

An investigatory study of the relationship between attachment, coping and motivation in adult college students.

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## Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Title	3
Abstract	4
Chapter 1: Introduction	5
Chapter 2: Methodology	21
Chapter 3: Results	29
Chapter 4: Discussion	37
References	44
Appendix	51

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**Title**

An investigatory study of the relationship between attachment, coping and motivation in adult college students.

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to examine how adults cope with the demands of college and identify how they are academically motivated as a function of their attachment relationships. Data was gathered from 150 students studying Psychology, Law or Business at a Dublin based institution. The data was gathered by means of self reported questionnaires that assessed attachment, academic motivation and coping behaviours. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed there was no significant difference in attachment scores for all three academic groups ( $F(2,147)=0.342$ ,  $p=0.711$ ). The t-test showed a significant difference in emotion-focused coping strategy scores between females and males ( $t(148)=-1.729$ ,  $P=0.086$ , 2t) with the mean for females being higher at 17.7284, than the mean for males at 16.6087.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The model of attachment holds a great deal of attention and significance in psychology today. The psychological model of attachment which was initially first spoken about and published by the psychiatrist and developmentalist, John Bowlby and later Mary Ainsworth holds a wealth of available literature and research. The concept of attachment in relation to Emerging Adulthood and Adulthood is of particular interest for this study. These are two exciting stages of the life span that encounter many biological, cognitive, and psychosocial changes taking place. In the developed world many societal factors characteristic of western societies have caused a change of view of the adulthood stage. As a result two distinct stages of adulthood are now viewed; Emerging Adulthood and Adulthood.

It is difficult to suggest an age when an individual has moved into Emerging Adulthood, however, it is marked between the ages of 18-25 when individuals are usually involved in further education, putting off their final career choices, getting married later in life and choosing to have children later also. Often, individuals during this stage do not know what exact career path they wish to choose and are often motivated to study courses that they find interesting in comparison to completing a course to allow them work in a particular field. It is an exciting time allowing further exploration of life while gaining independence and it is therefore common to see individuals at this stage deciding to travel the world, work in a variety of jobs and have various romantic attachments before deciding on one person to spend the rest of their life with. Emerging adulthood has been characterised as a developmental stage during which individuals explore their romantic relationships with an eye to future long-term possibilities (Arnett, 2000). In Western cultures, two major developmental goals

of emerging/young adulthood are that of establishing vocational identities and intimate relationships (Roisman, Masten, Coatsworth, & Tellegen, 2004).

In comparison, adulthood is accepted as being marked by those aged 26 and upwards. These individuals are usually more mature as they have build on their life experiences so far and choose careers they wish to work in while identifying how they can climb the corporate ladder to gain promotions. During adulthood individuals often decide to return to third level education. The reasons for their motivation to do this are often very different to those motivations encountered during emerging adulthood. Often, during adulthood individuals decide to gain precise qualifications required to achieve a particular career aspiration they decide on or to allow them access to specific job fields. It is therefore common to see adults return to college on a full time or part time basis to complete precise courses to allow them work in a particular job they set their heart on. At the same time they also start to consider marriage and choose partners to settle and raise a family with. Along with this, people at this stage make decisions about where to live as they consider their aging parents and child minding facilities for their future unborn children.

Nonetheless, emerging adulthood and adulthood is a period that can be very enjoyable for some and challenging for others. It can be a time of vulnerability and loneliness in relation to stress for many individuals especially those involved in further education at third level as college students confront many challenges in pursuit of their educational goals (Ward Struthers, Perry & Menec, 2005).

Colleges today are experiencing an increasing amount of adult students enrolling for courses. College students encounter many challenges such as the pressure of completing

assignments, studying and sitting exams. In line with this some individuals have to balance the time they spend with their children and families while some individuals have to work to have a steady income. Mature students can sometimes feel cut off from the majority of younger full time students and there can be a change in the nature of one's support network and established relationships (Gibbons, 2008). The majority of adults who return to third level education cope well with these changes and show no excessive signs of stress. However, there are some who experience difficulty in coping and this can lead to various kinds of psychological and behavioural difficulties such as eating disorders, depression (Peterson & Barrett, 1987), suicidal thoughts, stress (Carver & Scheier, 1994) and academic underperformance.

During the course of research for this particular study, there did not seem to be very much explorations on whether specific attachment patterns may be related to another area of psychology, that of academic motivation and coping with the demands and stress of college life. The fact that third level education entry usually occurs at the beginning of early adulthood, prompted the present study to examine the 'emerging adulthood' theory that was proposed by Arnett (1998). The present study also examined 'adulthood' as a lot of adults decide to return to third level education as mature students. Furthermore, the young people of today are faced with a demanding world of work and specialised tasks, and as such, spend an extended period of time in colleges in order to acquire specialised skills, educational experiences, and professional training (Boyd & Bee, 2006).

The ways in which adults are academically motivated to study and continue with their studies at third level is an important area of research. Thus, the ways in which adults adapt and cope with the various demands of college life is also an imperative area of research and



by furthering our understanding we can advance in developing ways to reduce the impact of anxiety or stress that college life can cause on psychological, as well as physiological well-being. We can also identify implications for the improvement in assisting students cope better with the demands of college life and increasing their motivation to complete courses, continue with further education and achieve the highest results they can individually.

### **Attachment**

Attachment theory which was devised by Bowlby (1969), holds the principle belief that an infant is required to develop an attachment with at least one primary caregiver in their life in order to allow development of vigorous social and emotional nature to occur. A growing area of research suggests that attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969, 1988) is like a constructive scaffold which explains why individuals differ in their behaviours with various stressors throughout their life. Attachment is described as a very powerful lasting tie or bond of affection between an individual and an attachment figure (who is normally the infant's main caregiver). The main idea supporting attachment behaviour is that the infant will seek out the caregiver in times of distress or doubt. If the infant is confident that the primary caregiver will be available when they encounter times of distress or doubt then they will view that person as a secure resource which will allow them explore their surroundings in confidence and this will allow them develop healthily.

In contrast, those children who are insecure and in doubt demonstrate an unwillingness and inability to use their caregiver as a secure resource. This is usually because the primary caregiver is not available physically or emotionally when the infant seeks them out and as a result the caregiver does not provide the emotional security that the infant requires. If the infant has confidence in the accessibility and responsiveness of the

attachment figure they will view them as a “secure base” for exploration (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). If an infant comes to understand that their primary caregiver is usually physically available when they seek them out in their time of distress then they appear to demonstrate an idea that the caregiver will usually be available when they need them. This illustrates how the idea of security for the infant moves from a physical one to a mental representation. The responsiveness and level of emotion the caregiver provides to the infant is very important for influencing the development of the child’s attachment to the caregiver. However, the infant’s personality and temperament also play a role in the development of the attachment relationship between the child and the caregiver.

Current theories would claim that attachment styles identified in infancy remain fairly steady over time and are passed into adulthood. Attachment theorists propose that an infant’s initial relationship with his or her caregiver affects how that individual will approach future relationships (Bowlby, 1969). Bowlby (1969, 1982) claimed that individuals who are securely attached display greater social and emotional adjustment while coping with life and the various stressors it throws at people. Although the notion of attachment has been considered and investigated in various ways across the whole lifespan the research literature on attachment security and its benefits supports what Bowlby (1969, 1982) claimed. The new close relationships which arise during emerging adulthood and adulthood are influenced by first attachments experienced during infancy with parental attachment figures. Secure attachment is related to happiness, greater life satisfaction, more positive affect, and fewer depressed symptoms than those with other attachment styles (Peterson & Park, 2007). Various other studies have found that secure adult attachment is related to marital satisfaction and acceptance (Collins & Read, 1990) and is closely correlated to adults being more satisfied in their relationships than insecure adults who are characterised

by greater trust and commitment (Feeney, Noller & Callan, 1994). Secure adults are more likely than insecure adults to seek support from their partners when trying to cope with distress and secure adults are more likely to provide support to their distressed partners (Simpson et al., 1992).

In chorus to secure attachment, Bowlby's (1988) theory proposes that insecure attachment styles are related to a number of psychological problems and evidence identified supports this, for example; studies have found that insecure attachment is related to marital dissatisfaction and non acceptance of physical and emotional support in anxiety-eliciting situations (Simpson 1990). Research also shows that possessing an avoidant attachment style is a risk factor for health (Kotler et al., 1994).

The effect of parenting is extremely influential on a child's ability to develop healthy relationships throughout life. It holds a powerful impact on psychological well being during emerging adulthood and adulthood as research has demonstrated. An unhealthy attachment experience can result in devastating emotional and psychological damage that can take a lifetime to recover from. This raises the questions of how important a secure relationship with a caregiver is during the earlier stages of the life cycle and how important a secure relationship with a close loved one is during the emerging adulthood and adulthood years.

Evidence of an empirical nature in relation to attachment in emerging adulthood and adulthood has shown time after time that attachment is linked to anxiety and depression during these stages of the lifespan. Adjustment to college has been conceptualised as a separation from parents, where individuals experience anxiety and act

out their attachment styles (Larose & Bovian, 1998). Emerging adults and adults who report lower attachment security also report more depressive symptoms and an excessive need for approval from others (Berry, Wearden & Barrowclough, 2007). Studies examining close intimate relationships and peer relationships also show that attachment styles predict friendships or other non romantic relationships (Grabill & Kerns, 2000). Students who hold a secure attachment style tend to have an easier time adapting to college than students who do not have secure attachments (Rice, Fitzgerald, Whaley, & Gibbs, 1995).

Furthermore, it has been found that attachment theory is a predictive of how persistent an individual will be to pursue an academic goal. Children are more likely to persist in goal pursuit when the attachment to their parents is secure (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939). As a result attachment theory has asserted itself as the reference framework in developmental psychology for better understanding how an individual's perceptions about the self and others influence the course of social relationships. Also, for better understanding how interactions with parents, friends and close ones can promote healthy adjustment to third level education. Human beings are at any age most well-adjusted when they have confidence in the accessibility and responsiveness of a trusted other as asserted by Bowlby (1969, 1982).

### **Coping with the demands of college**

Every year thousands of adults decide to return to college on a full time or part time basis. When an adult decides to pursue a third level education course it entails a lot of commitment as students become swamped with the demands of their course, jobs and personal lives, all of which can cause some students to develop stress related illnesses.

Research has shown that the more stress a student feels they are enduring, the higher is the probability that they will also have negative psychological symptoms such as unhappiness, depression, and anxiety (Holahan and Moos, 1990). Towbes and Cohen 1996, established that a wide range of new life circumstances are implicated in the shift to college life. It can be the first time for many students to experience living independently while learning to make decisions and be financially sensible. As a result, some students can find themselves under chronic stress as a result of the transition to third level education. Stewart-Brown et al. 2000 claimed that academic issues were reported as the second most common source of stress after inter-personal problems in a number of studies. In contrast, academic issues were the most reoccurring stressors reported among Irish students (Tyrell, 1992).

Psychologists have viewed stress in three different ways: as a stimulus, as a response, and as an ongoing interaction between an organism and its environment (Passer and Smith, 2004). It can be viewed as an experience of a negative emotional feeling which is coupled with changes of physiological, emotional, behavioural and cognitive changes. These changes are directed either toward altering the stressful event or accommodating its effects (Taylor, 2009). A study conducted on medical students in the US established that when students felt under higher stress such as exam times, the efficiency of their immune system was reduced which lead to an increased likelihood of illness (Glaser & Kiecolt-Glaser, 1993).

It is claimed that the appraisal process plays a critical role for explaining how an individual responds to a stressor. Different students deal with the demands of college in different ways; some students may interpret an identical stressor in very different respects or some students may interpret an identical stressor differently on separate occasions.

Lazarus and Folkman (1991) distinguished between primary and secondary appraisal. Primary appraisal focuses on the emotional effect of the stressful event while secondary appraisal is concerned with the assessment of the significance of the threat and the competence of the student's ability to deal with the stressful event.

Coping was defined by Folkman and Lazarus (1980) as constantly changing cognitive and behavioural attempts to direct and maintain exact external and/or internal demands which are appraised as exceeding the reserves of the individual. Coping is not restricted to attempts of a successful nature only; it includes all intentional efforts to manage stress, in spite of the effectiveness of the efforts. Strategies designed for coping can have an influential effect in moderating the effect academic stress has on a student. As a result, these have been classified as positive coping or negative coping.

Positive coping strategies aim to modify the relationship between the stressor and the individual. These were further classified by Compas (1987) into problem focused coping and emotion focused coping. Problem focused coping is concerned with attempting to act on the stressor deliberately whilst emotion focused coping is concerned with those intended to reduce the emotional states related with or as a consequence of the stressor. Dysfunctional coping refers to coping methods that do not reduce an individual's levels of stress and these can cause further damage in the long term as they are not directed toward problem resolution (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980).

Higgins and Endler in 1995 distinguished between three main classifications of coping strategies; task-oriented, emotion-oriented, and avoidance-oriented. The task-oriented strategy is based on a coping style of problem-focused which entails making a

decision and being proactive in attempting to alter the situation itself so that the level of stress observed reduces. In comparison, the emotion-oriented strategy allows attempts to direct changing emotional responses to the actual stressors so that they stop evoking a negative emotional response and elicit less stress (Mattlin, 1990). Avoidance-oriented coping includes strategies such as avoiding the situation causing the stress, refusing to believe its existence, or losing hope (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). It also includes the use of indirect efforts to adjust to stressors by distancing oneself or engaging in unrelated activities for the purpose of reducing feelings of stress (Roth & Cohen, 1986).

In order for students to successfully complete their course and manage the various stressors they are required to develop coping skills which in turn allows them cope with the stress and demands of college. Goral, Kesimci, and Gencoz (2006) describe coping as a way to control, endure, or assuage a tense situation. Coping can serve as a buffer against psychological and physical problems and making poor lifestyle choices (Nezu, 1986). In the appraisal process there are two different ways identified of coping with the demands of college. The first approach refers to problem focused coping which involves a student's thoughts, actions and tactics which are aimed at removing the stressful event and its impact. This approach can be successful when the student believes it is possible to do something to change the stressful situation. The second approach refers to emotion focused coping which involves a student's thoughts, actions and tactics which are aimed at managing and reducing the difficult emotions associated with a stressful event.

The most commonly reported stressors faced by emerging adults and adults in college are the pressure of exams, deadlines for assignments, financial pressure (Miech & Shanahan, 2000), public presentations on course work and social adjustment, particularly

adjusting to university life (Saracoglu, Minden, & Wilchesky, 1989; Abouserie, 1994). Research conducted by Negga, Applewhite and Livingston (2007) illustrates that students have to deal with other daily stressors such as time management, work, financial matters, class attendance, interpersonal relationships and low grades. The way in which a student copes with the demands of college life is very interesting when considered with an individual's attachment style. Studies in recent time's claim that coping successfully with the stressors of college life partially depend on the student's attachment behaviour. Kotler et. al (1994) found that individuals in their sample of college students with the "avoidant" attachment style reported lower levels of social support and greater loneliness in comparison to those individuals with a "secure" attachment style. Developmental trends in relation to the use of coping strategies have found that older college students are more likely to employ task oriented coping and younger students are more likely to use emotion oriented coping (Heiman, 2004). Other research also supports the claim that as people enhance in age an increase in emotion focused coping strategies also occurs (Band and Weisz, 1988).

The difference of gender has been the main focal point of research with regards to coping. According to research carried out by Sheu and Sedlacek, 2004, female students are less likely to use avoidance coping than are male students. In contrast, other researchers found that significant differences come into play with respect to avoidance based strategies with women reporting a significantly higher level of use of avoidance than men (Haarr & Morash, 1999). Generally, males appear to make more use of active coping strategies and are more likely to endeavour to solve problems. In comparison, females are inclined to make more use of emotional and social coping resources (Rawson, Palmer & Henderson, 1999). Research also shows that female students use emotion-oriented coping



throughout their college years whereas male students increase their use of the emotion-oriented coping style (Pritchard & Wilson, 2006).

The build up of stressors and a dysfunction coping style may be a factor in the increase in the psychological and behavioural problems. Therefore, having facts and information about the ways in which students cope with stressful situations is important for colleges to help students alleviate these problems, reduce the risk of being ill and achieving the maximum amount they can from the college experience. In order for effective intervention programmes to be designed, the stressors particular to college students must be determined (Wright, 1967).

### **Academic Motivation**

Third level education plays a fundamental responsibility in aiding students to achieve their life goals and gain qualifications and motivation is an important contributor to student achievement (Uguroglu & Walberg, 1979). In Ireland, a total of 87,033 university full time undergraduate and postgraduate students were in third level education during the year 2007 to 2008. In line with this, during the same year of 2007 to 2008, there were a total of 16,518 university part time undergraduate and postgraduate students attending third level education. This increased during the year 2008 to 2009, when there was 91,226 full time and 16,673 part time undergraduate and postgraduate students attending university (The Higher Education Authority, 2012). As a result of an increasing amount of students enrolling each year it is imperative that students remain motivated to complete courses and achieve their full potential.

Academic Motivation is an important area of study for two principle reasons; unmotivated students do not achieve grades as high as they are capable of, some drop out of college without gaining the qualifications they initially set out to achieve and many of these students never return to college to complete degrees (Consolvo, 2002) and relish the full opportunities that third level education gives them access to. The term motivation which is derived from the Latin word mover which means “to move” is the underlying force that explains why students continue to complete their courses, to turn up for lectures, to study for exams and to have assignments completed by specific deadline dates that are set. It explains why people engage in behaviours pertaining to their persistence and learning (Deci and Ryan, 1985). When considering academic motivation, the thought is not so much why students choose specific courses to study from a variety of courses available, but what drives some students to work harder than others, to work more efficiently and remain motivated to cope with the demands that college places on them. It should be considered that motivation is not the only factor which influences a college student’s academic performance as individual ability, quality of available equipment, college societies and support within the college also play a role.

The research literature on why adults study and are motivated to study asserts that some adult students have personal reasons for studying while others have relational reasons for studying (Gore & Rogers, 2010). The motives an adult student has for studying are strongly linked with the reason why a goal is pursued and the reason why a person pursues a goal influences their motivation to achieve the specific goal (Ryan & Connell, 1989; Sheldon & Elliot, 1998, 1999).

Academic motivation can be classified into intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and amotivation in line with Self Determination Theory. Intrinsic motivation in academia focuses on why students are motivated by internal factors such as the pleasure obtained from studying something specific because they find it enjoyable and exciting. This type of motivation plays a fundamental role in aiding students reach their ambitions and academic learning. Intrinsic motivation concentrates on factors internal to the student that provide energy and direct their behaviour towards their studies. This view of motivation is seen as the manufactured outcome of internal drives that force a student to move toward the pleasure of their unique individual needs. The literature available claims that intrinsic motivation is interested in supporting a student's learning goals (Harter, 1981).

Extrinsic motivation in academia focuses on what drives students externally such as the rewards they may obtain when a specific qualification is obtained. It differs from intrinsic motivation as students not motivated to study a course for their own enjoyment, but to obtain precise qualifications to get them a specific job. Amotivation is when a student is not intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. Students with this classification of motivation can sometimes feel incompetent and question what they are doing in college which in turn can lead to them dropping out. As shown by Fortier et al (1995) amotivation can have a harmful effect on a student's academic experience. The debate of males versus females is quite strong when comparing motivational scores with females demonstrating a greater intrinsic motivation (Mecca & Holt, 1993).

As third level education is demanding but crucial for educating our population, improving our economy and peoples lifestyles it is important that motivation programmes

be designed to assist college students in maintaining motivation to complete courses and cope with the demands of the course. Academic difficulties which students encounter that are not resolved may lead to involuntary withdrawal (Thomas, 2002, p. 432).

### **Emerging Adulthood and Adulthood Relationships**

The emerging adulthood and adulthood stage engages a major change in how these individuals interact with close loved ones whether romantically or otherwise. It is a stage which includes identity formation and the establishment of more mature interpersonal and intimate relationships (Arnett, 2000). As individuals within this development stage mature their relationships become more symmetrically regular as these individuals develop an instinctive drive for independence. As individuals are placed in the position of having to make important decisions regarding commitments of a personal and educational kind they start to trust and commit more (Feeney, Noller & Callan, 1994). When individuals move into the Emerging Adulthood stage they are confronted with many developmental tasks. In particular, those individuals who are in college are faced with the developmental challenge of being able to develop intimacy and find fulfilment in relationships (Erikson, 1985).

The Emerging Adulthood and Adulthood stage involves a major change in the way these individuals interact with partners in romantic relationships and the way in which they approach dating relationships. Dating is a serious relationship that most adult college students will participate in as part of the academic culture. Dating relationships in early adulthood can be salient contributions “to the individual’s socialisation into the adult roles of society” (Skipper & Nass, 1966, p.412). The capability an individual has to develop these relationships which play a trivial responsibility in a healthy psychosocial

development increase as individual's age maturely. In turn, a student's experience with romantic partners may shape their motivation for completing their studies.

Various different methods and procedures have been used to study attachment style in emerging adulthood and adulthood. Self report tools have been a popular procedural measurement apparatus to assess attachment during this period rather than procedures of an observational nature as used in the strange situation (Ainsworth, 1978). For the purpose of this study, attachment style will be assessed using the revised Hazan and Shaver (1987) Three Category Measure. The coping strategies employed will be assessed using the Brief COPE which was developed by Carver (1997). Finally, academic motivation will be assessed using the Academic Motivation Scale developed by Vallerand et. al (1992).

This study is carried out with the premise that participants who report a secure attachment style will report using emotion-focused coping strategies. Also, it is hypothesised that females will report using emotion-focused coping strategies more so than males. The third hypothesis is that the emerging adults will report using emotion-focused coping strategies more so than participants in the adulthood stage. Lastly, it is hypothesized that those participants who report a secure attachment style will report high in the intrinsic motivation goal of "towards accomplishment". The predictor variables in this study will be gender, age group and academic discipline. The criterion variables will be reported coping strategies, reported attachment style and reported motivation. This study is conducted with the aspiration that the results will increase knowledge in the area of psychology which will in turn offer positive and helpful information to allow intervention programmes be developed. It is also hoped that this could be of use to allow more beneficial policy making in the third level education vocation.

## **Chapter 2: Method**

### **2.1 Materials/Measures**

The materials used for this study were paper, pens, and the below questionnaires.

#### *Demographic Measure*

A demographic measure was used to assess age group, gender, academic discipline and mode of studying (Appendix A).

#### *Attachment Measure*

Attachment, for the purpose of this study is defined as a distinct choice that best describes how the participant feels in romantic relationships when considering emotional and psychological closeness. It was in the 80's when researchers began to consider how attachment processes played out in adulthood. Early research which focused on adult attachment concentrated on studying the association between individual differences in adult attachment as well as the manner of how people thought about their relationships. In doing this it considered the individual's own memories for what their relationships with their parents were like.

Hazan and Shaver's (1987) theory that adult attachment correlated with attachment behaviours demonstrated by children led the way to a model of adult attachment containing three categories. Behaviours displayed by adults could be described as secure, anxious-ambivalent or avoidant. Adults who possessed secure attachment behaviour appeared to be at ease in relationships that were characteristically close. In comparison, adults who possessed anxious-ambivalent attachment behaviour illustrated how they sought out closeness but feared rejection. Finally, adults who showed an avoidant behaviour whereby they had

difficulty depending on others also seemed uncomfortable developing close relationships (Hazan & Shaver 1987).

The Hazan and Shaver (1987) is a self report questionnaire (Appendix D). The theoretical frame supporting it is attachment theory which was formulated originally by Bowlby (1969). However, Hazan and Shaver considered carefully how Bowlby's idea of attachment operated in terms of romantic relationships and adopted Ainsworth's three category concept as the basis for distinguishing the individuals differences in how adults think, feel and behave. They believed that the emotional tie that develops between adult romantic partners is partly a task of the behavioural system which also allows the development of an emotional bond between an infant and a caregiver. The two relationships have many similar features such as both feeling safe when the other is close by and both feeling insecure when the other is not accessible.

The questionnaire was designed to measure the individual differences which are referred to as attachment styles. This was done by firstly asking participants to read three paragraphs labelled with letters A-C and indicate the paragraph that best describes how they feel in a close natured relationship by placing a tick beside it. The second part of the questionnaire provides a profile of a participant's attachment behaviour and feelings. The participants were asked to read each of the three paragraphs again which detail three different relationship styles again; they were then asked to rate each style to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the description provided in relation to their general relationship style. The three paragraphs are answered on a seven point likert scale ranging from 1 (Disagree Strongly) to 7 (Agree Strongly).

### *Coping Measure*

For the purpose of this current study, coping is defined as ways in which a college student responds to stress in their lives. The Brief COPE which was developed by Carver (1997) is a self report questionnaire (Appendix B) which measures a participant's response about how the person has been coping with the stress in their life. This questionnaire was developed after observations revealed that participants became frustrated and impatient when completing the original COPE questionnaire. The Brief COPE questionnaire measures the student's responses that are directed to features of a situation the student has perceived as stressful rather than to the actual stressor itself. The Brief COPE questionnaire contains 4 items per scale and is a brief form of the previous published COPE inventory (Carver, Scheier, Weintraub, 1989).

The Brief COPE was the measure of choice in this study because it allows coping responses that could be important be considered in as short a time as possible. Also, it was thought that the greater the demand placed on the participants the lower the chances that they would consign themselves to involvement in the study. The Brief COPE comprises 28 items which measures 14 scales of two items each. There are three composite subscales measuring emotion-focused, problem-focused, and dysfunctional coping; psychometric properties are described for these. There were two scales from the full COPE measures excluded from the Brief COPE version because they did not prove beneficial in previous work. There was one scale added to the Brief COPE measure which was not included in the original COPE measure; this was the measure of self blame. The measure of self blame was later included because of the support showing the importance of this response as a predictor of poor adjustment under stress (McCrae & Costa, 1986).



The items can be used in many ways; however, for this study a retrospective situational format is used. The questions ask to what extent an individual has been doing what the item says; how much or how frequently to allow the individual cope with the stressful event(s). The questions are answered on a scale ranging from 1 which correlates to “I haven’t been doing this at all” to 4 “I’ve been doing this a lot”. When the questionnaire is completed the scores are found by totalling the sum of the response values. There was initially some concern surrounding the Brief COPE questionnaire in respect of its internal reliability and validity, however, this was cleared up as shown in the well known “Hurricane Andrew” study which involved the responses of a sample of community residents in relation to their responses to a natural disaster (David et. al. 1996). As illustrated the scales used within the Brief COPE questionnaire all meet the value of 0.50 which is minimally accepted (Carver, 1997).

### *Motivation Measure*

For the purpose of this study, motivation is defined as an individual’s enthusiasm towards attending third level education. The Academic Motivation Scale which is based on the belief of Self Determination theory is a self report measure of motivation (Appendix C) toward education which was developed in French and named the Echelle de Motivation end Education (EME). It was later translated into English through the correct practical procedures. The questionnaire is a collection of 28 items which are divided into seven sub scales that assess three types of intrinsic motivation and there types of extrinsic motivation in college students (Vallerand et al, 1992).

The three types of intrinsic motivation considered are the intrinsic motivation to know, to accomplish things, and to experience stimulation. In comparison, the questionnaire

also considers three types of extrinsic motivation which are the external, introjected, and identified regulation.

## **2.2 Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted using a small sample of adults with the goal of testing the understanding of the self reported measures and to establish an approximate time for completion. The results of the pilot study indicated that the questionnaires provided were easily understood and that it took approximately 12 minutes to complete.

## **2.3 Participants**

Permission was sought from three academic faculties within one third level institute in Dublin city centre. The variety in the target sample was selected by choosing 50 students from the Psychology faculty, 50 students from the Business faculty and 50 students from the Law faculty. Random sampling within each faculty was used to try and account for adults and emerging adults from all backgrounds.

### *Sampling*

All participants were chosen by means of stratified random sampling in the sense that the participants were not known to the researcher. The target populations were divided into subgroups and once permission was obtained a quota sampling approach was used i.e. participants that were representative of the population.

### *Inclusion criteria:*

Male or female adults or emerging adults, academic discipline and age group.

*Exclusion criteria:*

Those who refused to give informed consent.

**2.4 Design**

This will be a quantitative psychometric design correlational study. The participants will be examined in relation to their current and/or past attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours which allows the study to be descriptive and retrospective in nature. The researcher will use self-report measures to collect the necessary data. There will be no treatment interventions conducted during the course of the study.

The predictor variables in this study will be, gender, age group and academic discipline.

The criterion variables in this study will be the reported coping strategies, the reported attachment style and reported motivation.

**2.5 Procedure**

The researcher entered a room within the Psychology, Business and Law faculty to introduce themselves and explained to those in the room that the reason for the visit was to carry out a study involving a population in college of adults and emerging adults. In order to allow the required amount of questionnaires to be completed the researcher also asked students sitting outside classrooms before lectures if they would participate in the study. The researcher gave a brief description of the nature of the study and explained that self-report questionnaires would be used in the research which would take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. The researcher informed the participating students that their responses would be entirely confidential and no third party would be reading the completed questionnaires. In addition, the participating students were advised that if they agreed to participate they were

doing so voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any stage that they wished to do so. The participants that chose to partake did so of their own free will, they received no course credit or fee for their participant. The participants were presented with a pack containing questionnaires and a note explaining each of the measures used above. The cover page of the questionnaire pack described everything again that the researcher had already told the participants and also offered the address of a website the participants could go to for online support as well as contact details of organisations they could contact if they felt were affected by the demands of college or stress. Once the participants had completed reading this they continued to complete the questionnaires in the presence of the researcher in case any questions arose. Once the questionnaires were completed the researcher collected these and thanked the participants for their time.

## **2.6 Data Analysis**

Analysis of the data will include descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics will be employed to examine gender, age group, mode of study across the three academic disciplines. The reported coping strategies and reported academic motivation for attending college will also be reported. That statistical tests employed for inferential analysis will be three independent t-tests and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The first independent t-test will be employed to assess if Secure Attachment is a significant variable for the use of emotion focused coping strategies. The second will be used to compare the Emotion Focused Coping strategy scores of females and males. The third will be employed to compare the Emotion Focused Coping strategy scores of participants in the 18-25 year old age group (emerging adulthood) and participants in the 26+ age group (adulthood). The final independent T Test conducted was to compare the intrinsic motivational goal “towards accomplishment” scores among securely and non securely attached participants. Lastly, the

one-way analysis of variance will be completed so it can be established if there will be any statistical significant difference between the three academic groups.

### **Chapter 3: Results**

The results of this study are presented in three sections. In the first section, the descriptive statistics will be presented. These will consist of the results of the gender, age group, and mode of study across the three academic disciplines examined. The reported coping strategies among gender, academic discipline and age group will also be detailed. Finally, the reported academic motivation for attending college will be reported.

In the second section, the results of some independent T Tests will be presented. The first will be presented to compare the Emotion Focused Coping Strategy scores of participants with secure and non secure attachment styles. The second will be presented to compare the Emotion Focused Coping strategy scores of females and males. The third will be presented to compare the Emotion Focused Coping strategy scores of participants in the 18-25 year old age group and participants in the 26+ age group. The last independent T Test presented is to compare the intrinsic motivational goal “towards accomplishment” scores among securely and non securely attached participants. Also, the results of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for all three academic disciplines will be reported.

#### **Section One**

(i) The total 150 participants consisted of 69 males (46%) and 81 females (54%).

(ii) Further statistical testing on gender participation across the three academic disciplines show there was 17 males (34%) and 33 females (66%) from the psychology discipline. There was 23 males (46%) and 27 females (54%) from the law discipline. Lastly, there was 29 males (58%) and 21 females (42%) from the business discipline.

(iii) A statistical test on the age group of the participants in relation to gender confirmed there was 31 males (44.9%) between the ages of 18-25 and 38 males (55.1%) aged 26 or over.

There were 40 females (49.4%) between the ages of 18-25 and 41 females (50.6%) aged 26 or over.

(iv) The number of participants who were studying full time was 85 (56.7%) while 65 (43.3%) were studying part time as reported. There were 37 males (53.6%) and 48 (59.3%) studying full time. The results also showed there were 32 males (46.4%) and 33 (40.7%) females studying part time. These findings can be seen in table 1.0.

**Table 1.0**

***Gender, Age Group among Gender and Mode of Study among Gender***

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Total Male (N)</b>	<b>Total Male (%)</b>	<b>Total Female (N)</b>	<b>Total Female (%)</b>	<b>Total (N)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	69	46.0	69	46.0	81	54.0	150
	Female	81	54.0	69	46.0	81	54.0	150
<b>Age Group</b>	18-25	71	47.3	31	44.9	40	49.4	71
	26+	79	52.7	38	55.1	41	50.6	79
<b>Academic Discipline</b>	Psychology	50	33.3	17	34.0	33	66.0	50
	Law	50	33.3	23	46.0	27	54.0	50
	Business	50	33.3	29	58.0	21	42.0	50
<b>Mode of Study</b>	Full Time	85	56.7	37	53.6	48	59.3	85
	Part Time	65	43.3	32	46.4	33	40.7	65

(v) Statistical testing on the age group of the participants across the three academic show there was 26 participants (52%) between the ages of 18-25 and 24 participants (48%) aged 26 or over in the psychology discipline. In the law discipline, there were 23 participants (46%) between the ages of 18-25 and 27 participants (54%) aged 26 or over. Lastly, the results pertaining to the business discipline show there was 22 participants (44%) between the ages of 18-25 and 28 participants (56%) aged 26 or over.

(vi) Further statistical testing on the mode of study across the three academic disciplines. The results show there was 38 full time students (76%) and 12 part time students (24%) from the psychology discipline. There was 25 full time students (50%) and 25 part time students (50%) from the law discipline. Lastly, 22 full time students (44%) and 28 part time students (56%) participated from the business discipline. These findings can be seen in table 1.1

**Table 1.1**

*Age Group and Mode of Study across Academic Discipline*

<b>Academic Discipline</b>	<b>Psychology</b>	<b>Law</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Total (N)</b>
<b>Full Time (N)</b>	38	25	22	85
<b>Full Time (%)</b>	76.0	50.0	44.0	
<b>Part Time (N)</b>	12	25	28	65
<b>Part Time (%)</b>	24.0	50.0	56.0	
<b>18-25 Age Group (N)</b>	26	23	22	71
<b>18-25 Age Group (%)</b>	52.0	46.0	44.0	
<b>26+ Age Group (N)</b>	24	27	28	79
<b>26+ Age Group (%)</b>	48.0	54.0	56.0	



(iv) The reported coping strategy marks were looked at separately out of inquisitiveness. As reported in table 1.2, it was seen that Active Coping (mean=5.6067) and planning (mean=5.5000) which belongs to the problem-focused coping strategies were the most highly scored. In comparison to this, the dysfunctional strategy item of Behavioural Disengagement (mean=2.8133) which belongs to Avoidant Coping was rated the lowest.

**Table 1.2**

***Reported Coping Strategies***

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
SelfDistraction	150	2.00	8.00	4.9133
ActiveCoping	150	2.00	8.00	5.6067
Denial	150	2.00	8.00	3.0333
SubstanceUse	150	2.00	8.00	3.6800
UseOfEmotionalSupport	150	2.00	8.00	5.0333
UseOfInstrumentalSupport	150	2.00	8.00	4.7800
BehavioralDisengagement	150	2.00	7.00	2.8133
Venting	150	2.00	8.00	4.2333
PositiveReframing	150	2.00	8.00	5.3867
Planning	150	2.00	8.00	5.5000
Humour	150	2.00	8.00	4.1333
Acceptance	150	2.00	8.00	4.7000
Religion	150	2.00	8.00	3.2467
SelfBlame	150	2.00	8.00	4.4267
Valid N (listwise)	150			

(vi) Out of interest, the reported academic motivations for attending college were looked at separately. It was seen that “Because eventually it will enable me to enter the job market in a field that I like” which belongs to intrinsic motivation toward accomplishment was the most

highly scored all of these. When this was examined among gender it was seen that females scored higher (mean=6.3704) than males (mean=6.2464) as reported in table 1.3.

**Table 1.3**

***Reported Motivation***

Gender of Participants		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
Male	Because eventually it will enable me to enter the job market in a field that I like	69	2.00	7.00	6.2464
	Gender of Participants	69	1.00	1.00	1.0000
	Valid N (listwise)	69			
Female	Because eventually it will enable me to enter the job market in a field that I like	81	2.00	7.00	6.3704
	Gender of Participants	81	2.00	2.00	2.0000
	Valid N (listwise)	81			

**Section Two**

As reported in table 2.0, further statistical testing on attachment style was completed on scores received from the 150 participants. It showed there were 37 participants (24.7%) who had an Avoidant attachment style, 17 participants (11.3%) who had an Anxious attachment style and 96 participants (64%) who had a Secure attachment style. As the finding of 17 participants belonging to the Anxious attachment style was so disproportionate the data was recoded to show participants belonging to either of two groups; Secure Attachment Style or Insecure Attachment Style. The 17 participants with an Anxious attachment style and 37 participants with an Avoidant attachment style were now categorised as Insecure Attachment style.

**Table 2.0***Attachment Scores*

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Avoidant	37	24.7
Secure	96	64.0
Anxious/Ambivalent	17	11.3
Total	150	100.0

(i) In order to assess if Secure Attachment is a significant variable for the use of emotion focused coping strategies an independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the emotion focused coping scores of secure and non secure participants. Levene's F Test having confirmed that there was no significant difference in the variance of the two groups, the result showed that there was a significance difference between the mean scores of the two groups ( $t(148)=2.051, P=0.042, 2t$ ). The mean for securely attached participants being higher at 18.0926, than the mean for non securely attached participants at 16.7188. This suggests that there is significance difference between the emotion focused coping strategies of secure and non secure participants in this sample, with emotion focused coping scores higher for securely attached participants. The confidence interval supports this, since the null hypothesis value 0 is not within the range of values possible at 95% confidence level.

(ii) An independent T Test was also conducted to compare the Emotion Focused Coping strategy Scores of females and males. Levene's F Test having confirmed that there was no significant difference in the variance of the two groups, the result showed that there was a significance difference between the mean scores of the two groups ( $t(148)=-1.729, P=0.086$ ).

The mean for females being higher at 17.7284, than the mean for males at 16.6087. This suggests that there is significance difference between the emotion focused coping strategies of females and males in this sample, with emotion focused coping scores higher for females. The confidence interval supports this, since the null hypothesis value 0 is not within the range of values possible at 95% confidence level.

(iii) An independent T Test was also conducted to compare the Emotion Focused Coping strategy Scores of participants in the 18-25 year old age group and participants in the 26+ age group. Levene's F Test having confirmed that there was no significant difference in the variance of the two groups, the result showed that there was a significance difference between the mean scores of the two groups ( $t(148)=1.689$ ,  $P=0.093$ , 2t). The mean for participants in the 18-25 year old age group being higher at 17.7887, than the mean for participants in the 26+ age group at 16.6962. This suggests that there is significance difference between the emotion focused coping strategies of the two age groups in this sample, with emotion focused coping scores higher for the younger participants. The confidence interval supports this, since the null hypothesis value 0 is not within the range of values possible at 95% confidence level.

(iv) The final independent T Test conducted was to compare the intrinsic motivational goal "towards accomplishment" scores among securely and non securely attached participants. Levene's F Test having confirmed that there was no significant difference in the variance of the two groups, the result showed that there was a significance difference between the mean scores of the two groups ( $t(148)=0.124$ ,  $P=0.901$ , 2t). The mean for the securely attached participants being higher at 19.8333, than the mean for the non securely attached participants at 19.7083. This suggests that there is significance difference between the intrinsic

motivational goal “towards accomplishment” scores of the two groups in this sample, with intrinsic motivational goal “towards accomplishment” scores higher for securely attached participants. The confidence interval supports this, since the null hypothesis value 0 is not within the range of values possible at 95% confidence level.

(vi) A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) for all three academic disciplines was calculated on the participants’ ratings of attachment style. This was completed so it could be established if there would be any statistical significant difference between the groups. It was confirmed there was no statistically significant difference between groups as determined by the one-way analysis of variance ( $F(2,147)=0.342$ ,  $p=0.711$ ). There was no statistically significant differences between the three academic groups ( $P=0.9675$ ).

## Chapter 4: Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine how adults cope with the demands of college life and how they are motivated to complete third level education as a function of their attachment relationships. This study was carried out with the premise that participants who report a secure attachment style will report using emotion-focused coping strategies. It was hypothesised that females will report using emotion-focused coping strategies more so than males. The third hypothesis claimed that the emerging adults will report using emotion-focused coping strategies more so than participants in the adulthood stage. Lastly, it was hypothesised that participants who report a secure attachment style will report high in the intrinsic motivation goal of “towards accomplishment”. The study was carried out with the aspiration that it would provide empirical evidence that could be referred to in the progression in the area of psychology.

The first question in this study set out the hypothesis that secure attachment would be a significant variable in the use of emotion-focused coping strategies. The results of this study agreed that results. It was found that individuals with a secure attachment style did report a higher use of emotion-focused coping strategies as previous findings (Simpson 1990) suggest.

The second question in this study set out to determine if females would be a significant variable in the use of emotion focused coping strategies. The results of this study fit into previous studies, which show that female students are less likely to use avoidance coping than are male students (Sheu & Sedlacek, 2004), female students use emotion-

oriented coping throughout their college years whereas male students increase their use of the emotion-oriented coping style (Pritchard & Wilson, 2006).

The third question in this study set out with the premise that emerging adults will be a significant variable for the use of emotion focused coping strategies. The results of this study agree with previous studies conducted that older college students are more likely to employ task oriented coping and younger students are more likely to use emotion oriented coping (Heiman, 2004).

The last question set out to determine if secure attachment will be a significant variable for the use of intrinsic motivation (towards accomplishment). The results of this study agree with previous findings that illustrate some adult students have personal reasons for studying while others have relational reasons for studying (e.g., Gore & Rogers 2010). The motives an adult student has for studying are strongly linked with the reason why a goal is pursued and the reason why a person pursues a goal influences their motivation to achieve the specific goal (Ryan & Connell, 1989; Sheldon & Elliot, 1998, 1999).

There are limitations to this study that need to be considered. The first pertains to the sample location. The sample of students in this study were attending one Dublin based institution. If the sample had included other institutions within Dublin this could have impacted the results. Also, if the study had incorporated other third level institutions from around Ireland the findings may have shown different conclusions. The participants in this study were from three academic disciplines, however, if all the academic disciplines within the Dublin based institution that participated had of been assessed the findings could have varied.

The demographic factors recorded did not include religion or nationality. If these details had been gathered the results could reflect different findings especially in connection with the coping methods employed by students and academic motivations. The reason for this would be pertaining to the variety of religions in a cross cultural Ireland; some religions place a strong emphasis on coping and motivation as a means of self satisfaction whereas other religions place this as an emphasis for pleasing god by improving society. Religion and nationality could also affect an individual's attachment style as different religions and cultures carry out child bonding acts differently such as in African societies it is common practice for women to carry their baby on their back wrapped closely to them for most of the day. This raises the question of whether this could increase an infant's feeling of security and lead to secure attachments in adulthood.

It is important to be aware that there are many personal factors that have been found to determine the type of coping strategy employed by a person. One of these is the control of a personal nature, what one person may perceive as a controllable stressor another person may not, so this could influence the coping strategy an individual will choose to carry out when confronted with the stressor. As research carried out by Compas (1993) illustrated, the higher the personal control perceived is the higher the probability is that the individual will use problem-focused coping. Academic coping is also influenced and affected by the support available within the college the student is attending as has been shown in studies which have examined the role of colleges in aiding students to cope with third level transition (Stewart-Brown et al. 2000). The support offered by the college can vary from instrumental support, informational support, emotional support, appraisal support, financial support and social support. The lack of support offered in colleges for students is a stressor alone, however, it is



also a cushion to stress as it influences how the student appraises the prospective stressor itself.

Personality has been argued to also influence an individual's response to a situation presented as stressful as it does to an individual's attachment style. Optimistic people are connected with using the problem-focused coping strategies more so than the other coping strategies. Generally, it has been found that people who possess this personality trait will take advantage more so of seeking social support and focusing on the positive part of the stressful situation. Evidence available suggests that secure adults tend to be more satisfied in their relationships than insecure adults which are characterised by greater trust and commitment (Feeney, Noller & Callan, 1994). The research evidence also suggests that secure adults are more likely than insecure adults to seek support from their partners when trying to cope with distress and that secure adults are more likely to provide support to their distressed partners (Simpson et al., 1992).

Socioeconomic factors were also not considered in this study and these could have a very influential impact. In the higher classes of society it is not unusual for families to have live in childminders which in turn could affect the attachment style a person develops. This factor can also affect one's academic motivation, perhaps those in lower classes are more motivated to achieve qualifications to allow them obtain a job after years of saving to buy academic books. In contrast to this, perhaps students in more middle and upper class families just attend college to bide time while they decide what they want to do or are motivated so they can say they attended a specific university.

In addition, longitudinal research is also advised as it is with all areas of investigation. This type of research is recommended as it can overcome the cohort effects of cross-sectional

research, some of which can be unavoidable. As research in recent times has shown, the coping and academic motivations a person has can alter at different periods throughout this stage of development. Therefore, how an individual copes and is academically motivated is recommended to be assessed at different stages across this phase of the life cycle. In parallel with Bowlby's (1988) theory which points out that while an individual's style of attachment is presumed to be reasonably steady and unwavering over the life span they do hold the potential to be modified by life events and experiences; this illustrates how attachment relationships should also be assessed at varying intervals.

Self reports were used in this study. These have the advantage of being quick, easy and a convenient way of collecting desired data. However, there are also disadvantages with these such as the fact that they lack elasticity and flexibility.

The research conducted in times past on attachment style, academic motivation and coping has found varying results. One major disadvantage is that to date there does not appear to be any research completed that assess attachment style, academic motivation and coping all at once. Most research available only considers two of these variables at a time. Further research should measure the possibilities of why secure attachments are simultaneously linked with emotion-focused coping strategies. Another potential path to take would be to assess not only emerging and emerging adults but also their partners for those that are in relationships and living with their partners or to assess their parents possibly. If such an assessment was to be conducted, the results could support Bandura's idea of observational learning where these individuals may show signs of adopting coping strategies they have observed by their parents or partners. As individuals at third level are cognitively challenged a future study could consider coping strategies and academic motivations in

harmony with the stage of cognitive development whereby a longitudinal study could follow the student's cognitive development over the course of their academic studies to identify if this is connected with any shifts in coping strategies used. To conclude, additional and more inclusive research is required in this area.

Regardless of the limitations in respect to the current study there were many strengths identified. Firstly and fundamentally, the contemporary study has added to the current information relating to attachment, academic motivation and coping with the demands of college. The findings support what has been found in other studies. Another key strength of this study was that although self reported measures were issued and discussed above, meticulous procedures of a methodological nature were engaged through the study.

As academic motivation, psychosocial stress and an ability to cope with college during these parts of the life span is an important risk, the ability and manner in how students cope with the academic stressors they encounter is important to know and understand for psychologists and health professions. Understanding and rationalising difficulties that students encounter can aid colleges to work on motivation programmes and coping assistance programmes.

The curiosity surrounding attachment relationships, their consequences and impact on future psychosocial functioning have all been raised by attachment theory. However, due to the limitations of this study and the variety of results from previous studies regarding attachment with academic coping and attachment with academic motivation, these results bring to attention how important parents play a role in the lives of college students of all ages. However, there are many psychological processes at play which need to be considered. The

ability an individual has to develop a secure attachment cannot be highlighted enough. The previous research that has been completed shows the impact of these not only on academic motivation and coping but also on the years of life long after an individual has completed their academic studies.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

Age Group (please circle):	<b>18-25</b>	<b>26+</b>	
Gender (please circle):	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	
Academic Discipline (please circle):	<b>Psychology</b>	<b>Law</b>	<b>Business</b>
Study Type (please circle):	<b>Full Time</b>	<b>Part Time</b>	

### Appendix B

*These items ask what you've been doing in general to cope with stressful events. Different people deal with things in different ways, but think about what you usually do when you are under a lot of stress for e.g. exam stress, assignment deadlines approaching, family or relationship problems and rate each item.*

**1 = I haven't been doing this at all**

**2 = I've been doing this a little bit**

**3 = I've been doing this a medium amount**

**4 = I've been doing this a lot**

1. I've been turning to work or other activities to take my mind off things. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I've been concentrating my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I've been saying to myself "this isn't real.". \_\_\_\_\_
4. I've been using alcohol or other drugs to make myself feel better. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I've been getting emotional support from others. \_\_\_\_\_
6. I've been giving up trying to deal with it. \_\_\_\_\_
7. I've been taking action to try to make the situation better. \_\_\_\_\_
8. I've been refusing to believe that it has happened. \_\_\_\_\_
9. I've been saying things to let my unpleasant feelings escape. \_\_\_\_\_
10. I've been getting help and advice from other people. \_\_\_\_\_
11. I've been using alcohol or other drugs to help me get through it. \_\_\_\_\_
12. I've been trying to see it in a different light, to make it seem more positive. \_\_\_\_\_
13. I've been criticizing myself. \_\_\_\_\_
14. I've been trying to come up with a strategy about what to do. \_\_\_\_\_
15. I've been getting comfort and understanding from someone. \_\_\_\_\_
16. I've been giving up the attempt to cope. \_\_\_\_\_
17. I've been looking for something good in what is happening. \_\_\_\_\_
18. I've been making jokes about it. \_\_\_\_\_
19. I've been doing something to think about it less, such as going to movies, watching TV, reading, daydreaming, sleeping, or shopping. \_\_\_\_\_
20. I've been accepting the reality of the fact that it has happened. \_\_\_\_\_
21. I've been expressing my negative feelings. \_\_\_\_\_

22. I've been trying to find comfort in my religion or spiritual beliefs. \_\_\_\_\_
23. I've been trying to get advice or help from other people about what to do. \_\_\_\_\_
24. I've been learning to live with it. \_\_\_\_\_
25. I've been thinking hard about what steps to take. \_\_\_\_\_
26. I've been blaming myself for things that happened. \_\_\_\_\_
27. I've been praying or meditating. \_\_\_\_\_
28. I've been making fun of the situation. \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix C

*These items ask why do you go to college. Think about it and using the scale below; please circle to indicate to what extent each of the following items presently corresponds to one of the reasons why you go to college.*

<b>Does not correspond at all</b>	<b>Corresponds a little</b>		<b>Corresponds moderately</b>		<b>Corresponds a lot</b>		<b>Corresponds exactly</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>
1. Because with only a high-school degree I would not find a high-paying job later on.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7
2. Because I experience pleasure and satisfaction while learning new things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7
3. Because I think that a college education will help me better prepare for the career I have chosen.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7
4. For the intense feelings I experience when I am communicating my own ideas to others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7
5. Honestly, I don't know; I really feel that I am wasting my time in school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7
6. For the pleasure I experience while surpassing myself in my studies.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7
7. To prove to myself that I am capable of completing my college degree.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7
8. In order to obtain a more prestigious job later on.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7
9. For the pleasure I experience when I discover new things never seen before.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7

10. Because eventually it will enable me to enter the job market in a field that I like. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. For the pleasure that I experience when I read interesting authors. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. I once had good reasons for going to college; however, now I wonder whether I should continue. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. For the pleasure that I experience while I am surpassing myself in one of my personal accomplishments. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14. Because of the fact that when I succeed in college I feel important. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15. Because I want to have "the good life" later on. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16. For the pleasure that I experience in broadening my knowledge about subjects which appeal to me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17. Because this will help me make a better choice regarding my career orientation. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18. For the pleasure that I experience when I feel completely absorbed by what certain authors have written. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19. I can't see why I go to college and frankly, I couldn't care less. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20. For the satisfaction I feel when I am in the process of accomplishing difficult academic activities. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21. To show myself that I am an intelligent person. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
22. In order to have a better salary later on. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23. Because my studies allow me to continue to learn about many things that interest me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
24. Because I believe that a few additional years of education will improve my competence as a worker. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
25. For the "high" feeling that I experience while reading about various interesting subjects. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
26. I don't know; I can't understand what I am doing in school. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

27. Because college allows me to experience a personal satisfaction in my quest for excellence in my studies. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

28. Because I want to show myself that I can succeed in my studies. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

## Appendix D

*These questions are concerned with your experiences in romantic love relationships. Take a moment to think about these experiences and answer the following questions with them in mind.*

*Read each of the three self-descriptions below (A, B, and C) and then place a tick next to the single alternative that best describes how you feel in romantic relationships or is nearest to the way you feel. (Note: The terms "close" and "intimate" refer to psychological or emotional closeness, not necessarily to sexual intimacy.)*

\_\_\_\_\_ **A.** I am somewhat uncomfortable being close to others; I find it difficult to trust them completely, difficult to allow myself to depend on them. I am nervous when anyone gets too close, and often, others want me to be more intimate than I feel comfortable being.

\_\_\_\_\_ **B.** I find it relatively easy to get close to others and am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't worry about being abandoned or about someone getting too close to me.

\_\_\_\_\_ **C.** I find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me or won't want to stay with me. I want to get very close to my partner, and this sometimes scares people away.

*Now please rate below each of the relationship styles described above to indicate how well or poorly each description corresponds to your general relationship style.*

### Style A

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

### Style B

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

**Style C**

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