

THE ROLE OF MIDDLE CHILDHOOD ATTACHMENT STYLES IN PEER LIKING
AND TARGET-SPECIFIC AGGRESSION

by

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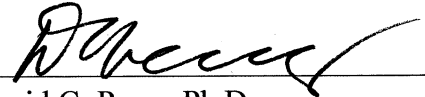
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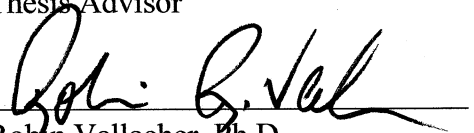
This thesis was prepared under the direction of the candidate's thesis advisor, Dr. David G. Perry, Department of Psychology, and has been approved by the members of her supervisory committee. It was submitted to the faculty of the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science and was accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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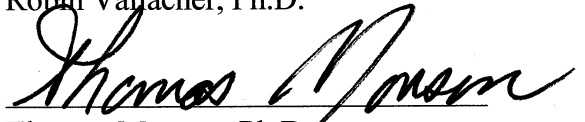


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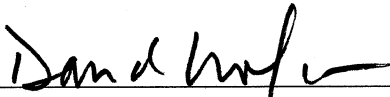
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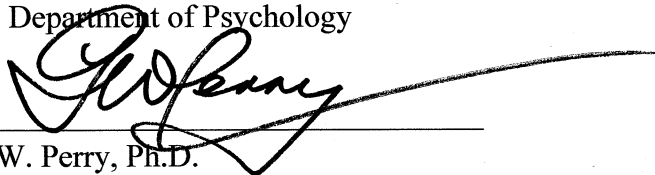


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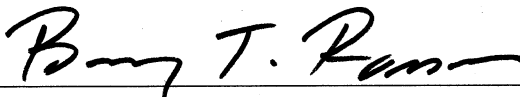
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ABSTRACT

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Attachment, a vital part of human life, is defined as a strong emotional bond with a caregiver that is formed through repetitions of behaviors that children adjust to accordingly. One forms a view on relationships that transfers from parents to peers as a result of their internal working model (IWM). A secure attachment can form a healthy model while an insecure one may form an unhealthy, negative model. The present study assesses preadolescents' attachment styles toward their friends and examines whether their attachment styles interact with peers' attachment styles to predict liking of the peers and aggression toward the peers.

DEDICATION

This manuscript is dedicated to my parents, my mother, Diana, who has put up with me for all of these years and still continues to support all of my endeavors and my father, Sam, who always encouraged me that I could finish whatever I started no matter what odds I was up against. I also dedicate this work to my brother, Samuel, and my best friends for all of their encouragement and strength because without it I would not be successful.

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INTRODUCTION

Close and intimate friendships are an integral part of human beings' lives because we are social creatures. These friendships, beginning in childhood, are in part based off of expectations formed in the parent-child relationship. Friendships are hard to define because people have a variety of different friendships. Some engage in friendships for the mutual benefit they provide, while other friendships become more one-sided with the other person being used for resources or information. Friendship denotes mutual perspective taking, sharing of interests and needs, and dependability.

In school, many children are lucky and do form friendships. However, others are not as lucky and often go through school friendless and alone. Children who form friendships are said to do so because similarity leads to liking. As children age, a variety of factors come into play that influence children's similarity to each other such as toy preference, gender, attitudes, values, and background. Maccoby (1998) states that throughout childhood there is a preference for same-sex peers until early adolescence. Children who may not find themselves similar to anyone may become victimized and friendless over a long period of time because of personal, peer-relational, and family-relational characteristics that aggressors may selectively target them for (Perry, Hodges, & Egan, 2001). Parents are one of the first influences on adolescents' socialization and development (Wilson & Donenberg, 2004). In fact, as Denham, Mitchell-Copeland, Strandberg, Auerbach and Blair (1997) found, successful children's interactions with

peers are associated with how parents socialize their children emotionally. If the relationship with parents is affectionate and warm it is deemed positive, whereas it is negative if the parent-child relationship is distant and distressing (Moller & Stattin, 2001). These childhood views become ingrained in children's thoughts and carry over into how later intimate relationships are affected (Moller & Stattin, 2001). If viewed negatively, this may lead children to attain higher levels of mistrust of relationships, sometimes leading to a preoccupied relationship orientation and sometimes leading to an avoidant relationship orientation. On the other hand, positive views lead to a later view on intimate relationships and friendships as positive as well (Moller & Stattin, 2001). Whether positive or negative, a relationship develops between an infant and a caregiver that can be emotionally strong and is defined as what is classically known as attachment (Steinberg, 2008). The purpose of this study is to investigate whether or not preoccupied or avoidant children tend to like or pick on other children with the same or a different attachment style.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Attachment

How does a child form these positive or negative views that will impact their friendships? These views are formed through attachment, which is primarily directed towards one person, and is a vital part of human life. Infants are born with a multitude of responses (e.g., sucking, clinging, following, crying, and smiling) that elicit attention and care from the caregiver (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1958). The responsiveness and sensitivity to the infant's responses forms the basis of the security felt on the infant's part (Bowlby, 1969). The caregiver is the person that they do not like to be separated from and whom they seek proximity to (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Yet, how does this one person become the infant's object of attachment? Two sources of significance are the quality of the response given and who usually provides that response (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). In addition, the attachment system is activated based on two classes of factors that are a sign of impending danger or stress. The first being the condition of the child (such as illness, fatigue, hunger, or pain) (Cassidy, 2008). The other is that of the environmental conditions (such as the location and behavior of the mother as well as the presence of hazardous stimuli) (Cassidy, 2008). According to Bowlby, "attachment behavior is evolutionary adaptive behavior, because it has ensured protection from predators in our 'environment of evolutionary adaptedness'" (Bowlby, 1969, p. 224). Bowlby also mentioned the possibility that it allows the infant to learn various necessary survival skills from its attachment figure(s). While necessary for survival, the development of the

attachment relationship does take time because it forms through a repetition of behaviors that children adjust to accordingly. It is through this repetition that infants recognize what to expect and how to adjust their behavior (Hazan & Shaver, 1994).

John Bowlby, a pioneer in the area of child development and attachment, defined three things as being essential to the features and functioning of attachment (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). First, proximity maintenance is the ability to stay near and resist separations from the attachment figure (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Next is a safe haven. It is simply a place the child can go to for support, reassurance, nurturing, etc. (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Finally, the seemingly most important, is that of a secure base. A secure base is the comfort provided by an attachment figure that can allow for the child to travel confidently and explore environments in which they may engage in nonattachment behavior (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). Children's responses to the primary caregiver upon their re-entry to the room in the Strange Situation, a procedure developed by Mary Ainsworth, reflects how secure versus insecure their relationship is and can often predict how these children will adjust outside of the home socially and emotionally (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978).

Attachment Styles

We now know how attachment relationships are formed, yet what are the different styles of attachment that result and their corresponding characteristics? There are four different types of attachment relationships. First is the secure attachment style in which the caregiver acts very warm and responsive and helps the child alleviate his or her fears and feel trust (Cialdini, Kenrick, & Neuberg, 2007; Weinfeld, Sroufe, Egeland, & Carlson, 2008). A second style that has been recognized is the disorganized/ disoriented

attachment. It is distinguishable by an unclear framework for dealing with anxiety because children display freezing, a behavior in which the child remains still while they are considering if the caregiver is approachable at this time or not, thought to be the result of a depressed or abusive caregiver (Hazan & Shaver, 1994; Weinfeld et al., 2008).

However, the present study will focus only on the remaining two insecure attachment styles, preoccupied and avoidant. The preoccupied style is characterized by caregivers who have acted inconsistently because sometimes they ignore the child but sometimes intrude into the child's activities (Cialdini et al., 2007). When in a novel or stressful situation, these children convey a strong desire for the parent; however, as a result of their caregiver's inconsistent behavior, the child becomes anxious about the availability of the caregiver when needed (Weinfeld et al., 2008). In turn, the child becomes angry with the caregiver in hopes that the caregiver will view the anger as punishment for the caregiver's unresponsiveness (Weinfeld et al., 2008). These children do not gain the same mastery of their environment and confidence in exploration, as seen in secure children, because they cannot explore their environment without worry (Weinfeld et al., 2008). This worrying is a result of their concern over the whereabouts of their caregiver and if they will be available if they become distressed. In infancy, these children often seek proximity prior to separation, are highly distressed and not easily calmed by the stranger upon separation, and upon reunion seek contact and then angrily refuse it once it is provided (Steinberg, 2008).

The avoidant attachment style is marked by indifference on the part of the child towards the caregiver (Steinberg, 2008). This is also a defensive form of attachment. Children disregard their caregiver and refuse affection after even a brief absence (Cialdini

et al., 2007). These children often look away, ignore, move past the caregiver instead of approaching them, or make no effort to continue contact with the caregiver if they are picked up upon their reunion with each other (Weinfeld et al., 2008). Mothers of these infants display repugnance for physical contact with their child and express little emotion during interactions (Weinfeld et al., 2008).

FROM PARENTS TO FRIENDS

As children age they spend more time with their peers and less time with their parents (Brown & Dietz, 1998; Iervolino et al., 2002; Larson, Richards, Moneta, Holmbeck, & Duckett, 1996). Therefore, it is important first to clarify what the differences and similarities are between child-parent relationships and friendships. As far as similarities go, both relationships involve attachment in that under stressful conditions the attachment figure (i.e., parent or close friend) is called upon for security, proximity, and protection (Cohn, Silver, Cowan, Cowan, & Pearson, 1992). On the other hand, one main difference is that friendships are part of an egalitarian relationship in which each person has comparable power and status as compared to relationships with parents that are asymmetrical because parents have more authority and status (Bretherton & Munholland, 2008; Furman & Shomaker, 2008). A final difference is that relationships with friends are voluntary and more easily terminated if the friend does not meet the child's needs whereas the relationship with parents is obligatory (Furman & Shomaker, 2008).

Internal Working Models

One method of transfer of attachment style from parents to friends is that of an internal working model (IWM) constructed from early attachment experiences. The IWM allows the individual to evaluate the attachment figures' behavior in order to help guide their expectations for how to interpret and understand their social world and new

relationships (Bowlby, 1973; Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986). Thus, it forms the basis of interpersonal relationships the individual engages in throughout life (Steinberg, 2008). As children's cognitive abilities increase, their IWMs become increasingly sophisticated (de Ruiter & van Ijzendoorn, 1993). One's IWM is self-perpetuating due to the fact that young children tend to elicit complementary responses from interaction partners that validate their relational expectations and because of confirmation biases inherent in their functioning (Thompson, 2008).

The development of an IWM of attachment is paralleled by the development of another IWM, the interrelated model of the self, that is, the way the child views the self in terms of relationships. Children decide whether or not they are worthy of another person's love and care and if they view someone as trustworthy or untrustworthy with their needs and support (Feldman, Fisher, & Gowen, 1998). In their IWMs, children who have caregivers who are rejecting form insecure relationships, view the world as unpredictable, and define themselves as unworthy of deserving anything better, whereas caregivers who are consistent and sensitive allow children to form a secure relationship thus deeming themselves as worthy and accepting of love (Sroufe & Fleeson, 1986). IWMs, as they concern the self and relationships, influence information processing, ideation, and memory, creating selective input that tends to stabilize one's IWM (de Ruiter & van Ijzendoorn, 1993).

Behavioral Style

Children may also transfer their attachment style with their parents to their friends by using the current relationship with the caregiver as a starting point. This may help the

child decide whether or not their behavioral styles are a match or mismatch with their friend. The parent-child attachment relationship develops behavioral synchrony and regulation, which is learned through interacting and observing with the caregiver (Weinfeld et al., 2008). Additionally, affect regulation is proposed to be learned as a result of the early attachment relationship because the caregiver's response to a distressed infant who cannot self-regulate is an external source of emotion (Weinfeld et al., 2008). Both behavioral synchrony and affect regulation may change the developing brain resulting in influences at the neuronal level (Weinfeld et al., 2008). As a result of these factors, the infant learns the behaviors that make up a relationship, thus helping the child learn what to expect and how they will be treated by others in a friendship, an application of their developed IWMs. Importantly, Furman, Simon, Shaffer, and Bouchee (2002) state, "It seems that views of friendships may serve as a mechanism for carrying forth not only what has been learned in relationships with parents, but also what has been learned in friendships". Finally, Furman et al. (2002) also suggested that friendship attachment styles may mediate the links between views of adolescent romantic relationships and relationships with parents.

In summation, one characteristic of attachment that is so valuable is that it is cumulative, that is, due to the interactions with their parents, children form generalized expectations concerning their parents and how the parents will take care of them; later these expectations generalize to others, including peers and romantic partners (Maysless & Scharf, 2001).

ATTACHMENT STYLE IN SCHOOL WITH FRIENDS

Now that methods of transfer for one's attachment style have been discussed, one's subsequent development based on attachment style can be examined. Securely attached children appear to be more empathic, socially competent with peers, less hostile, and have more reciprocated friendships (Sroufe, 1983; Thompson, 2008; Waters, Wippman, & Sroufe, 1979). Insecure attachments result in children who exhibit behavioral inhibitions possibly as a result of overcontrolling and intrusive mothers (Calkins & Fox, 1992; Erickson, Sroufe, & Egeland, 1985). In particular, preoccupied children in school tend to cry easily, do not explore their surroundings often, and are noticeably anxious (Perry et al., 2001). Those aforementioned characteristics serve as catalysts for victimization and lead to internalizing problems. These children, at the expense of peer relations, tend to sit next to the teacher more and engage in more interactions with them because they feel that their efforts are ineffective and they must rely on others who may or may not meet their needs. Troy and Sroufe (1987) observed preschool play dyads and found that preoccupied children were more likely to be victims (especially when interacting with avoidant children). A preoccupied friend may exhibit a strong need for the friend in new situations (e.g., will not join a club or extracurricular activity without the friend), be hypervigilant to the possibility that the friend may reject them, and show extreme distress over separation from the friend (e.g., want the friend to sleep over constantly after play dates) (Hodges, Finnegan, & Perry, 1999). Preoccupied children, who are more likely to be girls, were found to have emergent properties that are

a result of the friendship and not the relationship stance with the caregiver (Hodges et al., 1999).

Avoidant children, in school, are more likely to exhibit hostility and scapegoating (Suess, Grossmann, & Sroufe, 1992). Avoidantly attached children often develop externalizing problems that are reflected in their being significantly more likely to victimize their partner (Troy & Sroufe, 1987). An avoidant friend may be characterized by refusing friends offers of help with difficult tasks and avoiding the friend when distressed (Hodges et al., 1999). Lastly, children with an avoidant attachment style, who are more likely to be boys, are attracted to other avoidant same-sex individuals and tend to become friends with them as a result of their relationship stance with their caregiver (Hodges et al., 1999).

MEASURES OF ATTACHMENT

An infant's attachment style is measured by behavioral observations (e.g., The Strange Situation) (Ainsworth & Wittig, 1969). However, how is attachment style measured post-infancy? In early childhood, researchers' focus switches from looking at behavior to instead drawing upon children's representational skills. For example, preschoolers may be administered Narrative Story Stems. This method uses dolls, representing family members, that the researcher uses to enact the beginning of the story and then passes the dolls along to the child to complete the story with varying degrees of prompting. Narrative Story Stems allow researchers to gain insight into children's IWMs. In middle childhood, children are administered story completion narratives in which they read a passage describing a situation and two responses. The children are then asked to decide which response is most similar to how they would feel if in that situation. Each passage assesses an attachment style, and children are assigned an attachment style based off of all of their responses to the passages. In addition, Target, Fonagy, and Schmueli-Goetz (2003) developed the Child Attachment Interview (CAI). This semi-structured interview, used on children ages 7-11, was adapted from the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) (George, Kaplan, & Main, 1985). Children are asked 14 questions that focus on representations of relationships with parents and the children's responses are scored based on verbal and non-verbal communications.

Adults' and adolescents' styles of relating to romantic partners are often assessed with the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) questionnaire and the Experiences in

Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) questionnaire (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). The ECR measures how preoccupied a person is about their relationships as well as how avoidant one is in their relationships. Thus, the questionnaire yields two scores for each respondent- a preoccupied attachment score and an avoidant attachment score. Even though scores are derived for only two dimensions of attachment, combinations of the two scores can be used to classify people into one of the four styles. The secure style of attachment is characterized by low anxiety and low avoidance; the preoccupied style of attachment is characterized by high anxiety and low avoidance; the dismissive avoidant style of attachment is characterized by low anxiety and high avoidance; and the fearful avoidant style (disorganized attachment) is characterized by high anxiety and high avoidance.

Despite major advancements in the measurement of attachment style in early childhood and adulthood, one major limitation that remains is the lack of measures suitable for assessing attachment in middle childhood or preadolescence. In the present study, a measure was developed to assess preoccupied and avoidant dimensions of attachment toward friends. The measure was adapted from the ECR (Brennan et al., 2003). The measure was adapted for use with preadolescents, and instead of measuring adult romantic attachment it is used to assess attachment style in peer friendships. Reliability and validity of the scale will be assessed in hopes that this new measure will prove fruitful in the identification of different attachment styles in middle childhood friendships.

SAME-SEX FRIENDSHIPS

Same-sex friendships typically form in elementary or middle school, about 4 to 6 years earlier than cross-sex friendships (Kuttler, La Greca, & Prinstein, 1999). These intimate friendships and relationships eventually begin to replace the parent as the primary attachment figure (Freeman, 1997). Evidence of same-sex friendships can be found in young preschoolers because they often choose to play with same-sex peers (La Freniere, Strayer, & Gauthier, 1984). The choice to play with same-sex peers often comes about as children's awareness of gender becomes prevalent (Fagot, 1985). As a result, preschoolers start to show evidence of gender-based in-group favoritism and out-group denigration (Yee & Brown, 1994). Additional evidence supporting the formation of same-sex friendships is toy preference. Weinraub et al. (1984) found that while toy preferences differ on the basis of gender children may not be demonstrating a gender bias and may simply prefer others who play with the same toys. As children developmentally progress so do the qualities that are important in a friendship. Preschoolers' friendships are based on toy preference, gender, or activity level for preschoolers, whereas young children base their friendships on common activities and proximity (Fawcett & Markson, 2010). Friendships become more complex in middle childhood and Weinfeld et al. (2008) mention that now, "A child must not only interact with others, but must sustain personal relationships over time (i.e., forge loyal friendships), must find a place in the more organized peer group, and must coordinate friendships with group functioning" (Weinfeld et al., 2008, p.80). Additionally, correlations have been found between

similarity in behavior and friendship in middle childhood (Haselager, Hartup, van Lieshout, & Riksen-Walraven, 1998). Older children and adolescents often report that same-sex friends must exhibit loyalty, as well as similar personalities and values (Bigelow, 1977).

Limiting opportunities for same-sex friendships could result in missing out on some benefits associated with them. Children appear to have a preference for same-sex peers in terms of school-work, playing, and time spending. More companionship seems to be linked with same-sex friendships, and girls in particular have longer lasting and more intense and intimate relationships with those who are their close same-sex friends (Kuttler et al., 1999). One reason for this can be traced to the classic function of socialization within each gender because women are seen as emotionally supportive and men as protective (Kuttler et al., 1999). Females were also more comfortable and gave their same-sex best friend a higher rating in terms of amiability than cross-sex friends.

CROSS-SEX FRIENDSHIPS

As children age, they have increased time and exposure to peers, especially those of the opposite gender. During mid- to late adolescence, the percentage of adolescents who have at least one close cross-sex friend is 47% (Kuttler et al., 1999). The possession of a cross-sex friend serves as an important catalyst in the formation of adolescent intimate dating relationships. Cross-sex friendships have a typical time period when they are formed. In relation to same-sex friendships which are formed 4 to 6 years earlier, in elementary or middle school, cross-sex friendships developed during middle or high school (Kuttler et al., 1999). The likelihood that one will have a cross-sex friendship goes up with age. It is estimated that 43% of 15- to 16-year-olds and 57% of 17- to 18-year-olds reported having a close cross-sex friend (Kuttler et al., 1999). As Moller and Stattin (2001) found, cross-sex friendships become most apparent and warranted around adolescence and provide an outlet for adolescents to face challenges and learn about life and heterosexual relationships. Sharbany, Gershoni, and Hoffman (1981) mention that it is these friendships in adolescence that are considered learning experiences for both parties involved because they are seen as more intimate than same-sex friendships during adolescence and help them learn about the mature sexual relationships to come.

According to Sharbany et al. (1981), cross-sex friendships, which are also referred to as opposite-sex friendships, are often discounted because many believe there is always an erotic element associated with them. However, McBride and Field (1997) found no

physiological evidence for different erotic elements in same- and cross-sex friendships. They also found that cross-sex friendships may be seen as less relaxed than same-sex friendships.

Benefits can also be derived from cross-sex friendships. Both sexes value cross-sex friendships because they are essential to the development of a healthy social and romantic life. They also allow free expression and exchange of ideas that might not occur otherwise. Males are also more likely to use cross-sex friendships for ego support, and those males who are more identity committed are likely to have more intimate cross-sex friendships (Johnson et al., 2007). Men also view cross-sex friendships markedly higher in overall quality, nurturance, and enjoyment than their same-sex friendships, perhaps because they can confide emotionally in women, something they are unable to do as freely with their same-sex friends (Chatterjee, 2001). Conversely, women can tell jokes and be funny without feeling overly emotional, see their relationships with men as refreshing and lighthearted, and gain insight into male perspectives (Chatterjee, 2001). In times of need, the likelihood of turning to a same or cross-sex friend was comparable. Finally, many long to be close with one another, and whether that is accomplished by a same or cross-sex friendship, it still allows the experience of intimacy.

While many effects of cross-sex friendships exist, some are gender specific. For instance, one notable feature found in cross-sex friendships is that men are more confiding and hide their weaknesses while women hide their strengths (Hacker, 1981). McBride and Field (1997) also found that males were more playful with their cross-sex best friend and females were more playful with their same-sex best friend. In addition,

boys exhibit more feelings of esteem support in their cross-sex friendships than with their same-sex friendships (Kuttler et al., 1999).

SAME VERSUS CROSS-SEX FRIENDSHIPS

Instead of paralleling same versus cross-sex friendships there have been numerous studies that have compared the two simultaneously (Chatterjee, 2001; Hacker, 1981; Johnson et al., 2007, Kuttler et al., 1999; McBride & Field, 1997). One study with children ages 15 to 18 focusing on this simultaneous comparison was conducted by Kuttler et al. (1999) and looked at the different qualities that each type of friendship provides. Those who had both same- and cross-sex friendships did not show behavioral or social problems. They exhibited competence in friendships, social support from significant others, and lowered levels of aversive peer experiences. McBride and Field (1997) also examined interactions of best friends in same-and cross-sex friendships. One main focus was to assess personality characteristics, such as extraversion and self-esteem, to see if they would be crucial factors in the formation of cross-sex friendships versus same-sex friendships. There was no significant difference found in personality characteristics between who would become friends in both groups. Behavior states were also noted as being predominantly equivalent which should be the case when interacting with a true best friend because personalities become matched when united.

In a longitudinal study, Moller and Stattin (2001) examined close relationships with friends and parents and later romantic relationships. They wanted to investigate whether positive same- and cross-sex friendships were associated with more satisfying adult relationships. In terms of their cross-sex friendships, participants were asked, during the ages of 15-18, about sexual experiences and how important or concerned they were

with their cross-sex friendships. They found that these cross-sex friendships had less significance in adult relationships. Shyness was associated with lower satisfaction in relationships. Girls and boys who worried about these cross-sex friendships had lower satisfaction whereas boys who did not worry so much experienced elevated levels of satisfaction. Girls who did not worry often possessed more acceptance from their fathers in adolescence and therefore became more satisfied with their relationships. It was found that the type of attachment adolescents experienced with their parents significantly affected midlife adult relationships. It could be proposed that those who have insecure parental relations place more attention on significant others to help them cope with problematic parental relationships. Affectionate relationships with parents may also prevent one from falling too deep in love with someone. These results are found to be mainly associated with emotional experiences.

PEER LIKING AND ATTACHMENT STYLE

The first step in the formation of friendships is that of initial attraction to peers (Fawcett & Markson, 2010). This attraction is influenced by both interpersonal similarity and initial feelings of connectedness. Byrne and Griffitt (1966) found a linear relationship between initial attraction and attitude similarity. In 1971, Byrne formulated the similarity theory stating that people are drawn to others who possess characteristics similar to their own. It is postulated that similarity leads to liking, resulting in friendships. It makes logical sense that the more one has in common with another and likes him or her, the more of a chance there is at forming a friendship.

How do children perceive preoccupied or avoidant peers in terms of liking? Preoccupied individuals tend to engage in hyperactivating strategies that involve strong efforts to gain others support by demonstrating unusual vigilance to others' availability and closeness (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). Consequently, they self-disclose too easily and have lower self-evaluations due to their attempts to win over support from others (Srivastava & Beer, 2005). As a result, children may express lower likability for these individuals because they deviate from the norm of moderate self-disclosure and are overly reactive to how much others like them (Srivastava & Beer, 2005).

Avoidant individuals commonly engage in deactivating strategies that protect them from the lack of support from others by allowing them to maintain a psychological and physical distance from others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003; Srivastava & Beer, 2005). Consequently, avoidant individuals may assert more independence, rely less on

sociability to obtain their sense of self-worth, and may self-disclose less to others (Park, Crocker, & Mickelson, 2004; Srivastava & Beer, 2005). As a result, children may view the social distance and lack of self-disclosure less favorably resulting in lower ratings of likability. Thus, overall, both preoccupied and avoidant children may be less likable than other children.

The principle of similarity of friendship selection predicts that preoccupied children will like preoccupied children more than less preoccupied children will, and that avoidant children will like avoidant children more than less avoidant children will. That is, there should be “homophily of attachment style,” or attraction to peers whose attachment style resembles one’s own.

TARGET-SPECIFIC AGGRESSION

While some children develop liking for one another, others become aggressive and mean towards another. Aggressive children are not aggressive to everybody; rather, they focus their aggressions toward certain peers who become consistently victimized (Olweus, 1978; Perry, Kusel, & Perry, 1988). As Hodges and Perry (1999) found, the children who are repeatedly victimized tend to stabilize during the later elementary school years. Three sets of influences, personal, family-relational, and peer-relational, operate together and are found to affect the probability of victimization in children (Perry et al., 2001).

Physical attributes, one kind of personal factor, that lend children to become victimized are deviant external characteristics (e.g., physical disabilities, obesity, wearing glasses, or speech problems) (Perry et al., 2001). As a result, these children may develop low self-esteem that aggressors look for. In addition, physically weak children tend to become victimized because they do not have the physical strength to avoid attacks (Olweus, 1978; Hodges & Perry, 1999). Secondly, behavioral attributes such as appearing to peers as socially withdrawn and depressed may result in these children being labeled as “passive victims” (Perry et al., 2001). Conversely, “provocative victims” are those who provoke peers as a result of their disruptive and argumentative behaviors (Olweus, 1978). These two victims react differently when bullied; provocative victims react very angrily in an unskilled fashion that renders their attempt futile, while passive victims give in quickly to the bullies’ requests, usually without a fight (Perry et al.,

2001). Finally, the third personal factor is social cognitive factors. Perry et al. (2001) state that, “children with low self-esteem experience self-defeating thoughts and debilitating affective arousal during peer conflicts that encourage victimization”.

Alongside physical attributes, peer-relational influences affect victimization as well. Hodges, Malone, and Perry (1997) found that friendless children are more likely to be victimized because aggressors know the child is rejected and that the peer group will not retaliate against them for their actions.

Finally, the third set of factors is that of family influences. Troy and Sroufe (1987) found that, in regards to attachment, preoccupied individuals whose perceive themselves as unworthy are likely to be victimized. Three child-rearing practices have also been associated with victimization:(a) intrusive, overprotecting parenting that interferes with normal peer behavior (e.g., play); (b) psychological control from parents that leads children to believe their own thoughts are incompetent thereby leading to internalizing symptoms; and (c) coercion (e.g., harsh discipline and authoritarian commands) may also lead to internalizing problems conducive to victimization (Perry et al., 2001).

It seems likely that children’s attachment styles will affect the kinds of children that they pick on or bully. Troy and Sroufe (1987) found that avoidant preschoolers tend to pick on preoccupied peers. Avoidant children are motivated to control and dominate others, and they are most likely to attack preoccupied children because preoccupied children should be annoying to them (as preoccupied children are clingy and demanding) and because preoccupied children tend to be needy and defenseless.

THE PRESENT STUDY

For the purposes of this study, a new scale measuring preoccupied and avoidant attachment styles will be developed and two research questions will be addressed:

1. Do children like other children who are similar to themselves in attachment style?
2. Do children of a certain attachment style pick on other children of a certain attachment style in both same- and cross-sex dyads?

In response to those research questions, two hypotheses have been formulated to be evaluated.

1. Children will like other children whom they have rated as similar to themselves in attachment style. Specifically, avoidant children will like peers who are also avoidantly attached, and preoccupied children will like peers who also are preoccupied.
2. Preoccupied and avoidant individuals will pick on other children of a dissimilar attachment style. Avoidant individuals will be more likely to pick on preoccupied children, specifically; avoidant boys are expected to pick on preoccupied girls.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 201 students at Alexander D. Henderson University School in Boca Raton, Florida. All of the participants spoke fluent English and were in grades 4-8. Two informed consent forms (one to turn in and one to keep) were mailed home to the parents of each student in each class and grade. Only children who received written parental consent participated. The elimination of four participants resulted because they did not provide sufficient answers to questions during testing or refused to take part in a session, leaving a total of 197 participants.

There were 96 females and 101 males. Females' ages ranged from 98 months to 154 months ($M = 120.36$, $SD = 13.79$), and males' ages ranged from 98 months to 159 months ($M = 122.43$, $SD = 14.52$). Concerning grade, 52 participants or 26.4% of the sample were in fourth grade, 56 participants or 28.4% were in fifth grade, 44 participants or 22.4% were in sixth grade, and 45 participants or 22.8% were in seventh grade. Over 65% of each class participated.

Measures

The survey instruments included a measure that has previously been reported elsewhere along with questionnaires developed solely for the purpose of this study. Questionnaires measured the constructs of middle childhood attachment style, peer liking, and self-reports of aggression and victimization.

Preoccupied and Avoidant Attachment Styles

These constructs were measured using a new questionnaire developed for the purpose of this study (see Appendix for complete questionnaire). The new questionnaire was adapted from the ECR scale; an adult romantic relationship style scale developed by Brennan et al. (1998) and was altered to a friendship style scale that was used on a sample of much younger children. Participants were asked a total of 30 questions. Participants chose one of five different choices, ranging from 1 (Disagree Strongly!) to 5 (Agree Strongly!), for each item. The 30 items represent two different attachment styles: (a) preoccupied attachment (15 items; e.g., “My friends don’t want to get as close as I would like.”; “I do not like it when my friends spend time away from me.”); and (b) avoidant attachment (15 items; e.g., “I do not like it when my friends want to be very close.”; “I find it hard to depend on my friends.”).

For each of the attachment styles measured, scores were calculated by averaging responses to the subscale items, resulting in a preoccupied and an avoidant attachment style score. Reverse scoring was done on one item (item 17) in the preoccupied subscale and five items (items 2, 7, 11, 14, and 24) in the avoidant subscale.

Peer Liking

To measure liking of peers, participants were given a list of their classmates and asked, “How much do you like each kid?”. Participants made one of four different choices, ranging from 1 (Not at all!) to 4 (A lot!), for each classmate.

Dyadic Aggression and Victimization Inventory (DAVI)

This questionnaire was modified from the original DAVI created by Card and Hodges (2010). The present measure assessed aggression toward both same- and cross-

sex classmates whereas the original only assessed aggression toward same-sex peers. All participants were provided with a sheet listing the name of one classmate at the top left corner, and along the left side of the page were the names of every other classmate. Participants were asked to indicate whether or not the classmate at the top was mean to each classmate listed on the left hand side by checking the yes or no box. If the participant checked the yes box it meant that the child felt as though the classmate listed at the top was mean to that particular classmate. If the participant checked the no box it meant that the child did not feel as though the student in the upper left corner was mean to that particular classmate. Each participant was asked about every classmate and was asked to skip the page with their name on the top left corner as well as their name in the list along the left hand side.

A measure of general aggression was created for each participant by calculating the proportion of classmates who nominated that individual as being mean to each classmate and averaging these proportions across all possible classmates. A measure of general victimization was created for each participant by calculating the proportion of classmates who nominated that individual as being picked on by each classmate and averaging these proportions across all possible classmates.

Procedures

Data collection took place over three months (September, October, and November, 2010). Each participant was given 1 hour to complete the individual session and 45 minutes for the group session, totaling 1 hr 45 min of participation. For the individual session, each participant was taken to a private room located in the back of the school media center. Group sessions were held in an empty classroom. Each session was

conducted by a Master's or Doctoral student. All treatment of subjects was in accordance with the ethical standards of the APA.

In each session, participants were read the assent form and asked to sign it. Participants were told that the study was examining what makes kids get along with other kids at school and they would be asked to answer questions about themselves and their classmates. They were notified that their answers would not be shared with anyone else and were asked to put their birthday on a 3" by 5" index card with their name on it that was attached to the envelope containing their questionnaires. Instructions were read carefully for each questionnaire to the participants. Additionally, they were told to make sure that every question they wished to answer was answered honestly. Once completed, the participants' packet was placed inside a manila envelope that was sealed after completion of both sessions. As a reward, each participant was offered one colorful pencil with an attached brightly colored eraser cap at the end of their individual session only.

RESULTS

All data were entered separately by two undergraduate psychology students. The data were cleaned to ensure everything was recorded properly. All procedures and statistical analyses were performed using the PASW 18 (formerly SPSS) statistical software package. Descriptive statistics were run prior to exploring the studies two research questions and can be found in Table 3.

The present study used a new scale containing two subscales that measured preoccupied and avoidant attachment styles with friends during middle childhood. Reliability analyses were run on each subscale in order to determine if the scales possess high internal consistency, defined as the extent to which items on a scale are consistent. The preoccupied attachment subscale consisted of 15 items and was found to be highly reliable ($\alpha = .85$). The avoidant attachment subscale consisted of 15 items and was also highly reliable ($\alpha = .81$).

In addition, a factor analysis was conducted on the new measure. A factor should be kept for further interpretation if its Eigenvalue is greater than 1 and in this case the first eight factors satisfy this condition and will be kept. The percentage of the variance in the measured variables explained by my solution is 60.74%. Although the results were expected to load highly onto two factors, preoccupied and avoidant, eight factors were found. Upon further inspection, each factor was comprised of either preoccupied or avoidant items. Factor 1 consists of avoidant attachment measure items 13, 19, 26, and 27 that can be named "Space". Factor 2 contains preoccupied items 6, 9, 17, 23, and 30.

These items can be called “Fear of Abandonment”. Factor 3 includes preoccupied items 10, 15, 18, 22, and 28. This factor can be termed “Reciprocated Abandonment”. Factor 4 is made up of preoccupied items 4, 12, and 25. These three items can be referred to as “Space”. Factor 5, “Disclosure”, refers to avoidant items 1 and 21. Factor 6 includes avoidant reverse scored items 2 and 11 and can be named “Opposite”. Factor 6, “Distance” contains avoidant item 5. Finally, Factor 7 consists of preoccupied item 3 and can be named “Reassurance”. In total, nine avoidant items and 14 preoccupied items were accounted for on the factor analysis. The items not accounted for were preoccupied item 16 and avoidant items 7, 8, 14, 20, 24, and 29. In summation, each factor identified was either a preoccupied or avoidant factor which can be combined to result in the two factors preoccupied or avoidant.

Regression Analyses: Liking

Examination of the first research question (Do children like other children who are similar to themselves in attachment style?) was conducted by running a set of four regression analyses, for all participants, in which we predicted how much participants liked another based on both of their attachment styles. These analyses examined (a) whether children’s level of avoidance is related to the degree to which they like avoidant peers, (b) whether children’s level of avoidance is related to the degree to which they like preoccupied peers, (c) whether children’s level of preoccupied attachment is related to the degree to which they like avoidant peers, and (d) whether children’s level of preoccupied attachment is related to the degree to which they like preoccupied peers. For example, for the first of these four cases (the question of whether the degree to which children’s avoidance predicts the degree to which they like avoidant

peers), we did the following, for each child. First, we determined how much the child likes each classmate (potential target) in terms of Z scores that tell how much the child likes each peer relative to how much that peer is liked by other children. Thus, a high Z score for a particular potential peer target indicates that the focal child likes that peer more than other children like that peer, and a low Z score indicates that the focal child likes that peer less than the peer is liked by other children. Thus, for every focal child, a profile of Z scores was achieved that tells how much the focal child likes each classmate relative to how much others like each of those classmates. If, for example, there are 20 children in a class, each child has 19 potential peer targets, and thus a profile consisting of 19 Z scores would be computed for each focal child. Next, for each focal child, we correlated the focal child's profile of Z scores with the avoidant attachment scores of the classmates. Thus, in the example where there are 19 potential peer targets, a within-subject correlation was computed telling how the 19 Z scores and the 19 classmates' corresponding avoidance scores are associated. If this correlation is high and positive, then it means that the focal child likes (relative to other children) avoidant targets more than non-avoidant targets. If the correlation is negative, it means that the focal child likes (relative to other children) non-avoidant children more than avoidant ones. The betas associated with these correlations thus index the degree to which each child's liking toward peers is governed by the targets' avoidance. One beta is calculated per focal child (in our example, one for each of the 20 children in the class). These betas then served as the dependent variable in a regression analysis in which focal children's avoidance served as an independent variable. A positive beta for the effect of the focal child's avoidance

would indicate that the more that children are avoidant, the more they are inclined to like (relative to other children) avoidant peers.

The regression analysis took the following form. On the first step, the focal child's age, sex, and general aggression score were entered as controls. (We controlled general aggression because we wanted to make sure that any liking of a particular type of target, such as avoidant targets, was not merely a function of general aggressiveness but rather a function specifically of the focal child's attachment style.) On the second step, participants' (i.e., focal children's) avoidant scores were entered.

The foregoing general procedure was followed to evaluate all four correlations of focal child attachment style (preoccupied, avoidant) crossed with peer target attachment style (preoccupied, avoidant). Across the four regression analyses, only one association was significant. A significant positive relationship was found between a preoccupied participant and a preoccupied target ($\beta = .21, p = .00$). These results indicate that the more preoccupied a participant is, the more he or she likes preoccupied classmates.

Generally, it appears that preoccupied participants like other preoccupied classmates. However, do there appear to be sex differences between boy and girl targets? In order to examine this question, a set of eight subsequent regression analyses was then run, for all participants, to predict how likely participants were to like another based on both of their attachment styles and on the targets' sex. For these analyses, two separate profiles of *Z* scores were computed for each focal child — one telling how much the focal child likes each male peer (relative to other children) and one telling how much the focal child likes each female peer (relative to other children). Next, for each focal child, we correlated each of these two profiles of *Z* scores with targets' avoidance scores and

also, separately, with targets' preoccupied scores. A significant positive relationship was found between a preoccupied participant and a preoccupied boy target ($\beta = .17, p = .01$). The more preoccupied a participant is, the more they like preoccupied boy targets. No significant results were found for targeted girls.

Let us now examine sex differences between both the participant and the target in terms of liking one another. After splitting the data file into a boys' and girls' file, a set of eight regression analyses were run for each sex. These analyses predicted how likely participants were to like one another based on both of their attachment styles and sex. These analyses were analogous to the previous ones but involved four correlations of child and target sex. In step one, participant age and general aggression scores for boys or girls were entered. The participants' preoccupied or avoidant attachment style was entered on the second step. Significant results were found for boys and nearly significant results were found for girls. For boys, a significant positive result was found indicating that the more preoccupied a boy is, the more he likes other preoccupied boys ($\beta = .23, p = .02$). These results indicate that preoccupied boys significantly like other boys who are preoccupied, as shown in Table 2.

Interestingly, similar results are found for preoccupied girls. A significant positive relationship showed that the more preoccupied a girl is, the more she likes other preoccupied girls ($\beta = .19, p = .05$). Approaching significance is another positive relationship found between the more preoccupied a girl is the more she likes preoccupied boys ($\beta = .19, p = .06$). Along with preoccupied boys, preoccupied girls also significantly like other girls who are also preoccupied.

In summation, these results indicate that both preoccupied boys and preoccupied girls like anyone else that is their same sex and preoccupied. No significant results were found for participant avoidance.

Regression Analyses: Aggression

In order to examine the second research question (Do children pick on other children of a dissimilar attachment style?) the same regression analyses as before were run after changing the dependent variable to betas indicating the degree to which focal children's aggression towards targets is associated with targets' avoidance or preoccupation. In step one, participant age, sex and general aggression scores were entered. The participants' preoccupied or avoidant attachment style was entered on the second step. A significant negative relationship was found between an avoidant participant and an avoidant target ($\beta = -.19, p = .01$). These results indicate that the more avoidant a participant is, the less likely they will pick on anyone with an avoidant attachment style. Conversely, the less avoidant a participant is, the more likely they will pick on anyone with an avoidant attachment style.

In general, for all participants, it appears that avoidantly attached participants are less likely to pick on those who are also avoidantly attached. However, does the sex of the target make a difference? A set of eight subsequent regression analyses was then run, for all participants, to predict how likely participants were to pick on another based on both of their attachment styles and on the targets' sex. In the subsequent regression analyses that predicted betas indicating how much children attacked preoccupied or avoidant peers, a similar model to the one above was employed. In step one, participant age, sex, and general aggression scores for boys or girls were entered. The participants'

preoccupied or avoidant attachment style was entered on the second step. A significant negative relationship was found between participants' avoidance and avoidance of a boy target ($\beta = -.19, p = .01$). These results reveal that the more avoidant a participant is, the less likely he or she is to pick on an avoidant boy, whereas, the less avoidant a participant is, the more likely he or she will pick on an avoidant boy. Another positive relationship, very close to significance, was found between participant avoidance and a preoccupied target ($\beta = .14, p = .06$). This relationship suggests that the more avoidant a participant is, the more likely he or she will pick on a preoccupied boy, as shown in Table 1. No significant results were found for targeted girl targets.

The previously reported results suggest that significant relationships do exist between a participant and the sex of the target, but do these same results hold true when the participant's sex is taken into account? In order to examine this, the data file was split into a boys' and a girls' file. Next, a set of eight regression analyses were run for boys and girls separately. These analyses predicted how likely participants were to pick on another based on both of their attachment styles and sex. These analyses were analogous to the previous ones but involved four correlations of child and target sex. In step one, participant age and general aggression scores for boys or girls were entered. The participants' preoccupied or avoidant attachment style was entered on the second step. No significant results were found for girl participants; however, one significant result emerged for boys. A significant positive relationship emerged between boys' avoidance and male targets preoccupation ($\beta = .20, p = .03$). These results indicate that the more avoidant the boy participant is, the more likely he will pick on a preoccupied boy, as shown in Table 2.

In summation, these results provide evidence that children do pick on other children based on both the participant's and the target's attachment styles. Table 4 displays intercorrelations of all measures separately by sex but controlling for age. Specifically, the previously reported significant results indicate that avoidant boys are more likely to pick on preoccupied boy classmates in lieu of picking on another avoidant classmate. These results are especially impressive given the fact that how generally aggressive each participant is towards everyone else was controlled for.

DISCUSSION

The present study had three objectives. The first was to develop a new questionnaire for assessing preoccupied and avoidant attachment styles with friends. Secondly, I tested the hypothesis that children develop liking for peers who are similar to themselves in attachment style. In other words, does attachment style affect children's liking for peers? Lastly, I sought to tell if children of a certain attachment style pick on other children of a certain attachment style in both same-and cross-sex dyads.

Many current methods of assessing middle childhood attachment style simply split the children into two groups: those who are securely attached and those who are insecurely attached. This new measure allows continuous assessments of two attachment dimensions, preoccupied and avoidant. The questionnaire used in the present study was a modification of a romantic relationship style scale commonly used in research with adults. It was altered to be a friendship style scale and was used on a sample of much younger children.

Do these two new scales have good overall reliability and validity? The Preoccupied and Avoidant subscales were both found to possess high internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha = .85 and .81, respectively), supplying evidence that they provide a reliable assessment of middle childhood preoccupied and avoidant attachment styles with friends. Although validity (how well a questionnaire measures what it is supposed to) cannot be directly measured, it can be inferred that these scales do possess validity. The significant results that were presented demonstrate that the preoccupied subscale did

capture the intended relationship style as evidenced by the fact that preoccupied children were more likely to be victimized by avoidant children and only liked one another, whereas the avoidant subscale found that avoidantly attached children tended to victimize preoccupied children. The significant results found in the present study resonate well with previously reported findings, thereby extending the validity of these new scales.

In order to assess whether the new scales show construct validity two regression analyses were performed. The first examined whether a participant's avoidant attachment style predicted general aggression. The results indicate that there is not a significant relationship between an avoidant attachment style and aggression. In other words, if one is avoidant it does not necessarily predict aggression. The second regression analysis sought to examine if preoccupied attachment predicts victimization and the results were not significant. In other words, being preoccupied does not necessarily predict victimization.

Do the new scales do any better than Hodges' scales? Overall, the present scales are better than Hodges' scales for four reasons. First, the current scales measure attachment to friends while Hodges' scales measure attachment to parents and it is more appropriate at this age to apply it to friends rather than parents. Secondly, the scales used in the present study go down from adulthood while Hodges' scales go up from childhood. Third, the new scales were constructed from an adult romantic attachment scale while Hodges' scales were devised from a childhood attachment scale. Finally, the new scales were used with cross sex participants and Hodges' scales were only used on same sex participants. Therefore, we have bridged the gap between childhood and adulthood as

well as gender with the use of the new scales in the present study and as a result they prove to be more beneficial than that of Hodges' scales.

The first research question and corresponding general hypothesis (children will like other children whom they have rated as similar to themselves in attachment style) was partially supported by the results from the present study. In general, preoccupied individuals liked other preoccupied individuals, specifically preoccupied boys. Conversely, there were no significant results for avoidant individuals liking anybody; there was a trend for avoidant individuals to like avoidant boys ($p = .07$).

Overall, it appears as though avoidant individuals do not pick on other avoidant individuals who might fight back, but rather direct their aggression towards those who are preoccupied because they serve as easier and weaker targets that are more likely just to accept their hostility. Conversely, preoccupied targets, both boys and girls, tend to like one another and were not found to be aggressors towards any other classmates.

In the present study, the second research question and its corresponding results did partially support the second hypothesis that preoccupied and avoidant children do pick on other children of a dissimilar attachment style in both same- and cross-sex dyads. While avoidant individuals were found to be significantly more likely to pick on anybody with a preoccupied attachment style, no significant evidence was found that preoccupied individuals pick on anyone in particular (more than they pick on others), let alone those of a dissimilar attachment style.

Participant avoidance was negatively related to picking on avoidant children. These results demonstrate that avoidant participants are less likely to pick on other avoidant participants, specifically boys. Just as Hodges et al. (1999) found that avoidantly

attached boys were attracted to other avoidantly attached boys for friendship, the results of the present study provide additional support for this conclusion, but extend it, because avoidant boys that like each other will not pick on one another and will tend to direct their aggression towards other nonaggressive individuals who serve as easier targets for them.

In terms of an avoidant attachment style, it was hypothesized that avoidant boys are expected to pick on preoccupied girls. This hypothesis was not supported by the results of the present study. Zayas and Shoda (2007) found that preoccupied girls prefer avoidant male dating partners, presumably because they confirm the girls' expectations that dating partners avoid intimacy. Many of these relationships include instances of domestic violence. Although the present study did not find significant results to support Zayas and Shoda's (2007) hypothesis, it may be that our participants were too young. However, as children age, the formation of this relationship may serve as the foundation for the dating relationship preferences to come in adolescence, because it may be in middle childhood that preoccupied girls are first attracted to, but treated poorly by, avoidant boys and once this relationship is learned in adolescence it becomes the form of treatment that preoccupied girls are used to and expect.

Overall, the results of the present study suggest that the process involved in liking is not necessarily the same process that is involved in aggression. The two concepts of liking and aggression must be measured separately as results from one do not predict results in the other. In other words, just because a child does not like someone it does not mean that they will pick on him or her. Conversely, that a child picks on another child does not mean that they dislike them. A child may pick on someone viewed as similar to

them because they pose a threat to them or their social status. This is a very important result of this study and should be kept in mind for future researchers to consider when examining peer relations.

Limitations and Future Directions in Middle Childhood Attachment Research

Despite this study's expansion of knowledge in the constructs of attachment, peer liking, and target-specific aggression, several limitations must be addressed. First, some participants noted that some items of the attachment measure seemed to be assessing romantic attachments. Many children at this age are not interested in intimate relationships or love and may have felt uncomfortable truthfully answering questions they felt related to those concepts. Secondly, children at this age tend to be very moody and whom they like and befriend repeatedly changes. It may have been that on testing day a participant was fighting with another one, influencing various ratings. Third, peer liking was self-reported after only a couple months of knowing one another in the class. It may have been that children in the class did not know each other well and may not have accurately rated how well they liked someone because they did not know each other well enough yet. However, because humans are perceptive creatures that can make snap judgments on how they feel about a multitude of issues relating to others, it is believed that many of the children's basic knowledge of knowing one another will not dramatically change over the course year as to significantly alter the current results. A final limitation of the current study is that it is only a snap shot of the participants' friendships. A suggestion for future research, in order to improve this limitation, is to conduct the present study on a longitudinal basis. This would enable researchers to track participants' friendships throughout the school year to account for the variance over time

to establish more accurate linkages. It would also help to clarify and see if participants' liking and aggression towards one another significantly changed. Lastly, future studies may wish to investigate race and its impact on the relationship between attachment style and liking or target-specific aggression by maybe even conducting separate studies to further explore the relationships between the two. For example, over time do children begin to aggress against peers whom once they simply did not like (but did not aggress against)?

Conclusions

The findings of the current study enhance the understanding of same- and cross sex friendships in middle childhood, preoccupied and avoidant attachment styles, peer liking, and target-specific aggression. Results of the current study have shed light on how to assess preoccupied and avoidant attachment styles in middle childhood and have provided researchers with a useful measure with which to do. In addition, most of the research found supports the belief that attachment is cumulative; early parent-child interactions lead children to develop positive or negative internal working models that are then transferred into the types of friendships adolescents strive for, thus resulting in their middle childhood friendship style. It is also expected that the results of this study will prove fruitful in identifying more specific family-relational and peer-relational factors that predict bully/victim pairs related to children's attachment style. The present study met its goals by identifying the avoidant attachment style as the one typically possessed by aggressors and the preoccupied attachment style as the one possessed by targets in middle childhood. While these results represent only a subset of the elementary and middle school years, it is my belief that this study will provide researchers with a

necessary framework for further investigating the relationships between middle childhood attachment style with friends and a variety of factors helping to close the current gap between the parent-child attachment and adult romantic relationship attachment literatures.

APPENDIX

1. I do not like to show my friends how I feel deep down.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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2. I like being close to my friends.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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3. I need my friends to tell me they like me.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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4. My friends don't want to get as close as I would like.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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5. I do not like to be too close to my friends.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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6. I worry a lot about my friendships.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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7. I talk to my friends about my problems.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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8. I want to get close to my friends, but I keep pulling away.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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9. I worry about losing my friends.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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10. I get upset when my friends are not around as much as I'd like them to be.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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11. I find it easy to get close to my friends.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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12. I want to be close to my friends and this sometimes scares them away.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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13. I do not like it when my friends want to be very close.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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14. I tell my friends just about everything.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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15. I feel insecure when my friends aren't around.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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16. I worry that my friends won't care about me as much as I care about them.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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17. I do not worry about losing my friends.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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18. I get upset or angry when my friends don't want to hang out with me.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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19. When my friends start to get close to me, I pull away from them.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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20. I find it hard to depend on my friends.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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21. I find it uncomfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my friends.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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22. Sometimes I wish my friends liked me as much as I like them.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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23. I worry about having no friends.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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24. I don't mind asking my friends for comfort or help.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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25. Sometimes I feel like I force my friends to be closer to me than they want to be.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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26. I get nervous when my friends get too close to me.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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27. I try to avoid getting too close to my friends.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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28. I do not like it when my friends spend time away from me.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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29. I do not like opening up to my friends.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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30. I worry that my friends will stop being my friends.

Disagree Strongly!	Disagree a little	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree a little	Agree Strongly!
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Table 1.

Regression Analyses Predicting Aggression Toward and Liking of Preoccupied Targets by Avoidant Children

Predictor	Targets					
	All Preoccupied Children		Preoccupied Boys		Preoccupied Girls	
	<u>Aggression</u>	<u>Liking</u>	<u>Aggression</u>	<u>Liking</u>	<u>Aggression</u>	<u>Liking</u>
Step 1						
Age	-.03	-.10	.01	.11	-.03	.12†
Sex	.04	-.04	.08	-.15*	-.06	-.23***
General Aggression	.13†	.02	.18*	-.10	.04	.02
Step 2						
Avoidant style	-.02	.03	.14†	.07	-.11	.00

Note. Entries are partial correlations with age, sex, and general aggression scores controlled.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. † = approaching significance.

Table 2.

Regression Analyses Predicting Aggression Toward and Liking of Preoccupied Targets by Boys

Predictor	Targets					
	All Preoccupied Children		Preoccupied Boys		Preoccupied Girls	
	<u>Aggression</u>	<u>Liking</u>	<u>Aggression</u>	<u>Liking</u>	<u>Aggression</u>	<u>Liking</u>
Step 1						
Age	-.17	-.22*	-.00	.16	-.04	-.46***
General Aggression	-.15	.09	.40***	-.02	-.04	-.01
Step 2						
Avoidant style	.08	-.09	.20*	.06	-.04	-.11
(Preoccupied style)	(.05)	(.13)	(-.08)	(.23*)	(.14)	(-.06)

Note. Entries are partial correlations with age and general aggression scores controlled.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. † = approaching significance.

Table 3.

Means and Standard Deviations of Measures by Child Sex

Measure	Girls (<i>n</i> = 96)		Boys (<i>n</i> = 101)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Avoidant attachment	2.24	.63	2.71	.56
Preoccupied attachment	2.60	.74	2.63	.77
Aggression	.05	.06	.05	.07
Aggression toward girls	.04	.06	.04	.07
Aggression toward boys	.06	.07	.06	.08
Aggression toward preoccupied targets	-.02	.20	-.00	.21
Aggression toward avoidant targets	.01	.23	-.02	.23
Liking of preoccupied targets	-.06	.21	-.08	.23
Liking of avoidant targets	-.01	.23	.04	.21
Aggression toward preoccupied girls	.02	.27	-.02	.33
Aggression toward preoccupied boys	-.05	.30	.00	.30
Aggression toward avoidant girls	.23	.32	-.07	.28
Aggression toward avoidant boys	-.00	.30	.01	.33
Liking of preoccupied girls	-.09	.32	-.02	.36
Liking of preoccupied boys	-.03	.27	-.12	.31
Liking of avoidant girls	-.01	.35	.12	.31
Liking of avoidant boys	-.01	.30	-.03	.28

Table 4.

Intercorrelations of Measures

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. Avoidant attachment	-	-.02	.13	.14	.11	.10	-.16	-.08	.09	-.05	.24*	-.09	-.17	-.12	.06	.00	.12
2. Preoccupied attachment	.23*	-	.14	.15	.11	.07	-.09	.15	-.11	.13	-.03	-.15	-.01	-.06	.22*	-.06	-.10
3. Aggression	-.15	.04	-	.94***	.97***	.15	-.08	.09	.07	-.03	.38***	-.15	-.20	.07	.02	.08	.03
4. Aggression on girls	-.21*	.05	.93***	-	.83***	.12	-.07	.08	.12	-.04	.32**	-.17	-.21*	-.01	.06	.14	.04
5. Aggression on boys	-.06	-.01	.89***	.76***	-	.16	-.08	.09	.04	-.02	.40***	-.11	-.15	.13	-.02	.04	.03
6. Aggression on preoccupied targets	-.13	.09	.07	.09	.06	-	.18	.05	-.08	.77***	.49***	.15	.04	.02	-.03	-.07	-.04
7. Aggression against avoidant targets	-.21*	.02	.13	.12	.13	.20	-	.04	-.15	.17	-.11	.75***	.64***	-.01	.07	-.13	-.07
8. Liking of preoccupied targets	.14	.24*	-.14	-.15	-.13	-.10	-.31**	-	.23*	.07	-.08	.07	.05	.65***	.67***	.30**	.20
9. Liking of avoidant targets	.02	.21*	-.13	-.16	-.13	.10	-.06	.23*	-	-.12	.05	-.07	-.03	.27**	-.01	.77***	.76***

Table 4. *continued*

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
10. Aggression on preoccupied girls	-.17	.01	.15	.17	.16	.59***	.11	-.03	-.05	-	-.10	.20*	.06	.05	.01	-.12	-.06
11. Aggression on preoccupied boys	.04	.11	-.10	-.11	-.10	.71***	.11	-.07	.13	-.03	-	-.20	-.08	.02	-.20	.03	.08
12. Aggression on avoidant girls	-.15	.05	.17	.17	.16	.15	.76***	-.36***	-.16	.17	.04	-	.23*	.02	.10	-.14	.01
13. Aggression on avoidant boys	-.19	-.04	.11	.09	.11	.16	.74***	-.16	.07	.05	.04	.24*	-	.09	-.04	-.02	.01
14. Liking of preoccupied girls	.14	.19	-.01	-.10	.02	-.11	-.29**	.75***	.27**	.01	-.13	-.30**	-.16	-	-.07	.32***	.11
15. Liking of preoccupied boys	.07	.13	-.19	-.11	-.22*	-.07	-.18	.60***	.04	-.12	.02	-.23*	-.09	-.02	-	.06	-.16
16. Liking of avoidant girls	-.10	.13	-.10	-.15	-.11	-.04	-.01	.27**	.78***	-.07	-.03	-.07	.07	.40***	-.02	-	.19
17. Liking of avoidant boys	.13	.15	-.18	-.13	-.19	.16	-.14	.09	.67***	-.06	.22*	-.25*	.02	.00	.15	.12	-

Note. Correlations for boys are above the diagonal; correlations for girls are below the diagonal. Entries are partial correlations with age controlled.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$

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