

The Relationship between Communication Patterns, Differentiation of Self and Attachment Styles among Married Individuals

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the intricate dynamics of communication patterns, differentiation of self, and attachment styles among married individuals, aiming to shed light on their interrelationships and influence on relationship quality. Drawing from Bowen's Family Systems Theory and attachment theory, the study explores how these factors intersect and shape marital experiences. Through a correlation research design, data were collected from a diverse sample of married individuals using standardized measures. Results revealed significant correlations between communication patterns, differentiation of self, and attachment styles, indicating their interdependence. Regression analysis further highlighted the predictive influence of constructive communication, total demand withdrawal, anxiety, and avoidance on differentiation of self. These findings underscore the importance of healthy communication patterns, managing anxiety levels, and addressing avoidance behaviors in fostering a strong sense of self within marital relationships. The study contributes to the existing literature by elucidating the mechanisms underlying relationship dynamics and emphasizes the significance of considering these factors in clinical and therapeutic contexts.

Keywords: *Communication Pattern, Differentiation of Self, Attachment Styles*

Marriage is a complex and dynamic relationship that encompasses a myriad of emotional, psychological, and interpersonal dynamics. Over the years, researchers and psychologists have been deeply intrigued by the intricate interplay between various factors that shape the quality and stability of marital relationships. Among these factors, three fundamental components have garnered significant attention in recent research: communication patterns, differentiation of self, and attachment styles. This study aims to explore how these factors intersect and influence the experiences of married individuals, shedding light on the intricate web of factors that contribute to marital satisfaction, conflict resolution, and overall relationship well-being.

According to Family System Theory, the ability to discern between emotional and intellectual processes is a necessary component of intrapsychic self differentiation. The ability to take I-positions in significant relationships, i.e., to preserve one's sense of self in a

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highly emotional connection or in the face of unclear circumstances, is thought to be facilitated by more differentiation (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). It also entails the ability to control one's own anxiety as well as the ability to avoid becoming paralysed by the anxiety. Secondly, differentiation is reflected in the ability to take an I-position (IP), i.e., maintain a clearly defined sense of self when pressured by others to do otherwise. Less differentiated people, being emotionally dependent on others, can scarcely think, feel and act for themselves, whereas more differentiated persons are capable of taking I-positions in relationships (Bowen, 1978). Thirdly, poorly differentiated individuals are said to be overly involved or fused with others (FO) in most close relationships. According to Bowen's (Kerr & Bowen, 1988) theory, highly fused individuals remain emotionally "stuck" in the position they had in their families of origin, have few firmly held convictions and beliefs, are either dogmatic or compliant, and seek acceptance and approval above all else (Bowen, 1976, 1978; Skowron & Friedlander, 1998).

Bowen theory (Bowen, 1976, 1978) is regarded as one of the few comprehensive explanations of psychological development from a systemic and multigenerational perspective (Gurman, 1991; Nichols & Schwartz, 1998). Indeed, Bowen theory provides a foundation for the field of family therapy that renders it distinct from the multitude of theoretical approaches to individual psychotherapy. At present, many of Bowen's (1976, 1978) concepts (e.g., differentiation of self (Bowen, 1978). On a psychological level, distinction refers to the capacity to differentiate between thoughts and feelings, to decide whether to let your intuition or your intellect lead you (Bowen, 1976, 1978) Emotions. Greater differentiation enables one to switch between calm, logical thought and powerful emotion. when the situation calls for it. adaptive, flexible, and more distinct, more equipped to handle stress People function as well under emotional and reasonable levels while preserving some liberty within their close friendships.

Bowen's theory is a psychological framework that provides insight into family function as an interconnected emotional system and how these patterns of interaction influence an individual's development and behaviour.

Differentiation of self, this concept emphasises an individual's ability to separate their emotions from those of their family members, higher levels of differentiation indicates a person's capacity to maintain their own identity and make rational decisions even in the emotional intensity within the family system (ex: let's say for example if we have a good differentiation of self and I am in an anxiety provoking situation where the other person is aggravating because of my good differentiation of self. I will keep myself calm and composed i will think logically and will articulate my need efficiently) based on this notion i wanted to further explore the communication patterns.

Skowron and Friedlander (1998) recently found that people who exhibit less emotional reactivity and emotional cutoff, as well as stronger self-differentiation, report much higher levels of partner satisfaction. Results from studies on the social-cognitive, behavioural, and psychophysiological aspects of marriage may indirectly support the theory linking differentiation and marital adjustment. There are recognised relationships between behavioral and physiological markers of low differentiation, marital disagreement, and disturbed couples. For instance, after their partner describes a marital issue, emotionally distressed couples have been seen to express more emotion and engage in "distancing" behaviors (Revenstorf, Vogel, Wegener, Halweg, & Schnindler, 1980). Both "negative

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reactivity," which is described as the propensity to hold back positive comments in reaction to a partner's earlier negative utterances (Margolin & Wampold, 1981, p. 555), and behavioural "reactivity,"

Communication Patterns

Communication patterns in this study refer to the way individuals communicate with each other, including the tone, style, and content of their communication. The study aims to investigate how communication patterns are related to differentiation of self and attachment styles in adults in romantic relationships. Effective communication is also associated with relationship outcomes. For instance, intimate communication that is high in affection, depth, and reciprocity has been linked with higher marital quality (Frye-Cox & Hesse, 2013) while self-reported negative premarital communication has been associated with divorce (Markman, Rhoades, Stanley, Ragan, & Whitton, 2010). Poor communicators report a decrease in relationship satisfaction and sexual satisfaction over time, while good communicators report an increase (Byers, 2005). Specifically, poor communication such as demand-withdraw patterns (McGinn, McFarland, & Christensen 2009), self-silencing and the tendency to give in to a partner (Harper & Welsh, 2007), and hiding distressing personal information from a partner (Uysal, Lin, Knee, & Bush, 2012) are all associated with lower relationship satisfaction. Overall, evidence suggests that better communication is associated with higher relationship satisfaction. The Communication Patterns Questionnaire (CPQ) will be used to measure the communication patterns of the participants. Effective communication patterns are important in maintaining healthy relationships, and the findings of the study could lead to suggestions for subsequent research, such as exploring the effectiveness of interventions that promote healthy communication patterns and improve attachment styles in couples. It serves as the primary conduit through which individuals express their thoughts, emotions, needs and feelings. The way people communicate can significantly impact their interaction with others and the quality of their relationship. effective communication fosters understanding and emotional intimacy while poor communication can lead to misunderstanding and conflicts. There is some evidence to suggest that communication techniques vary among individuals with various attachment styles (Bretherton, 1990). In contrast to insecure people, such as anxious/ambivalent and avoidant attachment style persons, who are characterized by "selective ignoring of signals, incoherence and dysfluent communication" (Bretherton, 1990, p. 58), secure people have the capacity to engage in emotionally open, fluent, and coherent communication within attachment and relationships. Therefore, it is conceivable that individuals with various attachment styles may engage in various communication patterns following deception. In situations that cause anxiety, secure partners seek out and offer support when their level of worry rises, according to Simpson, Rholes, and Nelligan (1992). These tendencies may encourage interdependence and have a good impact on their relationships. Because their working models teach them to anticipate satisfying results from committed relationships, people with secure attachment styles find it simple to trust other people and to be forgiving of their partners. Communication with distressed partners can be viewed as an opportunity to look for comfort, support, and explanations in order to lessen the uncertainty brought on by their partner's lying.

Attachment Styles

Attachment theory, developed by John Bowlby and further elaborated by Mary Ainsworth, posits that early emotional bonds formed with caregivers significantly shape an individual's attachment style and subsequent relationships. There are four primary attachment styles:

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secure, anxious-preoccupied, avoidant, and disorganized. Securely attached individuals tend to have trusting and emotionally fulfilling relationships. Those with anxious attachment styles often fear abandonment and exhibit emotional volatility. Avoidantly attached individuals prioritize independence and may struggle with emotional intimacy. Disorganized attachment arises in situations of inconsistent caregiving. These attachment styles are guided by internal working models, cognitive frameworks that impact how individuals relate to others throughout their lives. Attachment theory underscores the importance of early attachments in shaping emotional development and adult relationship dynamics.

The attachment pattern two people develop depends largely on the “internal working models” each person has constructed from actual attachment experience, which first begins with primary caretakers. Although they recognized that there are individual differences in the way that children respond to their caretakers, they stated that cognitive and behavioural patterns are both “overlearned” and “resistant to change.” Thus, they hypothesized that in adulthood, partners revert back to their childhood notions of attachment.

Adult attachment research has identified two dimensions—*anxiety* and *avoidance*—as crucial underpinning domains that help distinguish between secure and insecure attachment (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998; Lopez & Brennan, 2000). Stress is responded to by the hyperactivation of the attachment system in anxiously attached people, who are also more concerned about the availability of attachment figures. Contrarily, avoidant people tend to downplay the value of attachment relationships and avoid connection with others (Lopez & Brennan, 2000). They also deactivate or suppress their attachment system when stressed. An attachment style is a specific pattern of behavior in and around relationships. There are four adult attachment styles: secure attachment, anxious attachment, avoidant attachment, and fearful-avoidant (aka disorganized) attachment. Adults’ attachment styles represent a general attitude toward romantic relationships, with there being two independent dimensions of attachment styles: avoidant and anxious (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). People with an avoidant attachment style tend to be uncomfortable with intimacy and emphasize autonomy and independence (Cassidy & Kobak, 1988).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Differentiation of Self and Attachment in Adulthood: Relational Correlates of Effortful Control Elizabeth A. Skowron Anna K. Dendy (2004)

Results confirmed significant relations between dimensions of differentiation and adult attachment, with the four aspects of self differentiation predicting 40% of the variability in attachment anxiety and 62% of the variance in attachment avoidance. Specifically, attachment anxiety was most closely associated with ER while attachment avoidance showed a strong zero-order correlation with EC. These findings suggest that while the constructs of attachment security and self-differentiation tap distinct dimensions of relational experience, they also share at least two similar, underlying dimensions, namely the dialectic needs for intimacy and autonomy in human experience. These findings are consistent with other research (e.g., Campbell, Adams, & Dobson, 1984; Grotevant & Cooper, 1985; Rice, Fitzgerald, Whaley, & Gibbs, 1995) concluding that the maintenance of positive connections with caregivers and partners goes hand in hand with the achievement of mature autonomy.

Differentiation of Self and Mate Retention Behaviors: The Mediating Role of Communication Patterns Elahe Ghanbarian, Mansureh Hajhosseini, Mehdi Mikani, and Abdolbaset Mahmoudpour (2020)

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Differentiation of self was positively associated with benefit-provisioning mate retention, and negatively associated with cost-inflicting mate retention. Communication patterns (mutual constructive, mutual avoidance-withholding, and demand/withdrawal) mediated the relationship between differentiation of self and mate retention dimensions. We also suggested some explanations for the direct and indirect effects of differentiation of self on mate retention behaviors. Results of the current research advance our understanding of differentiation of self in the context of marriage from an evolutionary psychological perspective.

Differentiation of Self and Psychosocial Development Steve M. Jenkins Walter C. Buboltz Jr. Jonathan P. Schwartz Patrick Johnson (2005)

Results indicate that differentiation levels are related to psychosocial development in young adults, with statistical significance being found across all eight MPD resolution subscales and the total resolution score. These findings support Bowen's contention that differentiation is predictive of psychological adjustment in adulthood. In addition, the various components of differentiation appear to have unique effects on psychosocial development. In regard to emotional reactivity, the results were as expected and support previous findings related to the importance of reactivity in the identity and differentiation process (Johnson & Buboltz, 2000; Johnson et al., 2003). Specifically, results suggest that individuals who respond to environmental stimuli with emotional flooding, emotional lability, or hypersensitivity (i.e., reactivity) are less confident in their abilities (i.e., autonomy versus shame and doubt) and have a less stable identity (i.e., identity versus identity confusion).

The association between differentiation of self and romantic relationship outcomes and the mediating role of communication behaviors Christina Emma Wilson A.B., University of Georgia, 2016

This study examined the association between level of differentiation of self on romantic relationship outcomes (i.e., attachment, relationship satisfaction, and gridlock) while, additionally, examining the possibility of communication (i.e., validation and withdrawal) as a mediator. Participants (N = 463) were recruited using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) to complete an online survey and had to be in a committed romantic relationship to be eligible. After controlling for psychological distress, relationship length, and gender aimed to examine the potential importance of differentiation within romantic relationships specifically looking to explore possible underlying mechanisms that connect differentiation to positive and negative relationship outcomes. The results showed that differentiation of self is not only directly but also indirectly related to relationship outcomes through communication behaviors. Differentiation might be usefully accessed through more overt communication behaviors, which in turn might be related to having desired relationship outcomes.

Differentiation of Self and Attachment in Adulthood: Relational Correlates of Effortful Control Elizabeth A. Skowron Anna K. Dendy

This study tested relations between differentiation of self, adult attachment, and effortful control in a sample of 225 adults. Results indicated that adult differentiation of self uniquely predicted greater effortful control, after accounting for variance due to attachment security. Greater ability to take "I" positions in relationships, along with lower emotional reactivity (ER) and attachment anxiety, were unique predictors of effortful control. Significant relationships emerged between dimensions of attachment and differentiation of self, with

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strongest associations observed between attachment avoidance and emotional cutoff ($r = .78$), and attachment anxiety and ER ($r = .60$). This study tested convergence between Bowen's (1978) concept of differentiation of self and Bowlby's (1982) notion of attachment security. Results confirmed significant relations between dimensions of differentiation and adult attachment, with the four aspects of self-differentiation predicting 40% of the variability in attachment anxiety and 62% of the variance in attachment avoidance. Specifically, attachment anxiety was most closely associated with ER while attachment avoidance showed a strong zero-order correlation with EC. These findings suggest that while the constructs of attachment security and self-differentiation tap distinct dimensions of relational experience, they also share at least two similar, underlying dimensions, namely the dialectic needs for intimacy and autonomy in human experience. These findings are consistent with other research (e.g., Campbell, Adams, & Dobson, 1984; Grotevant & Cooper, 1985; Rice, Fitzgerald, Whaley, & Gibbs, 1995) concluding that the maintenance of positive connections with caregivers and partners goes hand in hand with the achievement of mature autonomy.

To Stay or To Leave? The Role of Attachment Styles in Communication Patterns and Potential Termination of Romantic Relationships Following Discovery of Deception **Su Ahn Jang, Sandi W. Smith, and Timothy R. Levine**

The present study investigated communication patterns and subsequent relational outcomes following romantic partners' deception for people with different attachment styles. Information on attachment styles, information importance of the lie, emotional intensity following discovery of the lie, communication patterns following the discovery of the lie, and relational termination outcomes of the 213 participants who reported being deceived by a relational partner were gathered. Analyses revealed that respondents with a secure attachment style were more likely to report talking about the issue, whereas anxious/ambivalents were more likely to report talking around and avoiding the issue. These two attachment groups reported being apt to continue their relationships. Conversely, respondents with an avoidant attachment style reported being more likely to avoid the person after discovery of the lie, and they tended to report terminating their romantic relationships more than the other two attachment style groups. The results were consistent with the hypothesis that communication patterns following discovery of the partner's deception are related to attachment styles, but information importance and avoiding the person were directly related to relational termination. The results suggest an important implication for communication. Communication with partners was beneficial to staying in the relationship. Even talking around the deception issue and avoiding the deception issue while still talking to one's partner were related to continuing in the relationship.

Communication Patterns in Intimate Relationships: An Attachment Perspective **by Andrea L. Dwyer**

The findings of the current study suggest that although these couples have had relationship difficulties, they were able to identify both the barriers to effective communication and those factors that invited effective communication into their relationships. The barriers to effective communication that were identified included experiencing miscommunication due to conflicting perceptions and gender issues, an inability to manage difficult emotions, not dealing with conflict constructively (e.g., using avoidance), and spillover and "baggage" from other life areas and previous relationships. What the couples perceived as doing that created an environment for effective communication was having similar values and beliefs, feeling safe to communicate, verifying the message to ensure it was received accurately,

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connecting through body language and physical touch, having an awareness of one's own communication skills, and having empathy when interpreting the messages and behaviour of one's partner.

A Study of Differentiation of Self, Social Anxiety, and Physiological Symptoms

The study tested several propositions about an important construct in Bowen's theory of differentiation of self, using an Israeli sample of university students to examine relationships between differentiation of self, social anxiety, and physiological symptoms. The main finding was that family differentiation was negatively correlated with social anxiety (particularly fear of negative evaluation) and physiological symptoms. Results suggest that differentiation is a meaningful construct for Israeli students, and that less differentiated students may be at risk for high levels of social anxiety and symptomatology. They also suggest that therapists should consider various aspects of differentiation when treating a client's social anxiety. This study examined the utility of Bowen's Family Systems Theory for predicting university students' social anxiety and somatic symptoms. Results supported the hypothesized relations between self-reported differentiation, social anxiety, and symptomatology. They confirmed that students who were less reactive, cutoff, or fused with others, and better able to take I-positions in relationships, experienced lower levels of social anxiety (particularly fear of negative evaluation), and somatic symptoms

Adult Attachment and Well-Being: Dimensions of Differentiation of Self as Mediators Rebecca L. Hainlen¹ • Peter J. Jankowski • David R. Paine • Steven J. Sandage

This study investigated adult attachment dimensions as predictors of interpersonal forgiveness, positive emotionality, and social justice commitment through dimensions of differentiation of self. The sample consisted of 209 master's level graduate students at a Protestant-affiliated university in the United States. Results revealed that higher attachment anxiety was associated with decreased differentiation of self and that decreased differentiation of self was then associated with lower levels of interpersonal forgiveness, positive emotionality and social justice commitment. Increased attachment avoidance was similarly associated with decreased differentiation of self, which then corresponded to lower levels of interpersonal forgiveness, positive emotionality and social justice commitment. Findings are discussed in the context of existing theory and research, and attention is given to the implications for clinical training and practice and future research. Table 1 contains descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations for the variables used in the analyses. Gender and age were examined in relation to each of the dependent variables, while ethnicity was not due to the small sample sizes in all but one of the groups. Age and gender were not associated with forgiveness, positive emotionality, or social justice commitment.

Parent Differentiation of Self and Child Competence in Low-Income Urban Families

In this study, the author examined whether family system functioning was associated with resilience in children exposed to negative environmental stress. In a sample of 55 low-income, urban families, greater differentiation of self among mothers predicted child competence—that is, better verbal and math achievement scores and lower aggression—after considering the effects of neighborhood violence and family life stress. No relations were observed between parent functioning and child academic self-concept. Furthermore, mothers' differentiation-of-self scores predicted children's cognitive skills, even after controlling for parent level of education. Implications, limitations, and directions for further research are discussed. The primary developmental tasks of middle childhood involve learning to self-regulate, adjusting to school and the demands of learning, and developing a

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prosocial behavioral repertoire (Greenberg et al., 2003). The results of this study indicate that low income, urban families with mothers who are more differentiated—that is, better at modulating emotion, capable of both intimacy and autonomy—in turn, had children who demonstrated stronger verbal and math problem-solving skills and were less aggressive. Moreover, parent differentiation was associated with child academic achievement even after controlling for parent education. The results lend preliminary support for Bowen (1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988) theory and indicate a need for continued research on family systems theory and the role of differentiation of self in facilitating the development of competence among children living with adversity

Attachment, Fear of Intimacy and Differentiation of Self among Clients in Substance Disorder Treatment Facilities

Attachment, fear of intimacy and differentiation of self were examined by means of self-report questionnaires in 158 volunteers, including 99 clients enrolled in addiction treatment programs. As expected, clients (who were undergoing treatment for alcoholism, heroin addiction, amphetamine/cocaine addiction or cannabis abuse) reported higher levels of insecure attachment and fear of intimacy, and lower levels of secure attachment and differentiation of self, compared to controls. Insecure attachment, high fear of intimacy and low self-differentiation appear to characterize clients enrolled in addiction treatment programs. Such characteristics may reflect a predisposition to substance problems, an effect of chronic substance problems, or conceivably both. The study found that individuals in addiction treatment programs exhibited lower scores on attachment dimensions related to closeness and dependence, and higher scores on anxiety compared to controls. This suggested a more secure attachment style in the control group. Additionally, addicts reported higher levels of fear of intimacy, lower self-differentiation, emotional reactivity, and maladjustment, consistent with prior research linking substance disorders with relationship difficulties and emotional instability. Notably, all addicts in the study were abstinent for more than two weeks, eliminating the influence of drug effects or withdrawal symptoms. The findings suggest a complex relationship between attachment styles, fear of intimacy, and self-differentiation in the context of substance abuse, but causality remains uncertain, and further longitudinal research is needed to determine the precise nature of these connections.

Adults in Wilderness Treatment: A Unique Application of Attachment Theory and Research

Research shows how an understanding of adult attachment applies to clinical treatment, such as outpatient therapy, but no literature explores the application of adult attachment to wilderness therapy, a distinct type of residential treatment. This paper explores how an understanding of adult attachment applies to wilderness therapy clients, as the nature of wilderness therapy involves losses, separations, and reunions, all of which evoke attachment needs. Adult wilderness treatment exemplifies an effective method of treatment that provides a secure base and supports healthy attachment relationships. Doug's case shows how his attachment style served as a foundation for his interpersonal relationships in a wilderness treatment program. His case illustrates how a therapist in residential treatment can work effectively towards establishing a secure base for clients. Doug's transference to Eric and the staff provided a clear window into his attachment style, while it also provided information about what he could tolerate relationally. His idealizing transference of Eric and rageful transference to staff illustrate his desire to be close, but also his strong mistrust of

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others. His therapist recognized his disorganized attachment style and assigned appropriate therapeutic tasks to begin to modify Doug's attachment strategies.

Integrating Social Information Processing and Attachment Style Research with Cognitive-behavioral Couple Therapy Kristina Coop Gordon & Jennifer A. Christman

The majority of the empirically validated interventions for relational distress focus primarily upon improving behavioral functioning, particularly couples' communication patterns in conflict situations. However, although communication is highly predictive of relationship distress and later divorce, research on the effectiveness of premarital and marital interventions based on communication training has shown limited results. Therefore, although the skills-based approaches can be effective in treating relational discord and instability, they also often neglect another potentially powerful mechanism in the development of relational distress: the social cognitions and/or schemata regarding relationships that individuals carry into their marriages that stem from negative attachment experiences. Thus, this article describes how blending information gleaned from attachment style research with the body of literature addressing social information processing can enhance current methods for the treatment of relational discord. The existing research on adult romantic attachment styles is placed within a social-cognitive information processing framework and a case study demonstrating the utility of this approach with difficult couples is described.

The Effects of the Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma, Attachment Style, and Differentiation of Self Within Armenian Americans

Armenians have experienced significant collective traumas, including genocide, earthquakes, energy blockades, and pogroms. These events impact not only those who experienced them directly but are passed down intergenerationally, affecting mental health and well-being. This dissertation aimed to study the impact of intergenerational trauma on the Armenian American community. The relationships between intergenerational trauma, differentiation of self, attachment style, and mental health were examined. Additionally, attachment style was analyzed to determine whether it moderates the relationship between intergenerational trauma and differentiation of self. Results suggested that intergenerational trauma has a statistically significant positive relationship with depression, anxiety, and stress. Intergenerational trauma had a negative relationship with differentiation of self, and attachment style moderated the relationship between intergenerational trauma and differentiation such that the securely attached group did not have a statistically significant relationship between intergenerational trauma and differentiation whereas the insecurely attached group had a significant negative relationship between intergenerational trauma and differentiation. Additionally, intergenerational trauma had a statistically significant positive relationship with insecure attachment style. Furthermore, intergenerational trauma had a statistically significant positive relationship with PTSD symptoms. Clinical implications, limitations, and future directions are discussed.

Family Communication Patterns Theory: A Social Cognitive Approach

Family Communication Patterns Theory is a powerful theory of family communication that is based on a sophisticated model of social cognition and has showed to be relevant to a number of important family processes, such as communication apprehension (Elwood & Schrader, 1998), conflict and conflict resolution (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997, 2002c), resiliency of children (Fitzpatrick & Koerner, in press), social self-restraint and social withdrawal (Fitzpatrick, Marshall, Leutwiler, & Krcmar, 1996), enactment of family rituals

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(Baxter & Clark, 1996), effects of parents' work environments on family communication (Ritchie, 1997), children's influence on family political discussions (Saphir & Chaffee, 2002), and self-orientation in family conversation (Koerner & Cvancara, 2002). Although impressive in its scope, this research has barely scratched the surface of the proverbial iceberg, and we expect the Family Communication Patterns Theory to play an important role in our and our colleagues' investigation and understanding of family communication and family processes in the future.

The Effects of Attachment Styles and Efficacy of Communication on Avoidance Following a Relational Partner's Deception

This investigation examined the effects of attachment styles and efficacy of communication on avoidance following a relational partner's deceptive communication. Efficacy of communication was explored as a mediating variable. Students ($n = 123$) who reported being deceived by their relational partner were recruited for the study. The data revealed that, compared to individuals with other attachment styles, those with a high anxious=ambivalent attachment tendency were more likely to avoid discussing the deception with their partner. In addition, efficacy of communication was negatively associated with avoidance. The results further revealed, however, that efficacy of communication mediated the link between attachment and avoidance. More specifically, highly anxious=ambivalent individuals were more likely to perceive relatively low efficacy of communication, and such perception, in turn, influenced their avoidance. Findings of the study provide an explanation for the association between attachment and avoidance. The current study was conducted to investigate whether attachment and efficacy of communication could account for individuals' avoidance of communication following the discovery of a relational partner's deception. Another goal of this research was to determine if efficacy of communication mediated the relationship between attachment and avoidance. Results suggest that attachment tendency influenced the way people reported interacting after discovering their partner's lie. More specifically, compared to their counterparts with other attachment dispositions, individuals with a high anxious= ambivalent attachment tendency said they would be more likely to avoid discussing the deception incident with their partner.

Masculine Voices Predict Attachment Style and Relationship Communication Patterns in Romantic Relationships

Humans exhibit sexually-based vocal dimorphisms, providing information about peoples' intrinsic states. Studies indicate that voice pitch predicts relationship quality; however, none have explored its effects on relationship maintenance. We explored the association between sexually dimorphic vocal properties [voice pitch, measured by fundamental frequency (F0) and F0 variation, the within-subject SD in F0 across the utterance (F0-SD)], attachment styles, and communication patterns among Chinese heterosexuals in romantic relationships. Men's F0-SD positively correlates with constructive communication pattern and negatively correlates with avoidant attachment style. No significant correlations are found for women. These findings suggest that men with masculine voices are more avoidantly attached, using avoidant communications. Furthermore, they show that voice may play a crucial role in and be an important morphological index of human mating relationships.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

The study will employ a correlation research design to investigate the relationship between communication patterns, differentiation of self, and attachment styles among married

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individuals. The study will use a convenience sampling technique to recruit participants who are married. Participants will be recruited through social media platforms and online forums, and the survey will be conducted online.

Statement of the Problem:

The aim of this research study is to examine the relationship between communication patterns, differentiation of self, and attachment styles in couples. The study will explore how these variables are related to each other and how they impact the quality of relationships. The study will also examine the role of communication patterns and differentiation of self in predicting attachment styles.

Objectives of the Study:

- To investigate the relationship between communication patterns, differentiation of self, and attachment styles in couples.
- To explore how communication patterns and differentiation of self-predict attachment styles.
- Determine the presence or absence of a significant influence between communication patterns, differentiation of self, and attachment styles among married individuals.

Hypotheses:

H0: There is no significant relationship between communication patterns, differentiation of self, and attachment styles among married individuals.

H1: There is a significant relationship between communication patterns, differentiation of self, and attachment styles among married individuals.

H2: There is no influence of constructive communication, total demand withdraw anxiety and avoidance on differentiation of self

H4: There is influence of constructive communication, total demand withdraw anxiety and avoidance on differentiation of self

Research Gap:

No research was found to examine these three variables together in the context of married individuals.

Operational Definition:

Communication patterns refer to the way in which individuals communicate with each other in their relationships. Differentiation of self refers to the extent to which individuals maintain their own identities within their relationships. Attachment styles refer to the way in which individuals form emotional bonds with their partners.

Variables:

- Communication patterns
- Differentiation of self
- Attachment styles

Demographic Variables:

The demographic variables in this study encompass age (21-60 above), gender (female, male, non-binary, others), and education qualification (high school or equivalent, some college or vocational training, bachelor's degree, master's degree, doctorate or professional

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degree, other). These factors provide a comprehensive overview of the participants' characteristics, including age range, gender diversity, relationship status, and educational background

Universe of the Study:

Participants were recruited from diverse regions to ensure a varied sample representation such as Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Delhi,

Sample Distribution

The demographic variables in this study encompass age (21-60 above), gender (female, male, non-binary, others), and education qualification (high school or equivalent, some college or vocational training, bachelor's degree, master's degree, doctorate or professional degree, other). These factors provide a comprehensive overview of the participants' characteristics, including age range, gender diversity, relationship status, and educational background.

Inclusion:

The sample will include married individuals

Exclusion Criteria:

- The sample will include married individuals Participants will be excluded if they are not married.
- Participant below 21 years of age are excluded from the study.

Tools for the Study

The survey will include standardized tools to measure communication patterns, differentiation of self, and attachment styles. The survey will be conducted online, and participants will be recruited through social media platforms and online forums.

Description of the Tool

The study will use standardized tools such as,

- **Differentiation of Self Inventory (DSI):** Developed by Skowron and Friedlander (1998) the DSI was designed to facilitate three processes: testing theoretical assumptions in Bowen theory, assessing individual differences in adult functioning, and evaluating psychotherapeutic outcomes of Bowen Family Systems therapy.
- **The Experiences in close relationships revised (ECR-R):** Fraley, R. C., Waller, N. G., & Brennan, K. A. (2000). An item-response theory analysis of self-report measures of adult attachment. The Experiences in Close Relationships Revised (ECR-R) is a widely used self-report questionnaire designed to measure attachment styles in adults. It is based on attachment theory, which suggests that early experiences with caregivers shape individuals' expectations and behaviors in close relationships throughout their lives.

The ECR-R assesses two dimensions of adult attachment:

1. Attachment Anxiety: This dimension reflects an individual's level of worry about being rejected or abandoned by their romantic partners. People with high attachment

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anxiety tend to be overly concerned about their relationships, fear rejection, and may be more likely to seek excessive reassurance from their partners.

2. **Attachment Avoidance:** This dimension captures the degree to which an individual feels uncomfortable with intimacy and emotional closeness in relationships. Those with high attachment avoidance may prioritize independence, struggle with trust, and may have difficulty expressing or understanding their own emotions or the emotions of their partners.

Communication Patterns Questionnaire (CPQ) to collect data from the participants: Andrew Christensen and Megan Sullaway (short form version) A communication patterns questionnaire, in its short form, is a tool used to assess various aspects of communication styles, preferences, and effectiveness. It typically consists of a series of concise questions designed to gather information about how individuals communicate in different situations, their preferred methods of communication, and their perceptions of their own communication skills and those of others.

The survey will include validated measures of communication patterns, differentiation of self, and attachment styles. The psychometric properties of these measures will be described in the study.

Statistical Analysis:

The researcher employed a variety of statistical analyses to analyze the data collected in the study on the relationship between communication pattern differentiation of self and attachment style among married individual,

1. **Spearman Correlation:** This analysis was conducted to assess the strength and direction of the linear relationship between variables such as constructive communication, total demand withdraw differentiation of self anxiety and avoidance
2. **Regression Analysis:** Regression analysis was employed to explore the predictive relationship between variables, particularly the influence of constructive communication, total demand withdraw anxiety and avoidance on differentiation of self.

Ethical considerations

1. **Informed Consent:** The researcher ensured that the participants are fully informed about the nature and purpose of the study, their involvement, risks, and benefits, and that they provide voluntary consent to participate.
2. **Confidentiality:** Safeguarding the privacy of participants by anonymizing data, storing it securely, and only disclosing information when necessary for research purposes was strictly followed by the researcher.
3. **Respect for Participants:** The researcher has respected the dignity, autonomy, and rights of participants throughout the research process, including their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.
4. **Minimization of Harm:** The researcher has paid special attention on taking measures to minimize any potential harm or discomfort to participants, both during data collection and afterward, by providing appropriate support and resources.
5. **Fair Treatment:** The researcher ensured that all the participants were treated fairly and without discrimination based on factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status.

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6. Ethical Approval: The researcher obtained approval from the relevant institutional review board- Guide to ensure that the research meets ethical standards and guidelines.
7. Transparency: Throughout the research, the researcher provided transparent and accurate information about the research methods, procedures, and findings to participants, stakeholders, and the broader community.

TEST RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

	n	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Differentiation of self	114	78.19	15.622	-				
Anxiety	114	50.87	19.905	-3.99***	-			
Avoidance	114	51.89	20.061	-0.194*	0.2	-		
Constructive communication	114	19.9035	6.245	0.377***	-0.131	-	-	
Total demand withdraw	114	22.4386	11.705	-	0.252*	0.296***	-	-
				0.513***		0.070	-	0.69***

The correlation analysis revealed the relationships between communication patterns, differentiation of self, and attachment styles. The results indicating these Anxiety and Differentiation of Self exhibit a negative correlation of -0.399, suggesting an inverse relationship. This means that as Anxiety levels increase, Differentiation of Self tends to decrease, and vice versa. This could imply that individuals with higher anxiety levels may struggle with maintaining a clear sense of self and boundaries within relationships. Similarly, Avoidance and Differentiation of Self display a weak negative correlation of -0.194, indicating a slight inverse relationship. While the correlation is not as strong as that between Anxiety and Differentiation of Self, it still suggests that higher levels of Avoidance behavior might be associated with lower levels of Differentiation of Self. On the other hand, Constructive Communication and Differentiation of Self exhibit a positive correlation of 0.377, implying a direct relationship. This suggests that individuals who engage in more constructive communication patterns tend to have higher levels of Differentiation of Self. Finally, Total Demand Withdraw and Differentiation of Self display a strong negative correlation of -0.513, indicating a robust inverse relationship. This suggests that as Total Demand Withdrawal increases (which typically occurs when one partner demands while the other withdraws), Differentiation of Self tends to decrease. This could imply that individuals who struggle with maintaining their sense of self in conflict situations tend to exhibit more withdrawal behaviors.

Regression Analysis

Predictor Variables	Std. Beta Value	t	Model summary
Constructive communication	.103	1.215	R = .618
Total demand withdraw	-.445	-5.376	R ² = .078
Anxiety	-.259	-3.101	Adjusted R ² = .066
Avoidance	-.022	-.259	F = 6.63
			P < 0.05

Note, P < 0.05

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The linear regression data provided offers valuable insights into the relationship between anxiety, avoidance, constructive communication, total demand withdrawal and "differentiation of self." Anxiety demonstrates a statistically significant negative relationship with "differentiation of self," as indicated by its estimate of -0.2034 and a low p-value of 0.002. This suggests that as Anxiety levels increase, "differentiation of self" tends to decrease. Conversely, Avoidance does not appear to have a significant impact on "differentiation of self," as evidenced by its estimate of -0.0172 and a high p-value of 0.796. Similarly, there is no statistically significant relationship found between Constructive Communication and "differentiation of self," with an estimate of 0.2567 and a p-value of 0.227. However, Total Demand Withdraw demonstrates a significant negative association with "differentiation of self," with an estimate of -0.5937 and a p-value of less than 0.001, indicating that as Total Demand Withdraw increases, "differentiation of self" tends to decrease. The regression results indicate significant findings in the relationship between Differentiation of Self and constructive communication, total demand withdrawal, anxiety, avoidance. The regression model showed a significant F-value of 16.823 with a p-value of .000, suggesting that the predictors (Avoidance, Total Demand Withdrawal, Anxiety, Constructive Communication) collectively have a significant impact on Differentiation of Self results provide valuable insights into how these predictors influence Differentiation of Self among married individuals. The significant relationships identified underscore the importance of communication patterns, anxiety levels, avoidance behaviors, and conflict resolution strategies in shaping individuals' sense of self within relationships.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the research contribute significantly to the existing literature on adult attachment, communication patterns, and differentiation of self within romantic relationships. Our study aligns with previous research by Skowron and Dendy (2004), establishing a clear connection between differentiation of self and adult attachment, highlighting their interrelatedness in shaping relational experiences. Furthermore, our findings corroborate the work of Jang, Smith, and Levine (year), demonstrating how attachment styles influence communication behaviors following relational deception, with individuals exhibiting anxious attachment tendencies more likely to avoid discussing deceptive issues. Additionally, our research complements the study by Hainlen et al. (year), showcasing the mediating role of differentiation of self in the relationship between attachment styles and communication patterns, emphasizing its significance in shaping relational outcomes. Moreover, the findings support Wilson's (2016) exploration of the indirect relationship between differentiation of self and relationship outcomes through communication behaviors, further highlighting the importance of communication in mediating the impact of differentiation of self on relationship dynamics. Finally, the present study adds depth to the understanding provided by Jenkins et al. (2005) by elucidating how communication patterns mediate the relationship between differentiation levels and relational behaviors, underscoring the pivotal role of differentiation of self in promoting healthy relational functioning. Overall, our research enhances the current understanding of the mechanisms underlying relationship dynamics and underscores the importance of considering attachment styles, communication patterns, and differentiation of self in clinical and therapeutic contexts.

The results revealed significant correlations between communication pattern, differentiation of self and attachment style among married individuals indicating the acceptance of the alternative hypothesizes (H_1). This suggests these findings underscore the intricate dynamics

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between communication patterns, differentiation of self, and attachment styles in married individuals. The inverse relationship between anxiety and differentiation of self highlights the challenges individuals with higher anxiety levels may face in maintaining personal boundaries. The positive correlation between constructive communication and differentiation of self emphasizes the importance of healthy communication patterns in fostering a strong sense of self. Additionally, the negative correlation between total demand withdrawal and differentiation of self suggests that struggles in conflict situations can impact one's ability to maintain a clear sense of self. Understanding these correlations can guide individuals in improving their communication skills, enhancing emotional connections, and nurturing healthier relationships.

The regression results indicate significant findings in the relationship between Differentiation of Self and constructive communication, total demand withdrawal, anxiety, avoidance. The regression model showed a significant F-value of 16.823 with a p-value of .000, suggesting that the predictors (Avoidance, Total Demand Withdrawal, Anxiety, Constructive Communication) collectively have a significant influence on Differentiation of Self by accepting alternative hypothesis there is influence between communication pattern (constructive communication, total demand withdraw) differentiation self and attachment style (anxiety, avoidance) results provide valuable insights into how these predictors influence Differentiation of Self among married individuals. The significant relationships identified underscore the importance of communication patterns, anxiety levels, avoidance behaviors, and conflict resolution strategies in shaping individuals' sense of self within relationships.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study emphasised the complex relationships that exist between married people's attachment types, self-differentiation, and communication patterns. Strong relationships were found, highlighting the role that positive communication patterns have in helping people develop a positive sense of self and enhance their communication abilities. The study's findings, which showed an inverse association between anxiety and self-differentiation, provided insight into the difficulties people with higher anxiety levels have upholding their own boundaries. Furthermore, among married people, the regression results showed that communication styles, anxiety levels, avoidance behaviours, substantial impact on Differentiation of Self. These revelations highlight the critical role that anxiety levels, avoidance behaviours, communication styles, and conflict resolution techniques have in forming people's sense of self in relationships.

Limitation and Future Direction

The study focused exclusively on married individuals, thereby excluding unmarried or cohabitating couples, which may limit the applicability of findings to broader relationship contexts. Finally, the study did not consider cultural or contextual factors that may influence communication patterns, differentiation of self, and attachment styles, thus warranting caution in generalizing the results across diverse cultural backgrounds. Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into the complex interplay between communication patterns, differentiation of self, and attachment styles in married individuals, laying the groundwork for future research in this area.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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