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Relationship Satisfaction Among Married or Cohabitating Heterosexual and Homosexual Couples in the State of Hawaii

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2012

Abstract

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M.A., Caldwell College, 2001

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore relationship satisfaction among adult, cohabitating heterosexual and homosexual dyads. The United States has the highest rate of divorce among all the industrialized nations. Divorce has been linked to declines in mental and physical health, financial and social instability, unhealthy patterns of over-compensation, and higher levels of separation among the offspring of such couples. Hawaii has the fourth lowest rate of divorce in the country, despite also having the one of the highest rates of interethnic marriage worldwide. Researchers of relationship satisfaction and minority issues have yet to explore the correlates of relationship satisfaction and the veracity of attachment theory, the leading theory addressing couples' interactions, in this subpopulation. This study was grounded in Bowlby's attachment theory. The Dyadic Adjustment Scale was used to measure relationship satisfaction as it interacted with 3 independent variables: each couple's attachment style combination, as measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships scale; place of nativity and rearing; and parental separation status. A factorial analysis of variance indicated statistically significant attachment and parental separation status main effects as well as a statistically significant attachment by parental separation status interaction effect among 160 diverse couples. Place of nativity and rearing did not have a statistically significant impact on relationship satisfaction however. Establishing effective couples' relationship education programs can promote social change by reducing relationship dissolution and enhancing physical, mental, and financial well-being among couples and their offspring.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated with unending gratitude to my husband, Jimmy. As I strove to fulfill this childhood dream of mine, your humor, tenderness, and support has been unwavering. You have been nearly tireless in your commitment to relieve me of my household duties, resolute in commandeering the boys' extracurricular activities, and downright saintly when cheerfully representing us both at social gatherings these past five years. You are more than amazing; you are the love of my life. To our two young, charismatic sons, Dominic and Alex, thank you for allowing Mommy this opportunity of enrichment. Thank you for playing in the other room, for visiting me at my computer desk with small trinkets of love, for spontaneous hugs, and for stories capturing the day's events. I pray my small contributions to the world will make it all the more lovely for you to enjoy. To Frances Welsh, my very best friend since our freshman year at Caldwell College, I want to honor you, your wisdom, and your own ever-evolving personal journey. You have been an inspiration, a joy, and a constant source of security. To Sara, Daniel, Dawson, Jene, Kamila, Kris, and Kelvin, you each have brought something so unique to this shared doctoral process. The time we spent together laughing, crying, encouraging, and supporting one another since as early as 2007 has left an indelible mark on my Walden memories. You will be forever cherished and esteemed. To Charlotte and Daniel Flavin, my in-laws, thank you for your lifelong emphasis on positive social change and all your support during these years of study. Your actions have been a beacon to so many, here and abroad. Last and most of all, this dissertation is especially dedicated to my parents, Marie and Letterio Rando, who applauded my love of learning

since those earliest days in grammar school. I am so glad that fate brought you closer to me, Dad. Mom, I know you're beaming from Heaven. I only wish we could have celebrated this grand accomplishment together. With your sacrifice, commitment, and honesty, you and Dad have always been the epitome of class and integrity. You are my heroes and I love you both with all my heart. To all of you I say, "If I have seen further, it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants." – Sir Isaac Newton

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I'd also like to thank my friends, coworkers, and colleagues who have cheered me on from the sidelines all these years and the members of this small island community for participating in what must have seemed like an interesting endeavor. I am honored to call Maui my home and hope to continue serving this precious population for many decades to come.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Bowlby's (1969/1982, 1973, 1980) attachment theory has emerged as the most widely accepted construct of human relationships in Western thought over the past 4 decades (Lee, Grossman, & Krishnan, 2008). Over 1,000 articles on adult dyads have been published since researchers, beginning with Ainsworth (1989), Hazan and Shaver (1987), and Weiss (1982), announced that the same secure, anxious, and avoidant attachment styles seen in infant-caregiver dyads could be seen operating between adult romantic partners (Feeney, 2008). However, its application to all cultures has been presumed true without rigorous testing (Lee et al., 2008). Despite an even greater influx of non-Western immigrants to the United States since the 1965 Immigration Act and a high incidence of divorce, American researchers continue to study adult attachment theory by sampling predominantly Caucasian, middle class, two parent households on the US mainland (Akiyama, 2008). There is, therefore, a gap in the literature concerning attachment theory and multicultural populations in off-shore locations.

The purpose of the present study was to explore attachment theory and relationship satisfaction among adult couples who represent cultural variants of the United States population: cohabitating heterosexual and homosexual dyads living in the state of Hawaii. Although this topic will be more fully explored in Chapter 2, Hawaiian culture has been shaped largely by Polynesian and Asian influence. Where attachment theorists exalt independence and exploration from a secure base, for example, local

islanders incorporate Eastern values such as conformity, anticipating another's unspoken needs, and keeping loved ones in close proximity throughout the lifespan (Rothbaum, 2000). With its unusually low rate of divorce and high rate of interethnic marriage, Hawaii's couples represent a subpopulation whose idiosyncrasies merit closer examination. To minimize these elemental differences en route to assessing relationship satisfaction is to risk pathologizing what are otherwise healthy adaptations.

The American Psychological Association (APA; 2003) has long recognized the power of psychologists to influence human behavior, organizational change, and public policy. As such, the onus is on the membership to explore the ways in which European-American-based constructs interact with ethnic minority groups (as well as biracial, multiethnic, and multiracial groups); thus ensuring valid application and ethical practice. The urgency to examine this interplay stems not only from an increasingly diverse US population, but also takes its lead from the APA's guiding principles of competency, respect for others' rights, and social justice (APA, 2002). For this research, it is hoped that a measure of social justice will be advanced by sampling heterosexual and homosexual minority couples living in the state of Hawaii in an attempt to explore the correlates of relationship satisfaction in a multicultural, off-shore context. By identifying the factors which may be correlated with Hawaii's unusually low rate of divorce, interventions can be designed to support couples living both here and abroad. More information regarding the groups to be sampled will follow in Chapter 2. The impetus of

this study, the serious consequences of relationship dissolution, will be delineated using the only demographic widely researched: married, Caucasian heterosexuals.

Background of the Study

Relationship dissolution is an eventual reality for the majority of married couples in America (Coontz, 2006). The likelihood that a first marriage will end in divorce before the 40th anniversary is 67%; of those, half will occur within the first 7 years (Gottman & Silver, 1999). The statistics for second and subsequent marriages ending in dissolution occur at a rate of 77% (Gottman & Silver, 1999). This high proportion reflects a social prerogative that has changed dramatically over modern times; one in which the norm evolved from zero tolerance regarding divorce, to requiring a party to blame, to no-fault divorces, to marriage-friendly predivorce counseling (Adams & Coltrane, 2006; Coontz, 2006). With such momentum in support of marital dissolution, there are real-world costs to be considered, particularly when abuse and conflict do not precede the decision to end the marriage.

There is a greater likelihood that divorced adults will fall victim to mental illness, suicide, homicide, disease, and poor health (Carrere, Buehlman, Gottman, Coan, & Ruckstuhl, 2000). These factors may be related to increased levels of "social isolation, lower standard of living (particularly for women), [and] increased difficulty raising children" (Rye, Folck, Heim, Olszewski, & Traina, 2004, p. 32). When polled 10 years after their divorce, 30% of male respondents and 40% of female respondents stated that they still harbored feelings of resentment and hostility toward their former spouses; many

even after their own subsequent remarriages (Rye et al., 2004). Chronic hostility is related to a decline in mental and physical well-being and is particularly challenging for the non-initiators of divorce who are said to perceive their lives as uprooted by the decision of their partners (Baum, 2007). This is not to minimize the psychological hardship endured by initiators; they reported experiencing separation guilt versus rejection, admit becoming hypervigilant about condemnation, and recall appealing to their loved ones with a degree of overindulgence that they were not be able to maintain (Baum, 2007). Moreover, both parties may experience sudden changes in their social networks and the grief associated with the loss of an ideal if not a partner (Oygard, 2003).

Economic difficulties further exacerbate the problem. Andress, Borgloh, Brockel, Giesselmann, and Hummelsheim (2006) noted a postdivorce drop in income for US women of 24% and a drop for men of 6%. Lyons and Fisher (2006) found that those who divorce were more likely to default on a loan, file for bankruptcy, and score lower than expected on credit ratings. The authors also discovered that many married women do not have their own credit history; instead, they accrue their credit history under their husbands' names and, upon divorcing, are denied credit or are given the bare minimum at exorbitant interest rates (Lyons & Fisher, 2006). Many that do end up divorced are socioeconomically disadvantaged to begin with, meaning they have lower levels of education, are renting their homes, and earning less money even prior to the split with their spouses (Strohschein, 2005). For these individuals, divorce may be akin to going from bad to worse, financially speaking.

Another compelling reason to address the high rate of marital dissolution is the toll it takes on the health and well-being of the children involved. This is especially true when parental, post divorce conflict and visitation irregularity are high, and frequency of contact with the nonresident parent is low (Fabricius & Luecken, 2007). In cases such as this, chronic parental discord and disrupted visitation lead to lower self-esteem and increased tardiness, truancy, school conflict, promiscuity, drug use, and aggression – especially in sons and particularly in the first 18 months after divorce for both genders (Fabricius & Luecken, 2007). The link between the aforementioned variables and anxiety, depression, and antisocial behavior in children arises when children feel overwhelmingly vulnerable to abandonment on both a physical and emotional level (Strohschein, 2005; Troxel & Matthews, 2004). Conditions such as these indeed occur in children prior to divorce when parents are generally unhappily married (Strohschein, 2005), but hit a peak with the addition of separation disruption, financial turmoil, and limited resources once the divorce is finalized (Lyons & Fisher, 2006). This, in retrospective reports, is correlated with long-term, serious health conditions in the children; a medical scenario that costs the family and society much in the way of mental and physical support services (Fabricius & Luecken, 2007).

Lastly, adult children of divorce dissolve their marriages at higher rates than those whose parents never divorced, particularly when the parents who divorced were in low conflict marriages (Amato & DeBoer, 2001). In order to measure the prevalence of either high-conflict or low-conflict precursors of divorce, Amato and Hohmann-Marriott (2007)

analyzed the longitudinal reports of 509 couples involved in Wave I (married couples that were interviewed between 1987-1988) and Wave 2 (re-interviews of by-then divorced couples between 1992-1994) of the National Survey of Families and Households. They found that only half of the divorced couples based their decision to split on matters of conflict; rather, the results indicated that the other half of couples who ultimately divorced were the adult children of parents who had divorced.

One way to conceptualize the high rate of marital dissolution is by acknowledging that modernization has raised the bar on expectations in the USA and abroad (Bodenmann et al., 2006). It is no longer the case that women are satisfied simply with a wage earning husband. Instead, college students of both genders who were recently polled by Cherlin (2004) described marriage as an opportunity for deep, emotional bonding and self-actualization; a state of affairs termed romantic love. Additionally, the increased numbers of single divorcees available in America as well as a relaxed view of intercourse provide greater incentive to dabble in dating for those who were once unsatisfactorily wed (Amato & Hohmann-Marriott, 2007). The American and Western European fervor regarding romantic love only came about in the 1960s (Amato & Hohmann-Marriott, 2007; Bodenmann et al., 2006), though the impact of this prerogative has persisted in those countries experiencing economic growth and stability, low unemployment rates, greater opportunities for advanced education, a female workforce, ease of divorce, lenient religiosity, and a social structure that emphasizes individual versus collectivist values (Bodenmann et al., 2006).

Data detailing the intimate relationships of heterosexual Caucasians abound, with a number of the more serious consequences of failed marriages noted above; however, the problem remains that research focusing on cohabitating, heterosexual and homosexual couples native to remote, island locations does not exist. Even in the small handful of studies examining relationship satisfaction among homosexual couples, all have sampled Caucasians with a single exception wherein a large group of African-Americans was surveyed (Peplau & Spalding, 2003). There is, therefore, a gap at the juncture of relationship satisfaction and couples from heterogeneous populations. More specifically, no research assessing the validity of attachment theory on the relationship satisfaction of committed, romantic dyads has been conducted using island samples. To assert then that attachment theory applies to all of humanity is as yet unfounded.

Statement of the Problem

The research problem addressed in this study is a fundamental lack of understanding regarding which factors co-occur with relationship satisfaction among unions in Hawaii. Despite having the fourth lowest rate of divorce in the nation, there is little known about the correlates of relationship satisfaction among married or cohabitating couples living in the state of Hawaii. Considering the majority of heterosexuals nationwide between the ages of 25 and 44 are married or cohabitating (for women, 62% and 8%, respectively; for men, 59% and 10%, respectively) and one third of those in their first marriage will divorce before their tenth anniversary (Goodwin,

Mosher, & Chandra, 2010), couples both outside of and within Hawaii may benefit from knowing the correlates of the state's low divorce rate.

Additionally, the veracity of attachment theory has yet to be tested in interethnic couples living in the Hawaiian Islands. This is a problem as it can only be assumed that Hawaii-based couples are similar to their mainland counterparts. Greenman, Young, and Johnson (2009) acknowledged that little to no research on minority, intercultural unions exists regarding the application of Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy – one of the most successful couples therapy models to date and one which is grounded in attachment theory. This dearth of knowledge represents a significant barrier to evidence-based practice for couples' therapists in Hawaii who rely on the principles of attachment theory when treating clients from divorced and intact families. In light of the present divorce rate and the impact of relationship dissolution on wellbeing, systematic research on an interethnic, couples-based therapeutic model is long overdue.

Purpose of the Study

Given the dearth of empirical information regarding the interplay between attachment theory and Hawaii's unusually low rate of divorce and high rate of interethnic marriage, the purpose of this quantitative, nonexperimental study was to examine whether mean group differences in relationship satisfaction, the dependent variable, exist among Hawaii-based couples who vary in terms of three independent variables: attachment style combination (Secure, Insecure, or Mixed), place of nativity and rearing (Hawaii or Other), and parental separation status (Together or Other).

Research Questions

1. Is there a statistically significant attachment style main effect on relationship satisfaction, measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) scale and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii?

2. Is there a statistically significant nativity/rearing main effect on relationship satisfaction, measured by the demographic questionnaire and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii?

3. Is there a statistically significant parental separation status main effect on relationship satisfaction, measured by the demographic questionnaire and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii?

4. Are there any statistically significant attachment style by nativity/rearing by parental separation status interaction effects on relationship satisfaction, measured by the ECR, the demographic questionnaire, and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii?

Hypotheses

$H_0$1: There is not a statistically significant attachment style main effect on relationship satisfaction, measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) scale and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii.

$H_1$1: There is a statistically significant attachment style main effect on relationship satisfaction, measured by the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) scale and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii.

$H_0$2: There is not a statistically significant nativity/rearing main effect on relationship satisfaction, measured by the demographic questionnaire and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii.

$H_1$2: There is a statistically significant nativity/rearing main effect on relationship satisfaction, measured by the demographic questionnaire and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii.

$H_0$3: There is not a statistically significant parental separation status main effect on relationship satisfaction, measured by the demographic questionnaire and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii.

$H_1$3: There is a statistically significant parental separation status main effect on relationship satisfaction, measured by the demographic questionnaire and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii.

$H_0$4: There are no statistically significant attachment style by nativity/rearing by parental separation status interaction effects on relationship satisfaction, measured by the ECR, the demographic questionnaire, and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii.

$H_1$4: There are statistically significant attachment style by nativity/rearing by parental separation status interaction effects on relationship satisfaction, measured by the ECR, the demographic questionnaire, and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii.

Theoretical Base

Bowlby's (1988) attachment theory, the theoretical model guiding this research, has been cited in over 10,000 journal articles to explore personality development and the ways individuals bond with primary caregivers, lovers, friends, and significant others (Cassidy & Shaver, 2008). Key concepts include secure, anxious, or avoidant styles of attachment based on long-term exposure to a loving, unpredictable, or disinterested (or even abusive) caregiver, respectively. More about this theory will be addressed in Chapter 2. For the purposes of this study, attachment theory was used to identify the predominant attachment style of partners in committed, romantic dyads living in the state

of Hawaii. It was expected that the dependent variable, relationship satisfaction, will be significantly greater among couples where both partners have a secure attachment style (coded as Secure-Secure). Such a correlation was anticipated given the Secure-Secure partners' ease with physical closeness, perception of the other as a safe refuge, and use of the romantic relationship as a secure foundation from which to explore the world (Bowlby, 1969/1982).

Another key component of Bowlby's (1988) attachment theory used in this study is the concept of continuity. Continuity has been applied to personality development to describe the mental and emotional representations, or internal working models (IWMs), people form of themselves and others as they attempt to meet their attachment needs over time (Bowlby, 1969/1982, 1973, 1980). IWMs are said to be intergenerational in scope, as they color individuals' predictions, interpretations, and interactions with others (Bowlby, 1988). For the purposes of this study, continuity was used to assess whether the separation status of each respondent's parents is significantly correlated with the respondent's current relationship satisfaction. It was expected that the dependent variable, relationship satisfaction, would be significantly higher for those whose parents had not separated. Such a correlation was anticipated given the influence of IWMs over time on memory, beliefs, goal-setting, and problem-solving (Collins, Guichard, Ford, & Feeney, 2004).

Operational Definitions of Key Terms

African American: An individual who is descended from any of Africa's Black racial groups (e.g., Kenyan, Nigerian, or Haitian) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002) and indicated on this study's demographic questionnaire that they are primarily "Black/African American."

American Indian and Alaska Native: An individual who is descended from North America's, South America's, or Central America's tribal nations, retains affiliation with those communities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002), and indicated on this study's demographic questionnaire that they are primarily "American Indian/Alaskan Native."

Asian: An individual who is descended from the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002) and indicated on this study's demographic questionnaire that they are primarily "Asian."

Anxious attachment style: The mean anxiety score on the ECR ranging from 1 (low anxiety) to 7 (high anxiety) indicating the participant's general fear of rejection and abandonment (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998).

Avoidant attachment style: The mean avoidance score on the ECR ranging from 1 (*low avoidance*) to 7 (*high avoidance*) indicating the participant's general discomfort with closeness and depending on others (Brennan et al., 1998).

Attachment style: A score on the ECR indicating whether a respondent is predominantly secure, anxious, or avoidant when bonding with a significant other (Brennan et al., 1998).

Caucasian: An individual who is descended from Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002) and indicated on this study's demographic questionnaire that they are primarily "White/Caucasian."

Continuity: The influence of attachment experiences over time and across generations. For the purposes of this study, continuity was examined via the divorce status of each participant's parents as indicated on the demographic questionnaire.

Heterosexual: An individual who is presently in a romantic relationship with a person of the opposite sex and indicated on this study's demographic questionnaire that their sexual orientation is "Heterosexual."

Hispanic or Latino: An individual who is descended from countries once conquered and peopled by Spain (e.g., Latin America, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Cuba) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002) and indicated on this study's demographic questionnaire that they are primarily "Hispanic/Latino."

Homosexual: An individual who is presently in a romantic relationship with a person of the same sex and indicated on this study's demographic questionnaire that their sexual orientation is "Homosexual."

Insecure attachment style combination: A combined score of anxious-anxious, anxious-avoidant, or avoidant-avoidant attachment styles as measured by the ECR. No numerical value is associated with this categorical label, rather the word "Insecure" will serve to indicate that this is the resultant attachment style combination (Brennan et al., 1998).

Local: For the purposes of this study, an individual who was born, raised, and is living in the state of Hawaii, versus only individuals who claim a Hawaiian bloodline and indicated on this study's demographic questionnaire that they are primarily "Local."

Mixed attachment style combination: A combined score of secure-anxious or secure-avoidant attachment styles as measured by the ECR. No numerical value is associated with this categorical label, rather the word "Mixed" will serve to indicate that this is the resultant attachment style combination (Brennan et al., 1998).

Multiracial/Multiethnic: An individual who is descended from two or more distinct races or ethnicities and chooses to list them (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002) on this study's demographic questionnaire.

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: An individual who is descended from Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands and indicated on this study's demographic questionnaire that they are primarily "Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander."

Relationship satisfaction: A score on the DAS (Spanier, 1976) ranging between 0 and 151 that indicates the degree to which a respondent has adjusted to life with his or her romantic partner (Graham, Liu, & Jeziorski, 2006). Higher total scores are associated with higher levels of relationship satisfaction, whereas those below 97.5 indicate relationship distress (Christensen et al., 2004).

Secure attachment style: A score on the ECR indicating that the mean scores for both dimensions (anxiety and avoidance) are low (Brennan et al., 1998).

Secure attachment style combination: A combined score of secure-secure attachment styles as measured by the ECR. No numerical value is associated with this categorical label, rather the word "Secure" will serve to indicate that this is the resultant attachment style combination (Brennan et al., 1998).

Assumptions

It was assumed that the DAS and the ECR questionnaire are psychometrically sound assessment tools for identifying relationships satisfaction and couples' attachment styles combinations. Research has found both these instruments to be valid and reliable for the populations being studied in the present research. It was also assumed that individuals who responded to the study's solicitations were residents of the state of Hawaii, at least 21 years old, fluent in reading and writing English, and were not overly representative of some subset of the population, thereby introducing a sampling bias. It was further assumed that the subjects who volunteered would complete the questionnaires honestly and thoroughly.

Limitations

Potential weaknesses of this study included any language barriers that may prevent some participants from fully understanding and, therefore, accurately responding to the test items. The results of this study were also limited to correlation versus causation and responses to self-report questionnaires may have been skewed by memory effects and conscious or unconscious impression management.

Delimitations

The scope of the study was limited to adult, heterosexual and homosexual couples who had lived together for a period of at least 2 years and were living in the state of Hawaii at the time of data collection. The state's longtime and widespread acceptance of multiracial, multiethnic unions (Fu, 2006; Fu, Tora, & Kendall, 2001) is unique and may facilitate relationship satisfaction in a unique way. To be specific, there are not the same social stigmas prohibiting blended families in Hawaii as there are in mainland communities. As such, the generalizability of this study may be limited to similar populations.

Significance of the Study

With a better understanding of the factors associated with Hawaii's unusually low rate of divorce, social service and health care providers both here and abroad will be better able to mitigate the far-reaching physical, mental, financial, and social consequences of relationship dissolution. Poor attachment experiences during the formative years were correlated with stunted childhood development (Berlin & Appleyard, 2007), limitations in the expression of giftedness (Wellisch, 2010), lowered academic performance in school-aged children (Kennedy, 2008), and the incidence of insecurely attached adults in North America (Barnett & Vondra, 1999). Conversely, researchers have also shown that children reared by parents endorsing high levels of relationship satisfaction are more likely to have higher self-esteem (Amato, 1986) and to

form subjectively satisfying romantic relationships (Amato & Sobolewski, 2001) than their peers from families with distressed parental dyads.

Due to the fact that young people grow up to rear children in ways very similar to their own experiences (Berlin & Appleyard, 2007), the social significance of understanding the factors that support high relationship satisfaction is clear. The findings of the present study were expected to contribute to positive social change by informing preventative measures for use by couples, researchers, and clinicians who are eager to enhance relationship satisfaction both in Hawaii and elsewhere. Consequently, the rates of separation and divorce may be reduced because some of the factors that sustain mutually satisfying relationships have been identified and adopted.

Summary and Transition

For more than 20 years, social scientists have been applying the findings from Bowlby's 1940s experiments with infant-caregiver dyads to romantic relationships; in so doing, they found that the same secure, avoidant, and anxious-ambivalent attachment styles were observable in adult dyads as well (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). In more recent years, these descriptors have been reconceptualized as secure (Secure-Secure), mixed (Secure-Anxious or Secure-Avoidant), and insecure (Anxious-Anxious, Anxious-Avoidant, or Avoidant-Avoidant), and have been strongly associated with predicting marital satisfaction and longevity (Collins & Read, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). While a great deal of data has been gathered on Caucasian heterosexual couples, conspicuously less has been gathered on homosexual couples and couples of either sexual orientation

from a variety of ethnic minority populations. Given the state's unusually low divorce rate as well as its uniquely high incidence of interracial and interethnic marriage, this study will address that dearth of information.

Chapter 2 is a review of the literature pertaining to attachment theory (including divorce continuity), adult relationship satisfaction, non-Western interpersonal values, Hawaii-based couples, the DAS, and the ECR questionnaire. This chapter also reviews the particulars of the methods used in prior studies.

Chapter 3 is a description of the methodology used to assess the present research questions and data gathered. Chapter 3 is an exploration of the statistical analyses employed in comparing relationship satisfaction and attachment style, the research design, justification for the approach employed, sampling procedures, instruments used, and the ways in which the participants' rights were protected.

Chapter 4 is a demonstration of the appropriate use of the measurement tools and data analyses, delineates the descriptive statistics and results of the statistical analysis, indicates whether the findings supported or failed to support the study's hypotheses, and provides tables and figures wherein the data can be reviewed quickly. Moreover, this chapter is a discussion of observed consistencies, inconsistencies, and alternative interpretations, and provides a succinct summary relevant to the research questions and hypotheses.

Chapter 5 is an overview of the purpose and design of the study, an interpretation of the findings, the implications for positive social change, and recommendations for

future action and further study. Finally, this chapter ends with a clear and compelling message to the reader.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

At present, there is little known about the correlates of Hawaii's unusually low rate of divorce and how cultural factors among the largely Asian and Polynesian population here may influence relationship satisfaction. It is possible that differences in attachment styles, parental separation status, and other factors related to nativity and rearing may explain the low rate of divorce, but there is no research currently available that specifically explores successful minority relationship dynamics. Moreover, there were no researchers who simultaneously examined the relationship satisfaction of couples who represent heterosexual, homosexual, married, and cohabitating couples; subpopulations which are at once similar to and different from the married, middle class, Caucasian couples typically sampled. While it was hypothesized that attachment style would be positively correlated with relationship satisfaction in rates similar to the state's mainland counterparts, it was unclear which factors would account for the difference when couples who were born, raised, and living in Hawaii were compared to couples who relocated to the islands but were born and raised elsewhere.

Attachment theory was the theoretical basis for this study. Literature regarding this topic as it relates to attachment theory throughout the lifespan and relationship satisfaction among heterosexual, homosexual, and multiethnic couples was reviewed. Research on Hawaiian island culture including non-Westernized interpersonal values was

explored. Finally, the literature review concluded with contemporary research methodology in this field.

An online, digital search of the literature was performed using the psychological, medical, social science, and human science databases of PscyINFO, SocINDEX, PsycARTICLES, PsycBOOKS, SAGE Online Journals, Academic Search Premier, Mental Measurements Yearbooks, Psychiatry Online, LGBT Life, and ProQuest Central. The terms used to conduct the review of literature included *relationship satisfaction, attachment, attachment theory, cohabitation, marriage, divorce, same-sex couples, minority couples, multiethnic couples, interethnic couples, Hawaii couples, children*, and *meta-analysis*, whether individually or in combination with one another. All empirically-based, peer-reviewed publications in the English language examining these variables were included in the literature review, with preference for those which were published within the last 5 years.

Attachment Theory

Attachment during Infancy, Childhood, and Adolescence

Bowlby (1958) departed from the prevailing psychoanalytic tradition of his day when he postulated that attachment, driven by evolutionary forces, was at the heart of an individual's social and personality development. "Human infants, like infants of other species, are preprogrammed to develop in a socially cooperative way; whether they do so or not turns in high degree on how they are treated" (Bowlby, 1988, p. 9). An ethological proclamation such as this sparked a firestorm of debate then, and remains one of the most

widely researched and widely accepted psychological constructs ever proposed even now (Cassidy & Shaver, 2008).

According to his theory, attachment is an emotional bond between caregiver and care receiver that functions to ensure the survival of the helpless infant and, as an extension, the species as a whole. Crying, cooing, laughter, and other forms of early communication, he asserted, are used by the infant to maintain proximity and elicit care giving behaviors from the primary supporter; typically the mother (Bowlby, 1958). With her on-going provision of nutrition, warmth, interest, and proximity, the infant gains reassurance that caregivers will consistently and accurately meet its needs and that the world is a safe place in which to live and explore (Bowlby, 1958). Over time, mental and emotional representations of this dynamic develop (Bowlby, 1958). Termed internal working models (IWMs), they include the infant's preferred attachment patterns (styles), a sense of the extent to which the infant can rely upon others to meet their needs, and, as a result, a belief about the extent to which they themselves are worthy of such care (Bowlby, 1969/1982, 1979). For better or worse, IWMs allow the individual to imagine how future encounters will likely unfold based on previous experiences.

Bowlby (1969/1982) asserted that children develop one of three attachment styles in reaction to their mothers' predominant interpersonal approach: secure, anxious/ambivalent, or avoidant/dismissive. The first of these, secure attachment, develops when the infant's needs are consistently and accurately met, thus facilitating healthy emotion regulation and social ease. The second, anxious/ambivalent attachment,

develops when the infant's needs are inconsistently met, thus engendering imbalanced emotion regulation and social uncertainty (Bowlby, 1958). The last of these, avoidant/dismissive attachment, develops when the infant's bids are chided or seldom met, thus spurring feelings of anger and detachment regarding caregivers and social disinterest in general. With these developmental pathways in mind, Bowlby asserted that the most crucial period for attachment formation were the years spanning infancy through adolescence.

Expanding attachment theory to significant others in the child's life reveals the presence of secondary attachment figures which can be comprised of fathers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, siblings, coaches, confidantes, and the like (Ainsworth, 1991; Bowlby, 1969). This is not to say that mothers are always the primary attachment figures, neither is it to say that all close relationships provide the requisite attachment needs from which one can experience the world; namely physical closeness, a safe refuge, and a secure foundation (Bowlby, 1969/1982). Rather, individuals can preferentially form multiple attachment bonds, each serving similar purposes to varying degrees of satisfaction (Tancredy & Fraley, 2006). Over the life span, romantic partners migrate upward along a theoretical attachment hierarchy while the original primary caregiver retains some degree of preeminence (Doherty & Feeney, 2004; Fraley & Davis, 1997).

Regardless of who fulfills the lead and supporting roles, it is the quality of those relationships which shapes the IWMs associated with social acumen, personality, and

emotion regulation (Thompson, 2003). To illustrate, positive infant-mother attachments have been attributed to healthy patterns of sibling interaction. Volling and Belsky (1992) conducted a longitudinal study and noted less sibling conflict 5 years later among children who, as infants, had been found to be securely attached to their mothers. In two other studies, communication between siblings was deemed positive in households where infant-mother attachment was found to be secure (Booth, Rubin, & Rose-Krasnor, 1998; Teti & Ablard, 1989).

When friendships were examined longitudinally as part of the Minnesota Study of Risk and Adaptation from Birth to Adulthood, teenagers who were deemed securely attached as infants made friends with peers who had also been deemed securely attached; moreover, they did so in greater numbers than their insecurely attached counterparts (Sroufe, 2005). Booth-LaForce, Oh, Kim, and Rubin (2006) also conducted a longitudinal study and found that securely attached children made more friends, had more stable relationships, had fewer disciplinary problems, and were held in higher esteem than peers who were not securely attached. At about the same time, Sroufe found that young children with an anxious attachment to their primary caregiver at home appeared significantly needier than their classmates at school. Because their inhibited, tear-prone gestures were interpreted as immature and excessive by their peers, these anxiously attached children were unsuccessful in eliciting support in both domains. Similarly, children who were aggressive and rejecting with their primary caregiver at home were shown to minimize caregiver and peer importance across settings. These children

demanded autonomy even at school, in effect intimidating those around them and preventing others from becoming emotionally closer.

While attachment theory addresses both the strengths and weaknesses seen among youth as they interact across settings, some researchers have proposed alternate explanations for the success of securely attached children. Cassidy and Berlin (1999) asserted that the parents of these children afford them more opportunities to develop social skills and make friends, they spend more time exploring prosocial attitudes and mannerisms, and they themselves serve as exemplary role models of social competence. These points notwithstanding, it remains plausible that parents who go to these measures are attentive, responsive, and positive in their interactions with their offspring; characteristics which indeed lay the foundation for a secure attachment style.

Attachment in Adulthood

The transmission of attachment styles and IWMs from one's family-of-origin experiences across the lifespan and into adulthood is referred to as continuity. For example, infants who were found to be securely attached using the Strange Situation Procedure (SSP; Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978) and who were followed longitudinally, were also found to be securely attached as children, adolescents, and then later as adults (Sroufe, 2005). Anxious attachment during childhood was positively correlated with internalizing disorders later during adulthood, while dismissive attachment during childhood was positively correlated with externalizing disorders during adulthood (Abela et al., 2005; Burgess, Marshall, Rubin, & Fox, 2003; Essau,

2004; Guttmann-Steinmetz & Crowell, 2006). Transmission of attachment style also was found to occur intergenerationally, with the highest rates of concordance among Secure-Secure infant-mother dyads (van IJzendoorn, 1995). It appears that both intrapersonal and intergenerational continuity are most consistent in secure, stable, and non-stressful environments, with middle class families having these attributes in the highest numbers (Crittenden, 2008; Hautamaki, Hautamaki, Neuvonen, & Maliniemi-Piispanen, 2010).

While researchers such as those mentioned above explored the myriad ways attachment styles remained stable across time and measurement tools, still others asserted that attachment styles could transform. Feeney, Alexander, Noller, and Hohaus (2003) noted that attachment styles could change under the pressure of new roles, Hammond and Fletcher (1991) found that they could change with exposure to new partners, and Baldwin, Keelan, Fehr, Enns, and Koh-Rangarajoo (1996) discovered that attachment styles could transform in response to situational cues. The components of attachment styles that purportedly make them influential across time was also examined and found to encompass memory, beliefs, goal-setting, and strategizing (Collins et al., 2004). For instance, mate selection may turn on positive or negative memories of past relationships, situations can be construed in ways that confirm one's beliefs, and decision-making as well as problem-solving may emphasize approach or avoidance patterns. These early researchers still sought to explore the persistence of childhood attachment styles into adulthood.

It was not until Hazan and Shaver (1987) offered a closer look at romantic love alone through the lens of attachment theory that this particular line of research into the adult experience gained traction. Weiss (1982) and Ainsworth (1989) had already proposed that sexual dyads were the adult equivalent of the infant-caregiver duo in the sense that romantic partners also: (a) preferred the company of their mates, (b) balked at the idea of lengthy or permanent separation, (c) used the felt security of the relationship to explore the world around them, and (d) returned for comfort in times of distress. Just as in infancy, secure, anxious, and avoidant attachment styles were observed operating between romantic partners and, over time, these attachment styles were assessed using an ever-burgeoning collection of semi-structured interviews, self-report questionnaires, journal methodologies, and customized laboratories (Feeney, 2008).

One measure that came to prominence was the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) inventory (Brennan et al., 1998), a self-report scale based on a factor-analysis of pre-existing tools. The developers integrated the two key concepts – anxiety and avoidance – that attachment researchers since Ainsworth had honed in on. By providing respondents with a longer inventory and dimensional item choices, it was hoped that honest, unbiased responding would be increased. Since its inception, the ECR has been used in hundreds of studies; has been translated into several languages including Chinese (Mallinckrodt & Wang, 2004), French (Lafontaine & Lussier, 2003), Italian (Picardi, Bitetti, Puddu, & Pasquini, 2000), Japanese (Nakao & Kato, 2004), and Spanish

(Alonso-Arbiol, Balluerka, & Shaver, 2007); and has been found to be reliable and valid when used with same-sex couples (Matte, Lemieux, & Lafontaine, 2009).

The longstanding appeal attachment theory has enjoyed can be attributed, in large part, to its ability to explain both healthy and unhealthy variants of behavior across the lifespan (Feeney, 2008). In this model, requests for reassurance and encouragement will be positively and consistently met (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005) and a feeling of underlying security will be reinforced (Collins et al., 2004). Secondary attachment strategies such as personal distancing, turning inward, addictions, and affective and personality disorders emerge when these attempts are met by inconsistent, unavailable, or even abusive attachment figures (Brown & Wright, 2003). By examining these primary and secondary strategies, one can see the continuity of early attachment styles as they relate to perceptions and expectations throughout the lifespan (Carlson, Sroufe, & Egeland, 2004; Sroufe, 2005).

Continuity and Divorce

Attachment theory has also been used to explore why the adult children of divorced and intact families go on to have similar romantic experiences themselves. In longitudinal studies of adolescents and young adults whose parents had divorced or separated during childhood, researchers found that the incidence of developing an anxious attachment style by the age of 18 years increased significantly (Beckwith, Cohen, & Hamilton, 1999; Brennan & Shaver, 1998; Kilman, Carranza, & Vendemia, 2006; Lewis, Feiring, & Rosenthal, 2000; Ozen, 2003), even among those children who had

been securely attached as infants (Waters, Merrick, Treboux, Crowell, & Albersheim, 2000). When interviewed as adults, a number of researchers found that insecurely attached individuals (that is, anxiously or avoidantly attached individuals) came from non-intact families more often than participants who came from intact families (McCabe, 1997; Mickelson, Kessler, & Shaver, 1997; Riggs & Jacobvitz, 2002; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2004; Summers, Forehand, Armistead, & Tannenbaum, 1998).

In attempting to explain the mechanisms at work, Amato (2000) and others (Amato & Sobolewski, 2001; Bowlby, 1969/1982, 1979; Page & Bretherton, 2001) hypothesized that the process of relationship dissolution creates an imbalance in the attachment dynamic for both children and adults. They found that the sample children of non-intact parents experienced a sudden and enduring deficit in feeling safe and secure related to (a) a decrease in parental responsiveness and accessibility, (b) being substituted for the missing adult partner as an attachment figure, and (c) by witnessing unhealthy secondary attachment strategies (e.g., their parent's personal distancing, emotional numbing, overindulgence, etc.). In studying the impact on future romantic relationships, it was found that a significant number of adult children of divorced or separated parents were disenchanted with the idea of long-term, romantic relationships (Sirvanli-Ozen, 2005) and were more apt to dissolve their own relationships than those who came from intact families (Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Glenn & Kramer, 1987; McLanahan & Bumpass, 1988; Wolfinger, 2000). Hetherington (2003) conducted the Virginia Longitudinal Study of Divorce and Remarriage and found a strong positive correlation

between family of origin conflict, divorce, and subsequent relationship dysfunction among the adult children, while decreased closeness and an avoidance of even brief romantic interludes was found by Ensign, Scherman, and Clark (1998) and Knox, Zusman, and DeCuzzi (2004), respectively.

Since all children of divorce and parental separation are not destined for romantic hardship, attachment theory can be employed to better understand the moderating variables. Shulman, Scharf, Lumer, and Maurer (2001) noted that parental proximity, consistency, and warmth safeguarded children of divorce from undue anxiety. Advancing the topic further, researchers have begun to apply the accumulated knowledge of attachment style combinations to the divorce process in order to predict and differentially protect those most vulnerable to familial disruption; that is to say, the children caught between the disputing duos (Finzi, Cohen, & Ram, 2000). In this regard, Finzi et al. recommended counseling in order to facilitate communicating the emotions surrounding the divorce, particularly when one or both partners endorse a secure attachment style. For those couples wherein both parties are insecurely attached (anxious or avoidant), counseling is not necessarily recommended; rather, intervention from social services and the courts is recommended (Finzi et al.).

Prevalence of Attachment Styles Using the Three-Dimensional Model of Attachment

When Ainsworth et al. (1978) empirically tested Bowlby's theory using the Strange Situation, they identified three categories of attachment: secure, anxious, and avoidant. Later, when Hazan and Shaver (1987) applied these principles to adult

romantic couples, they found the same three styles to be in operation, however, they argued for the existence of a dimensional rather than categorical approach. From this perspective, individuals completing self-report questionnaires (such as the ECR mentioned above) simply endorsed more items of a certain descriptor than others and were, therefore, deemed to be predominantly (rather than exclusively) securely, anxiously, or avoidantly attached.

Among those who are said to be securely attached, gratifying life experiences with proximity-seeking and establishing a reliable base culminate in the belief that the self is special, valuable, and capable of connecting with others. Comprising 56% of the original Hazan and Shaver (1987) sample, securely attached adults individually described their most important romantic relationships as "especially happy, friendly, and trusting" (p. 515). They were able to remain accepting and supportive of their partners over longer periods of time, with the average length of their romantic relationship being 10.02 years, and the average rate of divorce being 6%. According to more recent studies, securely attached individuals have claimed greater relationship satisfaction, communication skills, mental health, emotion regulation, and trust in their partners (Mikulincer, Shaver, Sapir-Lavid, & Avihou-Kanza, 2009). In a couples-based study of attachment style combinations and relationship satisfaction, MacLean (2001) found that, among his sample of married, Caucasian dyads, 38% had a secure-secure pairing, 25% had a secure-avoidant pairing, and 12% had a secure-anxious pairing. When broken down, the figures in this sample represent a 56.5% majority of securely attached individuals; a percentage

nearly identical to Hazan and Shaver's findings 14 years earlier. More importantly, the couples endorsing secure-secure attachment style combinations in MacLean's study also endorsed the greatest relationship satisfaction (wives mean DAS score = 120.51; husbands mean DAS score: 118.50), while those with at least one securely attached partner ranked second and third place in terms of greatest relationship satisfaction.

Among those who are said to be anxiously attached, inconsistency and negativity have beset their interpersonal lives resulting in possessiveness and a lack of intimacy, warmth, self-confidence, and camaraderie (Feeney, 2008). Comprising 19% of the original Hazan and Shaver (1987) sample, anxiously attached persons individually reported experiencing intense emotional swings, sexual attraction, jealousy, and fear of abandonment. The average length of their romantic relationships was 4.86 years and their divorce rate was calculated to be 10%. In MacLean's (2001) couples-based study, 15% of the couples had an anxious-avoidant pairing, 12% had a secure-anxious pairing, and 4% had an anxious-anxious pairing. When broken down into individual reports, these figures amount to 17.5% of that sample; a proportion comparable to Hazan and Shaver's findings 14 years earlier. In terms of relationship satisfaction, the dyads in MacLean's study where at least one partner was securely attached faired better than those dyads where the attachment style combination was anxious-anxious or anxious-avoidant.

The last group in the three-dimensional conceptualization of attachment styles is comprised of those who are avoidantly attached. These individuals have been found to engage in relationships wherein their partners' needs are regularly dismissed and game-

playing (e.g., taunting) is evident (Feeney, 2008). They comprised 25% of the Hazan and Shaver (1987) sample and endorsed test items which indicated extreme reluctance to become intimate. Similar to their anxious counterparts, they, too, cited emotional swings as well as extreme jealousy. The average length of their romantic relationships was 5.97 years and their divorce rate was calculated to be 12%. In MacLean's (2001) couples-based study, 25% had a secure-avoidant pairing, 15% of the couples had an anxious-avoidant pairing, and 6% had an avoidant-avoidant pairing. When broken down into individual reports, these figures amount to 26% of that sample; a percentage nearly identical to Hazan and Shaver's findings 14 years earlier. MacLean's findings also indicate that relationship satisfaction was the lowest, and to a significant degree, for couples whose attachment style combination was avoidant-avoidant, with anxious-avoidant dyads and secure avoidant dyads suffering as well.

Relationship Satisfaction

Elements of Relationship Satisfaction

Defining what one means when speaking of relationship satisfaction has been the focus of thousands of studies in the social sciences for roughly three quarters of a century. Hamilton (1929) spearheaded one of the first published efforts, albeit in a clinical setting, to measure marital satisfaction and found 45% of couples there were experiencing serious maladjustment. Terman (1938) later found the majority of randomly selected respondents from a community sample were very happy with the state of their union; an account in line with most published research tapping the general population since that time.

Attempting to identify the constituent parts of relationship satisfaction, Makinen and Johnson (2006) summarized earlier findings that point to spontaneous acts of affection, reciprocity, and support with which each partner's mental and physical well-being are intertwined. These authors also noted that self-reports of secure dyadic bonding included words like trust and fidelity in addition to being open to new experiences, personal growth, and self-expression (Makinen & Johnson, 2006). Amato, Booth, Johnson, and Rogers (2007) found positive interactions, consistency, support, conflict resolution, alignment, and commitment to be key components of mutually satisfying adult relationships, while participants in a study conducted by Collins and Feeney (2000) noted support-seeking and care-giving transactions. Kaslow and Robison (1996) interviewed multinational couples who had been married between 25 and 46 years.

These couples reported similar attributes of a happy marriage but also included terms such as adaptability, appreciation, spirituality, social connection, responsibility, and shared time.

The above noted researchers, as well as others found that the majority of couples who reported being happily married freely mentioned attributes of their union which reflect the four attachment goals specified earlier: proximity seeking, separation protest, exploring from a secure base, and returning for comfort (Banse, 2004; Feeney, 2002; Meyers & Landsberger, 2002; Roberts & Greenberg, 2002). In studying proximity seeking and separation protest in adults, commitment and relationship stability were identified as important dimensions of a satisfactory relationship (Duemmler & Kobak, 2001; Simpson, 1990). Green and Campbell (2000) and Hazan and Shaver (1990) noted that the development of hobbies, working toward important personal goals, developing a profession, and traveling amounted to adult exploration. Bowlby (1979) asserted that one's exploration at any age is facilitated by knowing that one or more trusted people will come to one's aid if difficulties should arise. When interpersonal difficulties do arise, O'Connell, Corcoran, and Mallinckrodt (2000) noted that happily married individuals were more likely to problem solve contentious matters in a way that honored both their and their partners' unique perspectives than those who were unsatisfied with their relationship.

Researchers who examined the longevity of relationships have revealed information on relationship satisfaction as well. Whereas secure-secure partners

endorsed the highest levels of trust, camaraderie, and commitment (Levy & Davis, 1988; Simpson, 1990), Kirkpatrick and Davis (1994) and Feeney (2004) found that dyads of anxious women and avoidant men remain stable, albeit unhappily so, due to the former's inexhaustible need to manage the relationship and the latter's desire to avoid angry exchanges. Consequently, the degree of relationship satisfaction cannot be extrapolated on simply the number of years two adults have been in a relationship together; instead the quality of the relationship must be assessed independently.

Relationship Satisfaction and Attachment Theory

The exploration of what relationship satisfaction is in the context of treating adult, romantically involved couples has generated a number of theoretical perspectives. While some focus on skills acquisition and behavior modification (e.g., behavior marital therapy) and still others focus on reevaluating the way spouses think about one another (e.g., cognitive marital therapy), there are those which seek to increase partners' insight and empathy for one another via the expression of one's vulnerabilities in session (Baucom, Shoham, Mueser, Daiuto, & Stickle, 1998). However, among even these there is a single, empirically supported approach which is based upon attachment theory: emotionally focused therapy (EFT).

Developed by Susan Johnson while completing her doctoral internship during the 1980s and in conjunction with her thesis advisor, Leslie Greenberg, EFT was designed to differ from its predecessors in two important ways (Johnson & Greenberg, 1985). First, dependency upon one or more significant others is not pathologized at any stage in the

life span; rather, it is viewed as a survival strategy hard-wired into the human brain over the course of evolution (Johnson & Greenman, 2006). On-going reassurance that one's partner will respond in a timely, sensitive manner quells innate fears of abandonment and isolation (Johnson & Greenman, 2006). Such a position stands in stark contrast to theories which tout individuation and self-reliance as the pinnacle of development in a mature dyad (Johnson & Greenman, 2006).

Second, secure bonding as espoused by attachment theorists and EFT practitioners is believed to contribute powerfully to emotion regulation (Johnson & Greenman, 2006). When working with couples during counseling sessions, EFT therapists explain that strife between the two partners can itself generate turbulent feelings of disconnection. Termed separation distress, partners who respond without consideration to the consequences of their actions may employ hypo- or hyper-activated attachment strategies (Johnson & Greenman, 2006). When too many bids for attachment go unmet and the secure bond is perceived as being threatened, a dejected partner may attempt to lessen the emotional toll by minimizing the importance of the relationship and avoiding future attempts at connecting (Johnson & Greenman, 2006). This type of response constitutes hypo-activation and, over time, results in feelings of alienation (Johnson & Greenman, 2006). On the other hand, responses to attachment distress marked by increasingly anxious, clingy, coercive, and demanding behavior are seen as hyper-activation and contribute to the other partner feeling smothered (Johnson & Greenman, 2006).

By assisting partners with emotion regulation, couples learn to maintain affectional bonds with their significant other and still have their attachment needs met. This in turn increases trust and responsiveness, the two primary goals of EFT (Johnson & Greenberg, 1998). In a literature review of couple and family interventions, Baucom et al. (1998) found EFT to be an empirically validated approach to increasing relationship adjustment and satisfaction; one with a very large effect size of 1.3. Johnson, Hunsley, Greenberg, and Schindler (1999) noted relationship adjustment improvement rates between 70-73% for distressed couples engaged in this type of treatment.

An International Movement: Enhancing Relationship Satisfaction

The matter of establishing and maintaining a healthy relationship has become an veritable movement, with classes on marriage and relationship education (MRE) and couples relationship education (CRE) springing up across the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, Australia, and Norway (Halford, Markman, & Stanley, 2008).
In the United States, the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 has provided $150 million of funding each year to programs targeting marriage fortification under the Healthy Marriage Initiative (Administration for Children and Families [ACF], 2008). The impetus for this decentralized initiative is based upon numerous findings that children raised in two-biological-parent households fare better in terms of health (e.g., physical, mental, and emotional), behavior (e.g., criminal and sexual), education, economics, and interpersonal relationships than those children raised by single parents (ACF, 2008; Harknett, 2009). Moreover, adults in mutually satisfying relationships are likelier to

experience longer lives (Ross, Mirowsky, & Goldsteen, 1990), better health (Waite & Gallagher, 2000), greater financial stability (Waite & Gallagher, 2000), and require less medical attention (Prigerson, Maciejewski, & Rosenheck, 2000) and financial assistance (Thomas & Sawhill, 2005).

According to research conducted by the authors of the Healthy Marriage Initiative (ACF, 2008), healthy marriages are mutually enriching, beneficial to all members of the family unit, and are committed to growth, effective communication, and respectful conflict resolution. As such, MRE and CRE courses are predominantly skills-based and seek to enhance communication, displays of affection, support-giving, accurate appraising, goal setting, and implementing positive change (Halford & Wilson. 2009). That said, the requirements for state and local agencies applying for grant money under the Initiative stipulate that the curriculum they develop must include a domestic violence protocol. Whiting, Bradford, Vail, Carlton, and Bathje (2009) suggested that such a protocol include measures ensuring that attendees from the community understand the scope of relationship abuse, have a means of disclosing abuse privately, and are assisted by knowledgeable staff when planning for safety. In this way, attendees who are victims of abuse are not inadvertently discouraged from taking measures to leave their abusive relationships.

Although the Healthy Marriage Initiative was only enacted in 2005, interest in MRE dates back to the 1930s (Stahmann & Salts, 1993) and outcome studies on MRE and couples' communication since 1975 have numbered over 100 (Blanchard, Hawkins,

Baldwin, & Fawcett, 2009). A recent meta-analysis in this vein revealed significant post-treatment and follow-up improvements in communication (*d*=.36 to .54) and relationship satisfaction (*d*=.24 to .36) for participants (Hawkins, Blanchard, Baldwin, & Fawcett, 2008), while a separate but similar meta-analysis indicated that MRE has positive, long-term effects on both non-distressed and distressed couples (Blanchard et al., 2009). In most of these decentralized programs, MRE and CRE curricula focus on increasing communication, conflict resolution, and attachment skills (Halford & Wilson, 2009) with delivery models that vary from small group, face-to-face interventions to at-home or even web-based interventions (Halford & Wilson, 2009).

Cohabitating Heterosexual Couples

Data gathered during the year 2000 United States census indicated that more than 3.7 million households are headed by unwed, cohabitating partners (Schoenborn, 2004). Among heterosexual couples who later married in the 1990s, 50% to 70% reported that they lived together first (Stanley, Witton, & Markman, 2004). When surveyed, most of the couples who opted for cohabitation over marriage stated that they wanted to spend more time with their partner (Rhoades, Stanley, & Markman, 2009) and that moving in together was something that "just happened" (Lindsay, 2000; Manning & Smock, 2005). Although a mere 15% were motivated to cohabitate with the express intent to test the relationship first (Rhoades et al., 2009), Glenn (2005) found that the majority of heterosexual survey participants thought cohabitation to be a good premarital test of compatibility. Moreover, current trends in support of cohabitation among young,

heterosexual adults are buoyed by their beliefs that living together first will enhance marital satisfaction later (Johnson et al., 2002). Unfortunately, there is a large body of data that finds just the opposite to be true. According to a review of the literature by Rhoades et al., premarital cohabitation is consistently associated with higher rates of divorce, less marital satisfaction, poorer communication, increased violence and conflict, and a greater likelihood for infidelity among wives. Clearly, more CRE research and intervention efforts need to be aimed at couples who cohabitate.

Cohabitating Homosexual Couples

In terms of homosexual couples, the right to marry has been and continues to be severely limited by geography and federal law, such that same-sex couples who have married in the six eligible states are nevertheless excluded from the more than 1,400 benefits that accompany government-sanctioned, heterosexual marriage (Brownworth, 2009). Consequently, the inclusion of same-sex partnerships in psychological studies as well as in federally funded CRE programs has been seriously lacking despite the American Psychological Association's (APA) call for the legalization of same-sex marriage (APA, 2010). Peplau and Spalding (2003) argue that research on same-sex relationships would dispel myths and challenge negative stereotypes, provide more information on the ways gender interacts with relationship satisfaction, and illuminate whether existing relationship theories can be generalized to same-sex partnerships.

What is already known is that many same-sex couples seek the same legal protections and societal support that married heterosexuals have long enjoyed (Lanutti,

2008). It is no wonder when one considers the positive psychological benefits that accompany legal recognition of intimate relationships. Riggle, Rostosky, and Horne (2010) found that committed, same-sex couples living in jurisdictions that formally recognize the legitimacy of their unions reported significantly lower levels of stress, perceived homophobia, and depression and greater meaning in their lives than homosexual individuals who were either single, dating, or in otherwise committed relationships in other, less accepting jurisdictions.

Peplau and Spalding (2003) conducted a literature review and found that the relationship satisfaction of committed, same-sex partners paralleled that of matched heterosexual couples, even when longitudinal studies were examined. They also noted that relationship satisfaction in this population was higher when partners share similar core beliefs, contribute equitably to household duties, value dyadic attachment, maintain fidelity, were low in neuroticism, have satisfying sex lives, and have a relationship free of violence (Peplau & Spalding, 2003).

Similarities between same-sex and other-sex couples can be found at the demographic level as well. Romero, Rosky, Badgett, and Gates (2008) noted that, in the state of Hawaii, 1% of households are headed by same-sex couples, with 373 gay or lesbian partnerships in the county of Maui alone. Although individual gay and lesbian people in the state tend to earn less money than their single heterosexual counterparts, the percentage of same-sex to heterosexual households with a single wage earner (30%, 29%), the presence of one disabled partner (26%, 28%), and combined median incomes

($65,090 versus $65,000) are nearly identical. While only 21% of same-sex couples are raising children under the age of 18 years, the average family in both circumstances includes two children and the average household income differs by barely more than $2,000. Thus, it has been said that they are using similar financial resources to accomplish the same end (Romero et al., 2008). These resounding similarities, among others, should prompt social scientists to formulate ways to include all sexual orientations in their CRE studies and intervention programs.

Hawaii's Interracial and Interethnic Couples

Of all the states in the nation, Hawaii's residents individually sport the greatest ethnic diversity (US Census Bureau, 2010) and its couples represent one of the highest rates of exogamy worldwide (Nordyke, 1989; Fu & Heaton, 1997). Whereas intermarriage was banned by anti-miscegenation laws in the US mainland until the 1960s (Novkov, 2008), records of interracial relationships between the first British explorers and Hawaiian natives date back to the early 1800s (Usita & Poulsen, 2003). At about the same time, New England Congregationalist missionaries arrived on the islands by boat at the behest of the Hawaiian royal family (Miyares, 2008). As this was the case, they were immediately granted social status above the common people, however, they resisted assimilation (Miyares, 2008). In addition to foregoing the regional gestures and colloquialisms, they refused to use the customary exchange of breath to greet the locals, and so they were called *haoles* (without breath) (Miyares, 2008). The term, then and

now, represents an unwelcomed attitude of superiority and distance and is often, but not always, used disparagingly (Miyares, 2008).

Fortunately, many of the grown children of the first American and European settlers did adapt to their new homes and were considered *kama'aina*, meaning children of the land (Miyares, 2008). A few of these kama'aina haole families gained both economic and political clout, with some aspiring to use large tracts of the land to industrialize sugar cane and pineapple production (Miyares, 2008). In order to do so, though, field laborers were needed to supplement the dwindling native populace (Usita & Poulsen, 2003). When immigrants from China, Portugal, Japan, the Philippines, and Korea were ushered in, the new arrivals were provided housing in camps clustered near the plantations on which they worked (Usita & Poulsen, 2003). Over time, a pidgin language developed and workers from the various cultures eventually began contributing to the local economy in new ways; ways that ultimately promoted cross-cultural interdependence (Usita & Poulsen, 2003). This interdependence, combined with the close proximity of the citizenry, the geographical isolation of the islands relative to the mainland, and the limited pool of eligible partners, resulted in Hawaii's unparalleled rate of interracial and interethnic coupling (Usita & Poulsen, 2003). According to the latest US Census data, only 26.99% of married individuals and 45.6% of same-sex individuals presently living on the Hawaiian Islands are of only Caucasian descent (Romero et al., 2008).

While 20 different ethnic groups have settled in the Hawaiian Islands since those early years, four in particular constitute 75% of the state's population: Japanese, Hawaiians, Filipinos, and Caucasians (Fu, 2000) with Asians and Pacific Islanders comprising the overwhelming majority (Miyares, 2008). This reversal in cultural minority/majority positioning represents a unique phenomenon within the United States. Miyares studied the "local culture" in Hawaii and found that a distinct, situational ethnicity had formed among the peoples over the generations. Those who were born and raised in Hawaii, despite country of ancestral nativity, as well as relative newcomers who choose to assimilate are considered "local." These residents can be distinguished from more recent transplants by their ability to switch between Hawaii Creole English and Standard English, Anglo and non-Anglo mannerisms, and by showing the requisite aloha spirit. In practice, this "aloha spirit" is conceptualized as an attitude of camaraderie, sharing, and reciprocity; an attitude that enhances both harmony and survival in a remote island location (Miyares, 2008). Interestingly, the term "local" has also evolved to become "an identity of resistance to Anglo conformity," particularly in the years following Hawaii's statehood in 1959 (Miyares, 2008, p. 8). As such, acculturated Hawaiian residents constitute a subpopulation of the American experience which is heavily influenced by Eastern philosophies; is multicultural, interracial, and interethnic; and whose minority status on the mainland is a de facto majority here.

The research on Hawaii's adult couples is sparse and conflicting. This is unfortunate because exogamous couples living elsewhere in the country are said to suffer

from the added stressors of societal intolerance, disapproval from their family of origin, and differences in their views on sexuality, religion, the division of labor, and child rearing (Usita & Poulsen, 2003). It would, therefore, stand to reason that Hawaii should have one of the highest rates of divorce nationwide. The question of why it does not has not been answered by the few studies conducted in these islands over the years. In one such study, Fu et al. (2001) found that, among married Mormon couples living in Laie, Hawaii, those in same-race marriages reported the greatest marital happiness; whereas those from two different races were significantly less satisfied. Importantly, the majority of Fu et al.'s participants (76% of men; 69.9% of females) were not born and raised in the state of Hawaii; thus the stress of differing expectations about sex, the division of labor, and child-rearing as well as possible language barriers may have indeed exerted a profound, negative impact on the marital happiness of those in the interracial category. A second study conducted in Hawaii also by Fu (2000) found that, of the relatively small percentage of residents who divorced between the years 1983-1986, marriages which included a Caucasian wife dissolved most frequently even though they had the fewest children among the ethnicities targeted (Hawaiian, Japanese, Filipino, and Caucasian). The matter of relationship satisfaction among couples whose partners had been born and/or largely raised in the state of Hawaii has, therefore, not yet been adequately addressed.

With these conflicting conclusions in mind, the present research paper endeavored to account for important details such as place of nativity and rearing. In sum, it was

hoped that the prevalence and social acceptance of intermarriage in the state of Hawaii, as well as the low rate of divorce would yield an opportunity for studying the interplay of local culture, attachment styles, and relationship satisfaction relatively free of the confounding variables associated with mainland, stigma-laden relationships which are of mixed ethnicities.

Literature Related to Differing Methodologies

Early research on attachment theory in adults began with the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI). A semi-structured narrative exercise, the AAI was developed by George, Kaplan, and Main (1996) and used a qualitative methodology to examine one's childhood experiences with attachment and the impact those experiences had in adulthood and parenthood. The most recent meta-analysis of AAI distributions was conducted by Bakermans-Kranenburg and van IJzendoorn (1993). The researchers found that 58% of men, women, and adolescents in non-clinical samples were secure, 24% were dismissing, and 18% were preoccupied. Of those in clinical samples, only 8% were secure, 26% were dismissing, 25% were preoccupied, and 40% were unresolved, meaning there was lingering confusion and psychological disorganization created when one parent was securely attached to the interviewee as a child while the other was not.

Quantitative studies of adult attachment and relationship satisfaction are predominantly based on self-report measures that have evolved to include Likert scaling across multiple test items. The strength of such instruments is that they are brief, have good face validity, and are easy to administer, while their weakness is that they rely upon

respondents' awareness of their feelings, thoughts, and behaviors as well as their ability to reply honestly (Fraley, 2002). That being said, it is important to know that each of the tools targets slightly, yet meaningfully different constructs. For example, Hazan and Shaver's (1987) earliest work used a categorical, forced-choice method wherein subjects selected the one descriptor among three that most represented their attachment style in romantic relationships (e.g., "I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others; I find it difficult to trust them completely, difficult to allow myself to depend on them. I am nervous when anyone gets too close, and often, others want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being."). Once researchers began developing continuous rating scales, there was a proliferation of these kinds of tools; however, the ECR scale has been the most widely used instrument to date for identifying secure, anxious, and avoidant attachment styles in adult partners (Crowell, Fraley, & Shaver, 2008).

Studies using mixed methods which incorporated qualitative interviews such as the AAI, the Current Relationship Interview (CRI; Crowell & Owens, 1996), or the Couple Attachment Interview (CAI; Alexandrov, Cowan, & Cowan, 2005) along with quantitative self-report measures demonstrated consistently greater relationship satisfaction for those couples whose partners are classified as secure (Alexandrov et al, 2005; Owens et al., 1995; Roisman, Collins, Sroufe, & Egeland, 2005; Treboux, Crowell, & Waters, 2004). However, Roisman et al. (2007) noted that the two types of tests do not generate overlapping data. In their meta-analysis of over 900 participants, they found that attachment interviews assess unconscious aspects including defense mechanisms and

behaviors, while self-reports tap information participants are conscious of. Therefore, they warned, researchers are encouraged to use one or the other in their design, basing their decisions on the processes they wish to explore.

Adult attachment theory and relationship satisfaction have been widely researched with methodologies that include qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods designs. However, attachment theory and relationship satisfaction research has been limited to married, Caucasian samples in predominantly Westernized locales. The few studies that have examined the impact of intermarriage on relationship satisfaction have used samples whose partners may have varied widely in their expectations about sex, the division of labor, and child-rearing practices, to name a few. The present study attempted to address this gap in the literature by surveying individuals that were born, raised, and were living in a syncretic local, Hawaiian culture and compared their responses to the responses of those who were born and raised elsewhere then relocated to Hawaii. It used the same instruments as previous research on attachment and relationship satisfaction so as to approximate them as closely as possible. Finally, comparisons between the prevalence of securely attached Hawaii-based heterosexual and homosexual partners were made to mainland samples in order to explore the validity of attachment theory in non-Western cultures. What follows in Chapter 3 is a discussion of the methodology of the present study including the research design and approach, the setting and sample characteristics, procedures, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and the means used to protect the participants.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on the methodology of a nonexperimental, nonprobabilistic study of Hawaii's unusually low rate of divorce through the lens of Bowlby's (1969/1982, 1973, 1980) attachment theory. Described herein will be the research design and approach, the setting and sample characteristics, procedures, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and means of protecting the participants.

Research Design and Approach

The goal of this study was to examine whether mean group differences in relationship satisfaction exist among couples who varied in terms of attachment style combination (Secure, Insecure, or Mixed), place of nativity and rearing (Hawaii or Other), and parental separation status (Together or Other). The research questions were addressed using a sample of adult couples from the island of Maui, Hawaii; a demographic believed to be representative of Oahu and outer island residents. Since the relationship between two or more variables was to be explored without any manipulation on the part of the researcher, a quantitative, nonexperimental design was deemed most appropriate.

Population and Sample

The population for this study included heterosexual and homosexual couples who were residing in the state of Hawaii. Only those couples who had been living together in a committed relationship for 2 or more years were considered eligible. Moreover,

participants needed to be at least 21 years of age, fluent in the English language (both for the purposes of reading and writing), and were willing to complete the necessary questionnaires. The sample data were drawn from the responses of participants living on the island of Maui, Hawaii.

A power analysis using the software program G*Power 3.1 indicated that a minimum of 158 couples were needed to detect a medium effect size of 0.25 with a power level of 0.80, an alpha of .05, and three independent variables (attachment style, place of nativity and rearing, and parental divorce status) (Figure 1).

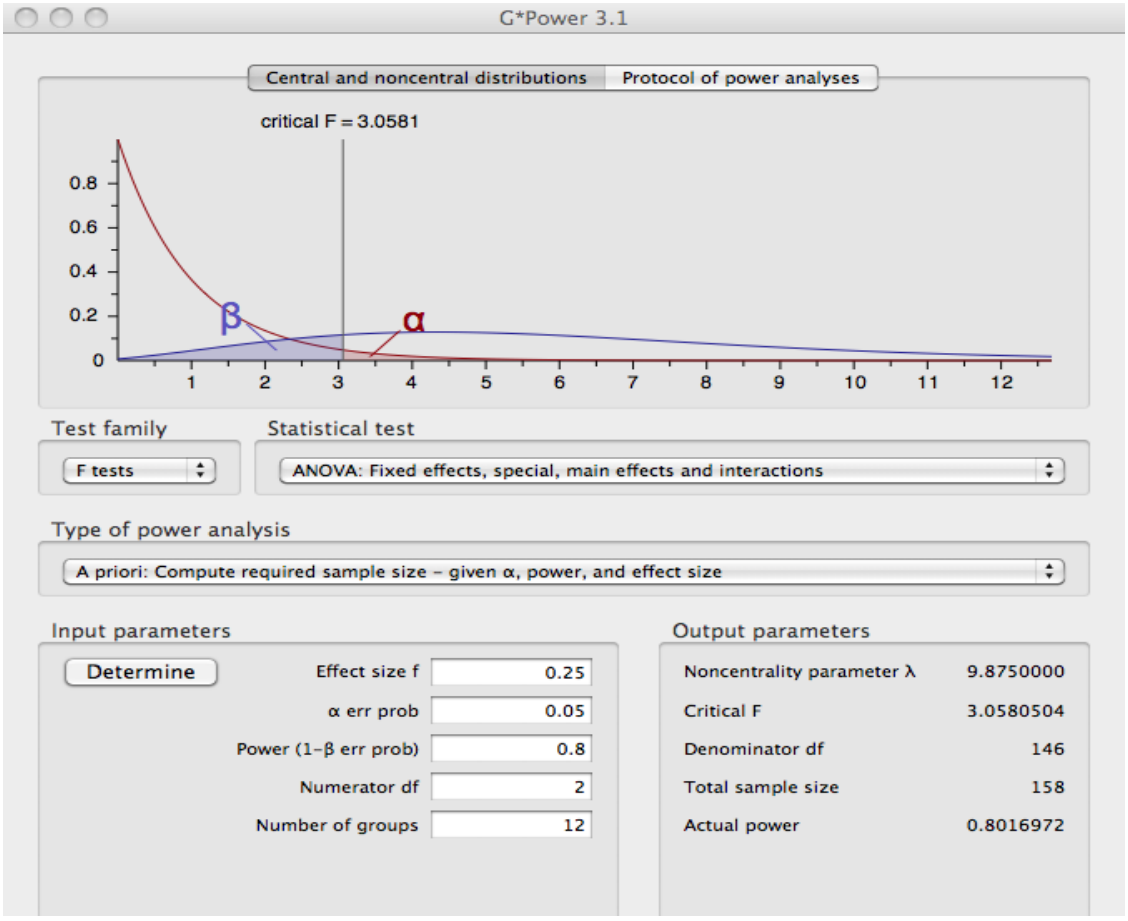

Figure 1. G*Power 3.1 Power Analysis

It was expected that the nonprobabilistic strategy of adaptive sampling would set the stage for subsequent face-to-face, group survey completion. According to Martsolf, Courey, Chapman, Draucker, and Mims (2006), adaptive sampling allows researchers to begin with conventional sampling methods (i.e., posting fliers, media advertisement, etc.) then focus the second and subsequent waves of recruitment on hard-to-reach populations that may be more elusive but tend to be clustered geographically or socially. Phase 2 of sampling typically uses social and geographic networks to enlist the support of Phase 1 participants, targeted leaders in the community, and relevant locales in order to increase the number of socially vulnerable respondents. Since I sought to examine the relationship satisfaction of heterosexual and homosexual dyads, adaptive sampling methods were expected to increase the number of homosexual participants with more efficiency than conventional methods (Blair, 1999). While probabilistic sampling methods could be said to yield generalizations about attachment theory and relationship satisfaction for the target population of Hawaiian island residents, it was more important to use sampling methods which would increase the participation of vulnerable populations for the purposes of this study.

Martsolf et al. (2006) noted that the larger number of respondents that adaptive sampling afforded required the research team to increase the efficiency with which they rolled out their data collection, scoring, and interpretation. Karney et al. (1995) used marriage licenses to compare the demographics of respondents with nonrespondents across couples recruited to participate in studies on relationship satisfaction. They found

that newspaper recruitment of couples was associated with greater marital discord whereas those who responded to mailers tended to be more socioeconomically advantaged than those who did not. Kendall et al. (2008) noted that snowball sampling, such as was to be used only if second and subsequent waves of recruitment proved necessary, is efficient but it cannot be used to make generalizations to the population. Since snowball sampling asks the first respondent to refer one or more respondents, biases related to inclusion and exclusion from the first respondent's social circle would likely influence the results. It stood to reason then, that adaptive sampling methods would nevertheless retain the strengths and biases inherent in the precise methods used and that a detailed account of the sample characteristics would be needed nevertheless (Brislin & Baumgardner, 1971).

Procedures

Participants were to be initially recruited from the island of Maui, Hawaii using radio and social media announcements, newspaper and magazine advertisements, and flyers posted in public and private places like sidewalk kiosks, bus stops, schools, churches, grocery store entrances, the University of Hawaii-Maui campus, and Maui AIDS Foundation offices (Appendix A). Participants were informed at least 1 week in advance that the doctoral study was exploring romantic relationship satisfaction and that questions of a moderately personal nature would be included. They also were informed that their name and contact information would not be recorded in any way nor associated with their eventual survey packets. Respondents who agreed to participate were notified

that they had to be (a) 21 years of age or older, (b) in a committed, romantic relationship, and (c) living with their participating partner for 2 years or more. Respondents who answered affirmatively to these questions, arrived at a testing site at the specified date and time with their partner, and considered or completed the 10-to-20-minute long survey packet were given a small thank you gift. So as to screen out individuals who were not living together, participants were required to present proof of their joint address by presenting any document that stated as much (e.g., a utility bill, drivers license, etc.).

The actual survey was administered in a number of public school auditoriums around the island of Maui, Hawaii. It was anticipated that the auditoriums were conveniently located, handicap accessible, had an ample number of tables and chairs, and provided quiet play areas for couples who brought young children. It was also anticipated that the hours of survey administration would potentially span the morning through the evening on one or more weekend days.

As the couples arrived, they were to be welcomed and read a scripted greeting (Appendix B). Each individual was to be handed a precoded survey packet and a pen. Couple-by-couple, the two partners were to be asked to randomly sit at a distance from each other, review the Informed Consent document (Appendix C), and quietly complete the three documents contained therein: the demographic questionnaire (Appendix D), the DAS (Appendix E), and the ECR (Appendix F). As each participant finished or decided not to continue, the packet needed to be quietly returned to the study leader who was to be seated near the door. The study leader was to ask if the participant had any questions

or concerns, and was to invite the participant to accept a small thank you gift. As the two were exiting, both partners were to be handed a colored page entitled, "Participant's Copy of the Informed Consent Form and Follow-Up Contact Information" (Appendix G) to take with them and to refer to the list of Maui island mental health providers if necessary. After that point in the process, participants were to leave the auditorium whenever they liked.

Though it was not needed, a second wave of recruitment using snowball sampling was to be initiated only if the recommended sample size of 158 couples had not been achieved after an ample amount of time. Had a second wave of recruitment been needed, the study leader was to announce to those still in attendance that additional couples were needed and it would be appreciated if family or friends that met the eligibility criteria could be contacted and asked to join the study, whether they participate that very day or at a subsequent survey administration. If the second recruitment strategy was initiated, then subsequent attendees were be asked how they heard of the study and the words "Friend/Family" or "Advertising" were be marked on the completed survey packets. Moreover, data collection for the second wave of participants could have occurred at a private location (e.g., the participants' homes) if they belonged to a vulnerable population. If this were to occur, the survey was to be administered couple-by-couple by the study leader, both partners would have been asked to sit apart from each other, and the actual packets were to be marked with the words "Home administration" so the difference could be considered in the Discussion section.

Instrumentation and Materials

Demographic Questionnaire

A demographic questionnaire was used to capture each participant's gender, date of birth, and whether they spent the majority of the years before the age of 22 in Hawaii. Participants were also asked about their primary ethnicity, and employment status. Finally, participants were asked about their sexual orientation, the number of years they have been in their current relationship, their parents' separation status, the number of children they had raised or were raising, and the number of children living in their home at the time of data collection.

Dyadic Adjustment Scale

The DAS (Spanier, 1976) is a 32-item, Likert scaled self-report used to assess relationship adjustment among cohabitating couples of the opposite or same sex. The most widely used tool of its kind, it has been employed in over 2,000 studies to date (Funk & Rogge, 2007). According to reviewers, the DAS is appropriate for use with adults aged 18 years and older and takes 5 to 10 minutes to complete (Budd & Heilman, 1989; Stuart, 1989). By adding the response values of all 32 test items, a total score with a range between 0 and 151 is obtained. Christensen et al. (2004) cited numerous studies which have found higher total scores to be associated with higher levels of relationship satisfaction, while those below 97.5 indicate relationship distress. In Spanier's original study, married individuals had a mean DAS total score of 114.8, while divorced individuals had a mean DAS total score of 70.7.

Psychometric analyses revealed that total scores had an internal reliability of .96 (Spanier, 1976) for the entire scale and test-retest reliability of .87 when college students were examined (Carey, Spector, Lantinga, & Krauss, 1993). Looking at each of the four DAS subscales separately, the reliability coefficients were .90 for the Dyadic Consensus Subscale's 13 items, .94 for the Dyadic Satisfaction Subscale's 10 items, .86 for the Dyadic Cohesion Subscale's 5 items, and .73 for the Affectional Expression Subscale's 4 items (Spanier, 1976). Construct validity of the DAS was supported by a correlation of 0.87 between it and the second most frequently used measure of relationship satisfaction: the Marital Adjustment Test (Locke & Wallace, 1959). A meta-analysis of 91 published studies which included 25,035 individuals showed acceptable DAS mean score reliability estimates which were not affected by "the sexual orientation, gender, marital status, or ethnicity of the sample" (Graham, Liu, & Jeziorski, 2006, p. 701). The DAS has been translated into Chinese (Shek, 1994), French (Vandeleur, Fenton, Ferrero, & Preisig, 2003), Italian (Gentili, Contreras, Cassaniti, & D'Arista, 2002), Korean (Lee & Kim, 1996), and Turkish (Fisiloglu & Demir, 2000). Although the DAS has been subject to some criticism (Fincham & Bradbury, 1987; Heyman, Sayers, & Bellack, 1994; Norton, 1983), the most promising alternative – the Couples Satisfaction Index (Funk & Rogge, 2007) – is a newcomer to the field and is untested in the populations this study sought to assess, so it was not used here.

Experiences in Close Relationships Questionnaire

The ECR (Brennan et al., 1998) questionnaire is a 36-item self report used to assess attachment. The test taker uses a 7-point Likert scale to indicate how strongly they agree or disagree with each statement. Scoring involves first reversing the values of 10 target questions, separating all 36 into the two subscales – the anxiety dimension and avoidance dimension – and then averaging the scores under each subscale. The first, avoidance, is comprised of the 18 odd numbered questions and evaluates the test taker's discomfort with intimacy, physical closeness, dependence, and self-disclosure with romantic partners (e.g., "I try to avoid getting too close to my partner."). The second, anxiety, is comprised of the 18 even numbered questions and evaluates the test taker's fear of desertion, dejection, and loss (e.g., "I worry about being abandoned."). Four linear discriminant functions as outlined in Brennan et al. are used to calculate four attachment style categories: secure, fearful, preoccupied, and dismissive. The highest score of these four indicates the test taker's attachment style. That being said, a review of the literature showed that researchers have often collapsed these four groups into three in order to ease analyses. Two different variations include Secure, Anxious (combining fearful and preoccupied), and Avoidant (representing dismissive), and; at the level of the couple, Secure (secure-secure), Insecure (both partners are either anxious or avoidant), and Mixed (one partner is secure while the other is not). Both of these variations were used in this study in order to draw appropriate comparisons to past research.

Brennan et al. (1998) reported the normative sample of the ECR consisted of 682 female and 403 male psychology undergraduates enrolled at the University of Texas at Austin. Sample data revealed a mean age of 18 with a range from 16 to 50 years old. Of the total 1,086 respondents, 487 stated that they were in a serious relationship at the time they participated in the study. Mean relationship length was 15 months, but no additional demographic data on the sample were provided.

Psychometric analyses of the ECR for internal reliability revealed Chronbach's alphas ranging from .90 to .95 for the avoidance subscale and from .91 to .92 for the anxiety subscale (Alonso-Arbiol, Balluerka, Shaver, & Gillath, 2008; Brennan et al.,1998; Lopez, Fons-Schedyd, Moru'a, & Chaliman, 2006; Lopez & Gormley, 2002). Test-retest reliability was found to be .86 for the avoidance subscale and .82 for the anxiety subscale (Wei, Russell, Mallinckrodt, & Vogel, 2007). Used in hundreds of studies, the ECR has been translated into Chinese (Mallinckrodt & Wang, 2004), French (Lafontaine & Lussier, 2003), Italian (Picardi, Bitetti, Puddu, & Pasquini, 2000), Japanese (Nakao & Kato, 2004), and Spanish (Alonso-Arbiol, Balluerka, & Shaver, 2007) and has been found reliable and valid among same-sex couples (Matte, Lemieux, & Lafontaine, 2009).

Data Collection and Analysis

A demographic questionnaire, the DAS, and the ECR were used to survey adult heterosexual and homosexual couples who had been cohabitating for a period of 2 or more years and were residing in the state of Hawaii. Relationship satisfaction, a

continuous dependent variable, was measured using the DAS and was represented by a theoretical score ranging from 1 to 151. For each couple, the two partners' scores were summed, entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17, and compared in terms of three categorical, independent variables: each couple's attachment style combination (Secure, Insecure, or Mixed), each couple's place of nativity and rearing (Hawaii or Other), and two parental separation statuses (Together or Other). Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to present the demographic characteristics of the study's sample.

Since this study sought to observe how three independent variables acted and interacted with a single dependent variable, a factorial ANOVA was used to determine if mean differences in relationship satisfaction scores existed among these disparate groups. If they did, post hoc analyses were to be used to identify which of them differed significantly. A 3 by 2 by 2 design with a single alpha level was preferred over separate univariate ANOVAs to avoid increasing the rate of Type I errors (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009). It was hypothesized that relationship satisfaction would be significantly greater for those couples who endorsed secure attachment combination styles, were born and raised in the state of Hawaii, and whose parents never divorced or permanently separated.

Participants were recruited from the island of Maui, Hawaii using newspaper and social media announcements, and flyers posted in public and private places like sidewalk kiosks, bus stops, schools, churches, grocery store entrances, the University of Hawaii campus, and Maui AIDS Foundation offices. Couples who met the minimum criteria

were expected to arrive at one of the indicated testing sites at the specified dates and times. Upon arriving, each partner was handed a pen and a precoded survey packet that included a demographic questionnaire, the DAS, and the ECR. No contact information was recorded anywhere on any of the survey documents. Partners were encouraged to raise their hands to ask questions and were recommended to sit at some distance from one another in the auditorium so their answers could be kept private. It was expected that participants would complete their survey packets in approximately 10 to 20 minutes and, upon returning them, the first partner was given a small thank you gift on behalf of them both. As they exited, both were asked if they had any additional questions, were given the colored, take-home Informed Consent document, and the list of area mental health providers.

Protection of Participants' Rights

Upon receiving IRB approval to collect data, measures that are based on the APA (2002) ethics code were implemented to protect participants' rights. A cover letter that explained the purpose, the procedures, the expected duration, and the anticipated risks and benefits, along with details that would allow for informed consent were included at the beginning of each survey packet. Among the topics covered were the voluntary nature of the study, the right to withdraw at any point without penalty, coding measures taken to conceal the identity of each participant, and the long-term storage of the completed packets. Moreover, contact information for the researcher and Walden University representative was provided. The reason for this was because the personal

nature of the study – exploring relationship satisfaction – was expected to bring a degree of discomfort to the participants either during or after the completion of the survey packet. Providing contact information enabled potentially disturbed participants to phone for support and clarification. The protection of participants' rights was prioritized and every care was given to achieving this goal. The following chapter is a presentation of the results of this study.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

Given the dearth of empirical information regarding the interplay between attachment theory and Hawaii's unusually low rate of divorce and high rate of interethnic marriage, the purpose of this quantitative, nonexperimental study was to examine whether mean group differences in relationship satisfaction, the dependent variable, exist among Hawaii-based couples who vary in terms of three independent variables: attachment style combination (Secure, Insecure, or Mixed), place of nativity and rearing (Hawaii or Other), and parental separation status (Together or Other). A 3-way ANOVA was used to determine whether main and interaction effects existed between the variables. Authorization to proceed from Walden University's Institutional Review Board was granted and the study was assigned approval number 10-31-11-0070695.

The demographic information and survey data of 160 heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii were used to calculate descriptive and inferential statistics. The present chapter provides a restatement of the study's research questions and hypotheses, a description of the participants, statistical conclusion validity, a reliability analysis, and the results of the factorial ANOVA. The descriptive and inferential data represent both individual- and couple-level responses to the demographic questionnaire, DAS, and ECR questionnaire, proceeding from simplest to most complex.

Research Questions

1. Is there a statistically significant attachment style main effect on relationship satisfaction, measured by the ECR scale and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii?
2. Is there a statistically significant nativity/rearing main effect on relationship satisfaction, measured by the demographic questionnaire and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii?
3. Is there a statistically significant parental separation status main effect on relationship satisfaction, measured by the demographic questionnaire and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii?
4. Are there any statistically significant attachment style by nativity/rearing by parental separation status interaction effects on relationship satisfaction, measured by the ECR, the demographic questionnaire, and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii?

Hypotheses

H_01: There is not a statistically significant attachment style main effect on relationship satisfaction, measured by the ECR scale and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii.

$H_1$1: There is a statistically significant attachment style main effect on relationship satisfaction, measured by the ECR scale and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii.

$H_0$2: There is not a statistically significant nativity/rearing main effect on relationship satisfaction, measured by the demographic questionnaire and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii.

$H_1$2: There is a statistically significant nativity/rearing main effect on relationship satisfaction, measured by the demographic questionnaire and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii.

$H_0$3: There is not a statistically significant parental separation status main effect on relationship satisfaction, measured by the demographic questionnaire and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii.

$H_1$3: There is a statistically significant parental separation status main effect on relationship satisfaction, measured by the demographic questionnaire and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii.

$H_0$4: There are no statistically significant attachment style by nativity/rearing by parental separation status interaction effects on relationship satisfaction, measured by the

ECR, the demographic questionnaire, and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii.

H_I4: There are statistically significant attachment style by nativity/rearing by parental separation status interaction effects on relationship satisfaction, measured by the ECR, the demographic questionnaire, and the DAS respectively, for heterosexual and homosexual couples living on the island of Maui, Hawaii.

Sample Description

Beginning in November 2011 and extending through December of the same year, couples from the island of Maui, Hawaii were recruited using an adaptive sampling method that combined probabilistic and nonprobabilistic strategies. Namely, initial recruitment of the general public was achieved using newspaper announcements and flyers distributed to community groups who serve both typical and vulnerable populations. Though snowball sampling had been a recruitment option described in the Procedures section, this method was not ultimately used to recruit gay and lesbian participants as had been anticipated. Rather, two groups did learn of the study from the media announcements mentioned above and interested members volunteered to support the research goals. Since it is unclear which of the group members personally read the media advertisements when they were presented to the general public versus those who heard it solely from one or more of their fellow group members, the results of the present study must be viewed with caution.

By the end of the data collection period, demographic information had been gathered from 160 couples, tantamount to 320 participants, and included each individual partner's gender, age, place of nativity (Hawaii or otherwise), number of years during the first 21 of life spent in Hawaii, primary ethnicity, and employment status. Also asked was the respondent's religion within which they were raised, importance of religion in their daily life currently, sexual orientation, number of years they and their partner have been in a committed relationship with each other, whether they had ever been divorced or separated, whether their parents had ever been divorced or separated by the time respondent was 22 years old, the number of children they raised/were raising, and the number of children currently living in their home. No adverse events were observed to have occurred, none were reported, and the response rate was 100% as all questions were answered as they arose.

The study's requirements allowed for participation by heterosexual and homosexual couples presently residing on the island of Maui, Hawaii. Only those couples who had been living together in a committed relationship for 2 or more years and were both at least 21 years of age, fluent in the English language, and willing to complete the necessary questionnaires were included. Marriage was not a study requirement. Of those partners who completed the individual survey packets, 161 individuals (50.3%) were males and 159 (49.7%) were females with 40 to 49 year olds being the largest age group represented. When considering place of nativity, slightly more participants were born in Hawaii than had been born elsewhere. In terms of place of rearing, the majority

of participants indeed spent 10.5 years or more in the state of Hawaii by the time they were 21 years old than did not. Moreover, a large majority of respondents indicated that their primary ethnicity was not American-Caucasian, were employed full-time, said they were raised within the Catholic faith, and reported that religion was currently "very important" in their daily life. Finally, most respondents in this study were heterosexuals, had never been divorced or separated, said their parents/primary caregivers had never divorced or separated by the time they were 22 years old, raised/were raising 2 children, and had no children in the home presently. When compared to Hawaii's general population, these incidence rates are indeed representative of those found statewide in the areas of gender, primary ethnicity, number of same-sex households, and number of children in the household. Interestingly, there were slightly more gay/lesbian couples in this study (3.4%) than in the state's general population (1%), most likely due to recruitment efforts that appealed to the Maui AIDS Foundation and the island's Episcopal churches.

Of special note is the incidence rate of Satisfied and Dissatisfied partners as well as securely attached partners in the study's sample. According to the analysis, a striking majority of individuals indicated that they were experiencing relationship satisfaction and most endorsed a secure attachment style. These incidence rates are strikingly higher than those reported in previous studies conducted elsewhere. For example, individual respondents herein endorsed a Secure attachment style at a rate of 70.3% as compared to Hazan and Shaver's (1987) original findings of 56%. At the level of the couple, the

present study's sample endorsed a Secure-Secure attachment style at a rate of 53.1% compared to MacLean's (2001) finding of 38%. This unusual phenomena will be addressed more fully in Chapter 5, but in the meantime, please refer to Table 1 for a tabular display of the frequencies and percentages of the individuals' demographic information.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Individuals in the Study Sample (N = 320)

Characteristic	*n*	%
Gender		
Male	161	50.3
Female	159	49.7
Age Groups		
20s	26	8.1
30s	79	24.7
40s	101	31.6
50s	54	16.9
60s	43	13.4
70s	15	4.7
80s	2	.6
Born in Hawaii?		
Yes	170	53.1
No	150	46.9
Spent Majority of Years By Age 21 in Hawaii?		
Yes (10.5 years or more)	182	56.9
No (10 years or fewer)	138	43.1
Primary Ethnicity		
American/Caucasian	110	34.4
Local	66	20.6
Hawaiian	13	4.1
Filipino/a	50	15.6
Italian	14	4.4
African-American	4	1.3
German	4	1.3
Asian	10	3.1
Japanese	39	12.2

(table continues)

Characteristic	*n*	%
Hispanic (Latino/a)	7	2.2
Israeli	1	.3
Other	2	.6
Employment Status		
Full time	212	66.3
Part time	21	6.6
Seasonal	5	1.6
Retired	51	15.9
Unemployed	9	2.8
Self-employed	22	6.9
Religion Raised In		
Buddhist	35	10.9
Protestant	44	13.8
Catholic	117	36.6
Jewish	9	2.8
Mormon/LDS	21	6.6
Christian	48	15.0
Atheist	7	2.2
Lutheran	6	1.9
Episcopalian	5	1.6
Baptist	8	2.5
Spiritual	5	1.6
None	14	4.4
Importance of Religion in Daily Life		
Very important	171	53.4
Somewhat important	88	27.5
Not important	61	19.1
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	309	96.6
Gay	6	1.9
Lesbian	4	1.3
Other	1	.3
Respondent Had Been Previously Divorced/Separated		
Yes	80	25.0
No	240	75.0
Parents/Primary Caregivers Divorced/Separated		
Yes	70	21.9
No	250	78.1
Number of Children Raising/Raised		
0	42	13.1

(table continues)

Characteristic	*n*	%
Number of Children Raising/Raised		
1	45	14.1
2	121	37.8
3	65	20.3
4	30	9.4
5	13	4.1
6	1	.3
7	1	.3
8	2	.6
Number of Children Currently in the Home		
0	135	42.2
1	57	17.8
2	86	26.9
3	29	9.1
4	7	2.2
5	6	1.9
DAS Category by Individual		
Satisfied	300	93.8
Dissatisfied	20	6.3
ECR Category by Individual		
Secure	225	70.3
Anxious (Fearful, Preoccupied)	88 (26, 62)	27.5 (8.1, 19.4)
Avoidant (Dismissive)	7	2.2

At the level of the couple, most of the sample dyads had been together for 11 to 20 years, were Satisfied-Satisfied according to their combined DAS code (representing relationship satisfaction), and endorsed both a Secure couple ECR code and a hyphenated couple ECR code of Secure-Secure in terms of attachment style. The majority of the samples dyads were comprised of couples where both spent 10.5 years or more before their 22 birthday in Hawaii, were comprised of partnerships where neither individual experienced the divorce or separation of their parents/primary caregivers before the age of 22 years, and were from the same ethnic group. Table 2 is a tabular display of the frequencies and percentages of the couples' demographic information.

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of Couples in the Study Sample (N = 160)

Characteristic	*n*	%
Number of Years Together		
10 or fewer	40	25.0
11 to 20	60	37.5
Number of Years Together		
21 to 30	36	22.5
31 to 40	20	12.5
41 to 50	3	1.9
51 to 60	1	.6
Combined DAS Code		
Satisfied-Satisfied	146	91.3
Satisfied-Dissatisfied	7	4.4
Dissatisfied-Dissatisfied	7	4.4
Couple ECR Code		
Secure	85	53.1
Insecure	23	14.4
Mixed	52	14.4
Hyphenated Couple ECR Code		
Secure-Secure	85	53.1
Secure-Fearful	15	9.4
Secure-Preoccupied	37	23.1
Secure-Dismissive	3	1.9
Fearful-Fearful	3	1.9
Fearful-Preoccupied	5	3.1
Preoccupied-Preoccupied	9	5.6
Preoccupied-Dismissive	2	1.3
Dismissive-Dismissive	1	.6
Majority of First 21 Years Spent in Hawaii		
Yes-Yes	76	47.5
Yes-No	30	18.8
No-No	54	33.8
Combined Parental Divorce/Separation Status		
Yes-Yes	18	11.3
Yes-No	34	21.3
No-No	108	67.5
Ethnic Homogeneity		
Same	99	61.9
Different	61	38.1

Additional descriptive statistics for select variables depict the mean age for the study's participants, and the mean number of years spent in Hawaii by the age of 21. Also shown is the sample mean for number of children raised/raising and the mean DAS total score at the individual level. Table 3 is a display of these values.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Select Variables by Individual Respondent

Variable	*M*	*SD*	Low	High
Current Age	46.50	12.79	22	84
Years in Hawaii	11.78	10.02	0	21
No. of Children R/R	2.17	1.39	0	8
DAS Total Score	119.07	14.72	71	148

At the level of the couple, means and standard deviations were also calculated for the number of years together, the number of children still living at home, and the combined DAS Total score for the couples. Please see Table 4 for these values.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Select Variables by Couples

Variable	*M*	*SD*	Low	High
No. of Years Together	18.27	10.69	2	60
No. of Children in Home	1.17	1.24	0	5
Summed DAS Total Score	237.86	26.38	143	287

Also at the level of the couple, means and standard deviations were calculated for the couples' summed DAS total scores by ECR couple code, place of nativity/rearing and parental divorce/separation status. As can be seen from reviewing Table 5, relationship satisfaction as represented by the mean of the summed DAS total scores was greatest for

those couples who were securely attached, were comprised of partners where both spent 10.5 years or more of their first 22 years of life in Hawaii, and for whom neither set of parents had divorced or separated by the time the respondents were 22 years.

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations of Couples' Summed DAS Total Scores by ECR Couple Code, Place of Nativity/Rearing, and Parental Divorce Status

Couple's ECR Code	Majority of Nativity/Rearing in Hawaii?	Parents Divorced/ Separated?	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Secure	Yes-Yes	Yes-Yes	248.00	.	1
		Yes-No	252.00	16.46	3
		No-No	247.48	21.62	33
		Total	247.86	20.79	37
	Yes-No	Yes-Yes	242.00	.	1
		Yes-No	256.75	12.09	4
		No-No	234.62	14.28	13
		Total	239.94	16.07	18
	No-No	Yes-Yes	250.50	25.65	4
		Yes-No	230.00	22.62	2
		No-No	246.75	24.59	24
		Total	246.13	24.21	30
	Total	Yes-Yes	248.67	20.16	6
		Yes-No	249.22	17.61	9
		No-No	244.84	21.87	70
		Total	245.58	21.19	85
Insecure	Yes-Yes	Yes-Yes	222.00	.	1
		Yes-No	220.33	31.97	3
		No-No	222.33	19.09	3
		Total	221.43	21.52	7
	Yes-No	Yes-No	172.00	.	1
		No-No	240.25	15.97	4
		Total	226.60	33.51	5
	No-No	Yes-Yes	231.00	1.41	2
		Yes-No	186.00	4.24	2
		No-No	230.71	22.07	7
		Total	222.63	24.95	11
	Total	Yes-Yes	228.00	5.29	3
		Yes-No	200.83	29.92	6
		No-No	231.64	19.57	14
		Total	223.13	24.84	23

(table continues)

Couple's ECR Code	Majority of Nativity/Rearing in Hawaii?	Parents Divorced/ Separated?	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Mixed	Yes-Yes	Yes-Yes	177.80	41.05	5
		Yes-No	241.08	18.68	12
		No-No	234.47	30.65	15
		Total	228.09	35.47	32
	Yes-No	Yes-No	228.33	6.80	3
		No-No	240.25	22.72	4
		Total	235.14	17.72	7
	No-No	Yes-Yes	235.75	13.67	4
		Yes-No	230.25	5.19	4
		No-No	248.60	30.96	5
		Total	239.00	20.99	13
	Total	Yes-Yes	203.56	42.96	9
		Yes-No	236.79	16.02	19
		No-No	238.38	28.97	24
		Total	231.77	30.48	52
Total	Yes-Yes	Yes-Yes	194.14	44.25	7
		Yes-No	239.44	21.73	18
		No-No	242.18	25.23	51
		Total	237.10	29.65	76
	Yes-No	Yes-Yes	242.00	.	1
		Yes-No	235.50	30.53	8
		No-No	236.76	15.68	21
		Total	236.60	19.88	30
	No-No	Yes-Yes	240.70	18.87	10
		Yes-No	219.13	22.48	8
		No-No	243.89	25.18	36
		Total	239.63	24.94	54
	Total	Yes-Yes	222.67	37.79	18
		Yes-No	233.74	24.87	34
		No-No	241.69	23.61	108
		Total	237.86	26.38	160

Statistical Conclusion Validity

A visual inspection of the boxplot in Figure 2 depicts a total of six summed DAS Total score outliers and a Shapiro-Wilk test confirms that the data were not normally distributed due to said outliers. That said, the data from these variables were included in the final analysis since most represented Dissatisfied couples; an otherwise underrepresented yet critical group in this study. Positive skewness (-.792) in the complete data set can be noted in Figure 3 but was still within normal limits and considered excellent for psychometric purposes (George & Mallery, 2009). Lastly, normality was also assessed via a visual inspection of a Q-Q scatterplot (Figure 4) which can be seen depicting data that clusters closely around a line that ascends from lower left to upper right, with the exception of the aforementioned outliers. Since the data deviate from normality, the results of the inferential statistics should be viewed with caution.

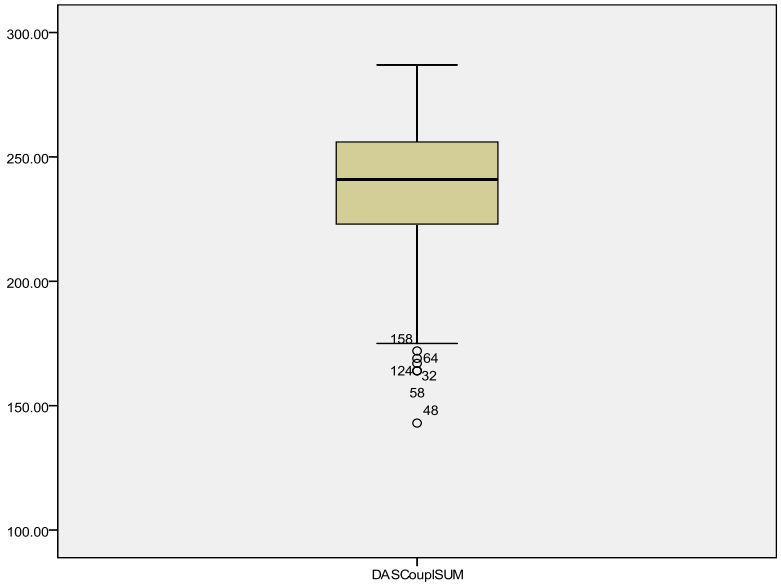

Figure 2. Boxplot of Summed DAS Total Scores by Couple

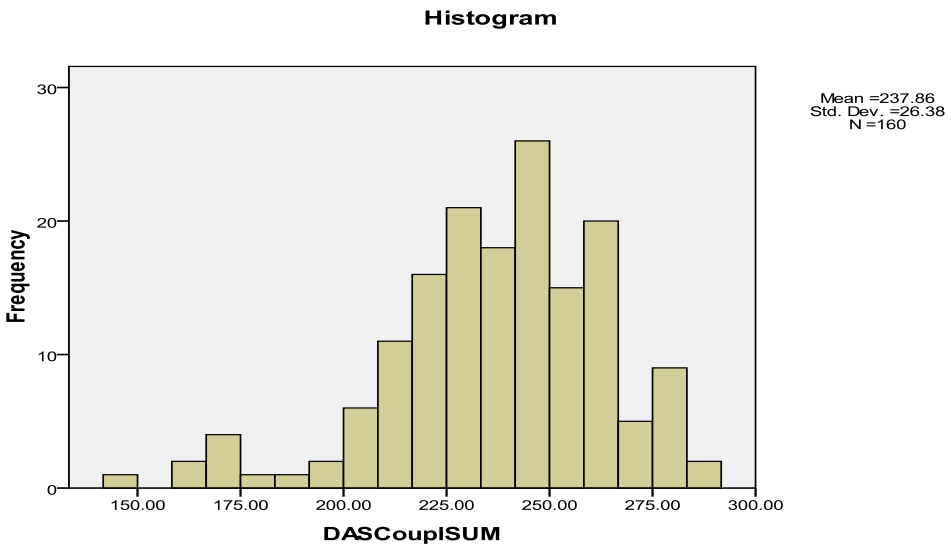

Figure 3. Histogram of Summed DAS Total Scores by Couple

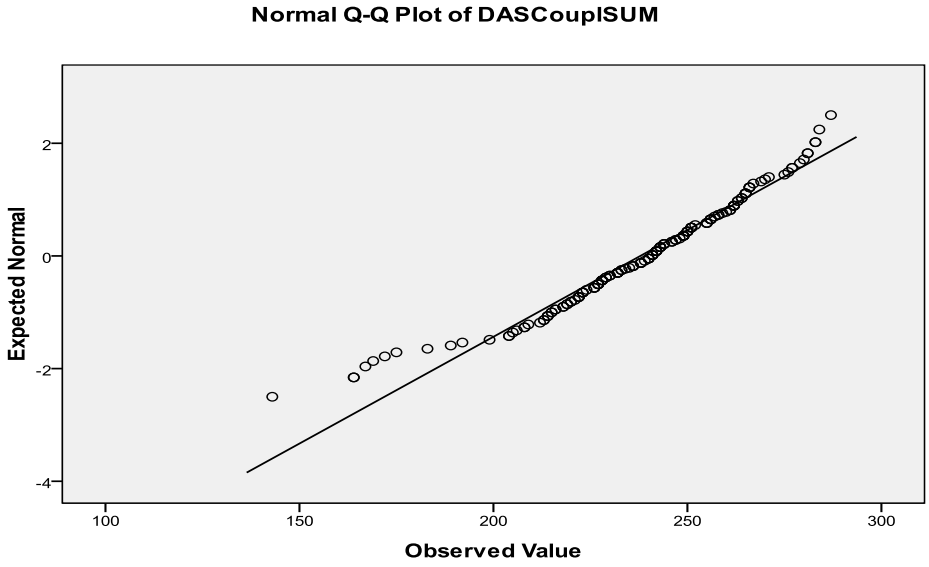

Figure 4. Scatterplot of Summed DAS Total Scores by Couple

Reliability Analysis

An analysis indicated the DAS and ECR were reliable. Chronbach's alpha coefficients for the DAS and ECR were .93 and .84 respectively.

Results

The results of the three-way between groups ANOVA identified a statistically significant attachment by parental divorce/separation interaction effect, $F(4, 135) = 4.34$, $p = .002$. The measure of effect size, measured by partial eta-squared was .11 indicating 11% of the variance in relationship satisfaction was accounted by the interaction. There was a statistically significant attachment main effect, $F(2, 135) = 8.15$, $p < .01$. The effect size, measured by eta-squared, was .19, indicating 11% of the variance in relationship satisfaction was accounted for by attachment. A Bonferroni post hoc test indicated couples who were securely attached ($M = 245.58$, $SD = 21.19$) differed in relationship satisfaction, $p = .000$, from those who were insecurely attached ($M = 223.13$, $SD = 24.84$) and from those who had a mixed attachment style ($M = 231.77$, $SD = 30.48$), $p = .003$. There was no statistically significant main effect for nativity/rearing.

There was a statistically significant main effect for parental divorce/separation status, $F(2, 135) = 3.71$, $p = .027$. The effect size, measured by eta squared was .05, indicating 5% of the variance in relationship satisfaction was accounted for by parental divorce/satisfaction. A Bonferroni post hoc test indicated couples whose parents had divorced or separated ($M = 222.67$, $SD = 37.79$) differed in relationship satisfaction, $p =$

.004, from those whose parents had not divorced or separated (M = 241.69, SD = 23.61).

Please see Table 6 for these values.

Table 6

Analysis of Variance Summary Table for Couples' Summed DAS Total Scores by Couple's Attachment Style (ECR Couple Code), Place of Nativity/Rearing, and Parental Divorce Status

Source	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*P*	*Partial Eta Squared*
Couple's Attachment Style	2	8584.39	4292.19	8.15	.000	.19
Nativity/Rearing	2	348.45	174.23	.33	.719	.01
Parental Divorce/Separation	2	3902.92	1951.46	3.71	.027	.05
Couple's Attachment Style x Nativity/Rearing	4	2990.15	747.54	1.42	.231	.04
Couple's Attachment Style x Parental Divorce/Separation	4	9150.80	2287.70	4.34	.002	.11
Nativity/Rearing x Parental Divorce/Separation	4	4787.53	1196.88	2.27	.065	.06
Couple's Attachment Style x Nativity/Rearing x Parental Divorce/Separation	6	4027.63	671.27	1.27	.273	.05
Error	135	71104.65	526.70			
Total	160	9163218.00				

Summary

This chapter was a review of the study's purpose, research question, and hypotheses. A description of the participants, statistical conclusion validity, and the inferential statistics related to the factorial ANOVA that was conducted were provided.

Given the serious consequences of relationship dissolution, questions surrounding Hawaii's low rate of divorce, and the preponderance of attachment theory, the purpose of this quantitative study was to measure the main and interaction effects of each couple's attachment style combination as measured by the ECR, place of nativity and rearing, and parental separation status on a single dependent variable: relationship satisfaction, as measured by the DAS. Considering Hawaii has the fourth lowest rate of divorce in the nation, the prevalence of relationship satisfaction found is this sample is quite noteworthy and will be explored in the discussion section.

The study's findings also support several, but not all, of the research hypotheses. The first of those supported a single interaction effect, namely, that the couple's combined attachment style (Couple ECR Code) and combined parental divorce/separation status have a strong interaction effect on relationship satisfaction (F = 4.34, p = .002). Though it did not meet statistical significance, one other interaction effect appeared to warrant additional study: that which arises from couples whose partners spent the majority of their first 21 years of life in Hawaii versus elsewhere, and the partners' combined parental divorce/separation status (F = 2.27, p = .065).

In terms of main effects, the results suggest that a couple's combined attachment style imparts a statistically significant main effect on their relationship satisfaction. As it turned out, securely attached couples differed in mean relationship satisfaction scores at a significance level of $p = .000$ from those who were insecurely attached, and at a significance level of .003 from those who had a mixed attachment style. While there was no statistically significant mean difference for place of nativity/rearing ($F = .33$, $p = .719$), there was a statistically significant difference when parental divorce/separation status was considered ($F = .3.71$, $p = .027$). A Bonferroni post hoc test of this last main effect revealed a statistically significant mean difference for couples in which both partners indicated that neither of their parents/primary caregivers divorced or separated before they turned 22 years old (No-No) as compared to those couples for whom both partners had endorsed this experience (Yes-Yes, $p = .004$).

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This study was undertaken to examine the veracity of attachment theory in a non-Western, island locale and to examine the impact of attachment style, place of nativity and rearing, and parental divorce/separation status on the relationship satisfaction of Hawaii's adult dyads. One hundred and sixty couples, all residents of the island of Maui, Hawaii; over the age of 21; cohabitating for 2 or more years; fluent in the English language; and willing to complete the survey packet, participated with the foreknowledge that Hawaii's low rate of divorce and high rate of interethnic unions may somehow prove helpful to the general understanding of relationship satisfaction here and abroad.

The consequences of relationship dissolution are well studied and include declines in mental and physical health (Carrere et al., 2000; Rye et al., 2004), financial instability (Andress et al., 2006; Lyons & Fisher, 2006; Strohschein, 2005), social instability (Oygard, 2003; Rye et al.), unhealthy patterns of over-compensation (Baum, 2007), and higher levels of separation among the adult offspring of such couples (Amato & DeBoer, 2001; Amato & Hohmann-Marriott, 2007). If mental health professionals are to continue creating interventions to increase relationship satisfaction and decrease the occurrence of dissolution fallout, then, it would stand to reason that couples who are able to maintain high levels of this coveted condition should be tapped for their expertise. Moreover, in a day and age where fewer pairings are homogeneously grouped, it is all the more important to include couples from diverse ethnic backgrounds and sexual orientations.

Chapter 5 represents the culmination of this effort. The topics covered include an interpretation of the findings in light of past research and the limitations that may or may not impact the study's generalizability to wider populations. Also covered in this chapter are recommendations for future research, the implications the results have in light of professional practice, and concluding remarks that capture the overarching points of the study.

Interpretation of the Findings

The present study confirmed the first of four research questions. Just as there has been for Westernized mainland couples, a statistically significant attachment style main effect on relationship satisfaction was found for romantic couples living together on the island of Maui, Hawaii. For instance, the results of this study parallel those of MacLean (2001) who found that couples endorsing secure-secure attachment style combinations also endorsed the greatest relationship satisfaction; whereas those who are attached in an avoidant-avoidant manner experienced the lowest degree of relationship satisfaction. The results of the present study also align with the findings of Mikulincer et al. (2009). They noted that securely attached couples reported the greatest relationship satisfaction.

The DAS and ECR test items administered to the participants also mirrored the findings of Makinen and Johnson (2006) who said that relationship satisfaction was buoyed by spontaneous acts of affection, reciprocity, trust, openness to new experiences, personal growth, and self-expression. Similarly, the results of the present study

supported research that attributes relationship satisfaction to the four attachment goals of proximity seeking, separation protest, exploring from a secure base, and returning for comfort (Banse, 2004; Bowlby, 1979; Duemmler & Kobak, 2001; Feeney, 2002; Green & Campbell, 2000; Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Meyers & Landsberger, 2002; O'Connell et al., 2000; Roberts & Greenberg, 2002; Simpson, 1990).

The incidence of those experiencing relationship satisfaction and secure-secure combined attachment styles in the study's Maui sample is higher than the rates reported in previous studies conducted elsewhere. For example, individual respondents herein endorsed a Secure attachment style at a rate of 70.3% as compared to Hazan and Shaver's (1987) original findings of 56%. At the level of the couple, the present study's sample endorsed a Secure-Secure attachment style at a rate of 53.1% compared to MacLean's (2001) finding of 38%. It may be that these unusually high rates account for the low incidence of divorce in the state, but they certainly appear to support the veracity of attachment theory in this largely Polynesian/Asian subculture of the American experience.

The second research question this study sought to address was whether spending the majority of one's formative years in the state of Hawaii, that, 10.5 years or more prior to reaching the age of 22 – afforded the islands' residents interpersonal sensibilities not gained elsewhere. Though Hawaii's unique history has played an indelible role in shaping the heterogeneity of family composition, it would seem from this study's results that those couples who relocated to the island from elsewhere actually had slightly

greater levels of relationship satisfaction as measured by the DAS (M = 119.43, SD = 13.62) than those who spent the majority of their years before age 22 in Hawaii (M = 118.80, p = 15.53). What contributes to the sample's unusually high incidence of relationship satisfaction and securely attached individuals cannot, therefore, be attributed to place of nativity and rearing. Since there was no statistically significant nativity/rearing main effect on relationship satisfaction, the second alternative hypothesis was disconfirmed. However, when compared to their mainland counterparts, the individuals who live on the island of Maui and participated in this study reported that they were satisfied with their partners at an astonishing rate of 93.8% and boasted a mean DAS Total score of 119.07 (SD = 14.72). That in comparison to Spanier (1976) who reported a mainland sample mean of 114.8 (SD = 17.8), Kobak and Hazan (1991) who found a mainland sample mean of 106, and MacLean (2001) who detailed a mainland sample mean of 114.17 (wives' SD = 13.48; husbands' SD = 12.57). So while there was no statistically significant difference between couples who spent the majority of their formative years in Hawaii versus out of state for the purposes of the second hypothesis, there is a difference in mean relationship satisfaction scores for the present study's couples versus those of past, mainland-based studies.

Also supported by the results was the third alternative hypothesis which posited that there would be a statistically significant parental separation status main effect on relationship satisfaction for Maui-based couples, as measured by the demographic questionnaire and DAS, respectively. Just as Amato and DeBoer (2001), Ensign et al.

(1998), Glenn and Kramer (1987), Hetherington (2003), Knox, Zusman, and Decuzzi (2004), McLanahan and Bumpass (1988), Sirvanli-Olsen (2005), and Wolfinger (2000) pointed out, the results of the present study found that relationship satisfaction was significantly lower for individuals and couples for whom one or both partners experienced the divorce/separation of their parents prior to the age of 21. Moreover, the results confirmed the findings of researchers who noted that insecurely attached individuals came from nonintact families more often than participants who came from intact families (McCabe, 1997; Mickelson et al., 1997; Riggs & Jacobvitz, 2002; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2004; Summers et al., 1998).

In essence, the findings suggested that Bowlby's (1988) concept of continuity is indeed at work in the sample of Hawaii couples who participated in the present study. That is to say, internal working models (IWMs) developed during childhood do, in fact, appear to impact the way adult children perceive their own relationship satisfaction. Indeed, the results of the 3-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant main effect on relationship satisfaction by parental divorce/separation status ($F = 3.71$, $p = .027$), with post hoc test results favoring those couples where neither partner experienced the divorce or separation of their primary caregivers before they turned 22 years of age. Thus, the results lent additional support to both the veracity of attachment theory among Hawaii's couples as well as the argument that parental separation/divorce during one's formative years lowers the rate of secure attachment and increases the rate of preoccupation, as had been found by other researchers mentioned in the literature review (Beckwith et al., 1999;

Brennan & Shaver, 1998; Collins et al., 2004; Kilman et al., 2006; Lewis et al., 2000; McCabe, 1997; Mickelson et al., 1997; Ozen, 2003; Riggs & Jacobvitz, 2002; Shaver & Mikulincer, 2004; Summers et al., 1998; Waters et al., 2000).

As for the fourth and last research question, the results of the study confirmed a single, statistically significant interaction effect on relationship satisfaction, one favoring securely attached couples whose parents had never divorced or separated during the respondents' first 22 years of life. As a detailed comparison of these findings to past research has already been outlined in the paragraphs above, there is no need to repeat it here. However, since this particular interaction effect was found statistically significant in terms of relationship satisfaction, it would seem promising to continue promoting the factors that create secure attachments and sustain them across generations. In that spirit, the results of this last research question support the on-going funding of marriage and relationship education (MRE) programs and couples relationship education (CRE) (Halford et al., 2008). It would seem that, even on Maui, adults in mutually satisfying relationships would be expected to live longer (Ross et al., 1990), experience better health (Waite & Gallagher, 2000), have greater financial stability (Waite & Gallagher, 2000), and require less medical attention (Prigerson et al., 2000) and financial assistance (Thomas & Sawhill, 2005) than those in unsatisfying partnerships. Coupled with the impact on the health and well-being of children (ACF, 2008; Harknett, 2009), the benefits of a secure attachment style and intact parenting are evident across the lifespan.

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The most important strength of the present study is the role intentional inclusivity plays in extending the external validity of the findings. Whereas the results of past studies have been almost exclusively based on White, middle class, middle-aged married couples, the present study was comprised of 110 Caucasians (34%) with the remainder representing an array of Local, Hawaiian, Filipino, Italian, African-American, German, Japanese, Hispanic, Israeli, and other primary ethnicities. Of these couples, only 61.9% shared the same ethnic heritage. Individuals from a variety of religious groups participated, including those raised in Buddhist, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Mormon, Christian, Atheist, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Baptist, and spiritual traditions; the majority of whom stated that religion was very important in their daily lives (53.4%) and only 65.6% of whom were raised with similar beliefs as children. Of the 320 individuals who responded, six were gay men, four were lesbians, and one chose to use the descriptor "Other." Compared to research studies where the participant pool is gathered from young undergraduate students, the present study's 40-and-over age groups comprised 67.2% of the sample, where 60 participants were 60 years of age or older and 75% had made it past their seventh anniversary, the point at which couples most commonly contemplate separation (Gottman & Silver, 1999). Prioritizing heterogeneity over homogeneity in research not only increases the generalizability of the study's results, but unequivocally announces that diversity is normal and acceptable, and ultimately worthy of all the benefits long-enjoyed by those in the majority status.

One limitation of this study was the low turn-out of participants who were experiencing relationship dissatisfaction. Due to this occurrence, extreme outliers were retained during statistical analysis, despite a violation of the assumption that the scores were normally distributed and with full knowledge of the impact the scores invariably had on the reported means. The decision to retain the outliers was made in order to lend a voice to the small number of participants who chose to arrive at the study site and contribute their feedback, in spite of the discomfort they likely felt regarding their relationship status. Nevertheless, it is necessary to view the results with caution and consider carefully how future researchers can ameliorate this dilemma.

A second limitation of this study is that the unique history of the Hawaiian Islands naturally champions and celebrates most forms of diversity (Fu & Heaton, 1997; Miyares, 2008; Nordyke, 1989; Novkov, 2008; US Census Bureau, 2010; Usita & Poulsen, 2003). This will likely not be the case for heterogeneous couples located elsewhere since the results are seated in a location steeped in a 200-year period of American history. Where couples of diversity elsewhere may encounter daily microaggressions from disapproving onlookers (thus lowering subjective relationship satisfaction), couples living in Hawaii are not exposed to such acts of corrosive stereotyping. Since this is the case, it may be that interventions drawn from the results of this study cannot be generalized to a larger audience.

A third limitation of the study is the self-selected bias inherent in nonexperimental random sampling. Though the couples who ultimately participated were diverse in their

demographic representation, it can be argued that research volunteers in general are typically healthy, well-adjusted individuals with a predisposition toward being helpful and agreeable. Lest the proverbial baby get thrown out with the bathwater, one must assume this of all studies in which recruitment includes broadcasting a call for volunteers. In effect, one must interpret these results with a balanced measure of optimism and skepticism.

Another limitation of this study is that it does not include data from coded observations of couples interacting over time; instead it is limited to information gleaned from self-reports and, therefore, is susceptible to reporting bias. Whereas the DAS relies on people's subjective evaluations of themselves and is vulnerable to social desirability and limited insight, a neutral observer's assessment of a couple's interpersonal patterns along measurable markers would also be useful in identifying characteristics unique to Hawaii's couples. Gottman (1999) and others who run "love labs" across the country have amassed longitudinal data in the form of video footage, physiological readings, and probing interviews that predict the fate of a relationship with 91% accuracy.

Implications

The implications for social change this study raised have a great deal to do with multiculturalism, inclusivity, and increasing awareness about our complicit role in social oppression as researchers. While it may be convenient to tap undergraduate students from majority populations, it is crucial that a cross-section of the true American population be sampled whenever and wherever possible. Racism, ageism, sexism, homophobia, and the

like can be dispelled only by giving proper credence to the idiosyncrasies and commonalities we, as human beings, share across the lifespan. When normative strengths become evident, they should be researched, no matter the associated demographic variables and no matter the distance from well-regarded epicenters of academia. Though this study has not revealed the correlates of relationship satisfaction in the Hawaiian Islands, it has shone a long-overdue light on a group of individuals who are functioning at a level higher than average in this particular regard. Sue (2008) noted,

> Because most of us would not intentionally discriminate, we often find great difficulty in realizing that our belief systems and actions may have oppressed others. As long as we deny these aspects of our upbringing and heritage, we will continue to be oblivious to our roles in perpetrating injustice to others. (p. 26)

Another implication for social change raised is the importance of early intervention to increase relationship satisfaction for the sake of the adult children in the households of the future. Since divorce/separation continuity has been implicated in this study and others as a marker for future relationship dissatisfaction, funding for marriage and relationship education (MRE) and couples relationship education (CRE) programs must continue in earnest. Identifying comprehensive family strengthening programs is a priority underscored by the results of this research.

Recommendations for Future Research

One recommendation for future research that would extend the goal of the present paper would be to bolster the number of dissatisfied participants by asking couples'

therapists to post and/or disseminate study announcements to those couples they already serve. A second recommendation for future research would be to ensure that the sample continues to reflect the diversity in ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and age, at the very least, which occurs normally in the population being studied. A third recommendation for research in the area of Hawaii's exceptionally low rate of divorce would be to establish a love lab on the island of Maui. If money were no concern, it would behoove scientists, clinicians, and couples to explore extensively the correlates of relationship satisfaction among Hawaii's island residents and draw comparisons to the data collected by Gottman and his colleagues. A third recommendation for future research – one that is more immediately achievable in terms of financial considerations – would be to conduct a meta-analysis of mean DAS scores for various populations. With over 2,000 studies to its credit (Funk & Rogge, 2007), it would be interesting to plot the present study's sample mean against the overall trend. While self-report measures are not necessarily the best or only way of gauging relationship satisfaction, the extensive database of DAS outcomes certainly holds the promise of deeper understanding.

Closing Statements

This study was an examination of the applicability of Bowlby's (1969/1982, 1973, 1980) attachment theory to adult couples who represent cultural variants of the United States population: cohabitating heterosexual and homosexual dyads living in the state of Hawaii. Touting the fourth lowest rate of divorce nationwide (Fiegerman, 2010) and one of the very highest rates of interethnic dyads worldwide (Fu & Heaton, 1997;

Nordyke, 1989; US Census Bureau, 2010), Hawaii's couples represent a subpopulation whose idiosyncrasies merited closer examination. Though the results of the 3-way ANOVA did not confirm that Hawaii-based nativity and rearing had a main effect on relationship satisfaction, the unusually high prevalence of satisfied couples living here points to a degree of happiness not often seen in mainland samples. This state of affairs alone certainly warrants further research.

The 3-way ANOVA did support the hypothesis that attachment style has a strong main and interaction effect on relationship satisfaction, as does divorce continuity as represented by parental divorce/separation status; two concepts central to Bowlby's attachment theory. It would stand to reason, then, that principles of attachment theory are indeed at play in this place where Eastern and Western values have intermingled freely for centuries. Moreover, a measure of social justice has been advanced by prioritizing the inclusion of heterosexual and homosexual dyads, married and cohabitating romantic partners, people of all ages, varied ethnicities, and religions. Lastly, the results of this study further support the need for on-going government funding of programs that seek to enhance relationship satisfaction, since the implications of relationship dissolution can be felt at the individual, couple, family, and community level. Though this study has left some new questions in its wake, it has also answered the call for social justice.

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Appendix A: Announcement for Radio, Print, and Social Media

Attention, Maui Couples

Did you know that couples in the state of Hawaii have the fourth lowest rate of divorce nationwide? Did you know that studies of relationship satisfaction are rarely conducted here, therefore the factors associated with this exceptionally low rate of divorce are largely unknown.

If you are currently in a romantic relationship with a partner or spouse, you may be eligible to participate in a research study exploring differences in RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION among Hawaii's residents.

- Are you and your partner/spouse both 21 years of age or older?
- Have you lived with your current partner/spouse for 2 years or more?
- Do you live on the island of Maui?
- Can you and your partner read and write English fluently?
- Are you BOTH willing to participate TOGETHER?
- Are you BOTH willing to individually fill out a 10 to 20 minute survey packet that includes multiple choice questions of a moderately personal nature?

If you answered yes to these questions, please come to:
Site name
Room number/name:
Date:
For 10 to 20 minutes between the hours of (times) on (day), (month) ___, (year).

This site is conveniently located, handicap accessible, and has ample room for children to wait. Every couple will receive a small gift as a thank you. Couples must show proof of their age and shared address in order to participate. (Driver's license, household bills, etc.). Your name and contact information will not be recorded in any way.

This study is being conducted by Adrianna Flavin, MA in partial fulfillment of a doctorate degree in clinical psychology through Walden University. 158 or more couples are needed in order to achieve valid results. All information will be kept strictly confidential and your name/contact information will not be recorded in any way.

Appendix B: Procedures for Administering the Survey Questionnaires

ADMINISTRATOR NOTE: I will read the following verbatim to each couple as they arrive.

"Welcome and thank you both for your willingness to consider participating in this study. May I please see your proof of age and shared residency?

- If proven, say "Thank you." Hand both partners one packet each and continue reading the script below.
- If not, say "I'm sorry, but I'll need proof of your age and shared residency in order for you to participate. You are free to leave and then come back with a photo ID or household bills, but I cannot let you participate without proof of your age and shared residency."

Today's study will be looking at relationship satisfaction. In order for us to be able to get honest responses, it'll be necessary for you two to sit on *opposite* sides of the room. Feel free to choose a seat on either side of the room though, as we're not asking people to sort themselves by gender.

Once you do find a seat, please carefully read through the Informed Consent document first. You won't need to sign or include your name anywhere on any of these documents; instead your voluntary participation will indicate your informed consent. Feel free to ask any questions as they arise or stop participating at any time if the questions make you feel anxious or uncomfortable.

Also inside the packet, you'll find two pencils, a demographic questionnaire, and two widely used surveys stapled together. When you're done, please return all the materials to me. Just be sure to leave with your own colored copy of the Informed Consent document, a list of local mental health providers, and a small gift for you and your partner to share.

Again, thank you so much for taking a look at today's study!"

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

Thank you for taking a look at today's research exercise on relationship satisfaction! For your records, my name is Adrianna Flavin, MA. I am conducting this study as part of the requirements for a doctorate degree in Clinical Psychology through Walden University.

The reason this study is being undertaken is because Hawaii has the fourth lowest rate of divorce in the nation. Unfortunately, not much is known about the factors associated with this very low rate of divorce since Hawaii's couples are not included in research as often as their mainland-based counterparts. By asking you to respond to the demographic questionnaire and two surveys, it is hoped that certain commonalities will be revealed and can be shared for the benefit of couples everywhere.

If you agree to participate, the study asks that you and your partner individually fill out a demographic questionnaire and two surveys. An estimated completion time to finish all three documents is between 10 to 20 minutes. Your name will not be recorded or associated with your answers in any way. By completing the attached documents, you are agreeing to participate in this study and, therefore, your signature is not necessary.

Though any risks to you are considered minimal, it is important for you to know that you can ask questions or stop participating at any time without penalty. It is also important for you to know that your participation is completely voluntary and agreeing to participate does not waive any of your rights.

If you do choose to participate, you and your partner together will receive a small thank you gift for your time and attendance. Your survey responses will be coded, the fact that you participated will be kept strictly confidential, and all data will be filed in a locked cabinet in a locked storage room. The information you provide will not be used for any purpose other than research and possible future publication in a professional journal.

Please keep the extra Consent Form printed on colored paper you will find in this packet. On the reverse side of that page are the names of local mental health providers you can contact should you experience any lingering discomfort from participating. If you have any further questions about this study once you have left, you can contact me at Adrianna.Flavin@WaldenU.edu or you can contact Dr. Leilani Endicott at 1-800-925-2268 x1210 if you have questions about your rights as a participant. Walden University's approval number for this study is 10-31-11-0070695 and it expires on October 30, 2012. You may also anonymously request the aggregated survey results by emailing me at Adrianna.Flavin@WaldenU.edu.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, had any questions answered, and consent to participate in this study. PACKET CODE # _____

Appendix D: Demographic Questionnaire

PACKET CODE # _____

1. Sex: (Please circle one.) Male Female Transgender

2. How old are you? _____ years old

3. Were you born in the state of Hawaii? (Please circle one.) Yes No

4. By the age of 21, how many years had you lived in the state of Hawaii? _____

5. Which ethnicity do you most strongly identify with? Please feel free to specify. (ex: American, Local, Hawaiian, Filipino, Italian, African American, German, etc.)
   _____

6. What is your present employment status? (Please circle one.)
   Full time Part time Seasonal Retired Unemployed Other
   If other, please specify: _____

7. Within which religion were you raised? (Please circle one.)
   Buddhist Protestant Catholic Jewish Muslim Other
   If other, please specify: _____

8. Currently, how important is religion in your daily life?
   (Please circle one.) Very important Somewhat important Not important

9. What is your sexual orientation?
   (Please circle one.) Heterosexual Gay Lesbian Other
   If other, please specify: _____

10. How many years have you and your spouse/partner been in a committed relationship with each other? _____

11. If you have been married or the equivalent, have you ever been divorced or separated? (Please respond.) Yes (# of times _____) No

12. Before your 22nd birthday, had your biological/adoptive parents or guardians been divorced or separated?
    (Please respond.) Yes (# of times _____) No

13. How many children have you raised/are you raising? _____

14. How many children currently live in your home? _____

Appendix E: Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976)

Most people have disagreements in their relationships. Please circle one number for each question to indicate the approximate agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each of the statements below.

	Always agree	Almost always agree	Occasionally disagree	Frequently disagree	Almost always disagree	Always disagree
1. Handling family finances	5	4	3	2	1	0
2. Matters of recreation	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Religious matters	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Demonstrations of affection	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. Friends	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. Sex relations	5	4	3	2	1	0
7. Correct or proper behavior	5	4	3	2	1	0
8. Philosophy of life	5	4	3	2	1	0
9. Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws	5	4	3	2	1	0
10. Aims, goals and things believed important	5	4	3	2	1	0
11. Amount of time spent together	5	4	3	2	1	0
12. Making major decisions	5	4	3	2	1	0
13. Household tasks	5	4	3	2	1	0
14. Leisure time interests and activities	5	4	3	2	1	0
15. Career decisions	5	4	3	2	1	0

	All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
16. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or ending	0	1	2	3	4	5

your relationship?						
17. How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?	0	1	2	3	4	5
	All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
18. In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?	5	4	3	2	1	0
19. Do you confide in your partner?	5	4	3	2	1	0
20. Do you ever regret being in this relationship?	0	1	2	3	4	5
21. How often do you and your partner argue?	0	1	2	3	4	5
22. How often do you and your partner "get on each other's nerves?"	0	1	2	3	4	5

	Every day	Almost every day	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
23. Do you kiss your partner?	4	3	2	1	0
24. Do you and your partner engage in outside interests together?	4	3	2	1	0

	Never	Less than once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More often
25. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas?	0	1	2	3	4	5
26. Do you and your partner laugh together?	0	1	2	3	4	5
27. Calmly discuss something	0	1	2	3	4	5
28. Work together on a project	0	1	2	3	4	5

These are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometimes disagree. Indicate if either item below caused differences of opinions or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks. (Please circle the number for "Yes" or "No.")

	Yes	No
29. Being too tired for sex.	0	1
30. Not showing love.	0	1

31. The following numbered line represents different degrees of happiness in your relationship. Point 3, "Happy," represents the degree of happiness of most relationships. Please circle the number that best describes the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your relationship.

Extremely unhappy	Fairly unhappy	A little unhappy	Happy	Very happy	Extremely happy	Perfect
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

32. Circle **one number** from the following statements that best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship.

5	I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and *would go to almost any length* to see that it does.
4	I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and *will do all that I can* to see that it does.
3	I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and *will do my fair share* to see that it does.
2	It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but *I can't do much more than I am doing* now to help it succeed.
1	It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but *I refuse to do any more than I am doing* now to keep the relationship going.
0	My relationship can never succeed, and *there is no more that I can do* to keep the relationship going.

Appendix F: Experiences in Close Relationships Scale (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998)

Instructions: The following statements concern how you feel in close relationships. We are interested in how you generally experience these relationships, not just in what is happening with your current spouse or partner. Respond to each statement by indicating how much you agree or disagree with it. Write a number from 1 to 7 in the space provided, using the following rating scale:

Disagree Strongly			Neutral			Agree Strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

_____ 1. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.
_____ 2. I worry about being abandoned.
_____ 3. I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners.
_____ 4. I worry a lot about my relationships.
_____ 5. Just when my partner starts to get close to me, I find myself pulling away.
_____ 6. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.
_____ 7. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.
_____ 8. I worry a fair amount about losing my partner.
_____ 9. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.
_____ 10. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him/her.
_____ 11. I want to get close to my partner, but I keep pulling back.
_____ 12. I often want to merge completely with romantic partners and this sometimes scares them away.
_____ 13. I am nervous when partners get too close to me.
_____ 14. I worry about being alone.
_____ 15. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.
_____ 16. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.
_____ 17. I try to avoid getting too close to my partner.
_____ 18. I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by my partner.
_____ 19. I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.
_____ 20. Sometimes I feel that I force my partners to show more feeling, more commitment.
_____ 21. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.
_____ 22. I do not often worry about being abandoned.

_____ 23. I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.
_____ 24. If I can't get my partner to show interest in me, I get upset or angry.
_____ 25. I tell my partner just about everything.

Disagree Strongly			Neutral			Agree Strongly
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

_____ 26. I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.
_____ 27. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.
_____ 28. When I'm not involved in a relationship, I feel somewhat anxious and insecure.
_____ 29. I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.
_____ 30. I get frustrated when my partner is not around me as much as I would like.
_____ 31. I don't mind asking romantic partners for comfort, advice, or help.
_____ 32. I get frustrated if romantic partners are not available when I need them.
_____ 33. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.
_____ 34. When romantic partners disapprove of me, I feel really bad about myself.
_____ 35. I turn to my partner for many things, including comfort and reassurance.
_____ 36. I resent it when my partner spends time away from me.

Appendix G: Participant's Copy of the Informed Consent Form and Follow-Up Contact Information

ATTENTION: This page is yours to keep. Please store it safely for future reference. Thank you for participating in this study!

Thank you for participating in today's research exercise on relationship satisfaction! For your records, my name is Adrianna Flavin, MA. I am conducting this study as part of the requirements for a doctorate degree in clinical psychology through Walden University.

The reason this study is being undertaken is because Hawaii has the fourth lowest rate of divorce in the nation. Unfortunately, not much is known about the factors associated with this very low rate of divorce since Hawaii's couples are not included in research as often as their mainland-based counterparts. By asking you to respond to the demographic questionnaire and two surveys, it is hoped that certain commonalities will be revealed and can be shared for the benefit of couples everywhere.

If you agreed to participate, the study asked that you and your partner individually complete a demographic questionnaire and two surveys. An estimated completion time to finish all three documents was between 10 to 20 minutes. Your name was not on any of the documents, rather your participation indicated your informed consent to proceed.

Though any risks to you were considered minimal, it was important for you to know that you could ask questions or stop participating at any time without penalty. It was also important for you to know that your participation was completely voluntary and your participation did not waive any of your rights.

If you did choose to participate, you and your partner together received a small thank you gift for your time and attention. Your survey responses will be coded, the fact that you participated will be kept strictly confidential, and all data will be filed in a locked cabinet in a locked storage room. The information you provided will not be used for any purpose other than research and possible future publication in a professional journal.

If you have any further questions about this study once it is over, you can contact me at Adrianna.Flavin@WaldenU.edu or you can contact Dr. Leilani Endicott at 1-800-925-2268 x1210 if you have questions about your rights as a participant. You may also anonymously request the aggregated survey results by emailing me at Adrianna.Flavin@WaldenU.edu.

If you have any concerns that arose as a result of your participation, please feel free to contact a local mental health care provider. On the reverse side of this page are the names of those taken from the local telephone directory. Thank you again for your participation in this study!

Curriculum Vitae

Adrianna Marie Flavin

RELEVANT CAREER HISTORY

09/2003 to present **Hawaii State Department of Education**
Position: School-based Behavioral Health Counselor
Duties: Provide group and individual counseling to students whose behaviors are impeding their academic success. Consult with school staff, parents, caregivers, and concerned others. Conduct observations, administer standardized tests, write reports, create/update behavior support plans, provide trainings, and facilitate support meetings.

09/2010 to 03/2011 **Aloha House, Inc.**
Position: Pre-doctoral practicum (6 months) and internship student (1 year) with the Licensed Crisis Residential Shelter (LCRS) and Residential Treatment Program (RTP) divisions
Duties: Provide individual and group psychotherapy to adult, residential clients who are receiving treatment for co-occurring disorders. Administer standardized tests, conduct observations, review files, interview clients and relevant others, and create psychological reports.

06/2001 to 09/2003 **Maui Youth and Family Services**
Position: Counselor, foster home licensor, trainer, coordinator
Duties: Provide individual and group psychotherapy to displaced, runaway, homeless, court adjudicated, and relocated adolescents. Provide community-based care coordination to these youth, act as a liaison between agencies, provide on-going support and training to the foster parents, and license additional foster homes.

ACADEMIC HISTORY

2007-2011 Walden University
Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology

1998-2001 Caldwell College
M.A. in Counseling Psychology

1994-1998 Caldwell College
B.A., Major in Psychology

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

1998- present American Psychological Association, student affiliate