (Sumer & Cozzarelli, 2004), expectations (Rowe & Carnelley, 2003), and memory reconstruction (Feeney & Cassidy, 2003).

Attachment theory also provides a framework for understanding the use of aggression in adult relationships. Physical aggression in relationships has been conceptualized as an exaggerated and maladaptive form of protest behavior (Bartholomew, Henderson, & Dutton, 2001). According to this theory, an individual may lash out in anger and violence in order to gain or regain proximity to their attachment figure (Bartholomew & Allison, 2006). Thus, physical aggression is predicted to be most likely to occur when an individual does not feel that his/her partner is as close (emotionally or physically) as he/she would like. A discrepancy between nonsexual exclusivity perceptions and ideals would be indicative of this situation.

In support of the predicted association between nonsexual exclusivity and physical aggression, research has found that physically abusive men display a higher level of dependency on their romantic partner and are more likely to focus exclusively on their primary relationship at the expense of other social contacts than men who are not physically abusive (Murphy, Meyer, & O'Leary, 1994). Physically abusive men have also been found to be extremely possessive of their romantic partner (Sugihara & Warner, 2002; Bacchus et al., 2006). Thus, having nonsexual exclusivity perceptions that do not meet ideals would likely be perceived as a threatening situation and, in order to regain proximity to their partner, individuals may resort to physical aggression. Therefore, it is predicted that nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception consistency will be a significant predictor of the use of physical aggression against the relationship partner; such that, individuals whose exclusivity perceptions do not meet their ideals will be more likely to perpetrate physical aggression against their partners than those whose exclusivity perceptions meet or exceed their ideals.

However, the use of aggression against a relationship partner may not be limited to physical aggression. An initial Exploratory Study found a low-level of physical aggression in college students' dating relationships (see Appendix A). It is possible that instead of using physical aggression, college students use psychological aggression in order to maintain proximity to their relationship partner. Psychological aggression, which has been defined as acts designed to produce fear, increase dependency, or damage the self-concept of the recipient (Murphy & Hoover, 1999), is often more prevalent in college students' dating relationships than physical aggression (Katz, Arias & Beach, 2000). Psychological aggression has also been identified as a significant predictor of physical aggression later in the relationship (Schumacher & Leonard, 2005). College students, who are young and typically in relatively new relationships, may begin by using psychological aggression against their partner and then resort to physical aggression later in the relationship. If college students are using psychological aggression in order to gain proximity to their relationship partner, the frequency of psychological aggression in the relationship should be greater for individuals whose exclusivity perceptions fall short of their ideals rather than meet or exceed them. Therefore, it is predicted that nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception consistency will be a significant predictor of the frequency of psychological aggression in the relationship; such that, individuals whose exclusivity perceptions fall short of their ideals will perpetrate more psychological aggression against their partner than those whose exclusivity perceptions meet or exceed their ideals.

However, attachment theory does not predict an equal likelihood of perpetration of aggression against the relationship partner across all individuals. Individual differences in attachment styles may contribute to the likelihood and frequency of aggression in a relationship.

Attachment anxiety appears to be the important dimension in predicting aggression in a relationship. Indeed attachment anxiety (measured in various ways) has been linked with the occurrence of physical aggression in relationships in community (Holtzworth-Munroe, Stuart, & Hutchinson, 1997; Roberts & Noller, 1998; Henderson, Bartholomew, Trinke, & Kwong, 2005), student (Bookwala & Zdaniuk, 1998) , and clinical (Dutton et al.,1994) populations. Attachment anxiety has also been associated with greater jealousy (Dutton, Saunders, Starzomski, & Bartholomew, 1994) and dependency (Alonso-Arbiol, Shaver, & Sagrario, 2002) in relationships. Anxiously attached individuals have been described as being hypersensitive to relationship threats and possessing a greater need to maintain close proximity to the relationship partner (Bartholomew & Allison, 2006). It seems likely then that these individuals would be particularly distressed by a discrepancy between nonsexual exclusivity ideals and perceptions, and would be most likely to use aggression to regain proximity to their relationship partner. As previously stated, violence often occurs in the context of a relationship threat (Bartholomew & Allison, 2006). For example, Roberts and Noller (1998) found that attachment anxiety was only associated with violence in the relationship when the anxious individual's partner was uncomfortable with closeness.

Thus, it seems that it is important once again to consider the consistency between individuals' exclusivity ideals and perceptions in their relationship. If violence is indeed an exaggerated form of protest behavior designed to gain or regain proximity to one's attachment figure, then it should be most likely to be perpetrated by an anxious individual who is not happy with the level of closeness (physical and emotional) in the relationship. Therefore, it is predicted that attachment anxiety will interact with nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception consistency in predicting the likelihood of perpetration of physical aggression against the relationship partner.

Specifically, it is predicted that participants whose perceptions fall short of their ideals will be increasingly likely to use physical aggression against their partner as their level of attachment anxiety increases. Participants whose perceptions meet or exceed their ideals should have less reason to use physical aggression to gain proximity to their attachment figure and therefore the likelihood of physical aggression for these individuals should remain constant across levels of attachment anxiety.

Once again, college students may be more likely to use psychological aggression rather than physical aggression to regain proximity to their relationship partner. Therefore, it is predicted that psychological aggression will operate in the same way as physical aggression with regard to exclusivity ideal-perception consistency and attachment anxiety. Individuals whose perceptions of exclusivity do not meet their ideals are predicted to use psychological aggression more frequently as attachment anxiety increases. The frequency of psychological aggression is predicted to remain constant across anxiety levels for individuals whose exclusivity perceptions meet or exceed their ideals.

## 1.4 HYPOTHESES

### 1.4.1 Hypothesis 1

Nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception consistency will be a significant predictor of relationship quality, trust and love; such that, individuals whose perceptions of nonsexual exclusivity in their relationship are lower than their ideals will report significantly lower relationship quality, trust and love than those whose perceptions meet or exceed their exclusivity ideals.

### 1.4.2 Hypothesis 2

Nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception consistency will also be a significant predictor of the likelihood of physical aggression and the frequency of psychological aggression in the relationship; such that, individuals whose exclusivity perceptions fall short of their ideals will be more likely to perpetrate physical aggression and will perpetrate more psychological aggression against their partner than those whose exclusivity perceptions meet or exceed their ideals.

### 1.4.3 Hypothesis 3

Attachment anxiety will interact with nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception discrepancy in predicting the use of physical aggression and the frequency of psychological aggression against the relationship partner. Such that, individuals whose perceptions of exclusivity are lower than their ideals will become increasingly likely to commit an act of physical aggression and more frequent acts of psychological aggression against their partner as attachment anxiety increases. While the likelihood of physical aggression and frequency of psychological aggression will remain constant across attachment anxiety for individuals whose perceptions of exclusivity meet or exceed their ideals.

# 2.0 METHODS

## 2.1 PARTICIPANTS

Four hundred undergraduates (154 men and 246 women) from the University of Pittsburgh participated in the study for course credit. Participants were recruited from the university subject pool and were told that the study was investigating what college students' are looking for in an ideal relationship. Thirty-six participants (17 men and 19 women) were excluded because they indicated that they had never been involved in a romantic relationship and thus were unable to respond to items pertaining to a current or previous romantic partner. Four (2 men and 2 women) other participants were excluded because they completed the forms incorrectly. This left a total N of 360 (135 men and 225 women).

A majority of the sample was Caucasian/white (82.7%), between the ages of 18 and 20 (92.8%) and had at least one parent who was college educated (71.4%). A majority of participants were heterosexual (98.9%). A little over half of the participants were not currently involved in a relationship (54.7%) and thus responded to items based on their last romantic relationship. These past relationships were typically exclusive (70.6%), and relatively short (67.4% of the relationships lasted for less than 8 months). A little over half (53.1%) of the past relationships ended less than 8 months before the participant completed the study. Of those who were currently involved in a relationship, 6 were married or engaged, and 9 were currently living

with their boyfriend/girlfriend, the rest were dating but not living with their partner. A majority of the current relationships were exclusive (93.3%) and had lasted for a year or more (55.2%) at the time of the study.

## 2.2 PROCEDURE

Anonymous surveys consisting of the following measures were administered to students in groups of 12-40 (see Appendix C for the complete survey). Students participated in the study in order to partially fulfill their Introduction to Psychology course requirement to serve as a research study participant. The students were able to select the studies in which they wanted to participate. Students were informed that this study was investigating the characteristics that college students find desirable in an ideal romantic relationship.

## 2.3 MEASURES

### 2.3.1 Demographic and Relationship Variables

Several demographic and relationship variables were measured and controlled for in analyses. Participants were asked to indicate their own gender and the gender of their current/last romantic partner. This was used to determine the participant's sexual orientation. Participants were also asked to indicate their age and ethnicity. As an indication of socioeconomic status, participants were asked to indicate their parent's highest level of education.

Participants were also asked to give information about their current or last relationship. First participants were asked to indicate whether they were married or engaged, cohabitating with their romantic partner, currently dating (but not living with their partner), not currently involved in a romantic relationship (but have been in the past), and never currently involved in a romantic relationship. Participants indicating that they were currently married, engaged, living with, or dating a romantic partner were categorized as "involved" and were asked to respond to the survey items based on their current relationship. Participants who indicated that they were not currently involved in a romantic relationship, but had been in the past, were categorized as "not involved" and were asked to respond to the survey items with regard to their last romantic relationship. Those indicating that they had never been involved in a romantic relationship were excluded from the study.

Other relationship variables assessed included: 1) level of commitment, casual (free to see other people) or exclusive (expected to date only each other), 2) Relationship length (less than 1 month to 1 year or more), and 3)Time since last relationship (for those not currently involved in a relationship; less than 1 month to 1 year or more).

### 2.3.2 Exclusivity Ideals and Perceptions

Nonsexual exclusivity ideals were measured using a 15 item face-valid measure created by the author based upon a review of the relevant literature, as discussed below. Participants were told to "Imagine what your IDEAL romantic relationship would be like" and asked to rate the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with each item using a Likert-type 5-point scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree". These items were designed to measure emotional exclusivity (i.e. "My partner would turn only to me for emotional support during a difficult

time."), self-disclosure ("My partner would share all aspects of his/her life with me exclusively."), and monopolization of time (i.e. "My partner would devote a majority of his/her leisure time to hanging out with me exclusively."). Some nonsexual exclusivity ideals items were based upon items from the Relationship Issues Scale (RIS) developed by Boekhout et al. (2003; See Appendix B for a complete list of items and their sources). The RIS provides a broad measure of attitudes and expectations about exclusivity/nonexclusivity in romantic relationships. However, it does not provide a measure of exclusivity ideals which may be very different from exclusivity expectations. For example, an individual may expect that his/her partner will have other friends while in a relationship with him/her, but desire a partner who will give up all of his/her other friends. For this reason, the wordings of the items were altered to reflect ideal rather than expected exclusivity.

Other items were based upon hypothetical jealousy- producing events used by Hansen (1985) to measure jealousy in college dating relationships. These events were presented as two or three sentence vignettes by Hansen. For the purpose of the current study these vignettes were shortened to one sentence. Hansen's (1985) hypothetical events vignettes were designed to measure jealousy in college students. Although, the interest in the current study was not to measure jealousy, these events described activities in which the partner was either spending time away from the relationship (i.e. engaging in a personal hobby alone) and/or cultivating outside relationships (i.e. having a night out with friends). These activities could be considered a violation of relationship exclusivity. Because these events were designed to inspire jealousy they sometimes included mention of a potential sexual rival (i.e. Having lunch with an opposite sex coworker/classmate). Since the interest in the current study was to examine *nonsexual*

exclusivity, the wordings of these items were changed so that the sex of the outside relationship partner was left ambiguous.

New items were created based on the two reasons for exclusivity in romantic relationships: specialness/sharing and mate guarding/jealousy. For example items 6, 7, 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19 in Appendix B ("My partner would turn only to me for emotional support during a difficult time.", "My partner would share a happy event with me before anyone else.", "My partner would have meaningful friendships with other people while in our relationship.", "My partner would tell me secrets that he/she wouldn't tell anyone else.", I would be able to cheer up my partner better than anyone else.", When my partner goes away, he/she would miss me more than anyone else.", "My partner would enjoy talking with me more than anyone else.") represent threats to the specialness/sharing aspect of an exclusive relationship. Whereas items 1, 8, 20, and 21 ("My partner would give up spending time with anyone except me.","My partner would devote a majority of his/her leisure time to hanging out with me exclusively.", "My partner would rather spend time with me than anyone else.", and "My partner would take time away from hanging out with is/her friends to be with me.") represent monopolization of the partner's time which is often used as a mate retention tactic (Buss,1988). Items 13,14, and 22 ("My partner would not stay out late partying with his/her friends without me.","My partner would not regularly have long study sessions with his/her classmates without me.", and "My partner would not go to a movie that I wanted to see without me.") are hypothetical events similar to those created by Hansen (1985) that indicate a threat to both the specialness of the romantic relationship as well as monopolization of the partner's time.

Perceptions of nonsexual exclusivity in the current relationship were measured using the same items as the nonsexual exclusivity ideals scale. However, participants were asked to

respond to these items by rating how much they agreed/disagreed that each item pertained to their current/last relationship. Once again these items were rated on a Likert-type 5-point scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree".

Nonsexual exclusivity ideal and perception scores were calculated separately as the mean rating for all of the items. This produced two scores: (1) nonsexual exclusivity ideal score (alpha=.86), and (2) nonsexual exclusivity perception score (alpha=.84). Some items on the nonsexual exclusivity ideal and perception scales were reverse scored (These items are marked with an asterisk in Appendix B) so that higher scores indicated a higher ideal or perception of nonsexual exclusivity in the relationship.

Ideal-perception consistency scores were calculated by subtracting the participant's exclusivity perception score from his/her exclusivity ideal score. Participants were then categorized into two groups based on their consistency score: one indicating that their perceptions met or exceeded their ideals (ideals<=perceptions), and the other indicating that the individual's perceptions failed to meet his/her ideals (ideal>perceptions). This dichotomized variable will be referred to as nonsexual exclusivity group.

### 2.3.3 Relationship Quality

Relationship quality was measured using the 18 item Perceived Relationship Quality Components (PRQC) Inventory (Fletcher, Simpson, & Thomas, 2000b). The PRQC inventory measures 6 components of relationship quality: satisfaction, commitment, trust, intimacy, passion, and love. Each component is measured with 3 questions. For example satisfaction is measured with the 3 questions: 1) How satisfied are you with your relationship?, 2) How content are you with your relationship?, and 3) How happy are you with your relationship? (See

Appendix B for complete list of items and the components they measure). These scales demonstrated good internal reliability (alphas range from .86-.96). Overall relationship quality is measured using the best exemplars of each component (bolded items in Appendix B). This scale of global perceived relationship quality demonstrated good internal reliability (alpha=.87). In a previous study, confirmatory factor analysis confirmed a good fit with a model in which items loaded onto the 6 first-order constructs, which in turn loaded onto a second-order factor representing global perceived relationship quality (Fletcher et al., 2000b).

In the current study, participants were asked to rate their current partner and relationship on each item using a Likert-type 5-point scale ranging from "Not at all" to "Extremely" (this scale was adapted from the original 7-point scale). Scores for each relationship quality component were calculated by adding the responses for the 3 questions pertaining to each component. The global perceived relationship quality score was calculated as the sum of the responses given for the 6 questions that represent the best exemplars of the components. The PRQC inventory was used in a previous study of ideal-perception consistency and satisfaction (Fletcher et al, 2000a) and thus contributes to the consistency of the current study with the ideal relationship literature.

### 2.3.4 Trust

Because a specific hypothesis is proposed for the relationship between trust and ideal-perception consistency, this relationship quality component was measured separately using a more in-depth measure than the one provided in the PRQC. Trust was measured using the Dyadic Trust Scale (Larzelere & Huston, 1980; see Appendix B for a complete list of items). This 8-item scale is a unidimensional measure that was designed to measure individuals' attributions concerning their

partner's benevolence ("My partner is primarily interested in his/her own welfare.") and honesty ("My partner is perfectly honest and truthful with me."). This scale was chosen because it is a fairly general measure of relationship trust.

Participants were asked to respond to each item using a Likert-type 5-point scale (this was adapted from the original 7-point scale) ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree". The trust score for each participant was calculated as the mean rating for all items. This scale demonstrated good internal reliability (alpha=.90). Some items were reverse coded (see items marked with an asterisk in Appendix B) so that a higher score indicates a higher level of trust in the relationship partner.

### 2.3.5 Love

Love was also measured separately from the PRQC using Rubin's (1970) Love Scale. This is a unidimensional measure of love that incorporates 3 components of romantic love: affiliative and dependent need ("If I could never be with my partner, I would feel miserable."), a predisposition to help ("If my partner were feeling badly, my first duty would be to cheer him/her up."), and an orientation of exclusiveness and absorption ("I feel that I can confide in my partner about virtually everything."; See Appendix B for a complete list of items). This 13-item scale is frequently used to measure love in relationship research (i.e. Larzelere & Huston, 1980) and has demonstrated construct validity (Rubin, 1970).

Participants were asked to respond to each item using a Likert-type 5-point scale (this was adapted from the original 9-point scale) ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree". The love score for each participant was calculated as the mean rating for all items. This scale demonstrated good internal reliability (alpha=.89).

### 2.3.6 Physical Aggression

Physical aggression was measured using the physical aggression subscale of the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS; Straus, 1979). This scale consists of 10 items ranging from "Threatened to hit or throw something at partner" to "Used a knife or gun against partner" (See Appendix B for a complete list of items). Participants were asked to indicate how often they committed each of the behaviors during a fight with the relationship partner in the past year. This scale has been used to evaluate the relationship between attachment styles and violence in dating relationships in previous research (i.e. Bookwala & Zdaniuk, 1998) and thus contributes to the consistency of the proposed study with the attachment and violence literature.

The original 9-point scale was adapted for this study to a 5-point scale (1= never, 2= once, 3= two to five times, 4= six to ten times, 5= more than ten times). The perpetration of physical aggression score was calculated as the sum of the ratings for each item. This scale demonstrated good internal reliability (alpha= .84). However, examination of the scale frequencies indicated a highly skewed distribution (see Figure 1). Because of this, these scores were dichotomized into either violent (scores of 11 or above; indicating that the individual engaged in some form of violent behavior towards his/her romantic partner in the past year) or nonviolent (score of 10, indicating that the individual never engaged in a violent behavior towards his/her partner in the past year). Researchers have often used this procedure when measuring violence in relationships using the CTS (e.g. Bookwala & Zdaniuk, 1998).

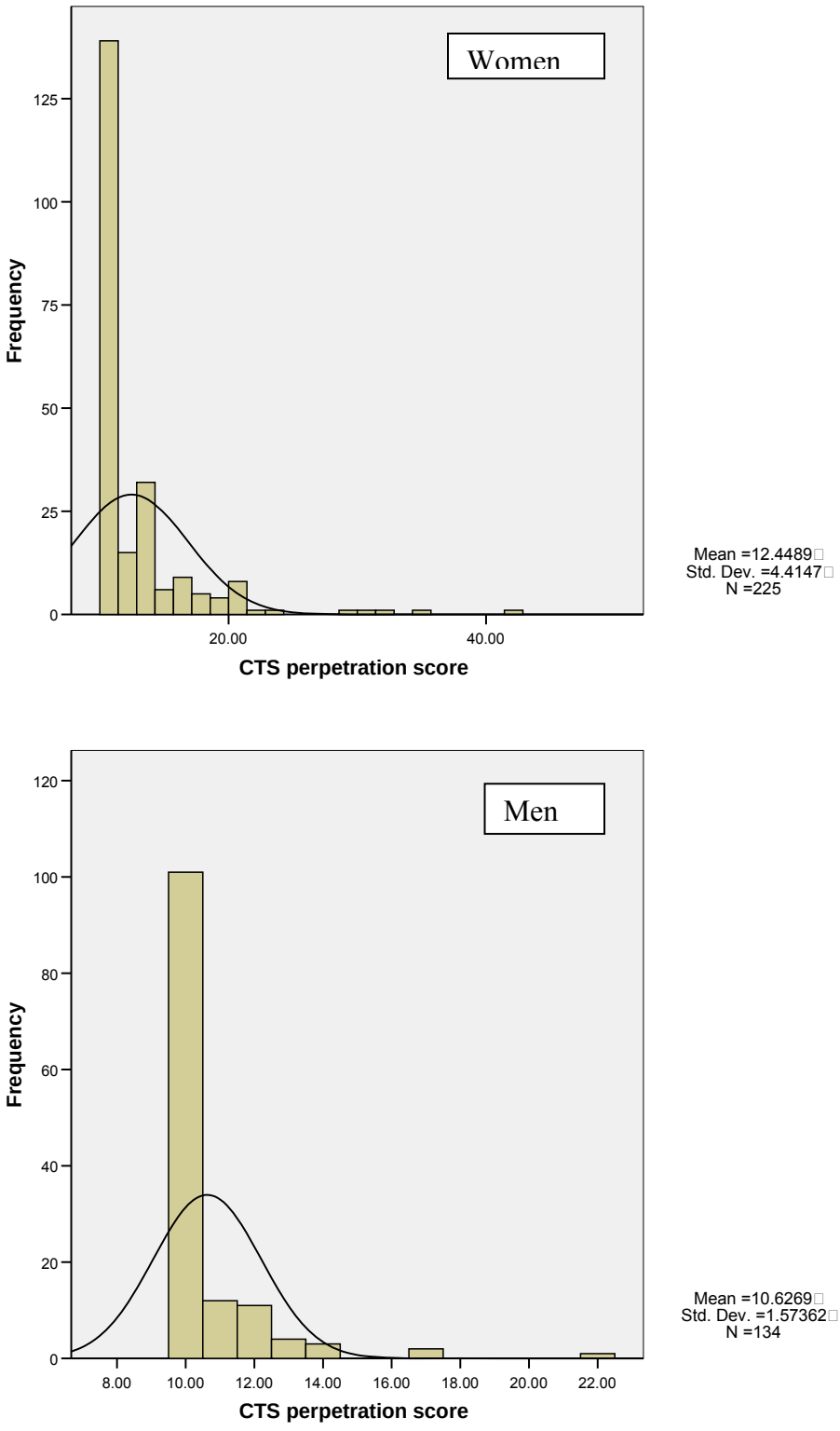


**Figure 1: CTS perpetration Score Distributions for Men and Women**

### 2.3.7 Psychological Aggression

Psychological aggression was measured using Ruehlman and Karoly's (1991) Test of Negative Social Exchange (TENSE). This scale was originally designed to measure the frequency of negative social exchanges between participants and important people in their life, but was later adapted for use as a measure of psychological aggression in married couples (Schumacher & Leonard, 2005). The TENSE shares a good amount of variance with other measures of psychological aggression such as the Multidimensional Measure of Emotional Abuse and the Psychological Aggression Scale of the CTS supporting its use as a measure of psychological aggression (Ro & Lawrence, 2007). This scale was chosen for use in the proposed study because it assesses a broad range of behaviors compared to other measures of psychological aggression and measures relatively mild forms of psychological aggression (Ro & Lawrence, 2007). These attributes make the TENSE ideal for capturing the subtle forms of psychological aggression likely to be used in a college sample.

Items were modified to reflect the participant's use of psychological aggression rather than the partner's use of psychological aggression. For example the item, "My partner distracted me when I was doing something." was changed to, "I distracted my partner when he/she was doing something." (See Appendix B for a complete list of items). Participants were asked to respond to each of the 18 items by indicating how frequently he/she engaged in each act against his/her partner in the past month using a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from "Not at All" to "About every day". Scores were calculated as the sum of all ratings. This scale demonstrated good internal reliability (alpha=.88).

### 2.3.8 Attachment Anxiety and Avoidance

Attachment anxiety and avoidance were measured using the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) Scale (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). The ECR is a self-report adult attachment measure consisting of two scales; one measuring attachment anxiety (18 items) and the other measuring attachment avoidance (18 items; See Appendix B for a complete list of items for each subscale). Participants were asked to think about how they generally feel in important relationships in their life and rate how much they agreed/disagreed with each item using a Likert-type 5-point scale (This scale was adapted from the 7-point scale typically used for the ECR). The ECR was derived from virtually every other self-report adult attachment measure (Brennan et al., 1998). Scores for each scale can be used to categorize individuals according to Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) four-category model of attachment styles. However, since continuous dimensions of attachment have been shown to be more precise measures of attachment (Fraley & Waller, 1998) the anxiety and avoidance scales of the ECR were analyzed as continuous measures of attachment anxiety and avoidance.

Scales for the two dimensions demonstrated good internal reliability (anxiety alpha= .90 and avoidance alpha= .92). Scores were calculated as the mean rating for all of the items included in the subscale. Some items were reverse coded (see items marked with an asterisk in Appendix B) so that a higher score indicated a higher level of attachment anxiety or avoidance.

# 3.0 RESULTS

## 3.1 DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Scale means for men and women are presented in Table 1. Both men and women perceived their relationships to be of fairly high quality and reported high levels of satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, and love. Chi-Squares were performed to determine possible gender differences in categorical variables. Men and women did not differ significantly in age, ethnicity, parental education, relationship status, level of relationship commitment (exclusive/casual), length of relationship, or length of time since end of last relationship. However women were more likely than men to have committed at least one physically aggressive act against their partner in the past year ($x^2(1)=19.237$, $p<.001$). For women, the most frequently endorsed act of physical aggression was pushing, grabbing, or shoving their partner (30.7% of women reported committing this act at least once in the past year). For men, the most frequently endorsed act of physical aggression was throwing, smashing, or kicking something (17% of men reported committing this act at least once in the past year). Thus, levels of physical aggression were low for both men and women.

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to examine possible gender differences in continuous variables. The overall multivariate F for gender was significant ($F(21,322)= 3.74$, $p<.001$). Univariate effects of this analysis are presented in Table 1. Men

held significantly higher nonsexual exclusivity ideals and perceptions than women. Men also reported committing less psychological abuse towards their partner than women. For both men and women, the most frequently endorsed psychological abuse item was "I disagreed with my partner" (92.6% of men and 97.8% of women reported committing this act at least once in the past month).

Intercorrelations among all variables for men and women are presented in Table 2. For men, nonsexual exclusivity ideals were significantly positively correlated with nonsexual exclusivity perception, global perceived relationship quality, satisfaction, intimacy, passion, and love (as measured with the PRQC). For women, nonsexual exclusivity ideals were significantly positively correlated with nonsexual exclusivity perception, commitment, love (as measured with the PRQC and Rubin's love scale), physical aggression, and attachment anxiety.

Given that individuals may respond to the items differently when referring to a current relationship than when referring to a past relationship, a MANOVA was conducted to examine possible differences between participants who were currently involved in a relationship and those who were not currently involved in a relationship. The overall multivariate F for relationship status was significant ($F(21,322)=6.762$, $p<.001$). Univariate effects (presented in Table 1) revealed that individuals not currently involved in a relationship reported lower nonsexual exclusivity ideals ($F(1,322)=5.952$, $p<.05$), nonsexual exclusivity perceptions ($F(1,322)=14.562$, $p<.001$), global perceived relationship quality ($F(1,322)=103.355$, $p<.001$), satisfaction ($F(1,322)=80.645$, $p<.01$), commitment ($F(1,322)=56.447$, $p<.001$), intimacy ($F(1,322)=62.252$, $p<.001$), trust (as measured with the PRQC $F(1,322)=52.363$, $p<.001$, and as measured with the Dyadic trust scale $F(1,322)= 43.259$, $p<.001$), passion ($F(1,322)=24.735$, $p<.001$), and love (as measured with the PRQC $F(1,322)=104.188$, $p<.001$; and as measured

with Rubin's Love Scale F (1,322)=37.089, p<.001) than those currently involved in a relationship. Individuals not currently involved in a relationship also reported significantly higher levels of attachment avoidance than those currently involved (F (1,322)=19.43, p<.001).

**Table 1: Means and F Scores by Gender and Relationship Status for All Continuous Variables**

| Scale (α) | Mean (SD) | | *F* (1,322) | Mean (SD) | | F (1,322) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Men | Women | | Not Involved | Involved | |
| **Nonsexual Exclusivity Ideals (.86)** | 2.86(.46) | 2.77(.44) | 4.299* | 2.75(.45) | 2.87(.44) | 5.952* |
| **Nonsexual Exclusivity Perception (.84)** | 2.98(.53) | 2.88(.44) | 6.223** | 2.84(.44) | 3.02(.51) | 14.562*** |
| **Sexual Exclusivity Ideals (.87)** | 3.96(.73) | 3.98(.62) | 0.269 | 3.96(.60) | 3.99(.74) | 0.077 |
| **Sexual Exclusivity Perception (.86)** | 3.58(.87) | 3.60(.72) | 0.002 | 3.47(.79) | 3.75(.74) | 9.498** |
| **PRQC Global (.87)** | 22.90(5.39) | 23.27(5.13) | 0.018 | 20.71(5.22) | 26.06(3.43) | 103.355*** |
| **PRQC Satisfaction (.95)** | 11.06(3.09) | 11.32(2.97) | 0.185 | 9.95(2.92) | 12.76(2.35) | 80.645*** |
| **PRQC Commitment (.96)** | 11.93(2.88) | 12.26(2.94) | 0.123 | 11.11(3.06) | 13.37(2.16) | 56.447*** |
| **PRQC Intimacy (.88)** | 11.72(2.78) | 12.05(2.67) | 0.436 | 10.87(2.78) | 13.22(1.98) | 62.252*** |
| **PRQC Trust (.90)** | 11.59(2.94) | 11.80(2.75) | 0.036 | 10.72(2.88) | 12.93(2.2) | 52.363*** |
| **PRQC Passion (.86)** | 10.45(3.24) | 10.80(3.24) | 0.653 | 9.84(3.43) | 11.68(2.67) | 24.735*** |
| **PRQC Love (.94)** | 11.46(3.25) | 11.49(3.55) | 0.4 | 9.90(3.52) | 13.41(2.08) | 104.188*** |
| **Dyadic Trust Scale (.90)** | 3.47(.93) | 3.56(.88) | 0.666 | 3.23(.85) | 3.88(.83) | 43.259*** |
| **Rubin's Love Scale (.89)** | 3.60(.74) | 3.52(.68) | 2.226 | 3.34(.68) | 3.81(.63) | 37.089*** |
| **TENSE (.88)** | 34.07(9.10) | 36.67(10.13) | 4.508* | 35.77(9.61) | 35.61(10.11) | 0.006 |
| **Attachment Avoidance (.92)** | 2.60(.67) | 2.66(.71) | 1.033 | 2.81(.69) | 2.43(.65) | 19.430*** |
| **Attachment Anxiety (.90)** | 2.95(.72) | 2.98(.68) | 0.35 | 3.04(.69) | 2.89(.69) | 2.118 |

Note. PRQC Global range 6-30

PRQC subscales range 3-15

TENSE range 18-90

All other scales range 1-5

* p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

**Table 2: Intercorrelations Among Variables (Men Above Diagonal; Women Below Diagonal)**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1. Nonsexual Exclusivity Ideals** | _ | .661** | .194* | .297** | 0.132 | .223** | 0.155 | .217* | .210* | 0.124 | 0.166 | 0.044 | -0.047 | 0.152 |
| **2. Nonsexual Exclusivity Perception** | .406** | _ | .404** | .462** | .253** | .414** | .301** | .375** | .351** | .284** | .255** | 0.062 | -0.036 | -0.02 |
| **3. PRQC Global** | 0.093 | .359** | _ | .859** | .818** | .879** | .821** | .584** | .882** | .689** | .641** | -0.129 | -.264** | -0.151 |
| **4. PRQC satisfaction** | -0.018 | .197** | .831** | _ | .664** | .730** | .813** | .4** | .739** | .720** | .585** | -.201* | -.238** | -0.11 |
| **5. PRQC commitment** | .169* | .197** | .749** | .574** | _ | .686** | .597** | .263** | .807** | .488** | .634** | -0.073 | -.288** | 0.009 |
| **6. PRQC intimacy** | 0.085 | .38** | .886** | .672** | .623** | _ | .661** | .615** | .734** | .539** | .493** | -0.033 | -.197* | -.205* |
| **7. PRQC trust** | -0.02 | .27** | .702** | .649** | .510** | .576** | _ | .334** | .690** | .8** | .494** | -.258** | -.188* | -.215* |
| **8. PRQC passion** | 0.107 | .27** | .649** | .496** | .279** | .673** | .224** | _ | .388** | .202* | .197* | 0.101 | -0.083 | -.18* |
| **9. PRQC love** | .14* | .311** | .879** | .683** | .714** | .774** | .593** | .487** | _ | .553** | .713** | -0.074 | -.32** | -0.007 |
| **10. Dyadic Trust Scale** | -0.088 | .228** | .54** | .595** | .346** | .433** | .797** | 0.103 | .456** | _ | .524** | -.410** | -.258** | -.232** |
| **11. Rubin's Love Scale** | .361** | .391** | .669** | .498** | .588** | .58** | .446** | .385** | .721** | .347** | _ | -0.108 | -.373** | -.195* |
| **12. TENSE** | 0.112 | 0.065 | -0.094 | -.167* | -.139* | -0.053 | -.227** | 0.088 | -0.088 | -.293** | -0.067 | _ | 0.044 | .264** |
| **13. Attachment Avoidance** | -0.113 | -.135* | -.297** | -.239** | -.253** | -.25** | -.229** | -.142* | -.297** | -.19** | -.399** | -0.017 | _ | -0.073 |
| **14. Attachment Anxiety** | .338** | 0.07 | -0.066 | -.153* | 0.122 | -0.092 | -.15* | -0.027 | 0.011 | -.268** | .16* | .176** | -0.019 | _ |

Note. PRQC Global range 6-30

PRQC subscales range 3-15

TENSE range 18-90

All other scales range 1-5

* p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

There were no significant interaction effects between gender and relationship status. Chi-squares revealed no significant differences in gender, age, ethnicity, or parental education between those involved and those not involved in a romantic relationship. However, individuals who were not currently involved in a romantic relationship were more likely to report on a casual relationship than those currently involved ($x^2(1)= 25.206$, $p<.001$) and were less likely to be reporting on a relationship that had lasted a year or more ($x^2(4)=42.966$, $p<.001$).

## 3.2 SUMMARY OF ANALYSES

In order to test the hypotheses that individuals whose nonsexual exclusivity perceptions fall short of their ideals will demonstrate lower relationship quality and a higher frequency of psychological aggression, linear regressions were conducted to predict relationship quality variables and psychological aggression with nonsexual exclusivity group.

In order to test the hypothesis that having nonsexual exclusivity perceptions that do not meet ideals will predict increased likelihood of physical aggression compared to those whose exclusivity perceptions meet or exceed their ideals, logistic regressions were conducted to predict the likelihood of physical aggression in the relationship with nonsexual exclusivity group.

All models were conducted first using the entire sample. Next, to test for possible moderation by gender and/or relationship status, interaction terms for gender X nonsexual exclusivity group and relationship status X nonsexual exclusivity group were entered into the models. It is also possible that the regression models as a whole behave differently for men and women and/or for those involved and those not involved in a relationship. In order to test this

possibility, regressions were run separately for men and women and for those involved and those not involved in a relationship. Chow-tests (Chow, 1960) were then conducted in order to determine if the regression coefficients were equivalent across the models. If results of the Chow-tests revealed significant differences between the models, results are presented separately by gender and/or relationship status.

Several demographic and relationship variables were controlled for in all analyses. Categorical variables were given dummy codes for inclusion in the models. These variables and their codes are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Demographic and Relationship Variables and Dummy Codes**

| Variable | Reference Group (coded 0) | Comparison group 1 | Comparison group 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Female (N=225) | Male (N=135) | |
| **Age** | 18-20 yrs. Old (N=334) | Over 20 yrs. Old (N=26) | |
| **Ethnicity** | Caucasion/White (N=296) | African American/Black (N=27) | Other* (N=35) |
| **Parent's highest level of education** | At least some college (N=325) | No college (N=35) | |
| **Relationship Status** | Involved**(N=163) | Not involved (N=197) | |
| **Level of commitment** | Exclusive relationship (N=291) | Casual relationship (N=63) | |
| **Relationship Length** | 1 yr. or more (N=134) | 4 mos. To 1 yr. (N=100) | Less than 4 mos. (N=119) |
| **Time since last relationship ended (for not involved participants)** | 1 yr. or more (N=59) | 4 mos. To 1 yr. (N=73) | Less than 4 mos. (N=62) |
| **Attachment Anxiety (continuous variable)** | | | |
| **Nonsexual Exclusivity Group** | Ideals> perceptions (N=119) | Ideals<=perceptions (N=223) | |

*includes Asian, Hispanic, and Multiracial

**includes currently dating, cohabitating and married couples

## 3.3 MAIN EFFECTS OF NONSEXUAL EXCLUSIVITY GROUP ON RELATIONSHIP QUALITY

It was predicted that having exclusivity perceptions that met or exceeded ideals would predict higher perceived relationship quality, trust and love scores compared with having exclusivity perceptions that fell short of ideals. In order to test this hypothesis, linear regressions were conducted predicting relationship quality (Global PRQC), trust (PRQC trust subscale and Dyadic Trust Scale), and love (PRQC love subscale and Rubin's Love Scale) scores with nonsexual exclusivity group controlling for demographic and relationship variables (see Table 3 for a list of these variables). Results of these analyses are presented in Table 4. Given the intercorrlelations among variables, collinearity diagnostics were assessed to determine if multicollinearity was a problem. These diagnostics indicated that multicollinearity was not an issue in these models (Tolerance statistics were all well above .10).

As indicated in Table 4, Nonsexual exclusivity group served as a significant predictor of global perceived relationship quality. Having exclusivity perceptions that met or exceeded ideals resulted in a .161 standard deviation increase in the global PRQC score compared with having exclusivity perceptions that fell short of ideals ($t(344)$=3.547; p<.001). Nonsexual exclusivity group also served as a significant predictor of relationship trust as measured by the PRQC trust subscale and the Dyadic Trust Scale (see Table 4). Having exclusivity perceptions that met or exceeded ideals was associated with a .161 standard deviation increase in the PRQC trust subscale score and a .174 standard deviation increase in the Dyadic Trust Scale score as

compared with having exclusivity perceptions that fell short of ideals(PRQC trust: $t_{(346)}$=3.196, p<.01; Dyadic Trust (346): $t$=3.432, p<.001). Results for love were more varied than those for relationship trust. As indicated by Table 4, Nonsexual exclusivity group was a significant predictor of love as measured by the PRQC love subscale but not for Rubin's Love Scale. Having exclusivity perceptions that met or exceeded ideals was associated with a .109 standard deviation increase in the PRQC love subscale score ($t_{(344)}$=2.477, p<.01).

**Table 4: Unstandardized Regression Coefficients for Nonsexual Exclusivity Group and Significant Control Variables Predicting Relationship Quality Variables**

| | | All | | | Not Involved | | | Involved | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | IV | B | SE | *t (344)* | B | SE | *t (183)* | B | SE | *t(149)* |
| Global PRQC | Relationship Status | 4.42 | 0.541 | 8.168*** | | | | | | |
| | Level of commitment | -1.493 | 0.647 | -2.308* | -1.586 | 0.88 | -1.803 | -0.899 | 1.055 | -0.852 |
| | Relationship length (<4 mos) | -2.753 | 0.585 | -4.703*** | -3.236 | 0.938 | -3.45*** | -1.99 | 0.675 | -2.947** |
| | Nonsexual Exclusivity Group | 1.794 | 0.506 | 3.547*** | 1.466 | 0.783 | 1.872 | 2.241 | 0.597 | 3.753*** |
| PRQC Trust | Ethnicity (Black) | -1.035 | 0.524 | -1.974* | -1.185 | 0.749 | -1.582 | -0.816 | 0.733 | -1.113 |
| | Ethnicity (Other) | 0.823 | 0.461 | 1.786 | 1.424 | 0.651 | 2.187* | -0.042 | 0.65 | -0.065 |
| | Relationship Status | 2.017 | 0.324 | 6.218*** | | | | | | |
| | Attachment Anxiety | -0.436 | 0.201 | -2.166* | -0.333 | 0.302 | -1.103 | -0.51 | 0.257 | -1.983* |
| | Nonsexual Exclusivity Group | 0.966 | 0.302 | 3.196** | 0.732 | 0.449 | 1.629 | 1.22 | 0.394 | 3.099** |
| Dyadic Trust | Age | 0.025 | 0.169 | 0.145 | -0.554 | 0.273 | -2.032* | 0.458 | 0.215 | 2.130* |
| | Ethnicity (Other) | 0.28 | 0.148 | 1.894 | 0.483 | 0.191 | 2.525* | 0.035 | 0.24 | 0.145 |
| | Relationship Status | 0.611 | 0.104 | 5.872*** | | | | | | |
| | Relationship Length (4 mos to < 1 yr.) | 0.226 | 0.11 | 2.063* | 0.43 | 0.161 | 2.662** | 0.125 | 0.151 | 0.827 |
| | Attachment Anxiety | -0.234 | 0.064 | -3.640*** | -0.18 | 0.087 | -2.059* | -0.283 | 0.095 | -2.993** |
| | Nonsexual Exclusivity Group | 0.332 | 0.097 | 3.432*** | 0.242 | 0.13 | 1.857 | 0.453 | 0.145 | 3.12** |
| PRQC Love | Relationship Status | 2.648 | 0.342 | 7.733*** | | | | | | |
| | Level of commitment | -1.134 | 0.408 | -2.777** | -1.243 | 0.576 | -2.157* | -0.719 | 0.588 | -1.222 |
| | Relationship Length (4 mos to < 1 yr.) | -0.91 | 0.362 | -2.511** | -1.098 | 0.637 | -1.723 | -0.646 | 0.343 | -1.882 |
| | Relationship Length (<4 mos) | -2.636 | 0.371 | -7.102*** | -2.824 | 0.617 | -4.578*** | -2.385 | 0.377 | -6.328*** |
| | Nonsexual Exclusivity Group | 0.793 | 0.32 | 2.477** | 0.457 | 0.514 | 0.889 | 1.21 | 0.268 | 3.634*** |
| Rubin Love | Gender | 0.143 | 0.069 | 2.062* | 0.209 | 0.097 | 2.149* | 0.024 | 0.105 | 0.23 |
| | Relationship Status | 0.422 | 0.08 | 5.264*** | | | | | | |
| | Relationship Length (<4 mos) | -0.341 | 0.087 | -3.925*** | -0.291 | 0.123 | -2.364* | -0.413 | 0.129 | -3.212** |
| | Attachment Anxiety | 0.222 | 0.05 | 4.46*** | 0.223 | 0.069 | 3.228*** | 0.238 | 0.073 | 3.252*** |
| | Nonsexual Exclusivity Group | 0.111 | 0.075 | 1.492 | 0.011 | 0.103 | 0.103 | 0.257 | 0.112 | 2.296* |

Note. PRQC Global range 6-30; PRQC subscales range 3-15; All other scales range 1-5;* p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

These results support the hypothesis that nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception consistency significantly predicts perceived relationship quality, trust, and love. However, it is possible that the association between nonsexual exclusivity group and these variables may be moderated by gender and/or relationship status. As stated previously, MANOVA results indicated that men held significantly higher exclusivity ideals and perceptions than women and that those involved in a relationship held significantly higher exclusivity ideals and perceptions than those not currently involved in a relationship. In order to test this possible moderation, interaction terms for gender X nonsexual exclusivity group and relationship status X nonsexual exclusivity group were entered into the models predicting relationship quality, trust, and love. Results of these analyses revealed that these interactions were not significant for all 5 models (predicting Global PRQC, PRQC Trust, Dyadic Trust Scale, PRQC love, and Rubin's Love Scale). Thus, it appears that gender and relationship status do not moderate the association between nonsexual exclusivity group and relationship quality variables.

It is possible; however, that the regression models as a whole behave differently for men and women and/or for those involved and those not involved in a relationship. In order to test this possibility, all of the regression models were run separately for men and women and for those involved and those not involved in a relationship. Chow-tests (Chow, 1960) were then conducted in order to determine if the regression coefficients were equivalent across the models. These tests were nonsignificant for the models run on female participants compared with those run on male participants. This indicates that the regression coefficients for women were not significantly different from those for men. Thus, the models seem to behave similarly for men and women.

Results of the Chow-tests for involved vs. not involved participants revealed significant differences for relationship quality, trust (as measured with PRQC trust subscale and the Dyadic Trust Scale) and love (as measured with the PRQC love subscale and Rubin's Love Scale). This indicates that the regression coefficients for those currently involved in a relationship and thus reporting on their current relationship were significantly different from those not currently involved in a relationship and thus reporting on a past relationship.

Because of these significant differences, regression coefficients for nonsexual exclusivity group are presented separately for involved and not involved participants in Table 4. As indicated by Table 4, nonsexual exclusivity group was a significant predictor of relationship quality, trust and love only among participants who were currently involved in a relationship. Among those currently involved in a relationship, having perceptions that met or exceeded ideals was associated with a .301 standard deviation increase in perceived relationship quality ($t(149)$=3.753, p<.001), a .256 standard deviation increase in PRQC trust ($t(150)$=3.099, p<.01), a .253 standard deviation increase in Dyadic Trust ($t(150)$=3.120, p<.01), and a .268 standard deviation increase in PRQC love ($t(148)$=3.634, p<.001) as compared with those currently involved in a relationship whose exclusivity perceptions fell short of their ideals. Thus, it appears that nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception consistency is a better predictor of current relationship quality variables than past relationship quality variables.

## 3.4 MAIN EFFECTS OF NONSEXUAL EXCLUSIVITY GROUP ON AGGRESSION

It was predicted that individuals whose perception of nonsexual exclusivity fell short of their ideals would be more likely to commit an act of physical aggression and more frequently commit acts of psychological aggression against their partner than those whose perceptions of exclusivity met or exceeded their ideals. In order to test the first prediction, a logistic regression was conducted predicting the likelihood of violence with nonsexual exclusivity group and control variables. Results (presented in Table 5) indicated that nonsexual exclusivity group was not a significant predictor of the likelihood of violence in a relationship.

**Table 5: Unstandardized Regression Coefficients for Nonsexual Exclusivity Group and Significant Control Variables Predicting The Likelihood of Violence**

| IV | B | SE | Wald (1) | Exp(B) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | -1.002 | 0.264 | 14.399*** | 0.367 |
| **Parent Edu** | -0.505 | 0.129 | 15.379*** | 0.604 |
| **Relationship Length (4 mos to < 1 yr.)** | -1.01 | 0.304 | 11.013*** | 0.364 |
| **Relationship Length (<4 mos)** | -1.647 | 0.337 | 23.92*** | 0.193 |
| **Attachment Anxiety** | 0.655 | 0.335 | 3.811* | 1.925 |
| **Nonsexual Exclusivity Group** | 1.355 | 1.3 | 1.086 | 3.877 |

Note. Attachment Anxiety Range 1-5
*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

A linear regression predicting TENSE score with nonsexual exclusivity and control variables was conducted to test the prediction for psychological aggression. Results (presented in Table 6) revealed that nonsexual exclusivity was a significant predictor of the frequency of psychological aggression in the relationship ($t(344)=2.08$, $p<.038$). However, these results were not in the predicted direction. Having exclusivity perceptions that met or exceeded ideals was associated with a .17 standard deviation increase in the use of psychological aggression against one's relationship partner compared with having exclusivity perceptions that fell short of ideals.

**Table 6: Unstandardized Regression Coefficients for Nonsexual Exclusivity Group and Significant Control Variables Predicting the Frequency of Psychological Aggression**

| | All | | | Not Involved | | | Involved | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **IV** | **B** | **SE** | ***t(344)*** | **B** | **SE** | ***t(183)*** | **B** | **SE** | ***t(149)*** |
| **Gender** | -2.421 | 1.032 | -2.346* | -1.64 | 1.353 | -1.212 | -2.372 | 1.622 | -1.427 |
| **Age** | 4.227 | 1.941 | 2.178* | 8.587 | 2.983 | 2.879** | 1.002 | 2.596 | 0.386 |
| **Relationship Length (4 mos to < 1 yr.)** | -3.805 | 1.254 | -3.033** | -3.785 | 1.764 | -2.146* | -5.04 | 1.822 | -2.766** |
| **Relationship length (<4 mos)** | -5.463 | 1.297 | -4.212*** | -5.035 | 1.709 | -2.947** | -6.523 | 2.046 | -3.189** |
| **Attachment Anxiety** | 3.21 | 0.742 | 4.329*** | 3.149 | 0.962 | 3.273*** | 2.986 | 1.154 | 2.586** |
| **Nonsexual Exclusivity Group** | 0.291 | 1.109 | 0.262 | 3.255 | 1.425 | 2.284* | -3.821 | 1.759 | -2.173* |

Note. Attachment Anxiety Range 1-5

*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Tests of moderation by gender and relationship status were nonsignificant for the model predicting the likelihood of physical aggression. When predicting psychological aggression; however, there was a significant interaction between relationship status and nonsexual exclusivity group ($t(343)=-3.487$, $p<.001$). This interaction is displayed graphically in Figure 2. For participants not currently involved in a relationship, having nonsexual exclusivity perceptions that met or exceeded ideals was associated with an increase in the use of psychological aggression against a partner; whereas, for those currently involved in a relationship, having nonsexual exclusivity perceptions that met or exceeded ideals was associated with a decrease in psychological aggression.

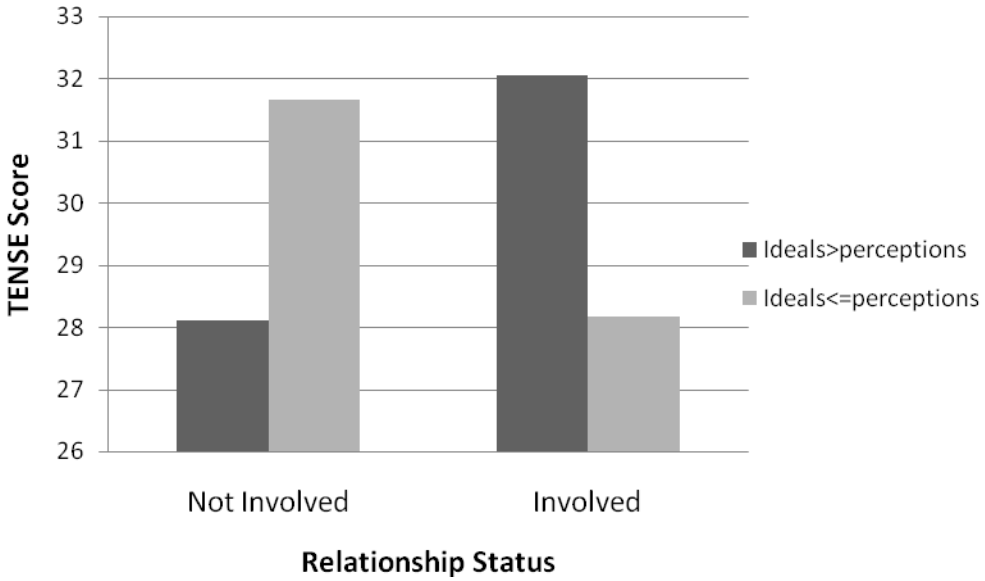


**Figure 2: TENSE Score as a function of Relationship Status and Nonsexual Exclusivity Group**

The psychological and physical aggression model was run separately for men and women and for involved and not involved participants. For psychological aggression, Chow-tests

revealed that models for men and women were equivalent to one another; however, the models for those involved in a relationship and those not involved in a relationship differed significantly. The results of these analyses are presented separately for involved and not involved participants. As shown in Table 6, nonsexual exclusivity group was a significant predictor of psychological aggression for both involved and not involved participants. However, the direction of this association differed. For participants who were not currently involved in a relationship, having perceptions that met or exceeded ideals was associated with a .162 standard deviation *increase* in psychological aggression ($t(183)=2.284$, $p<.05$) compared to participants not involved in a relationship whose perceptions fell short of their ideals. For participants who were currently involved in a relationship, having exclusivity perceptions that met or exceeded ideals was associated with a .175 standard deviation *decrease* in psychological aggression ($t(149)= -2.173$, $p<.05$) compared with those currently involved in a relationship whose perceptions fell short of their ideals.

An analog of the Chow-test for logistic regressions (DeMaris, 2004) was used to determine if the logistic regression model predicting physical aggression differed by gender and/or relationship status. Results of these tests were nonsignificant indicating that the model did not differ significantly for men and women or for those involved and not involved in a relationship. Thus, the hypothesis that nonsexual exclusivity group would significantly predict aggression was not supported for physical aggression. For psychological aggression, the hypothesis was supported in the predicted direction only for those currently involved in a relationship.

## 3.5 INTERACTION OF ATTACHMENT ANXIETY AND NONSEXUAL EXCLUSIVITY IN PREDICTING AGGRESSION

It was predicted that for individuals whose exclusivity perceptions fell short of their ideals, the likelihood of physical aggression and the frequency of psychological aggression would increase as attachment anxiety increased. While, for individuals whose exclusivity perceptions met or exceeded their ideals, the likelihood of physical aggression and frequency of psychological aggression would remain constant across attachment anxiety.

In order to test the physical aggression prediction, a logistic regression was conducted predicting the likelihood of the use of physical aggression with attachment anxiety, nonsexual exclusivity group, and the interaction term, controlling for the demographic and relationship variables presented in Table 3. Crosstabulations of violence group and nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception group revealed sufficient cell sizes to conduct this analysis. The interaction of nonsexual exclusivity group and attachment anxiety was not a significant predictor of the likelihood of physical aggression. However, there was a significant main effect of attachment anxiety. The odds of an individual using physical aggression against a partner are multiplied by 1.925 for each unit increase in attachment anxiety ($Wald(1)=3.811$, $p<.05$).

In order to test the hypothesis that attachment anxiety and nonsexual exclusivity group will interact in predicting the frequency of psychological aggression, a linear regression was conducted predicting psychological aggression (as measured by the TENSE) with attachment anxiety, nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception group, and the interaction term, controlling for the demographic and relationship variables presented in Table 3. Once again the interaction between attachment anxiety and nonsexual exclusivity group was not significant in predicting frequency of psychological abuse. However, there was a significant main effect of attachment

anxiety. Specifically a one unit increase in attachment anxiety was associated with a .216 standard deviation increase in the use of psychological aggression ($t(343)=2.396$, $p<.05$).

In order to test for the moderating effects of gender and/or relationship status, two three-way interaction terms (Anxiety X Nonsexual Exclusivity group X Gender and Anxiety X Nonsexual Exclusivity X Relationship Status) were entered into the models predicting physical and psychological aggression. Neither of these interaction terms was significant in predicting the likelihood of physical aggression. When the models predicting psychological aggression were run separately for men and women and for those involved and those not involved in a relationship, results of chow-tests revealed no significant differences between men and women. The models did differ significantly for those involved and those not involved in a relationship; however, the interaction between attachment anxiety and nonsexual exclusivity was nonsignificant for both involved and uninvolved participants. Analogous Chow-tests for logistic regression revealed equivalent models predicting the likelihood of physical aggression for men and women and for those involved and not involved in a relationship. Thus, the hypothesis that attachment anxiety and nonsexual exclusivity group would interact in predicting aggression was not supported for physical or psychological aggression.

# 4.0 DISCUSSION

In summary, results indicated support for the hypothesis that nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception discrepancy would be a significant predictor of perceived relationship quality, trust, and love. However, this hypothesis was only supported for those currently involved in a relationship. For participants currently involved in a relationship, having exclusivity perceptions that met or exceeded ideals significantly predicted an increase in perceived relationship quality, trust, and love compared with those whose exclusivity perceptions fell short of ideals.

It was also predicted that having exclusivity perceptions that fell short of ideals would be associated with an increased likelihood of physical aggression and increased frequency of psychological aggression in the relationship. This hypothesis was partially supported. Nonsexual exclusivity consistency was not associated with the likelihood of the use of physical aggression against a current or past partner; however, having exclusivity perceptions that met or exceeded ideals was associated with a significant decrease in psychological aggression against a current, but not past, partner as compared with having perceptions that fell short of ideals.

Results did not support the hypothesis that attachment anxiety would interact with nonsexual exclusivity discrepancy by exerting a greater influence on relationship aggression when exclusivity perceptions fell short of ideals as compared with when perceptions matched or exceeded ideals. However, there was a non-hypothesized main effect of attachment anxiety on both physical aggression and psychological aggression with higher attachment anxiety predicting

a greater likelihood of physical aggression and greater frequency of psychological aggression in the relationship.

The finding that, for those currently involved in a relationship, having exclusivity perceptions that met or exceeded ideals was associated with greater perceived relationship quality, trust, and love as compared to having perceptions that fell short of ideals is consistent with Interdependence theory (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978) and Fletcher and colleagues (1999) Ideal Standards Model. According to these theories, individuals are more satisfied with their relationship when their perceptions of their current relationship are consistent with their relationship ideals. This association has been demonstrated in previous research examining positive relationship ideals, such as warmth, trustworthiness, and loyalty (Fletcher, Simpson & Thomas, 2000a). However, the current study found support for these theories with regard to nonsexual exclusivity which is a relationship variable that is not necessarily considered to be positive. Furthermore, the results of the current study demonstrated two specific relationship quality components that are associated with nonsexual exclusivity consistency, trust and love. Results indicated that individuals who were content with the level of nonsexual exclusivity in their relationship were more trusting and loving of their partners than those whose perception of nonsexual exclusivity did not meet their ideals. This may be one reason why perceived relationship quality suffers when exclusivity perceptions fall short of ideals.

It is unclear why nonsexual exclusivity consistency was unable to significantly predict perceived relationship quality for those not currently involved in a relationship. One explanation may be the consistency effect on memory. According to this theory, if individuals have a theory that their attitudes will not change dramatically, they will remember their past attitudes as being more similar to their current attitudes than they actually are (Ross, 1989). In a study of the

consistency effect in relationships, McFarland & Ross (1987) found that students recalled their past view of their relationship partner (measured 2 months earlier) as more similar to their current view than it actually was. Thus, if uninvolved participants in the current study harbored bad feelings towards their ex-partner, they may have been remembering the relationship as worse than it actually was. Support for this explanation comes from the finding that those not currently involved in a relationship, and thus reporting on a past relationship, reported significantly lower perceived relationship quality, satisfaction, commitment, intimacy, trust, passion, and love than those currently involved in a relationship. It is possible that these reports were biased by the participant's current feelings towards their ex-partner and thus were not influenced by nonsexual exclusivity consistency.

The finding that the frequency of psychological aggression against a current partner increased when individuals held exclusivity perceptions that did not meet their ideals compared with those whose perceptions met or exceeded their ideals, is consistent with attachment theory's conceptualization of relationship aggression as protest behavior (Bartholomew, Henderson, & Dutton, 2001). According to this theory, individuals may lash out against their partner because they do not feel comfortable with the current level of closeness in the relationship. However, given that the most frequently endorsed items measuring psychological aggression were, "I disagreed with my partner.", and "I was angry with my partner." It may be that the association between nonsexual exclusivity consistency and psychological aggression found in this study reflects the conflict experienced by relationship partners surrounding issues like outside friendships, work relationships, and hobbies. Previous research has hinted at this association (Weis & Felton, 1987) and asserted that nonsexual exclusivity expectations should be communicated within a relationship in order to avoid these conflicts (Boekhout et al., 2003).

The current research supports these assertions demonstrating that being in a relationship that falls short of nonsexual exclusivity ideals is associated with a greater frequency of low level psychological aggression.

Once again, results differed for those not currently in a relationship. For those not currently involved in a relationship, having exclusivity perceptions that fell short of ideals was significantly associated with a decrease in frequency of psychological aggression compared with having perceptions that met or exceeded ideals. This association is in the opposite direction of the predicted results (and those found for individuals who were currently involved in a relationship). It is unclear why this occurred. One explanation would be that uninvolved participants whose exclusivity perceptions did not meet their ideals were more likely to be reporting on a casual relationship (one in which the partners are permitted to date other people) than uninvolved participants whose perceptions met or exceeded their ideals. Indeed, as reported earlier, uninvolved participants were more likely to be reporting on a casual relationship than involved participants. A chi-square was conducted to test this explanation and revealed that a greater proportion of uninvolved participants whose exclusivity perceptions fell short of their ideals reported on casual past relationships than uninvolved participants whose perceptions met or exceeded their ideals (Chi-Square(1)=8.30, $p<.01$). This was not the case for involved participants. Thus, the finding that having perceptions that fell short of ideals predicted a decrease in psychological aggression may be related to differences in reporting on a casual relationship as opposed to an exclusive one.

Reporting on a casual relationship may affect the amount of psychological aggression reported in two ways. First, the participant may be less upset about the breakup of the past relationship, since he/she was likely to have less invested in the relationship than someone who

was reporting on an exclusive past relationship. According to Rusbult and colleagues' (1999) Investment model, greater investment in a relationship is associated with a greater the level of commitment. Therefore, in a causal relationship which exhibits a low level of commitment, partners are likely to have less invested in the relationship and therefore stand to lose less by its dissolution. These individuals may therefore have less negative feelings about the past relationship and be less likely to distort their memory of the frequency of psychological aggression in the relationship. Thus, these individuals would report less psychological aggression than those who are reporting on a past exclusive relationship. Means for frequency of psychological aggression reported by uninvolved participants support this prediction, with participants reporting on a past casual relationship indicating less psychological aggression than those reporting on an exclusive past relationship (casual M= 34.71; exclusive M=36.19) however these means were not significantly different ($t(188)=-.943$, NS). With only 51 participants reporting on past casual relationships, this nonsignificance may be due to a lack of power.

It is also possible that there is simply less psychological aggression in casual relationships than exclusive ones. This would be inconsistent with previous research indicating that individuals in committed relationships are more likely to engage in relationship maintenance behaviors, such as accommodation (Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik, & Lipkus, 1987) and therefore should be less likely to engage in psychological aggression against their partner. However, mean frequencies of psychological aggression from the current study support this prediction. With participants reporting on casual relationships (both past and current) reporting less psychological aggression than those reporting on exclusive relationships (casual M=33.84; exclusive M=36.11) and this difference approaches significance ($t(350)=-1.655$, $p<.09$).

The hypothesis that the likelihood of physical aggression and frequency of psychological aggression would increase for those whose exclusivity perceptions fell short of their ideals as attachment anxiety increased and remain constant across attachment anxiety for those whose exclusivity perceptions met or exceeded ideals, was not supported. However, there was a significant main effect of attachment anxiety on physical aggression and psychological aggression. Specifically, an increase in attachment anxiety was associated with an increase in the likelihood of the use of physical aggression against the partner and an increase in the frequency of reported psychological aggression against the partner. In some ways, this is inconsistent with the theory of aggression as exaggerated protest behavior, which would predict that aggression would be more likely when both attachment anxiety is high and the relationship is not as close as the individual would like it to be. However, these results are consistent with previous research that has found a positive association between attachment anxiety and physical aggression (Bookwala & Zdaniuk, 1998; Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 1997; Roberts & Noller, 1998; Henderson et al., 2005). It may be that attachment anxiety has a main effect on low levels of physical and psychological abuse as reported by the participants of the current study, but more extreme levels of aggression are more likely to occur when attachment anxiety interacts with a situation where nonsexual exclusivity is less than ideal. The current data does not contain enough incidents of extreme physical or psychological abuse to properly test this theory, but this is a hypothesis that could be explored in future research.

Although no specific gender differences were predicted, analyses revealed that men held significantly higher nonsexual exclusivity ideals and perceptions than women. This means that men both desired and perceived a higher level of nonsexual exclusivity in their relationship. It is surprising that men perceived a higher level of nonsexual exclusivity than women since women

are more likely than men to rely on same-sex friends for emotional support (Roy et al., 2000). However, women typically engage in more self-disclosure than men in their romantic relationships (Cancian, 1987), so men's perception of greater nonsexual exclusivity may be a result of their partner's greater likelihood to communicate their personal thoughts and feelings. Other than this main effect of nonsexual exclusivity ideals and perceptions, nonsexual exclusivity seems to operate similarly for men and women. Results of Chow-tests revealed that the effects of nonsexual exclusivity discrepancy on relationship quality and aggression were not significantly different for men and women.

Results of the current study present evidence that nonsexual exclusivity ideals are an important factor in predicting relationship quality and psychological aggression. However, much more research in this area is needed. One important question that has been left unanswered is to what extent must exclusivity perceptions and ideals be discrepant in order to have ill effects on the relationship? Is a slight discrepancy enough to predict lowered quality,trust, and love, and greater conflict? Or do these variables only alter when the discrepancy between exclusivity perceptions and ideals reaches a certain breaking-point? It would also be helpful to note the impact of the direction of the discrepancy on relationship quality and conflict. Interdependence theory (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978) argues that relationship quality suffers if perceptions fall short of ideals. It does not make this prediction if perceptions exceed ideals. However, most ideal relationship research has looked at positive relationship qualities (e.g. Fletcher et al., 2000a). It is possible that with a variable such as nonsexual exclusivity for which attitudes vary, exceeding ideals by a large amount may also be detrimental to relationship quality. For example, if an individual desires a low level of nonsexual exclusivity in his/her relationship, he/she may perceive lower relationship quality when his/her partner is around more than he/she would like.

As stated previously the prediction that discrepancy between actual and ideals will be associated with a negative outcome is not unique to relationship researchers. According to Higgins' (1987) self-discrepancy theory, feelings of dejection, such as sadness and dissatisfaction, can result from a large discrepancy between one's actual self and ideal self. Self-discrepancy theory also predicts negative outcomes as a result of a discrepancy between an individual's actual self and "ought" self. According to Higgins' (1987) the "ought" self consists of an individual's beliefs about his/her duties, responsibilities, and obligations. Discrepancy between the actual self and "ought" self often results in feelings of agitation, such as fear, threat and restlessness. The current study focused on the discrepancy between individual's actual and ideal beliefs concerning nonsexual exclusivity in their relationship. Thus, the current study was concerned with how much nonsexual exclusivity individuals desired in their relationship rather than how much nonsexual exclusivity individuals feel a romantic relationship *should* have. It is possible that the consistency between an individual's "ought" relationship and actual relationship would have a different effect than the ideal-perception consistency examined in the current study. For example a discrepancy between the level of nonsexual exclusivity an individual feels their relationship should have and the level they currently perceive may be associated with agitation in the relationship in the form of jealousy and fear of abandonment. This remains an issue for future research.

It has been theorized and anecdotal evidence has supported the assertion that conflicts often arise in relationships over issues related to nonsexual exclusivity, such as spending an evening out with friends (Boekhout et al., 2003; Weis & Felton, 1987). Results of the current study indicate that conflict (in the form of low level psychological aggression) is more likely to occur in couples whose perception of exclusivity does not meet their ideal. However,

participants did not indicate what event/s or behavior/s instigated the conflict. Therefore it is unclear whether conflict resulted from nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception discrepancy or from a third variable that is related to this discrepancy. Future research should explore the connection between nonsexual exclusivity ideals and the types of conflict that occur by exploring both intraindividual consistencies between perceptions and ideals and interindividual consistency between both partners' ideals.

It is important at this time to make a comment about the generalizability of the current findings. Although most of the previous research on nonsexual exclusivity has examined the nonsexual exclusivity attitudes and expectations of dating college students (e.g. Boekhout et al., 2003; Hansen, 1985; Weis & Slosnerick, 1981), there are several reasons to believe that this population may differ from an older,married sample in their nonsexual exclusivity ideals. For one, married couples, especially those with children, tend to devote less time to outside friendships than dating couples (Fehr, 2000). Therefore, dating couples typically have more outside friendships than married couples to compete with the time and energy they spend on their romantic relationship. This is likely to result in lower nonsexual exclusivity ideals for dating college students than those of older, married adults. Although this assumption has not yet been tested empirically.

Dating college students are also likely to have less experience with romantic relationships than older, married adults. Prior to adolescence, most non-family relationships are formed with same-sex peers. Other-sex friendships and romantic relationships often do not emerge until adolescence (Furman & Shaffer, 1999). Thus, college students who are typically in late adolescence and early adulthood are relatively new to other-sex relationships and may still be negotiating the balance between a romantic relationship and outside friendships. Due to this

factor, young dating couples are likely to have nonsexual exclusivity ideals that are not yet fully formed and are perhaps more flexible than those of older, married adults. The differences in young, dating individuals and older, married couples with regard to nonsexual exclusivity ideals and the role of these ideals in relationships is a question that remains for future research. Therefore, the results of the current study cannot be generalized to an older, married population.

In conclusion, results of the present study offer evidence that matching between nonsexual exclusivity perceptions and ideals is important for perceived relationship quality, trust, love, and psychological aggression in college students' current relationships. Future research is needed to further explore the relationship between nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception consistency and relationship conflict and to examine the role of nonsexual exclusivity ideals in older, married relationships.

# APPENDIX A

## EXPLORATORY STUDY OF EXCLUSIVITY IDEALS

## A.1 ABSTRACT.

This study explored the associations between nonsexual exclusivity ideals and relationship quality, adult attachment, and violence. Nonsexual exclusivity ideals were defined as the desired amount of time, emotional support, and self-disclosure engaged in exclusively with one's romantic partner. It was predicted that nonsexual exclusivity ideals would be positively correlated with attachment anxiety and that individuals whose perception of exclusivity in their current relationship matched or exceeded their exclusivity ideals would perceive significantly higher relationship quality than those whose perception of exclusivity did not meet their ideal. Nonsexual exclusivity ideals were also predicted to be positively correlated with attachment anxiety and significantly higher for individuals who have been physically aggressive towards their romantic partner. A survey administered to 200 undergraduates allowed for testing of these and other predictions. These hypotheses were supported. Implications of these results for future research are discussed.

## A.2 INTRODUCTION

Most people have an idea of what their ideal relationship would be like (Rusbult, Onizuka, & Lipkus, 1993). Research has shown that these ideals are used by individuals to evaluate, explain, maintain and regulate their current relationship (Fletcher, Simpson, & Thomas, 2000a). Previous research has examined characteristics of positive relationship ideals, such as intimacy, loyalty, and warmth (Fletcher, Simpson, Thomas & Giles, 1999; Sprecher & Regan, 2002). The focus of earlier research on positive ideals ignores other types of ideals such as relationship exclusivity

ideals (particularly nonsexual exclusivity). These ideals include how much free time should be spent with the relationship partner, how much one should rely on the relationship partner for emotional support, how much one should disclose exclusively to the relationship partner, and what behaviors should be engaged in exclusively with the relationship partner (Boekhout, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 2003; Weis & Slosnerick, 1981). The purpose of the current study was to explore the role that these ideals play in college students dating relationships. Specifically, this research examined the associations between exclusivity ideals and relationship quality, adult attachment, and violence in the relationship. Two hundred college students were administered anonymous surveys in order to test predicted associations among these variables.

### A.2.1 Relationship Exclusivity

Exclusivity in a romantic relationship can be divided into two basic components: sexual exclusivity, which refers to the exclussion of sexual behaviors to one romantic partner, and nonsexual exclusivity, which refers to the amount of time spent with the romantic partner and the exclusion of other social relationships such as friendships (Boekhout et al., 2003). Research findings indicate that a majority of college students disapproved of their romantic partner's involvement in a sexual relationship outside of their own (Hansen, 1985), indicating that even at an early stage in the relationship, sexual exclusivity is expected. Sexual nonexclusivity has been linked with lower relationship satisfaction and often results in conflict in the relationship (Boekhout et al., 2003). Because of the lack of variability in individuals' standards for sexual exclusivity the current study focused on nonsexual exclusivity; although, sexual exclusivity was measured for comparison purposes.

Attitudes about nonsexual exclusivity are more varied compared to those about sexual exclusivity. For example, many college students felt that dating partners should give up close cross-sex friendships when entering into an exclusive relationship with someone (Hansen, 1985). And, students expected dating partners to even give up spending time with same-sex friends as the relationship became more committed (Hansen, 1985). However other college students have claimed that outside relationships (with friends and family) can actually strengthen their romantic relationship (Boekhout et al., 2003).

There are two primary reasons that individuals may desire exclusivity (both sexual and nonsexual) in a romantic relationship. These are 1)to promote the specialness/sharing aspects of a romantic relationship and 2) mate guarding or jealousy. In a romantic relationship, two individuals often share aspects of themselves and their lives exclusively with one another (Weis & Felton, 1987), promoting a special bond between these two individuals that is not shared with anyone else. Thus, exclusivity in a relationship may promote the uniqueness and specialness of the relationship (Boekhout et al., 2003). Another reason for exclusivity is to prevent one's mate from straying from the primary relationship. Buss (1988) conceptualized "monopolozation of mate's time", such as insisting that the mate spend allof his/her free time with his/her partner, as a mate retention tactic. Such a tactic assumes that if the mate was not able to spend time outside of the relationship, then he/she would not have access to other alternative mates (Buss, 1988). Thus, by insisting on exclusivity in the relationship, romantic partners can increase the chances that their mate stays with them.

Although it seems clear that most people believe that sexual exclusivity is necessary for the maintainence of a healthy relationship(Boekhout et al., 2003), whether or not nonsexual exclusivity is healthy in a relationship is debatable. Rubin's (1970) conception of romantic love

includes a measure indicating an orientation of exclusiveness and absorbtion in the relationship. According to this theory, some level of exclusiveness is expected in a love relationship. However, extreme exclusivity in a relationship has been termed possessiveness and has been linked to several relationship problems (Pinto & Hollandsworth, 1984). A possessive individual often distorts the effects that separations and autonomous activities will have on the relationship and encourages dependence on the primary relationship at the expense of other relationships (Pinto & Hollandsworth, 1984). Possessiveness has been linked with dependency (Pinto & Hollandsworth, 1984) and violence in romantic relationships (Sugihara & Warner, 2002; Bacchus, Mezey, & Bewley, 2006). Thus it seems that a high level of relationship exclusivity can be unhealthy and even dangerous.

It is clear that there is a great deal of variation in the expectations of romantic partners concerning nonsexual exclusivity (Boekhout et al., 2003; Hansen, 1985). Furthermore, couples often do not discuss their nonsexual exclusivity expectations with one another (Boekhout et al., 2003), and often experience conflict over issues like friendships, work relationships, and hobbies (Weis & Felton, 1987). Among college students, threats to relationship exclusivity, such as concerns that the partner spends too much time with his/her friends, often led to feelings of fear, uncertainty, anger, anxiety, and/or sadness (Boon & Pasveer, 1999).

Previous research has examined individuals' expectations and attitudes towards relationship exclusivity (Boekhout et al., 2003; Weis & Slosnerick, 1981). The purpose of the current study was to evaluate the role that exclusivity *ideals* play in romantic relationships. Ideals represent the positive end of evaluative dimensions rather than the average or mode (Fletcher et al., 1999). Thus, the current study focused on the level of emotional and physical exlcusivity that is desired in a romantic relationship, rather than what is expected. Higher

exlcusivity ideals therefore refer to higher standards for exclusivity (more time spent exclusively with partner, more emotional support gained exclusively from partner, etc.). Previous research on other ideals in realtionships can aid in forming hypotheses about the ways in which exclusivity ideals are likely to operate in romantic relationships.

### A.2.2 Ideals in Relationships

The role of ideals in relationships was first investigated by Kelley and Thibaut (1978) as part of their theory of interdependence. The authors proposed that members of a dyad evaluate their relationship by comparing it to a personal standard. This standard is known as the comparison level (CL) and is determined by the individual's past experience (both in this relationship as well as others), observations of others, and cultural ideals. If the individual finds that the outcomes of the current relationship meet or exceed the CL, then the individual is satisfied with the relationship. If, however, the outcomes do not meet the CL; the individual is dissatisfied with the current relationship and may leave the relationship (depending upon the attractiveness of alternative relationships). Thus, according to this theory, ideals function as a standard to which the current relationship is compared and important decisions are made about the relationship based upon this comparison (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978).

This theory was empirically tested by Sternberg and Barnes (1985). Sternberg and Barnes tested the importance of relationship partner ideals, which they referred to as "silent partners" (p.1586), to relationship quality in undergraduate dating couples. The subjects completed several measures of love with regard to (1) how he/she felt about his/her current partner, (2) how he/she believed his/her current partner felt about him/her, (3) how he/she would wish to feel about an ideal partner, and (4) how he/she would wish an ideal partner to feel about

him/her. The researchers found that both absolute levels of experienced love as well as comparison levels of experienced love relative to ideal levels of love significantly predicted relationship satisfaction. Thus, what seems to be important to relationship quality is not the mere presence of relationship ideals but rather the perception that one's current relationship differs markedly from one's ideal relationship (Sternberg & Barnes, 1985). This discrepancy (between ideals and perceptions) is a key variable in more recent research on relationship ideals and in the current study.

Fletcher and colleagues (1999) have elaborated on the importance of ideal-perception consistency in their Ideal Standards Model. According to this model, relationship and partner ideals are stable cognitive constructs which are used to guide and regulate a relationship. Fletcher, et al. (1999) argued that rather than making only global comparisons of one's current relationship to one's overall ideal relationship, individuals also make comparisons along specific partner and relationship dimensions. Just as Sternberg and Barnes (1985) discovered that it was not the mere presence of global relationship ideals that influenced relationship quality, but rather the consistency between these ideals and the perception of the current relationship, Fletcher, et al. (1999) argued that consistency between specific ideals and perceptions play an important role in relationship satisfaction. According to the Ideal Standards Model, consistency between ideals and perceptions of the current partner/relationship, serve three functions: evaluation, explanation, and regulation (Fletcher & Simpson, 2000). According to this theory, individuals make cognitive comparisons between their ideals and perceptions of their current relationship in order to evaluate the quality of the relationship, understand relationship events, and predict or control the partner or relationship (Fletcher & Simpson, 2000).

The researchers tested this theory in a longitudinal study of college students involved in new (4 weeks or less) heterosexual dating relationships (Fletcher, Simpson & Thomas, 2000a). The results indicated that the discrepancy between ideals and perceptions did, in fact, significantly predict relationship stability; such that, individuals with higher ideal-perception consistency were less likely to break-up than those with lower ideal-perception consistency. Furthermore this relationship (between higher ideal-perception consistency and a lower break-up rate) was significantly mediated by positive relationship evaluations. Thus, individuals who reported high ideal-perception consistency, perceived their relationships as being more positive, which then predicted a lower rate of dissolution (Fletcher et al., 2000a).

Previous research has looked at either positive global relationship ideals (Sternberg & Barnes, 1985) or more specific positive partner and relationship characteristics (Fletcher et al., 1999; Fletcher et al., 2000a; Campbell, Simpson, Kashy, & Fletcher, 2001). In these studies it is assumed that ideals will either equal or exceed the individuals' perceptions of these characteristics in their current partner/relationship. However, as reported earlier, a high level of nonsexual exclusivity is not always desired (unlike a high level of warmth or trustworthiness). Therefore some individuals may perceive their current relationship as actually exceeding their ideals for nonsexual exclusivity. Thus, it is important to consider the direction of the discrepancy between ideals and perceptions. According to interdependence theory, individuals will be satisfied with a relationship that either meets or exceeds their standards and will be dissatisfied with a relationship that does not meet their standards (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). Therefore, it is predicted that individuals whose perceptions do not meet their ideals for nonsexual exclusivity (ideals>perceptions) will report significantly lower relationship quality than those whose perceptions meet or exceed their exclusivity ideals (ideals<=perceptions).

Attachment theory can provide a framework for understanding what individuals are likely to hold high standards of exclusivity.

### A.2.3 Attachment and Exclusivity Ideals

Bowlby (1969/1982) developed attachment theory through his observations of homeless and orphaned children who were lacking a mother figure. He observed that children without a mother figure experienced a "powerful sense of loss and anger" (p xiii). Bowlby (1969/1982) theorized that an attachment system evolved in humans and other primates as a way to protect infants from danger by keeping them close to their mothers. This attachment system consists of emotions and behaviors (such as crying and smiling) designed to aid the infant in maintaining close proximity to his/her attachment figure (typically the mother). If the child is confident that his/her attachment figure will be available to him/her than he/she will be less likely to feel afraid and anxious than a child who doubts the availability of his/her attachment figure. According to Bowlby, these expectations of caregiver availability form the basis of internal working models used to guide attachment behaviors. Furthermore, Bowlby felt that these internal working models were relatively stable and persisted through to adulthood.

Research by Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) demonstrated that there are individual differences in attachment behaviors in infants depending on the responsiveness and sensitivity of the infant's mother. Ainsworth and colleagues (1978) observed infants' behaviors during a series of separations and reunions with their mothers. Through these observations they were able to delineate 3 different styles of attachment: secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent.

Hazan and Shaver (1987) applied attachment theory to adult romantic relationships. In this conceptualization the romantic partner serves as the attachment figure. Hazan and Shaver

(1987) adapted the classification system developed by Ainsworth and colleagues to fit with romantic relationships. According to this conceptualization, secure adults were those who found it easy to get close to others, were comfortable depending on others and having others depend on them, and didn't worry about being abandoned by someone close to them. Avoidant adults were uncomfortable with closeness and had difficulty trusting others and having others depend on them. Anxious/ambivalent adults felt a desire to merge completely with another person and were afraid of abandonment.

Since Hazan and Shaver's (1987) initial research on adult attachment, great strides have been made in the measurement of attachment in adults. A majority of adult attachment measures tap two basic dimensions: avoidance (discomfort with closeness) and anxiety (over abandonment; Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). These two dimensions are sometimes combined to form four different attachment styles (see Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991); however, measurements of the continuous dimensions of anxiety and avoidance have demonstrated a better ability to capture the structure of attachment security/insecurity than the categorical model (Fraley & Waller, 1998). Therefore, these dimensions were measured and analyzed as continuous variables in the current study and the hypotheses for this study reflect this method of measurement. Consistent with the theory of attachment styles as internal working models of relationships, adult attachment styles have been linked to several social cognitive processes in relationships such as relationship beliefs (Stackert & Bursik, 2003), attributions (Sumer & Cozzarelli, 2004), expectations (Rowe & Carnelley, 2003), and memory reconstruction (Feeney & Cassidy, 2003). However, it appears that attachment styles have never been looked at with regard to nonsexual exclusivity ideals.

The attachment system has been theorized to include both mental models of the self and of the attachment figure (Bowlby, 1969/1982; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). It seems likely that these mental models of the attachment figure would include ideals regarding the level of exclusivity in the relationship. Previous research on adult attachment and other relationship variables, leads to specific predictions about the relationship between attachment and exclusivity ideals. Attachment anxiety has been linked to greater jealousy (Dutton, Saunders, Starzomski, & Bartholomew, 1994) and dependency (Alonso-Arbiol, Shaver, & Sagrario, 2002) in relationships. Anxiously attached individuals have also been described as being hypersensitive to relationship threats and possessing a greater need to maintain close proximity to the relationship partner (Bartholomew & Allison, 2006). It seems likely then that these individuals would prefer a relationship partner who spends little time with others and depends exclusively on them for emotional support. Therefore it is predicted that attachment anxiety will be positively correlated with exclusivity ideals.

Attachment theory also provides a framework for understanding another potentially dangerous consequence of high relationship exclusivity ideals; relationship violence. Attachment anxiety (measured in various ways) has been linked with the occurrence of violence in relationships in community (Holtzworth-Munroe, Stuart, & Hutchinson, 1997; Roberts & Noller, 1998; Henderson, Bartholomew, Trinke, & Kwong, 2005), student (Bookwala & Zdaniuk, 1998) , and clinical (Dutton et al.,1994) populations. Violence in relationships has been conceptualized as an exaggerated and maladaptive form of protest behavior (Bartholomew, Henderson, & Dutton, 2001). According to this theory, an anxious individual may lash out in anger and violence in order to gain or regain proximity to their attachment figure (Bartholomew & Allison, 2006). Physically abusive men also display a higher level of dependency on their

romantic partner and are more likely to focus exclusively on their primary relationship at the expense of other social contacts than men who are not physically abusive (Murphy, Meyer, & O'Leary, 1994). Thus, it is predicted that physically abusive individuals will hold higher nonsexual exclusivity ideals than non-abusive individuals.

Violence often occurs in the context of a relationship threat (Bartholomew & Allison, 2006). For example, Roberts and Noller (1998) found that attachment anxiety was only associated with violence in the relationship when the anxious individual's partner was uncomfortable with closeness. Thus, it seems that it is important once again to consider the discrepancy between individuals' exclusivity ideals and perceptions of exclusivity in their relationship. If violence is indeed an exaggerated form of protest behavior designed to gain or regain proximity to one's attachment figure, then it should be most likely to be perpetrated by an anxious individual who is not happy with the level of closeness (physical and emotional) in the relationship. Therefore, it was predicted that attachment anxiety would interact with nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception consistency in predicting the likelihood of violence perpetration against the relationship partner. Specifically, it is predicted that participants whose perceptions fall short of their ideals will be increasingly likely to use violence against their partner as their level of attachment anxiety increases. Participants whose perceptions meet or exceed their ideals should have no reason to use violence to gain proximity to their attachment figure and therefore the likelihood of violence for these individuals should remain constant across levels of attachment anxiety.

### A.2.4 Hypotheses

In summary, the current study was designed to test the hypotheses that: (1) Individuals whose perceptions of nonsexual exclusivity in their relationship are lower than their ideals will report significantly lower relationship quality than those whose perceptions meet or exceed their exclusivity ideals., (2) Attachment anxiety will be positively correlated with nonsexual exclusivity ideals, (3) Physically abusive individuals will hold significantly higher nonsexual exclusivity ideals than non-abusive individuals., and (4) Attachment anxiety will interact with nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception consistency in predicting the use of violence against the relationship partner, such that, individuals whose perceptions of exclusivity are lower than their ideals will become increasingly likely to commit an act of violence against their partner as attachment anxiety increases. While the likelihood of violence for individuals whose perceptions of exclusivity meet or exceed their ideals will remain constant across attachment anxiety. The predicted results will contribute to the relationship violence literature, by supporting the conceptualization of violence as an exaggerated form of protest behavior. And will contribute to the ideal relationship literature by supporting the theory that ideals are used to evaluate the quality of one's relationship.

## A.3 METHODS

### A.3.1 Participants

Study participants were 100 male and 100 female, University of Pittsburgh Introduction to Psychology students 18 years of age or older. These students were recruited from the university subject pool. Three participants (1 male and 2 female) were excluded due to a large amount of missing data. This left a total N of 197, 99 male and 98 females. A majority of participants were white (81%), 9.6% were Asian, 6.6% were black or African American, and .5% were Hispanic/Latino(a). A majority of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 20 (96%), 3.6% were between 21 and 23 and 1 participant was between 24 and 26. A little over half of the participants were not currently involved in a relationship (51.8%), 28.9% reported currently being involved in an exclusive relationship, 16.8% reported that they were casually dating someone (described as being free to see other people), and 2.5% were currently living with their boyfriend/girlfriend. Only one participant reported dating a partner of the same-sex. Exclusion of this individual's data did not significantly alter the results; therefore, he was included in analysis.

### A.3.2 Procedure

Anonymous surveys consisting of the following measures were administered to students in groups of 12 (see Appendix B for a complete list of items included on this survey). Students participated in the study in order to partially fulfill their Introduction to Psychology course requirement to serve as a research study participant. The students were able to select the studies

in which they wanted to participate. Students were informed that this study was investigating the characteristics that college students find desirable in an ideal romantic relationship.

### A.3.3 Measures

*Exclusivity Ideals and Perceptions.* Nonsexual exclusivity ideals were measured using a 15 item face-valid measure created by the author based upon a review of the relevant literature, as discussed below (see Appendix B for a list of items and their sources). Participants were told to "Imagine what your IDEAL romantic relationship would be like" and asked to rate the extent to which they agreed/disagreed with each item using a Likert-type 5-point scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree". These items were designed to measure emotional exclusivity (i.e. "My partner would turn only to me for emotional support during a difficult time."), self-disclosure ("My partner would share all aspects of his/her life with me exclusively."), and monopolization of time (i.e. "My partner would devote a majority of his/her leisure time to hanging out with me exclusively."). Some nonsexual exclusivity ideals items were based upon items from the Relationship Issues Scale (RIS) developed by Boekhout et al. (2003; See Appendix B for a complete list of items and their sources). The RIS provides a broad measure of attitudes and expectations about exclusivity/nonexclusivity in romantic relationships. However, it does not provide a measure of exclusivity ideals which may be very different from exclusivity expectations. For example, an individual may expect that his/her partner will have other friends while in a relationship with him/her, but desire a partner who will give up all of his/her other friends. For this reason, the wordings of the items were altered to reflect ideal rather than expected exclusivity.

Other items were based upon hypothetical jealousy- producing events used by Hansen (1985) to measure jealousy in college dating relationships. These events were presented as 2 or 3 sentence vignettes by Hansen. For the purpose of the current study these vignettes were shortened to one sentence. Hansen's (1985) hypothetical events vignettes were designed to measure jealousy in college students. Although, the interest in the current study was not to measure jealousy, these events described activities in which the partner was either spending time away from the relationship (i.e. engaging in a personal hobby alone) and/or cultivating outside relationships (i.e. having a night out with friends). These activities could be considered a violation of relationship exclusivity. Because these events were designed to inspire jealousy they sometimes included mention of a potential sexual rival (i.e. Having lunch with an opposite sex coworker/classmate). Since the interest in the current study was to examine *nonsexual* exclusivity, the wordings of these items were changed so that the sex of the outside relationship partner was left ambiguous.

New items were created based on the two reasons for exclusivity in romantic relationships: specialness/sharing and mate guarding/jealousy. For example items 6, 7, and 15 ("My partner would turn only to me for emotional support during a difficult time.", "My partner would share a happy event with me before anyone else.", and "My partner would have meaningful friendships with other people while in our relationship.") represent threats to the specialness/sharing aspect of an exclusive relationship. Whereas items 1 and 8 ("My partner would give up spending time with anyone except me." And "My partner would devote a majority of his/her leisure time to hanging out with me exclusively.") represent monopolization of the partner's time which is often used as a mate retention tactic (Buss,1988). Items 13 and 14 ("My partner would not stay out late partying with his/her friends without me." And "My partner

would not regularly have long study sessions with his/her classmates without me.") are hypothetical events similar to those created by Hansen (1985) that indicate a threat to both the specialness of the romantic relationship as well as monopolization of the partner's time.

Sexual exclusivity items consisted of sexual behaviors ranging from hugging an opposite sex friend to having casual sex with someone outside of the relationship (see Appendix B for a complete list of items). This measure was developed by the author to provide a measure of sexual exclusivity that evaluated a range of sexual behaviors. Participants were asked to rate how much they agree/disagree that, in an IDEAL relationship, their partner would NOT engage in each behavior. Thus, stronger agreement indicated higher sexual exclusivity standards.

Perceptions of nonsexual and sexual exclusivity in the current relationship were measured using the same items as the respective exclusivity ideals scale. However, participants were asked to respond to these items by rating how much they agreed/disagreed that each item pertained to their current relationship (if participants were not currently involved in a romantic relationship, they were asked to respond to the items with regard to their last romantic relationship). Once again these items were rated on a Likert-type 5-point scale ranging from "Strongly disagree" to "Strongly agree". Nonsexual and sexual exclusivity ideal and perception scores were calculated separately as the mean rating for all of the items. This produced four scores: (1) nonsexual exclusivity ideal score (alpha=.80), (2) nonsexual exclusivity perception score (alpha=.78), (3) sexual exclusivity ideal score (alpha= .86), and (4) sexual exclusivity perception score (alpha= .87). Some items on the nonsexual exclusivity ideal and perception scales were reverse scored (These items are marked with an asterisk in Appendix B) so that higher scores indicated a higher ideal or perception of nonsexual exclusivity in the relationship.

*Relationship Quality.* Relationship quality was measured using the 18 item Perceived Relationship Quality Components (PRQC) Inventory (Fletcher, Simpson, & Thomas, 2000b). The PRQC inventory measures 6 components of relationship quality: satisfaction, commitment, trust, intimacy, passion, and love. Each component is measured with 3 questions. For example satisfaction is measured with the 3 questions: 1) How satisfied are you with your relationship?, 2) How content are you with your relationship?, and 3) How happy are you with your relationship? (See Appendix B for complete list of items and the components they measure). These scales demonstrated good internal reliability (alphas range from .78-.95). Overall relationship quality is measured using the best exemplars of each component (bolded items in Appendix B). This scale of global perceived relationship quality demonstrated good internal reliability (alpha=.84). In a previous study, confirmatory factor analysis confirmed a good fit with a model in which items loaded onto the 6 first-order constructs, which in turn loaded onto a second-order factor representing global perceived relationship quality (Fletcher et al., 2000b).

In the current study, participants were asked to rate their current partner and relationship on each item using a Likert-type 5-point scale ranging from "Not at all" to "Extremely" (this scale was adapted from the original 7-point scale). Scores for each relationship quality component were calculated by adding the responses for the 3 questions pertaining to each component. The global perceived relationship quality score was calculated as the sum of the responses given for the 6 questions that represent the best exemplars of the components.

The PRQC inventory was chosen for use in this study for two reasons. First, this measurement was used in a previous study of ideal-perception consistency and satisfaction (Fletcher et al, 2000a) and thus contributes to the consistency of the proposed study with the ideal relationship literature. And second, the measure was specifically designed to measure

perceptions of both global relationship quality as well as evaluations of specific domains of relationship quality. This is ideal for the exploratory nature of the proposed study since it is unclear whether exclusivity ideal-perception consistency will be related differently to different components of relationship quality.

*Relationship Violence.* Relationship violence was measured using the violence subscale of the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS; Straus, 1979). This scale consists of 10 items ranging from "Threatened to hit or throw something at partner" to "Used a knife or gun against partner" (See Appendix B for a complete list of items). Participants were asked to indicate how often they committed each of the behaviors during a fight with the relationship partner in the past year. This scale has been used to evaluate the relationship between attachment styles and violence in dating relationships in previous research (i.e. Bookwala & Zdaniuk, 1998) and thus contributes to the consistency of the proposed study with the attachment and violence literature.

The original 9-point scale was adapted for this study to a 5-point scale (1= never, 2= once, 3= two to five times, 4= six to ten times, 5= more than ten times). The perpetration of violence score was calculated as the sum of the ratings for each item. This scale demonstrated good internal reliability (alpha= .80). However, examination of the scale frequencies indicated a highly skewed distribution. Because of this, these scores were dichotomized into either violent (scores of 11 or above; indicating that the individual engaged in some form of violent behavior towards his/her romantic partner in the past year) or nonviolent (score of 10, indicating that the individual never engaged in a violent behavior towards his/her partner in the past year). Researchers have often used this procedure when measuring violence in relationships using the CTS (e.g. Bookwala & Zdaniuk, 1998).

*Attachment Anxiety and Avoidance.* Attachment anxiety and avoidance were measured using the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) Scale (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). The ECR is a self-report adult attachment measure consisting of two scales; one measuring attachment anxiety (17 items) and the other measuring attachment avoidance (18 items; See Appendix B for a complete list of items for each subscale). Participants were asked to think about how they generally feel in important relationships in their life and rate how much they agreed/disagreed with each item using a Likert-type 5-point scale (This scale was adapted from the 7-point scale typically used for the ECR). The ECR was derived from virtually every other self-report adult attachment measure (Brennan et al., 1998). Scores for each scale can be used to categorize individuals according to Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) four-category model of attachment styles. However, since continuous dimensions of attachment have been shown to be more precise measures of attachment (Fraley & Waller, 1998) the anxiety and avoidance scales of the ECR were analyzed as continuous measures of attachment anxiety and avoidance.

Scales for the two dimensions demonstrated good internal reliability (anxiety alpha= .90 and avoidance alpha= .91). Scores were calculated as the mean rating for all of the items included in the subscale. Some items were reverse coded (see items marked with an asterisk in Appendix B) so that a higher score indicated a higher level of attachment anxiety or avoidance.

## A.4 RESULTS

### A.4.1 Descriptive Data

Although no specific hypotheses about gender differences were made, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to examine possible gender differences. Results of this analysis are shown in Table 7. The overall multivariate F for gender was significant ($F(13, 183) = 2.24$, $p<.01$). Looking at the univariate effects, men reported significantly higher ideals about nonsexual exclusivity than women. No other gender differences reached significance.

Average rates of violence for both men and women were fairly low (Men M= 10.92, Women M=12.66; CTS physical aggression scores range from 10, indicating no violence, to 50)). Women were slightly more likely to have committed at least one act of violence against their partner in the past year than men (violent men N=41, violent women N=52); However, this difference was not significant (Chi-square=2.681, NS). The behaviors that were typically endorsed by participants were relatively low-level violent acts; such as throwing, smashing, or kicking something (28.5% of all participants committed this act at least once in the past year).

As shown in Table 7, both men and women were generally satisfied with their relationships and reported a fairly high level of commitment to their partner. Nonsexual exclusivity ideals were generally low, with the means for both men and women falling below the midpoint of the scale. The standard deviation for this measure was also relatively low indicating low variability. Men were slightly more likely than women to have perceptions of nonsexual exclusivity that did not meet their ideals (Men ideals>perceptions N=28, Women ideals>perceptions N=22). However, this difference was not significant (Chi-square=.885, NS).

**Table 7: Means, Standard Deviations, and F Scores for all Scales by Gender**

| Scale | Men | Women | F (1,183) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nonsexual exclusivity ideals | 2.35 (.43) | 2.21 (.50) | 4.36* |
| Nonsexual exclusivity perception | 2.58 (.50) | 2.51 (.54) | .82 |
| Sexual exclusivity ideals | 4.00 (.62) | 4.07 (.52) | 0.85 |
| Sexual exclusivity perception | 3.62 (.81) | 3.53 (.78) | 0.58 |
| Global PRQC | 23.20 (4.56) | 22.62 (4.77) | 0.76 |
| Satisfaction | 11.16 (2.84) | 10.94 (2.82) | 0.31 |
| Commitment | 11.75 (2.83) | 11.67 (3.07) | 0.03 |
| Intimacy | 11.77 (2.35) | 11.67 (3.07) | 0.01 |
| Trust | 12.04 (2.70) | 11.32 (3.05) | 3.12 |
| Passion | 10.88 (2.93) | 10.58 (2.95) | .5 |
| Love | 11.72 (2.98) | 10.91 (3.31) | 3.25 |
| Attachment Anxiety | 2.78 (.73) | 2.93 (.60) | 2.75 |
| Attachment Avoidance | 2.50 (.68) | 2.59 (.58) | 0.97 |

*p<.05

Note. Exclusivity and Attachment scales scores range from 1 to 5

Global PRQC scale scores range from 6 to 30

PRQC subscale scores range from 3 to 15

### A.4.2 Test of Hypothesis 1: Nonsexual exclusivity ideals and relationship quality

It was predicted that perceived relationship quality would be significantly lower for individuals whose perceptions of exclusivity did not meet their ideals than for those whose exclusivity perceptions met or exceeded their ideals (Hypothesis 1). Ideal-perception consistency scores were calculated by subtracting the participant's exclusivity perception score from his/her exclusivity ideal score. This was done separately for nonsexual exclusivity and sexual exclusivity, creating two scores; one represents the consistency between nonsexual exclusivity ideals and perceptions and the other represents the consistency between sexual exclusivity ideals and perceptions. Participants were then categorized into two groups for each consistency score, one indicating that their perceptions met or exceeded their ideals (ideals<=perceptions) and the

other indicating that the individual's perceptions failed to meet his/her ideals (ideal>perceptions). Once again this was done separately for nonsexual and sexual exclusivity. Thus, an individual could have nonsexual exclusivity perceptions that exceeded his/her nonsexual exclusivity ideals, but sexual exclusivity perceptions that did not meet his/her sexual exclusivity ideals.

Means and standard deviations for the PRQC global score and subscale scores by sex and exclusivity ideal-perception group are also presented in Table 8. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) of relationship quality by sex and ideal-perception group was conducted to compare the means for global perceived relationship quality for men and women whose nonsexual exclusivity perceptions met or exceeded their nonsexual exclusivity ideals and those whose perceptions failed to meet their ideals. Results are reported in Table 8. As predicted, there was a significant main effect of nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception group indicating that individuals whose perceptions of exclusivity were lower than their ideals perceived significantly lower relationship quality than those whose perceptions met or exceeded their ideals. The main effect for gender and the interaction effect were not significant.

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was also conducted to explore possible differences between the two nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception groups for the six different components measured by the PRQC (results of these analyses are also presented in Table 8). The overall multivariate F for exclusivity ideal-perception group was not significant ($F(6,188)=1.97$, NS); however, significant univariate effects emerged. There were significant main effects for ideal-perception group for satisfaction, trust, and love. Individuals whose perceptions of exclusivity did not meet their ideals were significantly less satisfied and had significantly lower trust and love for their partner than those whose exclusivity perceptions met or exceeded their ideals. There were no significant gender or interaction effects for any of these variables.

For comparison purposes, the same analyses as described above were performed using *sexual* exclusivity ideal-perception group and gender as the independent variables. Results of these analyses are also displayed in Table 8. Results indicated no significant main effects or interactions effects for global perceived relationship quality. The multivariate F was not significant (F (6,188) =1.94, NS); however, there was a significant main effect of sexual exclusivity ideal-perception group for passion. Individuals whose sexual exclusivity perceptions fell short of their ideals reported significantly more passion in their relationship than those whose perceptions met or exceeded their ideals. There was also a significant main effect of sexual exclusivity ideal-perception group and a significant interaction effect (gender X sexual exclusivity ideal-perception group) for trust. Women whose sexual exclusivity perceptions fell short of their ideals were significantly less trusting of their partner than women whose perceptions met their ideals. Men's level of trust did not differ significantly across sexual exclusivity ideal-perception groups.

**Table 8: Means, Standard Deviations, and Main Effects of Exclusivity Ideal-Perception Group for PRQC scales**

| | Nonsexual Exclusivity | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Men M(SD) | | Women M(SD) | | |
| Scale | ideals>perceptions (N=28) | Ideals<=perceptions (N=71) | Ideals>perceptions (N=69) | Ideals<=perceptions (N=30) | F (1,193) |
| Global PRQC | 21.64 (4.80) | 23.82 (4.34) | 21.05 (5.62) | 23.08 (4.43) | 7.73** |
| Satisfaction | 10.39 (3.34) | 11.46 (2.6) | 9.59 (2.99) | 11.33 (2.66) | 9.47** |
| Commitment | 11.04 (2.89) | 12.03 (2.78) | 11.09 (3.66) | 11.84 (2.88) | 3.24 |
| Intimacy | 11.25 (2.29) | 11.97 (2.36) | 11.5 (3.23) | 11.89 (2.4) | 1.88 |
| Trust | 11.21 (3.1) | 12.37 (2.46) | 10.23 (3.21) | 11.63 (2.95) | 7.48** |
| Passion | 10.39 (2.74) | 11.07 (3.0) | 10.72 (3.73) | 10.54 (2.71) | 0.26 |
| Love | 10.79 (3.05) | 12.08 (2.9) | 10.32 (3.94) | 11.08 (3.11) | 3.99* |
| | Sexual Exclusivity | | | | |
| | Men M(SD) | | Women M(SD) | | |
| Scale | ideals>perceptions (N=22) | Ideals<=perceptions (N=76) | Ideals>perceptions (N=73) | Ideals<=perceptions (N=25) | F (1,193) |
| Global PRQC | 23.19 (4.56) | 23.23 (4.62) | 22.14 (5.06) | 24.04 (3.49) | 1.73 |
| Satisfaction | 11.22 (2.8) | 11.03 (2.96) | 10.66 (2.93) | 11.76 (2.31) | 1.04 |
| Commitment | 11.83 (2.96) | 11.57 (2.54) | 11.47 (3.28) | 12.3 (2.28) | 0.35 |
| Intimacy | 11.83 (2.18) | 11.63 (2.74) | 11.66 (2.63) | 12.24 (2.49) | 0.24 |
| Trust | 12.04 (2.6) | 12.03 (2.94) | 10.81 (3.07) | 12.8 (2.5) | 4.84* |
| Passion | 11.16 (2.84) | 10.23 (3.07) | 10.82 (2.9) | 9.88 (3.03) | 4.03* |
| Love | 11.75 (2.98) | 11.63 (3.03) | 10.64 (3.44) | 11.68 (2.81) | 0.83 |

*p<.05, **P<.01

Note. Global PRQC scores range from 6 to 30

PRQC subscale scores range from 3 to 15

### A.4.3 Test of Hypothesis 2: Exclusivity and attachment anxiety

It was predicted that nonsexual exclusivity ideals would be positively correlated with attachment anxiety (Hypothesis 2). Person correlations were conducted separately for men and women to test this hypothesis. The hypothesis was supported for both men and women. Nonsexual exclusivity ideals scores were positively correlated with attachment anxiety for both men and

women (men r=.213, p<.03; women r=.255, p<.01). Thus, individuals' nonsexual exclusivity ideals increased as attachment anxiety increased for both men and women. Sexual exclusivity ideals were not significantly correlated with attachment anxiety for men or women (men r=.051, NS; women r=.078, NS).

### A.4.4 Test of Hypothesis 3: Exclusivity ideals and perpetration of violence

It was predicted that individuals who perpetrated violence against their romantic partner would have significantly higher nonsexual exclusivity ideals than those who did not engage in violence against their partner (Hypothesis 3). An ANOVA of nonsexual exclusivity ideals by gender and violence group was conducted to test this hypothesis. Results are presented in Table 9. Main effects of both gender and violence group emerged. Men held significantly higher nonsexual exclusivity ideals than women regardless of violence group. However, violent men and violent women (individuals who reported committing at least one act of physical aggression against their partner in the past year) held significantly higher nonsexual exclusivity ideals than their nonviolent counterparts. This analysis was repeated using sexual exclusivity ideals as the dependent variable. Results of this analysis are also presented in Table 9. There were no significant main effects or interaction effects for sexual exclusivity ideals.

**Table 9: Means, Standard Deviations and Main Effects of Violence Group on Exclusivity Ideals**

| | Men | | Women | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Scale** | **Violent (N= 41)** | **Nonviolent (N=58)** | **Violent (N=52)** | **Nonviolent (N=46)** | **F (1,193)** |
| Nonsexual Exclusivity ideals | 2.47 (.45) | 2.27 (.40) | 2.30 (.53) | 2.11 (.53) | 7.85** |
| Sexual Exclusivity Ideals | 4.01 (.69) | 3.99 (.57) | 3.96 (.57) | 4.2 (.44) | 1.75 |

**p<.01

Note. Exclusivity ideals scores range from 1 to 5

### A.4.5 Test of Hypothesis 4: Interaction between ideal-perception consistency and attachment anxiety

It was predicted that consistency between exclusivity ideals and perceptions and attachment anxiety would interact in predicting the likelihood of the use of violence against the relationship partner (Hypothesis 4). A Logistic regression was used to predict violence in the relationship from attachment anxiety, nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception consistency group (ideals>perceptions or ideals<=perceptions), and the interaction between anxiety and ideal-perception group. This analysis was conducted separately for men and women. Although a marginally significant interaction effect emerged for men, cross tabulation revealed low cell sizes for the ideals>perceptions group for both men and women (see Table 10). These low cell sizes make the regression unstable and difficult to interpret.

**Table 10: CTS Perpetration X Nonsexual Exclusivity Ideal-Perception Crosstabulation**

MEN

| | | Nonsexual Exclusivity Ideal-Perception | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Ideals > perceptions | Ideals<=perceptions | Total |
| CTS perpetration | nonviolent | 15 | 43 | 58 |
| | violent | 13 | 28 | 41 |
| Total | | 28 | 71 | 99 |

WOMEN

| | | Nonsexual Exclusivity Ideal-Perception | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Ideals > perceptions | Ideals<=perceptions | Total |
| CTS perpetration | nonviolent | 8 | 38 | 46 |
| | violent | 14 | 38 | 52 |
| Total | | 22 | 76 | 98 |

## A.5 DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of exclusivity ideals in college students' dating relationships. Two hundred college students were administered anonymous surveys measuring exclusivity ideals and perceptions (nonsexual and sexual exclusivity), relationship quality, attachment, and violence in their relationship. Results revealed that consistency between nonsexual exclusivity ideals and perceptions was related to perceived relationship quality and that nonsexual exclusivity ideals were related to attachment anxiety and violence in the relationship.

Comparisons with sexual exclusivity ideals revealed that nonsexual exclusivity ideals operate in important and unique ways that cannot be determined by measuring exclusivity ideals alone. These results indicate that nonsexual exclusivity ideals are an important variable in college students' dating relationships and lend support to Boekhout and colleagues (2003) contention that nonsexual exclusivity expectations should be discussed in couple's counseling. Implications of results are covered in greater detail below.

Hypothesis 1 predicted that perceived relationship quality would be significantly lower for participants whose perceptions of nonsexual exclusivity did not meet their ideals than for those whose nonsexual exclusivity perceptions met or exceeded their ideals. This hypothesis was supported. Further analyses revealed that this difference in global relationship quality was driven by differences in perceived satisfaction, trust, and love. Individuals whose perceptions of nonsexual exclusivity did not meet their ideals perceived their relationship as less satisfying, their partners as being less trustworthy and reported loving their partner less than those whose perceptions of exclusivity met or exceeded their ideals.

These results lend support to interdependence theory's (Kelly & Thibaut, 1978) assertion that individuals will be more satisfied with a relationship that meets their standards than one that falls short of these standards and the Ideal Standards Model's (Fletcher et al., 1999) theory that individuals use ideals to evaluate their relationships. It appears that trust is an important relationship quality component that suffers when nonsexual exclusivity perceptions do not meet ideals. This is consistent with the theory that nonsexual exclusivity, particularly monopolization of time, is used as a mate retention tactic (Buss, 1988). Individuals may feel less trusting of their partners when their partners do not spend as much time and energy focusing exclusively on the relationship, perhaps because they are afraid that their partner will discover a more suitable mate.

Love also suffered when perceptions of exclusivity did not meet ideals. This is consistent with the theory that exclusivity in a relationship promotes the specialness and uniqueness of that relationship (Boekhout et al., 2003). Future research should look more directly at the relationship between nonsexual exclusivity ideals and trust and love.

It is important to note that the results of this study cannot determine whether exclusivity perceptions falling short of ideals causes lower perceived relationship quality or if greater perceived relationship quality resulted in perceptions that met or exceeded ideals. Indeed, Murray, Holmes, Dolderman, & Griffin (2000) have argued that satisfied individuals are more likely to idealize their relationship partner than individuals who are not satisfied with their relationship. It is possible that participants who were satisfied with their relationship idealized their partner and therefore perceived them as meeting or exceeding their exclusivity ideals. Further research is needed to determine this causal sequence.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that nonsexual exclusivity ideals would be positively correlated with attachment anxiety. This hypothesis was supported for both men and women. Participants with a higher level of attachment anxiety also reported higher nonsexual exclusivity ideals. This is consistent with the conceptualization of anxiously attached individuals as desiring close proximity with their attachment figure (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Individuals who are high in attachment anxiety have been found to be hypersensitive to relationship threats (Bartholomew & Allison, 2006) and are therefore likely to perceive outside relationships as threatening to the primary relationship. Having a partner who is highly exclusive provides a way to avoid these threats.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that individuals who have used violence against their partner would have higher nonsexual exclusivity ideals than those who have not engaged in violence

against their partner. This hypothesis was supported. Men who had committed at least one act of violence against their partner in the past year had significantly higher nonsexual exclusivity ideals than men who had not engaged in violence against their partner in the past year. This is consistent with Murphy and colleagues (1994) finding that physically abusive men, as compared with those who were not physically abusive, displayed a higher level of dependency and focused more exclusively on the primary relationship at the expense of other relationships. Results from this study suggest that these men also desire more exclusivity from their partner than men who have not been violent in their relationship.

Women who had been violent towards their partner in the past year also had higher nonsexual exclusivity ideals than women who had not been violent. However, it's important to note that violent and nonviolent women held significantly lower nonsexual exclusivity ideals than their male counterparts. In fact, the mean nonsexual exclusivity ideals score for violent women is comparable to that of nonviolent men. This finding is consistent with evolutionary theory which predicts that men will engage in higher frequencies of mate guarding acts because the high costs of female infidelity (Buss, 1986). Men may desire a partner who is more exclusively devoted to them than women because they are more afraid than women that their partner will be unfaithful.

It was predicted that individuals whose perceptions did not meet their ideals would be increasingly likely to commit violence against their partner as attachment anxiety increased. The likelihood of violence was predicted to remain constant across anxiety levels for individuals whose perceptions of exclusivity met or exceeded their ideals. Results suggested a possible significant interaction between nonsexual exclusivity consistency and attachment anxiety in predicting the likelihood of the use of violence in the relationship for men; however, power was

too low in this analysis to properly interpret these results. Part of the reason for this problem was the dichotomization of the dependent variable (perpetration of violence). This dichotomization was necessary because of the low levels of physical aggression reported in this sample. Future research should investigate other forms of aggression such as verbal aggression which are known to have higher base rates in community samples (Katz, Arias, & Beach, 2000). It is possible that college students will use verbal aggression rather than physical aggression to maintain desired proximity to their relationship partner.

### A.5.1 Limitations

This study suffered from several limitations. The causal sequence of the relationship between nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception consistency and relationship quality is unknown. It is unclear whether relationship quality suffers when exclusivity perceptions do not meet ideals or if individuals who are in satisfying relationships perceive their partner as meeting their ideals because they are happy with their relationship. Future research should explore this causal sequence by collecting longitudinal data about exclusivity ideals and perceptions from dating couples.

The scope of the physical aggression data collected was limited. It was impossible to determine the motivations and contexts in which violent acts occurred which may be important for understanding the association between relationship violence and nonsexual exclusivity ideals. Future research should focus on qualitative differences in men's and women's use of violence and how this relates to exclusivity ideal-perception consistency.

A future study is planned to address other limitations of the current study. For example, means for the nonsexual exclusivity ideals and perceptions scales were fairly low, indicating that

many participants disagreed with a majority of the items. Most of the items on these scales tap the high end of nonsexual exclusivity; therefore, it may be unable to differentiate between individuals with moderate or low nonsexual exclusivity ideals/perceptions. In the future study, items that are designed to tap the lower end of nonsexual exclusivity will be added to these scales. This will allow for greater variability and a more valid measure of nonsexual exclusivity.

The scales used to measure trust and love in the current study consisted of only three items each and were therefore limited in their measurement of these variables. Results of the study indicated that individuals whose nonsexual exclusivity perceptions fell short of their ideals displayed slightly lower trust and love of their partner than those whose perceptions met or exceeded their ideals. The future study will include a more robust measure of trust and love in order to determine the depth of these results.

The prediction that individuals whose perceptions fell short of their ideals would be increasingly likely to use violence against their partner as their attachment anxiety increased was unable to be tested properly. This was due in part to the low levels of physical violence perpetration reported by participants. As the use of physical violence becomes more and more unacceptable, individuals may be turning to other forms of aggression in order to maintain the desired level of proximity to the relationship partner. The future study will measure verbal aggression to determine whether its use is predicted by an interaction of nonsexual exclusivity ideal-perception consistency and attachment anxiety.

# APPENDIX B

## SUREVEY ITEMS, SOURCE, AND SCALE ALPHAS

| Item | Source |
|---|---|
| Nonsexual Exclusivity Ideals Scale (a= .86) | |
| In an IDEAL relationship… | |
| My partner would give up spending time with anyone except me. | |
| My partner would give up all of his/her other friends. | Boekhout et al., 2003 |
| My partner's friendships outside of our relationship would strengthen our relationship.* | Boekhout et al., 2003 |
| My partner's friendships outside of our relationship would limit the uniqueness and importance of our relationship. | Boekhout et al., 2003 |
| My partner would share all aspects of his/her life with me exclusively. | Boekhout et al., 2003 |
| My partner would turn only to me for emotional support during a difficult time. | |
| My partner would share happy events with me before anyone else. | |
| My partner would devote a majority of his/her leisure time to hanging out with me exclusively. | |
| My partner would not devote a large amount of leisure time to a hobby that he/she engaged in alone. | Hansen, 1985 |
| My partner would not regularly have lunch with a co-worker/classmate without me. | Hansen, 1985 |
| My partner would not regularly have a night out with his/her friends, playing cards or other types of games without me. | Hansen, 1985 |
| My partner would not set aside time for doing things with his/her family that I did not participate in. | Hansen, 1985 |
| My partner would not stay out late partying with his/her friends without me. | |
| My partner would not regularly have long study sessions with his/her classmates without me. | |
| My partner would have meaningful friendships with other people while in our relationship* | |
| *My partner would tell me secrets that he/she wouldn't tell anyone else.* | |
| *I would be able to cheer up my partner better than anyone else.* | |
| *When my partner goes away, he/she would miss me more than anyone else.* | |
| *My partner would enjoy talking with me more than anyone else* | |
| *My partner would rather spend time with me than anyone else.* | |
| *My partner would take time away from hanging out with his/her friends to spend time with me.* | |
| *My partner would not go to a movie that I wanted to see without me.* | |
| | |

| Item | Source |
|---|---|
| Nonsexual Exclusivity Perceptions Scale (a=.84) | |
| In my CURRENT relationship… | |
| My partner has given up spending time with anyone except me. | |
| My partner has given up all of his/her other friends. | Boekhout et al., 2003 |
| My partner's friendships outside of our relationship have strengthened our relationship.* | Boekhout et al., 2003 |
| My partner's friendships outside of our relationship have limited the uniqueness and importance of our relationship. | Boekhout et al., 2003 |
| My partner shares all aspects of his/her life with me exclusively. | Boekhout et al., 2003 |
| My partner turns only to me for emotional support during a difficult time. | |
| My partner shares happy events with me before anyone else. | |
| My partner devotes a majority of his/her leisure time to hanging out with me exclusively. | |
| My partner does not devote a large amount of leisure time to a hobby that he/she engages in alone. | Hansen, 1985 |
| My partner does not regularly have lunch with a co-worker/classmate without me. | Hansen, 1985 |
| My partner does not regularly have a night out with his/her friends, playing cards or other types of games without me. | Hansen, 1985 |
| My partner does not set aside time for doing things with his/her family that I do not participate in. | Hansen, 1985 |
| My partner does not stay out late partying with his/her friends without me. | |
| My partner does not regularly have long study sessions with his/her classmates without me. | |
| My partner has meaningful friendships with other people while in our relationship* | |
| *My partner tells me secrets that he/she doesn't tell anyone else.* | |
| *I am able to cheer up my partner better than anyone else.* | |
| *When my partner goes away, he/she misses me more than anyone else.* | |
| *My partner enjoys talking with me more than anyone else* | |
| *My partner would rather spend time with me than anyone else.* | |
| *My partner takes time away from hanging out with his/her friends to spend time with me.* | |
| *My partner does not go to movies that I want to see without me.* | |
| | |
| | |

| Item | Source |
|---|---|
| Perceived Relationship Quality Components (PRQC) (Global scale a=.87) | Fletcher et al., 2000b |
| Satisfaction subscale (a=.95) | |
| **How satisfied are you with your relationship?** | |
| How content are you with your relationship? | |
| How happy are you with your relationship? | |
| Commitment subscale (a=.96) | |
| **How committed are you to your relationship?** | |
| How dedicated are you to your relationship? | |
| How devoted are you to your relationship? | |
| Intimacy subscale (a=.88) | |
| **How intimate is your relationship?** | |
| How close is your relationship? | |
| How connected are you to your partner? | |
| Trust subscale (a=.90) | |
| **How much do you trust your partner?** | |
| How much can you count on your partner? | |
| How dependable is your partner? | |
| Passion subscale (a=.86) | |
| **How passionate is your relationship?** | |
| How lustful is your relationship? | |
| How sexually intense is your relationship? | |
| Love subscale (a=.94) | |
| **How much do you love your partner?** | |
| How much do you adore your partner? | |
| How much do you cherish your partner? | |
| | |
| *Dyadic Trust Scale* (α= .90) | Larzelere & Huston, 1980 |
| *My partner is primarily interested in his/her own welfare.** | |
| *There are times when my partner cannot be trusted.** | |
| *My partner is perfectly honest and truthful with me.* | |
| *I feel that I can trust my partner completely.* | |
| *My partner is truly sincere in his/her promises.* | |
| *I feel that my partner does not show me enough consideration.** | |
| *My partner treats me fairly and justly.* | |
| *I feel that my partner can be counted on to help me.* | |

| **Item** | **Source** |
|---|---|
| *Rubin's Love Scale* (a= .87) | Rubin, 1970 |
| *If my partner were feeling badly, my first duty would be to cheer him/her up.* | |
| *I feel that I can confide in my partner about virtually everything.* | |
| *I find it easy to ignore my partner's faults.* | |
| *I would do almost anything for my partner.* | |
| *I feel very possessive toward my partner.* | |
| *If I could never be with my partner, I would feel miserable.* | |
| *If I were lonely, my first thought would be to seek my partner out.* | |
| *One of my primary concerns is my partner's welfare.* | |
| *I would forgive my partner for practically anything.* | |
| *I feel responsible for my partner's well-being.* | |
| *When I am with my partner, I spend a good deal of time just looking at him/her.* | |
| *I would greatly enjoy being confided in by my partner.* | |
| *It would be hard for me to get along without my partner.* | |
| | |
| Conflict Tactics scale (CTS) physical aggression subscale (a=.84) | Straus, 1979 |
| You threatened to hit or throw something at your partner. | |
| You threw or smashed or kicked something. | |
| You threw something at your partner. | |
| You pushed, grabbed, or shoved your partner. | |
| You slapped your partner. | |
| You kicked, bit, or hit your partner with your fist. | |
| You hit or tried to hit your partner with something. | |
| You beat up your partner. | |
| You threatened your partner with a knife or gun. | |
| You used a knife or gun against your partner. | |
| | |
| *Test of Negative Social Exchange (TENSE*;a= .88) | Ruehlman & Karoly, 1991 |
| *I lost my temper with my partner.* | |
| *I yelled at my partner.* | |
| *I was angry with my partner.* | |
| *I was impatient with my partner.* | |
| *I nagged my partner.* | |
| *I disagreed with my partner.* | |
| *I took my partner for granted* | |
| *I took advantage of my partner.* | |
| *I was inconsiderate towards my partner.* | |

| **Item** | **Source** |
|---|---|
| *I ignored my partner's wishes or needs.* | |
| *I took my partner's feelings lightly* | |
| *I distracted my partner when he/she was doing something* | |
| *I was too demanding of my partner's attention* | |
| *I invaded my partner's privacy* | |
| *I prevented my partner from working on his/her goals* | |
| *I made fun of my partner.* | |
| *I laughed at my partner.* | |
| *I gossiped about my partner.* | |
| | |
| Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) | Brennan et al., 1998 |
| Attachment Anxiety subscale (a=.90) | |
| I worry about being abandoned. | |
| I worry a lot about my relationships. | |
| I worry that people won't care about me as much as I care about them. | |
| I worry a fair amount about losing close relationships. | |
| I often wish that other people's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for them. | |
| I often want to merge completely with people, and this sometimes scares them away. | |
| I worry about being alone. | |
| My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away. | |
| I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by others. | |
| Sometimes I feel that I force people to show more feeling and more commitment. | |
| I find that people don't want to get as close as I would like. | |
| I get frustrated when people are not around as much as I would like. | |
| When others disapprove of me, I feel really bad about myself. | |
| I do not often worry about being abandoned.* | |
| If I can't get others to show interest in me, I get upset or angry. | |
| When I'm not involved in a relationship, I feel somewhat anxious and insecure. | |
| I get frustrated if close others are not available when I need them | |
| I resent it when close others spend time away from me. | |
| Attachment Avoidance subscale (a=.92) | |
| I prefer not to show people how I feel deep down. | |
| I am very uncomfortable being close to people. | |
| Just when people start to get close to me, I find myself pulling away. | |
| I get uncomfortable when people want to be very close to me. | |
| I don't feel comfortable opening up to others. | |
| I want to get close to people, but I keep pulling back. | |

| Item | Source |
|---|---|
| I am nervous when people get too close to me. | |
| I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with others.* | |
| I try to avoid getting too close to people. | |
| I find it relatively easy to get close to others.* | |
| I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on others. | |
| I tell close others just about everything.* | |
| I feel comfortable depending on others.* | |
| I usually discuss my problems and concerns with others.* | |
| I don't mind asking others for comfort, advice, or help.* | |
| It helps to turn to others in times of need.* | |
| I turn to others for many things, including comfort and support.* | |
| I prefer not to be too close to others. | |

* item is reverse coded

Note. Italicized items were not included in the exploratory study (see Appendix A)

# APPENDIX C

# SURVEY

This survey is part of a research project being conducted by a University of Pittsburgh graduate student and faculty advisor. We are interested in determining the role of ideals in college students' romantic relationships. You must be 18 years of age or older in order to complete this survey. The survey should take about 1 hour and you will receive 1 hour of research credit towards your Introduction to Psychology research requirement. If you have any questions you may contact Melinda Ciccocioppo at mmc57@pitt.edu. This is an anonymous survey. Please do not write your name anywhere on the forms. Your personal responses will not be identified in any way. Your participation is voluntary. Feel free to skip any items you do not wish to answer. Please use the scantron to record your responses.

1. What is your gender?
   A= Male
   B= Female

2. What is your age?
   A= 18-20
   B= 21-23
   C= 24-26
   D= 27-30
   E= Over 30

3. What is your ethnicity?
   A= Black or African American
   B= Hispanic/Latino(a)
   C= Asian
   D= Caucasian/White
   E= Multiracial

4. What is your parent's highest level of education? Indicate the level of education for the parent who has the most education.
   A= Some high school
   B= High School Diploma
   C= Some college
   D= Bachelors Degree
   E= Advanced Degree

5. Which of the following best describes your current relationship status?
   A= Married or engaged
   B= Living with boyfriend/girlfriend
   C= Currently dating someone (but not living with him/her)
   D= Not currently involved in a romantic relationship (but have been in the past)
   E= Never been involved in a romantic relationship

If you are currently involved in a romantic relationship, answer questions 6, 7, and 8 about your current relationship. If you are not currently involved in a relationship, answer questions 6, 7, 8, and 9 based on your most recent romantic relationship.

6. How committed is/was this relationship?
    A= Casual (free to see other people)
    B= Exclusive (expected to date only each other)

7. How long have you been/were you involved in this relationship?
    A= Less than 1 month
    B= 1 month to less than 4 months
    C= 4 months to less than 8 months
    D= 8 months to less than 1 year
    E= 1 year or more

8. What is/was the gender of your partner?
    A= Male
    B= Female

9. If you are not currently dating someone, how long ago did your last relationship end? If you are currently dating someone or have never been in a relationship, you may skip this question.
    A= Less than 1 month
    B= 1 month to less than 4 months
    C= 4 months to less than 8 months
    D= 8 months to less than 1 year
    E= 1 year or more

Continue on to the next page.

Imagine what your IDEAL romantic relationship would be like. Using the scale below, please rate how much you agree/disagree with each of the following statements about your IDEAL romantic relationship.

A= Strongly disagree
B= Disagree
C= Neither agree nor disagree
D= Agree
E= Strongly agree

In an IDEAL relationship…

10. My partner would give up spending time with anyone except me.
11. My partner would give up all of his/her other friends.
12. My partner's friendships outside of our relationship would strengthen our relationship.
13. My partner's friendships outside of our relationship would limit the uniqueness and importance of our relationship.
14. My partner would share all aspects of his/her life with me exclusively.

15. My partner would turn only to me for emotional support during a difficult time.
16. My partner would share happy events with me before anyone else.
17. My partner would devote a majority of his/her leisure time to hanging out with me exclusively.
18. My partner would not devote a large amount of leisure time to a hobby that he/she engaged in alone.
19. My partner would not regularly have lunch with a co-worker/classmate without me.

20. My partner would not regularly have a night out with his/her friends, playing cards or other types of games without me.
21. My partner would not set aside time for doing things with his/her family that I did not participate in.
22. My partner would not stay out late partying with his/her friends without me.
23. My partner would not regularly have long study sessions with his/her classmates without me.
24. My partner would have meaningful friendships with other people while in our relationship

25. My partner would tell me secrets that he/she wouldn't tell anyone else.
26. I would be able to cheer up my partner better than anyone else
27. When my partner goes away, he/she would miss me more than anyone else.
28. My partner would enjoy talking with me more than anyone else
29. My partner would rather spend time with me than anyone else.

30. My partner would take time away from hanging out with his/her friends to spend time with me.
31. My partner would not go to a movie that I wanted to see without me
32. My partner would devote a majority of his/her leisure time to hanging out with me.

Continue to imagine what your IDEAL romantic relationship would be like. Using the scale below, please rate how much you agree/disagree that your IDEAL partner would NOT do the following:

A= Strongly disagree
B= Disagree
C= Neither agree nor disagree
D= Agree
E= Strongly agree

In an IDEAL relationship, my partner would NOT…

33. Hug an opposite sex friend.
34. Kiss an opposite sex friend on the cheek
35. Kiss an opposite sex friend on the lips
36. Have sexual intercourse with an opposite sex friend.
37. Have sexual intercourse with a stranger whom he/she will never see again.

38. Date other people while in a relationship with me.
39. Have casual sex with other people while in a relationship with me.
40. Have sexual fantasies about someone he/she knew.
41. Have sexual fantasies about a TV or movie star whom he/she will never meet.
42. Flirt with an opposite sex friend.
43. Flirt with an opposite sex stranger.

Continue on to the next page.

Now think about your CURRENT romantic relationship. If you are not currently involved in a romantic relationship, think about your last romantic relationship (before it ended). Rate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements about your CURRENT (or last) romantic relationship.

A= Strongly disagree
B= Disagree
C= Neither agree nor disagree
D= Agree
E= Strongly agree

In my CURRENT (or most recent) relationship…
44. My partner has given up spending time with anyone except me.
45. My partner has given up all of his/her other friends.
46. My partner's friendships outside of our relationship have strengthened our relationship.
47. My partner's friendships outside of our relationship have limited the uniqueness and importance of our relationship.
48. My partner shares all aspects of his/her life with me exclusively.

49. My partner turns only to me for emotional support during a difficult time.
50. My partner shares happy events with me before anyone else.
51. My partner devotes a majority of his/her leisure time to hanging out with me exclusively.
52. My partner does not devote a large amount of leisure time to a hobby that he/she engages in alone.
53. My partner does not regularly have lunch with a co-worker/classmate without me.

54. My partner does not regularly have a night out with his/her friends, playing cards or other types of games without me.
55. My partner does not set aside time for doing things with his/her family that I do not participate in.
56. My partner does not stay out late partying with his/her friends without me.
57. My partner does not regularly have long study sessions with his/her classmates without me.
58. My partner has meaningful friendships with other people while in our relationship

59. My partner tells me secrets that he/she doesn't tell anyone else.
60. I am able to cheer up my partner better than anyone else.
61. When my partner goes away, he/she misses me more than anyone else.
62. My partner enjoys talking with me more than anyone else.
63. My partner would rather spend time with me than anyone else.

64. My partner takes time away from hanging out with his/her friends to spend time with me.
65. My partner does not go to movies that I want to see without me.
66. My partner devotes a majority of his/her leisure time to hanging out with me

Continue to think about your CURRENT romantic relationship. If you are not currently involved in a romantic relationship, think about your last romantic relationship (before it ended). Rate how much you agree/disagree that your CURRENT (or last) partner does NOT do the following:

A= Strongly disagree
B= Disagree
C= Neither agree nor disagree
D= Agree
E= Strongly agree

In my CURRENT (or most recent) relationship, my partner has NOT…

67. Hugged an opposite sex friend.
68. Kissed an opposite sex friend on the cheek
69. Kissed an opposite sex friend on the lips
70. Had sexual intercourse with an opposite sex friend.
71. Had sexual intercourse with a stranger whom he/she will never see again.

72. Dated other people while in a relationship with me.
73. Had casual sex with other people while in a relationship with me.
74. Had sexual fantasies about someone he/she knew.
75. Had sexual fantasies about a TV or movie star whom he/she will never meet.
76. Flirted with an opposite sex friend.
77. Flirted with an opposite sex stranger.

Continue on to the next page.

Continue to think about your CURRENT (or last) relationship. Please use the following scale to rate your CURRENT (or last) partner and relationship on each item. If you are not currently in a relationship, rate your last partner and relationship (before it ended) on each item.

A= Not at all
B= Very little
C= Moderately
D= A good deal
E= Extremely

78. How satisfied are you with your relationship?
79. How content are you with your relationship?
80. How happy are you with your relationship?
81. How committed are you to your relationship?
82. How dedicated are you to your relationship?

83. How devoted are you to your relationship?
84. How intimate is your relationship?
85. How close is your relationship?
86. How connected are you to your partner?
87. How much do you trust your partner

88. How much can you count on your partner?
89. How dependable is your partner?
90. How passionate is your relationship?
91. How lustful is your relationship?
92. How sexually intense is your relationship?

93. How much do you love your partner?
94. How much do you adore your partner?
95. How much do you cherish your partner?

Continue on to the next page.

Continue to think about your CURRENT romantic relationship. If you are not currently involved in a romantic relationship, think about your last romantic relationship (before it ended). Rate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements about your CURRENT (or last) romantic relationship.

A= Strongly disagree
B= Disagree
C= Neither agree nor disagree
D= Agree
E= Strongly agree

96. My partner is primarily interested in his/her own welfare.
97. There are times when my partner cannot be trusted.
98. My partner is perfectly honest and truthful with me.
99. I feel that I can trust my partner completely.
100. My partner is truly sincere in his/her promises.

101. I feel that my partner does not show me enough consideration.
102. My partner treats me fairly and justly.
103. I feel that my partner can be counted on to help me.
104. If my partner were feeling badly, my first duty would be to cheer him/her up.
105. I feel that I can confide in my partner about virtually everything.

106. I find it easy to ignore my partner's faults.
107. I would do almost anything for my partner.
108. I feel very possessive toward my partner.
109. If I could never be with my partner, I would feel miserable.
110. If I were lonely, my first thought would be to seek my partner out.

111. One of my primary concerns is my partner's welfare.
112. I would forgive my partner for practically anything.
113. I feel responsible for my partner's well-being.
114. When I am with my partner, I spend a good deal of time just looking at him/her.
115. I would greatly enjoy being confided in by my partner.
116. It would be hard for me to get along without my partner.

Continue on to the next page.

Continue to think about your CURRENT (or last) relationship. No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree on major decisions, get annoyed about something the other person does, or just have spats or fights because they're in a bad mood or tired or for some other reason. Please use the scale below to indicate how often each of the following has occurred during a fight with your relationship partner in the past year. If you are not currently involved in a relationship, indicate how often the following occurred in the final year of your last relationship.

A= Never
B= Once
C= Two to Five times
D= Six to ten times
E= More than ten times

117. You threatened to hit or throw something at your partner.
118. You threw or smashed or kicked something.
119. You threw something at your partner.
120. You pushed, grabbed, or shoved your partner.
121. You slapped your partner.

122. You kicked, bit, or hit your partner with your fist.
123. You hit or tried to hit your partner with something.
124. You beat up your partner.
125. You threatened your partner with a knife or gun.
126. You used a knife or gun against your partner.

127. Your partner threatened to hit or throw something at you.
128. Your partner threw or smashed or kicked something.
129. Your partner threw something at you.
130. Your partner pushed, grabbed, or shoved you.
131. Your partner slapped you.

132. Your partner kicked, bit, or hit you with his/her fist.
133. Your partner hit or tried to hit you with something.
134. Your partner beat you up.
135. Your partner threatened you with a knife or gun.
136. Your partner used a knife or gun against you.

Continue on to the next page.

Continue to think about your CURRENT (or last) relationship. Please use the scale below to indicate how often you have engaged in each of the following behaviors in the past month. If you are not currently involved in a relationship, indicate how often the following occurred in the final month of your last relationship.

A= Not at all
B= Once
C= One to two times a week
D= Three to five times a week
E= About every day

137. I lost my temper with my partner.
138. I yelled at my partner.
139. I was angry with my partner.
140. I was impatient with my partner
141. I nagged my partner.

142. I disagreed with my partner.
143. I took my partner for granted.
144. I took advantage of my partner.
145. I was inconsiderate towards my partner.
146. I ignored my partner's wishes or needs.

147. I took my partner's feelings lightly.
148. I distracted my partner when he/she was doing something important.
149. I was too demanding of my partner's attention.
150. I invaded my partner's privacy.
151. I prevented my partner from working on his/her goals.

152. I made fun of my partner.
153. I laughed at my partner.
154. I gossiped about my partner.

Continue on to the next page.

Continue to think about your CURRENT (or last) relationship. Please use the scale below to indicate how often your partner has engaged in each of the following behaviors in the past month. If you are not currently involved in a relationship, indicate how often the following occurred in the final month of your last relationship.

A= Not at all
B= Once
C= One to two times a week
D= Three to five times a week
E= About every day

155. My partner lost his/her temper with me.
156. My partner yelled at me.
157. My partner was angry with me.
158. My partner was impatient with me.
159. My partner nagged me.

160. My partner disagreed with me.
161. My partner took me for granted.
162. My partner took advantage of me.
163. My partner was inconsiderate towards me.
164. My partner ignored my wishes or needs.

165. My partner took my feelings lightly.
166. My partner distracted me when I was doing something important.
167. My partner was too demanding of my attention.
168. My partner invaded my privacy.
169. My partner prevented me from working on my goals.

170. My partner made fun of me.
171. My partner laughed at me.
172. My partner gossiped about me.

Continue on to the next page.

Please take a moment to think about how you GENERALLY feel in IMPORTANT REALTIONSHIPS in your life. Think about your past and present relationships with people who have been especially important to you, such as romantic partners and close friends. Using the scale below, respond to each statement in terms of how you GENERALLY feel in these relationships.

A= Strongly disagree
B= Disagree
C= Neither agree nor disagree
D= Agree
E= Strongly agree

173. I prefer not to show people how I feel deep down.
174. I worry about being abandoned.
175. I am very comfortable being close to people.
176. I worry a lot about my relationships.
177. Just when people start to get close to me, I find myself pulling away.

178. I worry that people won't care about me as much as I care about them.
179. I get uncomfortable when people want to be very close to me.
180. I worry a fair amount about losing close relationships.
181. I don't feel comfortable opening up to others.
182. I often wish that other people's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for them.

183. I want to get close to people, but I keep pulling back.
184. I often want to merge completely with people, and this sometimes scares them away.
185. I am nervous when people get too close to me.
186. I worry about being alone.
187. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with others.

188. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.
189. I try to avoid getting too close to people.
190. I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by others.
191. I find it relatively easy to get close to others.
192. Sometimes I feel that I force people to show more feeling and more commitment.

193. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on others.
194. I do not often worry about being abandoned.
195. I prefer not to be too close to others.
196. If I can't get others to show interest in me, I get upset or angry.
197. I tell close others just about everything.

Continue to think about how you GENERALLY feel in IMPORTANT REALTIONSHIPS in your life. Think about your past and present relationships with people who have been especially important to you, such as romantic partners and close friends. Using the scale below, respond to each statement in terms of how you GENERALLY feel in these relationships.

A= Strongly disagree
B= Disagree
C= Neither agree nor disagree
D= Agree
E= Strongly agree

198. I find that people don't want to get as close as I would like.
199. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with others.
200. When I'm not involved in a relationship, I feel somewhat anxious and insecure.
201. I feel comfortable depending on others.
202. I get frustrated when people are not around as much as I would like.

203. I don't mind asking others for comfort, advice, or help.
204. I get frustrated if close others are not available when I need them
205. It helps to turn to others in times of need.
206. When others disapprove of me, I feel really bad about myself.
207. I turn to others for many things, including comfort and reassurance.
208. I resent it when close others spend time away from me.

209. Did you find this survey interesting?

A= Yes
B= No

Thank you for your participation!

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