

Development of Attachment in Romantic Relationship of Young Adults with Different Love Styles

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Abstract

This study reconstructed the participants' retrospective experience of how attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety developed during the course of romantic relationships in young adults. Participants (290 undergraduate students) recalled their stories of love relationships that occurred approximately between the ages of 15 and 19. The feelings of avoidance and anxiety, which were experienced as a result of the events that occurred throughout the relationships, were analyzed. The general dynamics of these dimensions as well as the patterns that are typical for different love styles were discovered. The application of methodology to analysis of individual change in romantic attachment during relationship is demonstrated.

Keywords: attachment; romantic relationship; young adults; love styles

Bowlby's theory of attachment explained the psychological nature of a child's bonds to their parents and the possible impact this experience can have on shaping future interpersonal relationships. Bowlby (1979) proposed that a long-term romantic partner replaces a parent as the primary attachment figure. Hazan and Shaver (1987) went further and conceptualized romantic love as an attachment process. This became a popular approach to romantic relationship research (Fraley & Shaver, 2000).

The quest for the study of temporal model of love became timely and attachment was a worthwhile candidate for such research (Berscheid, 2010). The recent research has revealed that romantic relationships gradually develop attachment characteristics over the course of a particular relationship and with age (Hazan & Zeifman, 1994). Furman and Wehner (1994, 1997) considered romantic partners to become major figures in the functioning of the attachment, caregiving, affiliative, and sexual/reproductive behavioral systems. Affiliation and sexuality are expected to be the central systems in romantic relationships initially, but gradually the attachment and

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caregiving systems become salient as well. Romantic partners are not expected to emerge as attachment figures or recipients of caretaking until they begin to develop stable relationships—exclusive, longer-term relationships. In fact, these systems may not fully emerge in romantic relationships until the appearance of committed relationships; such relationships typically do not appear until early adulthood or later. They become more secure, less secure, or remain relatively consistent depending on the nature of the romantic experiences a person has.

This study explored the development of attachment feelings in romantic relationships of young adults. We followed a dimensional, rather than a typological approach to the concept of attachment, considering it through the lens of two dimensions: attachment-related avoidance and attachment-related anxiety, rather than the categorization as secure or insecure (Brennan et al., 1998; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000; Fraley et al., 2011). Secure attachment was considered as the combination of low avoidance and low anxiety; preoccupied was comprised of low avoidance and high anxiety; fearful avoidant was comprised of high avoidance and high anxiety; and dismissing-avoidant was comprised of low anxiety and high avoidance (Shaver & Fraley, n.d.). Such a dimensional approach gave more flexibility in research of diversity of attachment since a person (especially in the case of medium scores) could not always be classified into one of the four types of attachment.

We expected that attachment-related avoidance and attachment-related anxiety would decrease during development of intimate relationship. We also assumed that love styles and relationship events had effect on avoidance and anxiety in love relations.

Six love styles (Lee, 1973; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1989, 1992) are the preferences that people hold on different dimensions of love relationship: intense passion (Eros), love playing (Ludus), friendship and care relations (Storge), practicality and suitability of love (Pragma), obsession and possession (Mania), and altruism and selfless concern (Agape). Based on these descriptions, we expected that Eros, Storge, and Agape love styles would be characterized by a gradual decrease of avoidance and anxiety coming to more a more secure relationship. Ludus and Mania love styles relate to insecure attachment, so they were expected to display more uncertainty and consequently the retention of relatively high avoidance and anxiety. Pragma, the most practical of all of the love styles, should demonstrate stability of these feelings.

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We employed the turning point approach (Baxter & Bullis, 1986; Baxter & Erbert, 1999; Baxter & Pittman, 2001) as the methodology for understanding the trajectories of relationships as they develop. Turning points are the events or occurrences that are associated with change in a relationship. The turning-point approach emphasizes those events that stand out in people's minds as having the strongest impact on their relationships. Various types of turning points are related to closeness and commitment in romantic relationships. First meetings and first dates typify communication-based turning points. Passionate events include the first kiss, the first time a couple exchanges the words "I love you", or the first sexual encounter. The turning points especially related to commitment include: a threat by a third party, moving in together, or getting married (Bullis et al., 1993). This methodology allows for creating a map of the relationship and explaining the different paths that relationships take (Baxter & Bullis, 1986; Bullis et al., 1993).

Our study followed the turning point approach in terms of methodology of memories recollection. It reconstructed the progress of two basic dimensions of adult attachment, - attachment-related avoidance and attachment-related anxiety, - through the early romantic relationship experience. We expected to reveal the general patterns typical for people with prevalent love styles and believed that feelings of avoidance and anxiety depend to a great extent on the nature of events happening in relationships. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to explore the development of attachment feelings during the course of romantic relationships.

We hypothesized that:

1. Avoidance and anxiety as characteristics of attachment should decrease over the course of romantic relationship.
2. Young adults with Eros, Agape, and Storge love style experience gradual decrease of attachment avoidance and anxiety
3. Young adults with Ludus and Mania love styles experience turbulence in their avoidance and anxiety that restrain them in their development of intimate relationships.
4. Progress in development of romantic attachment feelings depends on the nature of events happening in relationships and because of this has an individual trajectory.

The study reported in this article is only a part of a larger project. Only measures, procedures and results pertaining to these hypotheses are reported.

Method

Participants

Undergraduate students ($N = 290$, 61% females, 94% Caucasians, 93% singles, ranging from 18 to 31 ages, $M = 19.22$ years, $SD = 1.79$) from introductory psychology classes participated in the study and received class credit. Confidentiality of responses was secured through anonymous descriptions of their autobiographic description recalls.

The average age of participants when they fell in love with the first significant partner was 16.69 ($SD = 1.85$) while their partner's age was 16.83 ($SD = 1.66$). The average length of this relationship was 14.74 months ($SD = 11.74$). The average age of participants when they fell in love with the second significant partner was 17.64 ($SD = 2.43$) and their partner's age was 18.37 ($SD = 2.36$). The average length of this relationship was 10.9 months ($SD = 9.7$). Males and females revealed no significant differences in these variables. The participants with various love styles also did not differ in this respect.

Measures

Data were collected during a series of two sessions. The procedures were similar each time and employed the same measures. Upon request, participants recalled the two most significant partners of the romantic relationship history (or one if they had only one). They rated their love attitudes toward the first partner using Love Attitude Scale and then repeated the same procedure of rating for the second partner. The directions were as follow:

“Answer the questions about your feelings towards first and second individual. You should recall your feelings and thoughts as you felt and thought overall during your relationship with the first and second individuals. The items are formulated in past verb tense, so if your relationship still continues, feel free to think of them in the present tense.

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Examples of items of Love Attitude Scale:

1. My partner and I had the right physical “chemistry” between us.

Individual 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Individual 2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

2. I felt that my partner and I were meant for each other.

Individual 1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Individual 2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

The Love Attitude Scale (LAS) in a short form (Hendrick, Hendrick, & Dicke, 1998) measured six basic love attitudes (Eros, Ludus, Storge, Pragma, Mania, Agape) with 18 items (three items per subscale) using a 9-point rating scale (to be consistent with event rating scale). The authors (Hendrick et al., 1998) concluded the short 3-item version of LAS as viable. Due to this we used it in our research for practicality reasons. Acceptable internal reliability was demonstrated for most subscales (Cronbach- α in the range .70 - .80) in the rating of the first and second partners.

Then the participants recalled the five most significant events of their romantic relations associated with both partners (or one, if they had only one) in chronological order and rated their feelings of avoidance and anxiety over the course of these events (before and after every event) using Experience in Close Relationship Questionnaire.

The Experience in Close Relationship Questionnaire in a short form (Fraley et al., 2011) measured two dimensions of attachment with 10 items: six items for avoidance and four items for anxiety, using 9-point rating scale. A shorter version was employed in our research for practicality reason. The most commonly used measures of adult attachment (ECR; Brennan et al., 1998; ECR-R; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000) are too long: both contain 18 items designed to assess attachment-related anxiety and 18 items to assess attachment-related avoidance. Since we were interested in multiple ratings during five events (before and after), the number of items needed for the assessment would multiply accordingly and become potentially unwieldy. Thus, Relationship Structures questionnaire developed by Fraley and colleagues (2011) was very suitable. We used the earlier 10 item version posted at the web site (Fraley, n.d.). Good internal reliability was demonstrated for attachment-related avoidance and attachment-related anxiety items (Cronbach- α in the range of .80 - .90) within all

measurements of each subscale (before and after each of the 5 events). It assured that using Relationship Structures questionnaire brings reliable scales. The Experience in Close Relationship Questionnaire was employed to measure the progress in avoidance and anxiety dimensions of romantic attachment during five events (before and after each event).

The directions were as follow:

“What are events?” Events may be any changes in your inner and outer world: meeting with a person attractive to you, love at first sight, party meaningful to you, some important acquaintance, conversation, pleasant news, surprise or disappointment, loss or discovery, heartbreak or recovery, occasional romance, success or failure in romantic relationship, your sudden pleasant or unpleasant thought that affected your romantic relationship. It can also be any event that did not occur with you personally or your partner (like divorce of the parents, or airplane catastrophe), but which significantly affected your relationship with romantic partner. The event has to pertain to a romantic instance. Identifying events you may think metaphorically. Let us agree: when we say "event" we shall always imply a particular change that occurred at a point in time, so that it is possible to approximate its date. There are also longer stages in life, but in this survey an "event" will be either the beginning, or the end, or the culmination. For example, not "the first romantic love" (it may be a rather long period), but "the first meeting", or "the third meeting" "the most striking impression", "the first kiss", or "the fourth kiss", "essential conflict", "breaking relation", or something from the story of this romantic relation, which has "really stuck in your memory" are considered as events.

Instructions suggested concrete recollection of events. The participants were asked to specify the names, labels of the events (41 labels were provided), and their sequence. Participants rated items, pertaining to avoidance (six items), anxiety (four items) both “before” and “after” each event using the following rating scheme:

Events	Before 1	After 1	Before 2	After 2	Before 3	After 3	Before 4	After 4	Before 5	After 5
9 'extremely'	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
5 'moderately'	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
1 'not at all'	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Some examples of the items rated are:

Avoidance:

- “It helped to turn to this person in time of need.”

Anxiety:

- “I was afraid that this person might abandon me.”

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Within every measurement of each of the two scales, (before and after each of the five events), a good reliability was demonstrated: avoidance ($\alpha \approx .80$), anxiety ($\alpha \approx .80$).

Finally, the participants completed Background Inventory asking demographics and history of romantic relations.

Procedure and analysis of data

Participants completed the procedure in groups. The researcher gave participants the instructions to recall their romantic relationship and rate their attitudes and feelings. Various forms of analysis were performed. The means of items were used as individual participants' scores of the love attitudes, attachment-related avoidance and attachment-related anxiety in all analyses. The mean score differences before and after an event were computed for each type of event to reveal the effect of the event and general pattern of changes over the history of the five events. General linear modeling for repeated measures was used to reveal such patterns. Overall, plot patterns of change over the five events were reviewed for participants with dominance of different love styles and then approximation of linear/curvilinear models was made.

Results

Typical patterns of development in attachment-avoidance and attachment-anxiety feelings

To determine how the feelings of attachment progress over the average history of romantic relations, the typical patterns of change during the five events were analyzed. The procedure of general linear model (GLM) for repeated measures was employed in this analysis with model specification as linear or quadratic. The graphs showed the dynamics of avoidance and anxiety attachment over the events, with the approximation of a general model. A one-way repeated measures ANOVA was carried out on the scores of avoidance and anxiety over the five events (including measures of *before* and *after* event).

Differences in those curves for the participants with different prevalent love styles were examined. A participant was identified as having a certain prevalent love style if his/her score on a corresponding attitude was within the top third of the rating scale (6.4 - 9.0). A participant could have one or two such high attitudes since, for example, Eros, Storge, and Agape quite often correlate to one another due to some similar features. The love style doesn't mean exclusiveness of only one of six, but rather combination of preferred ones. Some participants therefore scored high on two attitudes, so they were categorized in two styles.

In figure 1, the average graphs of the avoidance and anxiety over the five events are presented. In some cases these graphs differed for participants with different dominant love styles. We presented those specific graphs on figures 2 through 7 and discuss their features in text.

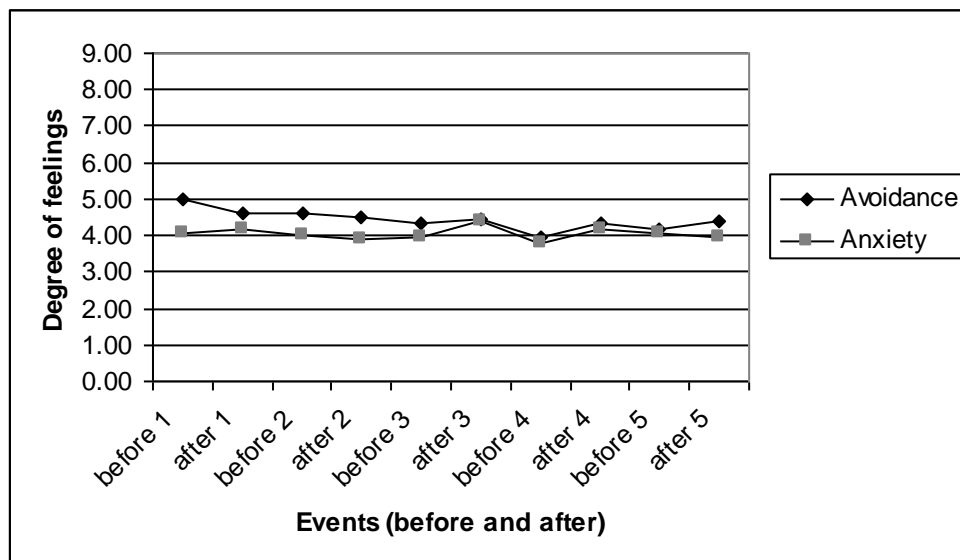


Figure 1. Dynamics of feelings in the course of five events

Figure 1 shows the gradual dynamics of avoidance over the five events (quadratic model, $F = 8.86$, $p < .01$). The first three events decrease this feeling, while the fourth and fifth events cause some turbulence increasing avoidance. Between events, the avoidance reverts back to a lower level, while the new event increases it again. In contrast to the first part of one's romantic history, the second part is characterized by a fluctuation of the avoidance dimension.

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Anxiety. Figure 1 shows gradual but significant fluctuating dynamics (model of order 8, $F = 6.25$, $p < .01$) of anxiety over the five events. The first three events maintain a quite stable high level of anxiety. These feelings then continue to show fluctuations during fourth and fifth events.

The romantic attachment development described above is very general to catch the diversity of typical and individual routes of romantic relationships. It is worth to note that SD in most measurements was around 2 points suggesting that such an average picture hides typological and individual variations. Figures 2 through 7 show another perspective on the results: the degree of avoidance and anxiety in the progression through events for holders of the six love styles. The feelings during the first four events (before and after) deserve special attention because these usually occurred in relations with first partner. In all love styles, however, there is a rise in avoidance after event four (most typical-*breakup*). All six love styles showed a noticeable increase of anxiety after event 1 (most typical-*romantic kiss*), as well as a decrease before event 4 (most typical-*breakup*), while stabilizing thereafter.

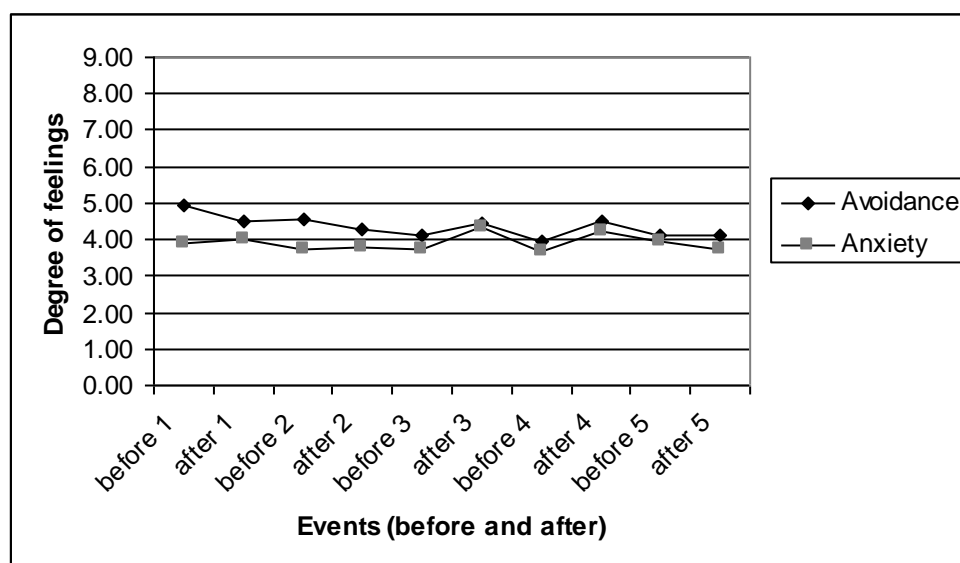


Figure 2. Eros love style: dynamics of avoidance and anxiety in the course of five events

The Eros and Agape graphs (figures 2 and 7) to a great extent resemble the general picture because the majority of students have a prevalence of those (Eros, 175, and Agape, 172). They are characterized by a gradual decrease of avoidance and

turbulence during the last events: fourth is typically *break-up*, and fifth starts the relations with the second partner. Anxiety being moderately high never goes away. The 14-month period (on average) is probably too short for relationship at the age of 16-17 for development of secure and comfortable feelings in romantic love. The graphs of Agape are, however, a little smoother than that of Eros's because the former is a calmer love style that is less concerned about one's own feelings. The Storge graphs (figure 4) are similar to Agape's but even smoother: the bare tendency of decreasing avoidance.

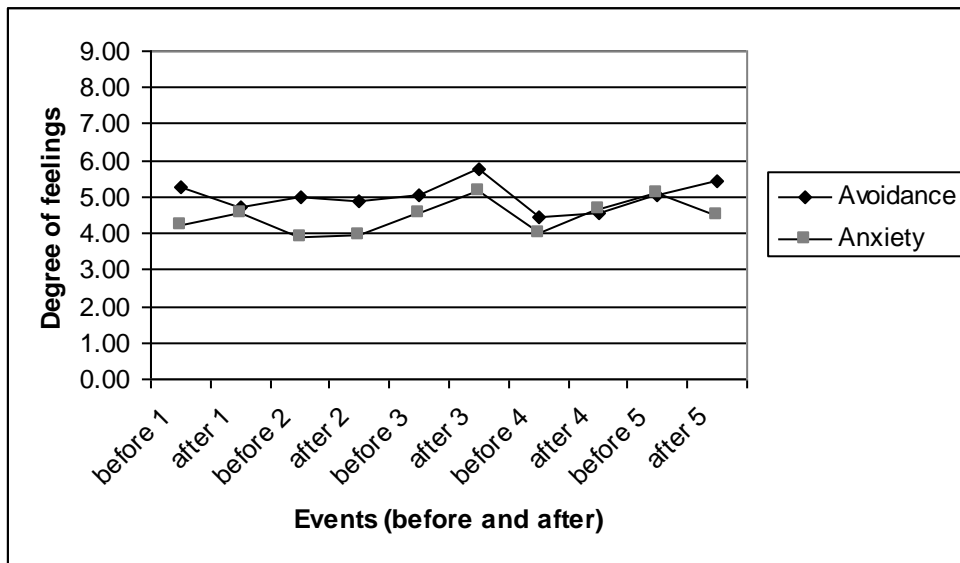


Figure 3. Ludus love style: dynamics of avoidance and anxiety over the course of five

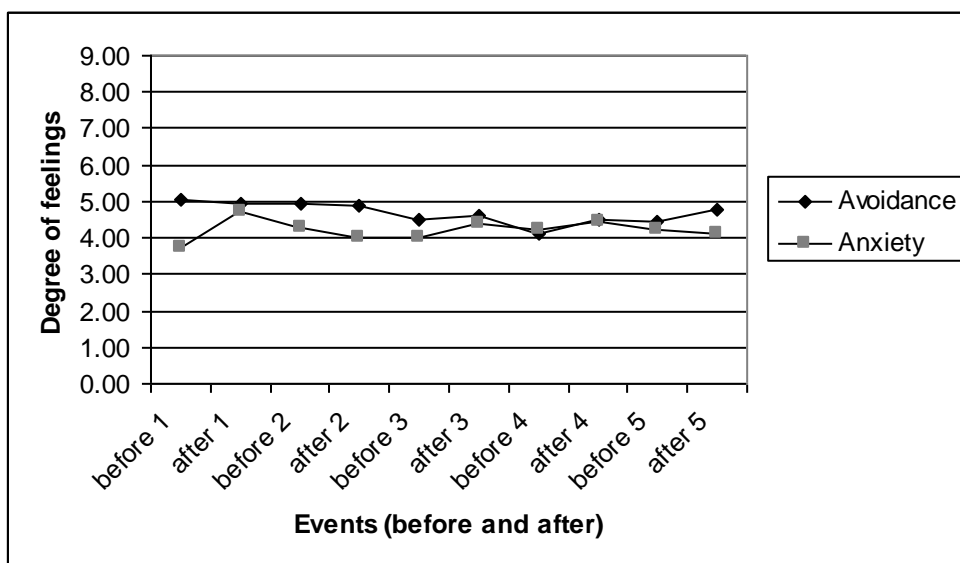


Figure 4. Storge love style: dynamics of avoidance and anxiety in the course of five

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The Ludus graphs (figure 3) show great fluctuation during course of relationships. The holders of this love style are unstable and have fluctuation dynamics of avoidance and anxiety depending on the event. The Mania graphs (figure 6) show little fluctuating instability with surprising stability during events two and three, but no overall tendency for decrease in neither avoidance nor anxiety.

The Pragma graphs (figure 5) show a relative stability of avoidance and anxiety during first two events but then reveal a big effect of events on these feelings. It turns out that despite being practical in their relationships they are still quite emotional.

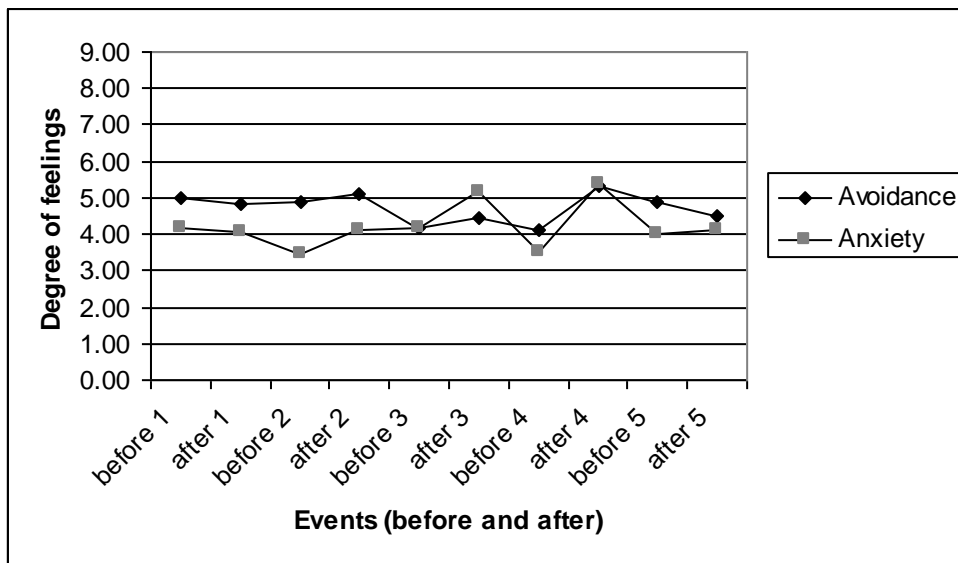


Figure 5. Pragma love style: dynamics of avoidance and anxiety in the course of five

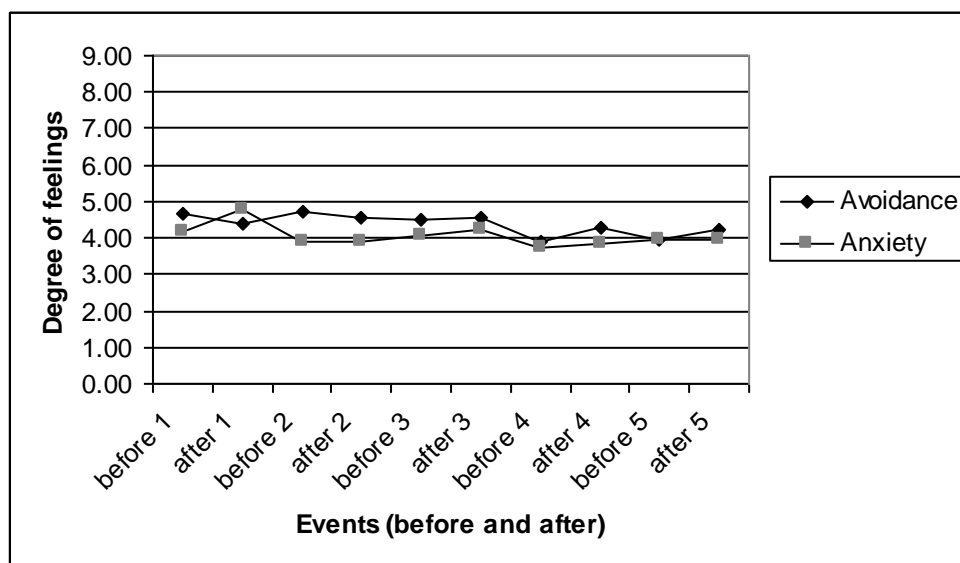


Figure 6. Mania love style: dynamics of avoidance and anxiety in the course of five

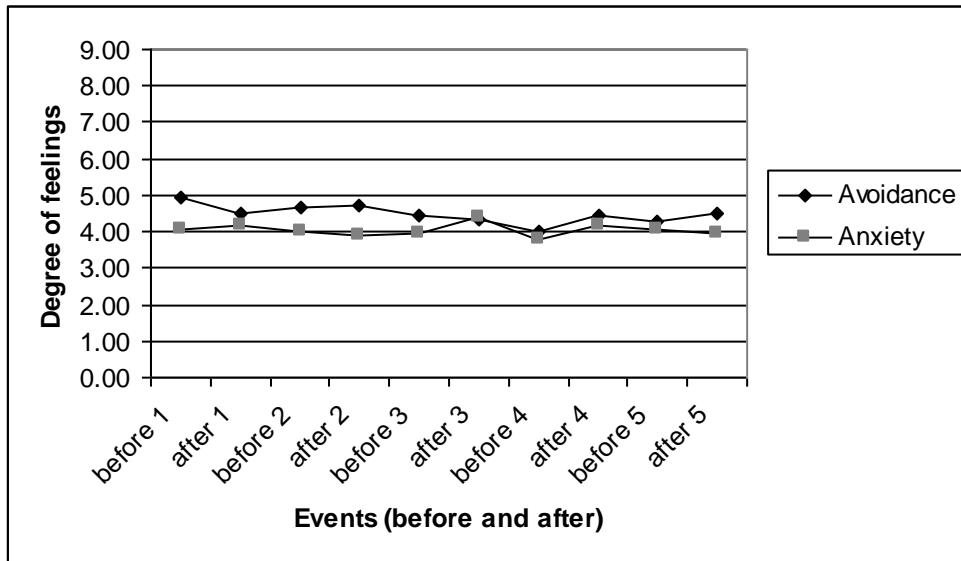


Figure 7. Agape love style: dynamics of avoidance and anxiety in the course of five

Individual stories of development in attachment-avoidance and attachment-anxiety feelings

The love styles, however, do not explain everything in the attachment development. The typical graphs hide the great diversity of individual routes of feeling progression affected by specific events occurred: the nature of specific events may have an enormous effect. Individual graphs presented in figures 8 through 10 exemplify this.

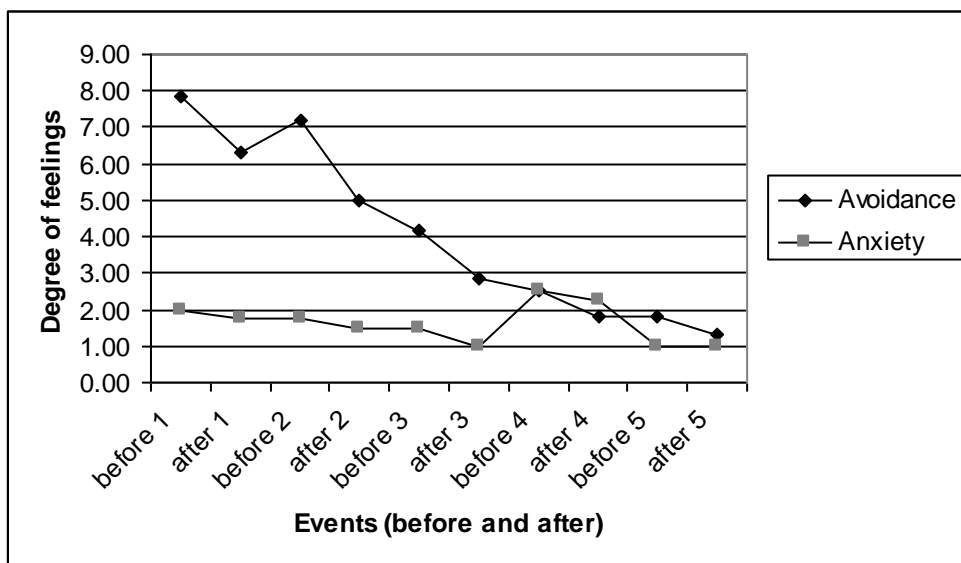


Figure 8. Example of feeling dynamics through the course of five events for a participant with salience of Agape love attitude

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Figure 8 demonstrates the case of “pure” Agape: drastic and consequent decrease of avoidance and low anxiety over the course of relationship. No break-up occurred in this relationship; it was an idyllic sequence of events: (1) realization of the romantic interest, (2) romantic kiss, (3) meeting with parents of a romantic partner, (4) talking about plans, (5) realization of true love.

Figure 9 demonstrates the case of “pure” Eros: drastic and consequent decrease of avoidance and low anxiety during first and second events and turbulence afterwards. What happened? The sequence of story as follows: (1) realization of romantic desire for someone, (2) sexual encounter, (3) break-up, (4) reunion of a past relationship, (5) heart break because of a partner leaves/moves away. This is a story of relationship, break-up, reunion, and inevitable separation due to the circumstances.

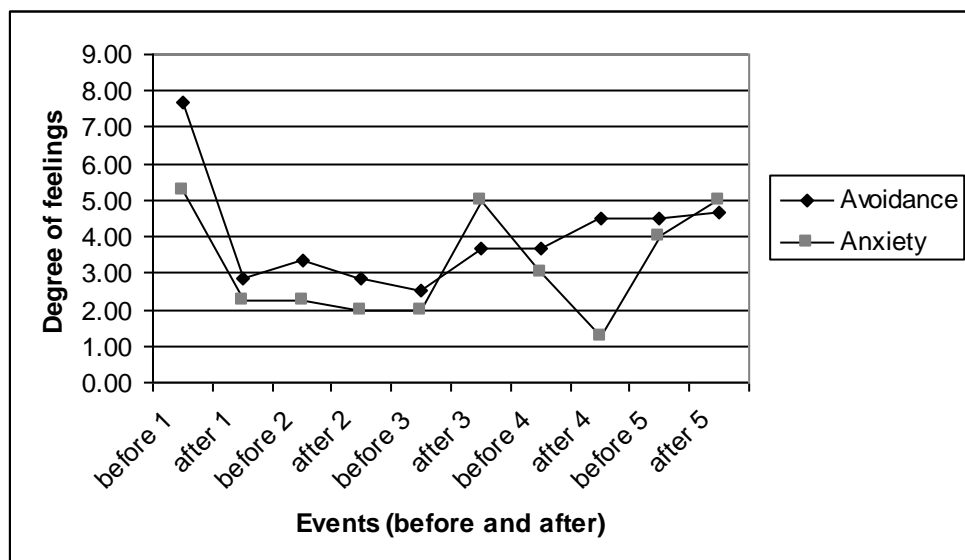


Figure 9. Example of feeling dynamics through the course of five events for a participant with salience of Eros love attitude

Figure 10 exemplifies the Mania’s story of ups and downs in avoidance and anxiety. The sequence of story is as follows: (1) romantic kiss, (2) hearing of another's interest in you, (3) date event, (4) break-up, (5) break-up. A dramatic story of relationship finalized in doubled events of break-up.

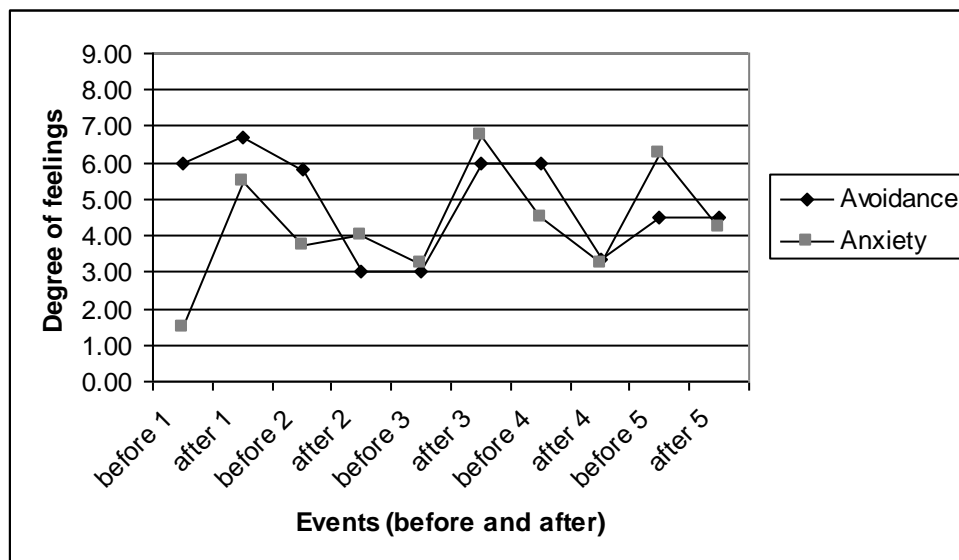


Figure 10. Example of feeling dynamics through the course of five events for a participant with salience of Mania love attitude

As one can see from these examples, the individual stories are more diverse and variable because of the individual events happened in their love stories. The typical (average) graphs presented above hide this diversity and variability.

Most common events in romantic relationships and their effects on avoidance and anxiety in relations

Out of the 41 events available in the survey, participants were asked to choose five in order to frame their history of romantic relations. Since they were young college students, they typically mentioned only one or two partners. On average aggregation of our sample, the 10 most typical events listed in the participants' descriptions were: *romantic kiss* (180 instances), *he/she said "I love you"* (124 instances), *breakup* (116 instances), *date event* (110 instances), *sexual encounter* (96 instances), *realization of romantic interest* (85 instances), *realization of romantic crush* (84 instances), *hearing of another's interest in you* (74 instances), *discussion of where your relationship is headed* (73 instances), *talking about your plans* (64 instances). The next events showed a substantial decrease in frequency, down to 38 instances and lower, so they were omitted in this report.

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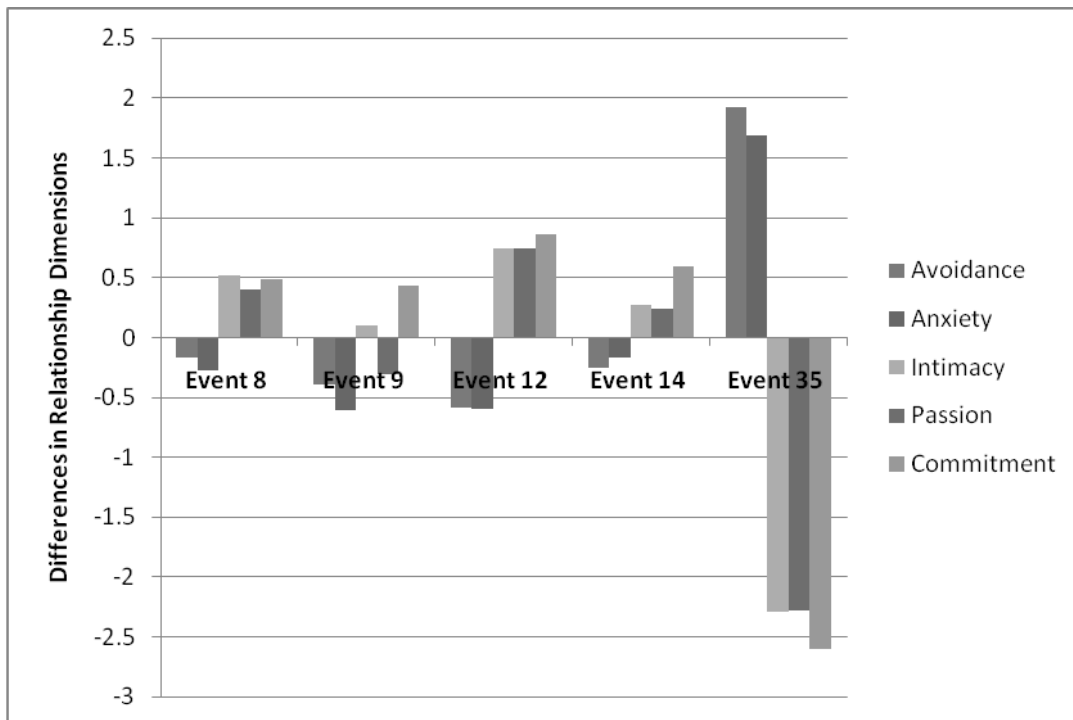
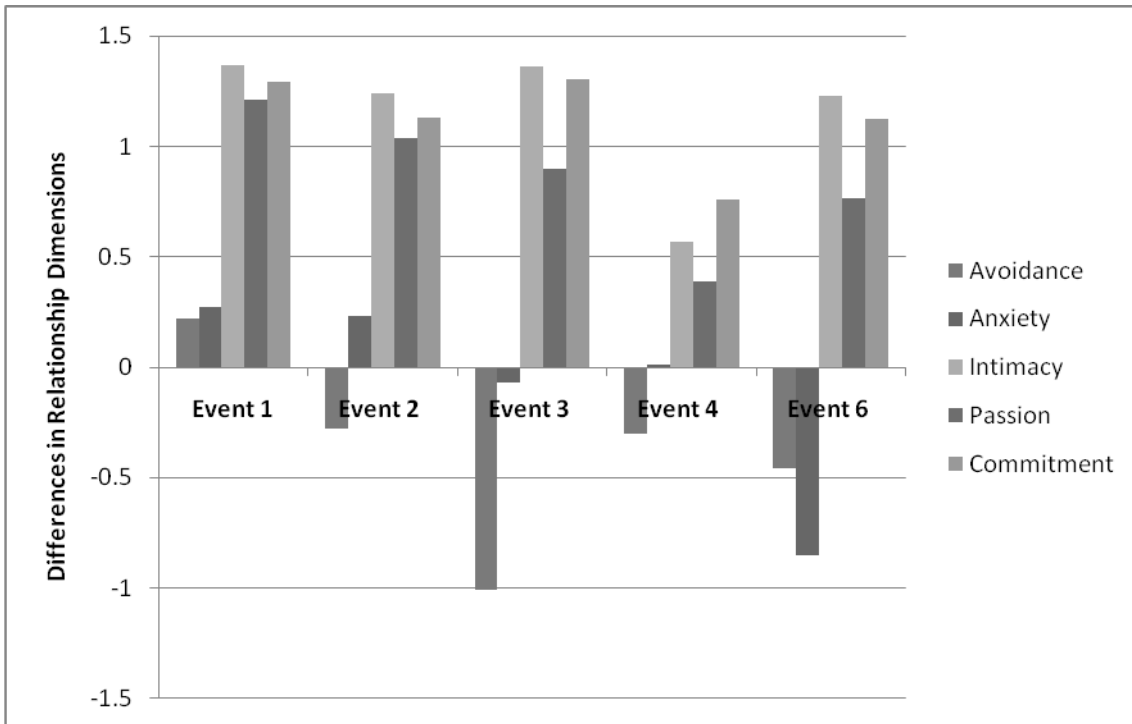


Figure 11. Differences in relationship dimensions by events.

Notes: Event 1: Realization of romantic interest; Event 2: Realization of romantic crush; Event 3: Hearing of another’s interest; Event 4: Date event; Event 6: He/ She said “I love you”; Event 8: Discussion where relationship is headed; Event 9: Talking about plans; Event 12: Romantic kiss; Event 14: Sexual encounter; Event 35: Break-up of either way.

To find how these 10 events affected avoidance, and anxiety, the average difference in the scores of those dimensions before and after an event was computed. The impact of these events is presented in figure 11. The events of: *romantic kiss*, *he/she said “I love you”*, *sexual encounter*, *hearing of another’s interest in you*, and *discussion of where your relationship is headed*, all show a similar pattern across the dimensions. This pattern is characterized by a decrease in avoidance and anxiety. *Date event* is also similar to these events, except for the dimension of anxiety, which shows no change. The event of *breakup* shows the opposite pattern from these events with an increase in avoidance and anxiety. The event of *Realization of romantic interest in someone* displays an increase in both dimensions, while *realization of romantic crush* increases anxiety but not avoidance. The event of *Talking about your plans* decreases both dimensions. Overall, the events of *realization of romantic interest in someone*, *realization of romantic crush*, *hearing of another’s interest in you*, *date event*, *he/she said “I love you,”* and *breakup* evidence a greater impact on the dimensions than the other most typical events. No effects of love styles on the impact of these most typical events on any dimension are found.

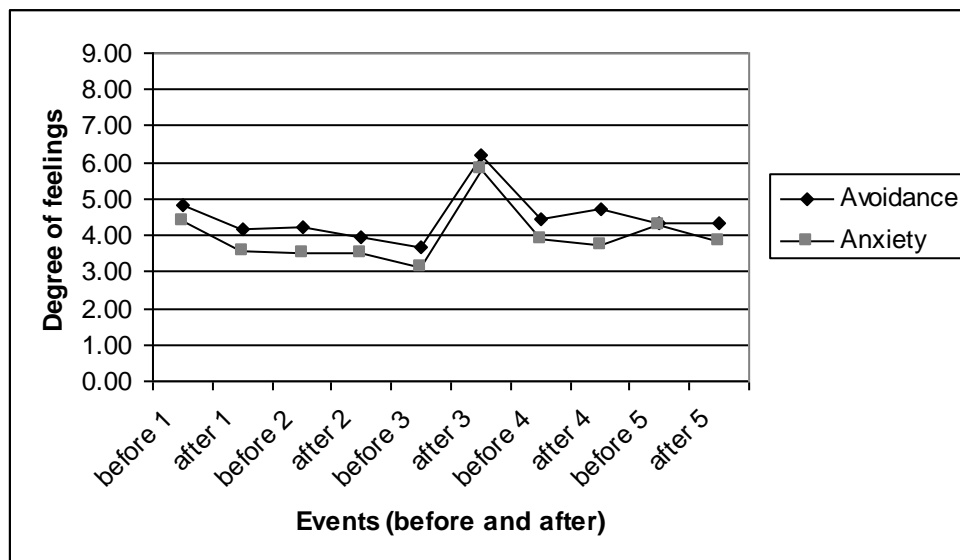


Figure 12. Dynamics of feelings over the course of five events for those (30 participants) who had break-up as an event 3.

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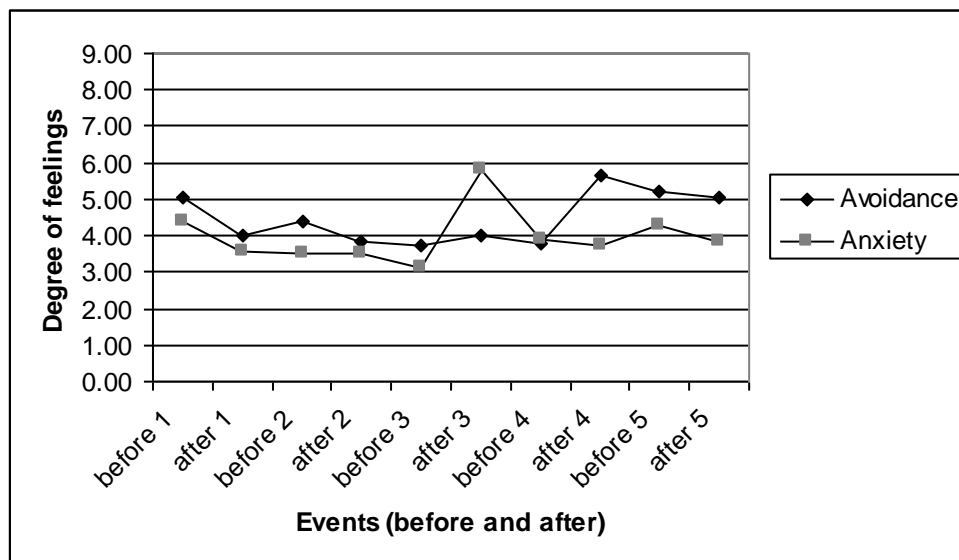


Figure 13. Dynamics of feelings over the course of five events for those (32 participants) who had break-up as an event 4.

Discussion

Autobiographic recall of early adulthood romantic relationships gave insight into the retrospective of attachment feelings. These are new results because they (1) allowed insight into the dynamics of such feelings in romantic love, (2) focused on dimensional, rather than typological approach. The hypotheses were mostly supported. As we expected, avoidance feelings natural for partners not well acquainted but romantically attracted to each other significantly decrease during first encounters when partners know each other better. Further progress in this respect depends on the events that occur in their relationship as well as on individual's love styles. Eros, Storge, and Agape love styles share their features in attachment progression, although Eros being more passionate decreases avoidance faster but unstable while Storge and Agape are more precautions in this respect: they adjust to a partner slower. Ludus being hurt by first encounters seem to distrust their partner. However, despite this hurting experience he/she tries to feel closer. Contrary to the results of previous studies, which showed high avoidance in this love style, Ludus is not avoidant but painfully controversial and demonstrates great fluctuation from low to high avoidance and back. Pragma seems to display uncertainty in the ability to be close to a partner, but events play a significant role in such fluctuation. Avoidance progression of Mania love style demonstrates small but stable turbulence characterized by emotional ups and downs.

Anxiety does not decrease as we expected and remains moderately high in the relationships with some fluctuations depending on events. This may be explained by uncertainty in the relationships because of a short time period (14 month on average) and the young age of participants (16-17 years). Commitment in relationships brings feelings of stability and, as a result, less anxiety. Nervousness and anxiety may accompany and be natural for the initial romantic period of love. Partners do not feel secure and comfortable in the relationship yet. Love styles do not play a big role in the progression of anxiety, except in Ludus and Pragma characterizing fluctuation of the feeling: uncertainty and untrustworthy of these love styles are expressed in this.

The study shows that neither general nor typological tendencies, but rather specific events play the most important role in determining attachment progression through early romantic relationships. This method can be valuably employed for analysis of individual routes of love feelings, and as such can be effectively used in counseling practice.

Some events showed expected attachment outcomes, while some did not. The most positive events decrease avoidance and anxiety. Negative events have the reversed effect. This is not true, however, for all romantic events. The effect of an event is a situational reaction and is not affected by dispositional factors like love styles. Thus, sometimes subtle differences in wording and meaning of events make a difference in their effect on attachment feelings.

Limitations

It is worth noting that the number of participants representing the six love styles is different: Eros (175), Ludus (22), Storge (70), Pragma (26), Mania (64), Agape (172). Also, there were not an equal number of participants holding different love styles, which might explain a greater fluctuation of graphs for Ludus and Pragma compared to Eros and Agape. To address this concern we selected a smaller number of Eros and Agape love style participants who were exclusive holders of only one of those styles. That analysis resulted in the same stable picture as for bigger sample presented at the graphs.

Many participants scored high on Eros and Agape, Eros and Storge, or Storge and Agape love styles. This might explain why Eros and Agape graphs, for instance,

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very much resemble the general graph on figure 1. Overlapping of Eros, Storge, and Agape love styles might result in similarity of their graphs. To address this concern we selected only those who hold exclusively Eros, or exclusively Agape. Although the number of participants became much smaller in both samples, the patterns of graphs remained the same.

One particular challenge was variability of individual data in terms of variation of events occurred. For example, the third event, in the sequence of five, may have a different effect depending on the nature of the event. This might be *romantic kiss*, for one participant, or *break-up*, for another one. And *break-up*, might occur as event 2, 3, 4, or 5, or does not happen at all. Thus, the generalization should be considered as very approximate. The individual cases show the more richness of analysis. Nevertheless, the general tendencies are still quite robust despite these variations. We checked how these tendencies display themselves depending on when *break-up*, the most salient event affected feelings, happened. We designed the separate graphs for history of attachment of feelings for those who had *break-up* as an event 2, 3, 4, 5, or never had. It turned out that graphs are rather similar in shape, like presented at the figures 12 and 13, but shifted along the X axis depending on the location of *break-up* event. When we designed the graph for those (188 participants) that did not have *break-up* event among the five most important, it perfectly resembled the figure 1. This demonstrates that general tendencies of attachment progression are the same despite variability in events. Split sample analysis confirms this.

Retrospective review of events and attachment may be different from longitudinal, but is still a valuable source of information about progression of love feelings. Baxter and colleagues, cited in Introduction section, successfully employed such a turning point approach recent years. It is a useful methodology to study the trajectories of relationships.

Conclusions

Summarizing the general patterns of feeling changes, one can say that the first three events in the sequence of five events decrease attachment-avoidance and attachment-anxiety. The following two events in the sequence challenge this tendency.

This may be due to crisis moments in the relationship or change of a partner. After the possible crisis moments, the attachment continues to positively develop further.

Attachment dimensions of avoidance and anxiety present different patterns. Anxiety is relatively stable and does not show a tendency to decrease during relationship. It rather depends upon the events happening in a relationship. Avoidance tends to decrease over time when partners know each other better and a relationship becomes more committed. Thus, an average trend is from insecure toward preoccupied romantic attachment. Because of the short duration of youth romantic relationship the chance of development of secure attachment is unlikely. An instance of a breakup event increases the insecure attachment. Research of long-term relationships can bring more extended picture of development of secure attachment and may be an interesting perspective of further study.

Eros, Agape, and Storge love style individuals demonstrate a consistent tendency toward more secure attachment, but typically remain preoccupied in their attachment since they are still on the early stages of relationship development. The Ludus and Mania love styles show controversial insecure attachment feelings that explain their difficulties in development of intimate relationship. Pragma lovers display uncertainty in their attachment restraining from forming close and sincere relationships.

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