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A brief content analysis of attachment and sexual relationships in sex therapy and research journals

Kathryn Zambrano Devis
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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A BRIEF CONTENT ANALYSIS OF ATTACHMENT
AND SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS IN SEX
THERAPY AND RESEARCH JOURNALS

by

Kathryn Zambrano Devis

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the
Master of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy
Department of Marriage and Family Therapy
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THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

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Markie Blumer, Committee Chair

Gerald Weeks, Committee Member

Katherine Hertlein, Committee Member

Larry Ashley, Graduate College Representative

Ronald Smith, Ph. D., Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies
and Dean of the Graduate College

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Abstract

A surge of scholarly publications on attachment within couple relationships prompted this content analysis of attachment articles published in six sex therapy and sex research journals. This study investigates the extent to which these journals attend to attachment in the context of adult sexual relationships. The researcher found 2257 articles published within these journals; 64 of which attend to attachment and 9 of which attend to attachment and sex. Implications for couples therapy in the field of sex therapy and future directions are discussed.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Research Questions	1
Chapter 2: Literature Review	2
Childhood Attachment Processes	2
Adult Attachment Processes	8
Adult Attachment Processes and Sex	14
The Importance of Attachment in the MFT and Sex Therapy Fields	23
Chapter 3: Method	30
Purpose	30
Method	30
Table 1: <i>Information of Articles</i>	34
Table 2: <i>Percentage Distribution of Attachment Categories</i>	37
Table 3: <i>Percentage of Distribution of Attachment and Sex Categories</i>	38
Chapter 4: Findings	39
Chapter 5: Discussion and Implications	41
Discussion	41
Research Implications	44
Limitations	46
Future Directions	48
Appendix 1: <i>Forth-order Sort Articles</i>	49
References	56
Vita	70

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Within the last several years, there has been a surge in the scholarly publications that focus on attachment within couple relationships (Johnson, 2005). Despite the interest in couple relationships and attachment, however, a limited amount of literature focuses on attachment processes and styles and how they manifest in a couple's sexual functioning (Birnbaum, Mikulincer, Reis, Gillath, & Orpaz, 2006; Johnson, 2010).

In response to the need to explore the literature and related gaps within the literature, the purpose of this content analysis of articles in sex therapy and sex research journals is to determine the extent to which the literature pays attention to attachment in general within the context of adult, coupled sexual relationships. The research questions guiding this analysis are:

1. To what extent and in what manner do sex therapy and sex research journals attend to attachment?
2. To what extent do sex therapy and sex research journals attend specifically to attachment in the context of adult sexual relationships?

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Despite the lengthy history of the concept of attachment and the role it has played in the lives of individuals, couples, and families in the fields of psychology, family studies, and Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT), at first glance at the sex therapy field, it would seem that the significance that attachment plays in our lives has been given little attention. Before exploring the crux of this observation, which is the primary focus in this content analysis, it is important to provide a little background on attachment as a concept.

Childhood Attachment Processes

Bowlby (1969; 1973) observed the behaviors of young children who were separated from their primary caregiver for various lengths of time. Based on these observations, Bowlby developed a theory of attachment. He found that humans have an innate attachment system that is formed in childhood and is based on the quality of relationships with the child's primary caregivers (Bowlby 1969; 1973). The attachments result in lifelong patterns of relating to others. Young children remain within close proximity to their caregivers (Bowlby 1969; 1973). Bowlby postulated

that while young children begin to build up confidence and trust in their caregiver as their caregiver provides protection, comfort, and support, certain behavioral and emotional reactions result from being separated (Bowlby, 1969; 1973).

As seen in their behavior, young children display a sequence of three emotional reactions when separated from their primary caregiver: protest, despair, and detachment (Bowlby, 1973). Protest behavior involves searching for the caregiver, resisting others' soothing efforts, and crying (Bowlby, 1973). Despair behavior is seen as an obvious sadness and meekness (Bowlby, 1973). Detachment behavior is displayed as a disregard and avoidance of the caregiver upon their return (Bowlby, 1973).

Bowlby found similarities between human infant-caregiver attachments and other primate infant-caregiver attachments which signified an evolutionary significance, particularly the attachment system's activation when human and primate infants are separated from their caregivers (Bowlby, 1973; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). In the face of separation, human and primate infants remain close to the mother for protection from danger. Infants developed complex attachment feelings and behaviors

which evolved to keep them close to their mother for protection. The mother, or caregiver, becomes a secure base for the child (Bowlby, 1973). Having a secure base allows the child to become independent and explore while still perceiving a strong foundation (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). In the presence of his/her caregiver, the child may explore the environment and establish contact with other family and community members. As this reliability and confidence builds, children get a sense that they have someone to rely on and learn to be less emotionally reactive (Bowlby, 1969; 1973; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007).

The attachment system is activated in response to internal or external threats to the person or their relationship (Bowlby, 1982). Internal threats occur when physiological needs are not met. Young children's attachment system is activated when they feel distress from hunger, thirst, or change in body temperature or other physical and emotional discomfort (Bowlby, 1982). External threats occur when safety needs are not met (Bowlby, 1982). An external threat could be when a child feels scared or sense a threat of danger in their environment. The attachment system is activated when children feel that they need to be protected (Bowlby, 1982). Lastly, threats to the

availability of the caregiver will activate the attachment system. Children will experience distress when they are separated from their caregiver or their caregiver is unresponsive to their needs (Bowlby, 1982).

In the first few years of a child's life, it is important to be sensitive and respond to the child's needs. The quality of a child's relationship to his/her caregiver during the first few years of life is a predictor of the child's response to threats and separation as they grow older (Ainsworth, 1973). When a child feels threatened, they seek proximity to their caregiver and communicate his/her needs; whereupon the caregiver responds (Ainsworth, 1973). The caregiver's sensitivity and responsiveness to a child's needs of comfort, reassurance, and caregiving provide a basis for the child to develop security within their relationships (Ainsworth, 1973).

A caregivers' varying reactions to a child's needs result in the development of different types of attachment styles (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Nosko, Tieu, Lawford, & Pratt, 2011). A "secure" attachment develops when a caregiver is warm, sensitive, and responsive to a child's need for safety (Ainsworth, 1973; Ainsworth et al., 1978). Caregivers who

provide a secure base for a child when the child needs safety and begins exploring his/her environment are security enhancing caregivers. A child with a secure attachment has easy and warm interactions with his/her caregiver and has an interest in examining and exploring their surroundings. The child uses his/her caregiver as a secure base to regulate distress and anxiety during threatening situations (Ainsworth, 1973; Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1973). The child may become upset when his/her caregiver leaves the room, but is relieved and seeks proximity when the caregiver returns. A child with a secure attachment begins to build confidence in his/her own competence and personal value. Additionally, a child's confidence builds in response to the caregiver's availability and reliability (Ainsworth, 1973; Ainsworth et al., 1978; Nosko et al., 2011).

On the other hand, an "insecure" attachment develops when a caregiver is cold, insensitive, and unresponsive. A child with an insecure attachment may develop an attachment style characterized by anxiety, avoidance, or both (Ainsworth, 1973; Ainsworth et al., 1978). A child with an anxious attachment is weary and distressed and need frequent contact with their caregiver (Ainsworth, 1973;

Ainsworth et al., 1978). Caregivers of an anxiously attached child are inconsistent and unreliable in responding to the child's needs. Moreover, the caregiver is awkward, self-centered, and/or intrusive in their caregiving (Ainsworth, 1973; Ainsworth et al., 1978). As a result, a child with an anxious attachment may demonstrate inconsistency between wanting to be near the caregiver and showing resistance when separated from the caregiver. These children tend to cry more than usual and explore the environment less than usual (Ainsworth, 1973; Ainsworth et al., 1978). Children with an anxious attachment are hypersensitive to safety threats and hypervigilant regarding the availability of their caregivers (Ainsworth, 1973; Ainsworth et al., 1978; Nosko et al., 2011).

Children with an avoidant attachment are disinterested in their caregiver's whereabouts (Ainsworth, 1973; Ainsworth et al., 1978). Caregivers of an avoidant attached child responds consistently, but negatively. Caregivers reject a child's attempts to establish physical contact with him/her. Moreover, the caregiver remains distant, angry, and/or rejecting (Ainsworth, 1973; Ainsworth et al., 1978). As a result, a child with an avoidant attachment may show little or no fuss when the caregiver leaves and may

actively turn away when the caregiver returns. An avoidant attached child tends to maintain emotional distance from their caregiver by not communicating their distress and maintains physical distance by avoiding them (Ainsworth, 1973; Ainsworth et al., 1978; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Nosko et al., 2011).

Lifelong patterns of attachment stem from the quality of relationships developed in childhood (Ainsworth, 1973; Ainsworth et al., 1978). Caregivers' responsiveness and sensitivity to children's needs in the first few years of life are important because the attachment styles developed in childhood persist into adulthood (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). These early attachment experiences give rise to the development of working mental models of self and others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2004; 2005; 2007). Working mental models create expectations, strategies, and procedures about relationships and provide a context for individuals to understand and interpret what happens in their relationships in both childhood and adulthood (Bogaert & Sadava, 2002; Bowlby, 1973; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2004; 2005; 2007; Mikulincer, Shaver, Bar-On, & Ein-Dor, 2010; Nosko et al., 2011).

Adult Attachment Processes

Hazan and Shaver (1987) proposed romantic love as an attachment process where emotional bonds are formed between adult lovers (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Emotional bonds in adult relationships reflect the attachment orientations originally observed in childhood. Shaver, Hazan, and Bradshaw (1988) based their conceptualization of romantic attachment on the three innate behavioral systems: attachment, caregiving, and sex, which Bowlby (1982) identified in his theory of attachment (Shaver, Hazan, & Bradshaw, 1988). The multiple forms of romantic love are shaped by social experiences and produce different relationship styles (Shaver et al., 1988). Attachment theory explains how the different forms of romantic love are developed and how the underlying dynamics of romantic love are common to all people (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Furthermore, attachment theory provides a basis for understanding mental models for a person's goals, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors intrapersonally and provides a framework to help conceptualize the multiple forms of romantic love in a person's social life, interpersonally (Birnbaum, 2010; Bogaert & Sadava, 2002; Bowlby, 1973; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2004; 2005; 2007; Mikulincer et al., 2010).

Hazan and Shaver (1987) formulated five hypotheses outlining the role of attachment theory in adult love (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). First, they hypothesized that attachment styles in infancy are also common in adulthood. Second, they hypothesized that individuals with secure, anxious, or avoidant attachment styles experience love differently. Third, they hypothesized that working models of self and relationships would be related to a person's attachment style. Fourth, they predicted that infant-caregiver interactions and adults' reports about his/her relationship with their parents would be parallel. Fifth, they predicted that insecure subjects would report greater trait loneliness than secure subjects (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). All of aforementioned hypotheses were supported by Hazan and Shaver's study on romantic love and attachment (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

Other researchers (Bogaert & Sadava, 2002; Davila & Kasha, 2009; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Mikulincer et al., 2010) found that attachment styles developed during childhood persist into adulthood and affect relations between adults. Similar to the attachment seeking behavior in childhood, adults seek security, support, and protection from their partners in adulthood (Mikulincer & Shaver,

2007). A securely attached adult develops relationships with others easily. They become close with others and maintain a confidence and trust with persons they become intimate with. When a securely attached adult is in a committed relationship, they feel stable and have little to no fears and/or worries of abandonment (Bogaert & Sadava, 2002; Davila & Kashy, 2009; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Within securely attached couples, partners mutually respond to each other when one or both partners feel distressed and need comfort and assistance from his/her partner (Bogaert & Sadava, 2002; Davila & Kashy, 2009). The distressed partner, or attachment seeker, will turn to his/her partner, who becomes a secure base, during times of need. The secure base partner will recognize his/her partner's distress and respond to his/her partner by providing protection (Bogaert & Sadava, 2002; Davila & Kashy, 2009). The attachment seeker's feelings will be mitigated and s/he will be able to feel secure again. Securely attached couples function in synchrony to each other's needs. The attachment seeker conveys his/her needs to his/her partner and makes use of his/her partner's support. In turn, the secure base partner provides security for the attachment seeker and provides what is necessary for his/her

attachment needs to be fulfilled (Bogaert & Sadava, 2002; Davila & Kashy, 2009). Supportive partners are able to take cues from the attachment seeker and provide support in line with the seeker's signals (Bogaert & Sadava, 2002; Davila & Kashy, 2009). The result of secure attachments is a positive mental model of self and others (Mikulincer et al., 2010).

On the other hand, couples with an insecure attachment are not attuned to each other's signals, which may render them out of synch with each other's needs (Davila & Kashy, 2009). Adults with an anxious attachment style vacillate between dependency and conflict in romantic relationships. When the attachment seeker conveys his/her needs, his/her partner is inconsistent with his/her response to the attachment seeker's needs (Bogaert & Sadava, 2002). Attachment seekers view his/her partner as reluctant to be intimate with him/her. Due to the partner's intrusive or reluctant support, the attachment seeker views his/her partner as undependable and untrustworthy. As a result, they constantly worry that his/her partner will abandon them (Bogaert & Sadava, 2002).

Adults with an avoidant attachment style are uncomfortable with intimacy (Bogaert & Sadava, 2002). When

the attachment seeker expresses his/her needs, his/her partner is rejecting, unresponsive, and/or unavailable. They learn to doubt his/her partner's availability and responsiveness and therefore, have difficulty trusting others. They learn to depend solely on themselves and they become uncomfortable when others get too close (Bogaert & Sadava, 2002). The result of insecure attachments is a distorted mental model of self and others. Adults with an insecure attachment learn to doubt their own value and lovability (Bogaert & Sadava, 2002; Mikulincer et al., 2010).

Adult attachments to romantic partners are parallel to childhood attachments in that individuals are affected by their partner's and caregiver's response to their needs. In adulthood, the differences in romantic love are due to each partner's individual attachment style (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Not only has romantic attachment theory greatly influenced the study of couple relationships in some of the ways described above (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Mikulincer & Goodman, 2006), attachment theory and related empirical evidence also exists with regard to there being a reciprocal relationship between attachment and sex. Recent research has also demonstrated that different attachment

styles may influence and play a part in sexual relationships (Birnbaum, 2007; 2010; Birnbaum et al., 2006; Birnbaum, Svitelman, Bar-Shalom, & Porat, 2008; Bogaert & Sadava, 2002; Brassard, Shaver, & Lussier, 2007; Cooper, Pioli, Levitt, Talley, Micheas, & Collins, 2006; Davis, Shaver, & Vernon, 2004; Davis, Shaver, Widaman, Vernon, Follette, & Beitz, 2006; Johnson & Zuccarini, 2010; Mikulincer & Goodman, 2006; Schachner & Shaver, 2004).

Attachment theory and sexual mating are distinct behavioral systems; however, recent research has found that attachment and sex are integrated processes. An individual's attachment style influences his/her personal motive for having sex and his/her perception of their sexual experience (Davis et al., 2004).

Adult Attachment Processes and Sex

Scholars have highlighted the effect of individual attachment style on a couple's relationship in general, and more specifically on a couple's sexual functioning (Birnbaum et al., 2006; Birnbaum, 2010; Hazan & Shaver, 1994; Johnson & Zuccarini, 2010). Attachment to a caregiver in childhood transforms into an attachment to a partner in a romantic adult relationship. In adulthood, a person's romantic partner becomes his/her attachment figure and

replaces the role of his/her caregiver from childhood. As a result, the partner simultaneously fills the role of attachment figure and sexual partner (Birnbaum, 2010; Strachman & Impett, 2009).

The interplay of attachment and sexuality systems has been supported through research by evolutionary theorists (Belsky, Steinberg, & Draper, 1991; Draper & Harpending, 1982; Kirkpatrick, 1998) and recognized by Hazan and Shaver (1987) in their theory of romantic love. Evolutionary theorists have argued that attachment processes play a role in reproductive and sexual strategies. The purpose of the attachment system is to keep infants with their caregivers for protection from danger (Bowlby, 1973; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). The purpose of the sexual system is to pass down genes to offspring for future generations (Birnbaum, 2007; Buss & Kenrick, 1998). Due to the prolonged period of care and attachment of infants to their caregivers, similar patterns in reproductive strategies are likely to be acted out in adulthood. The reproductive strategies used during infancy influence the reproductive decisions in future generations (Birnbaum, 2007; Bogaert & Sadava, 2002). Physical proximity and intimate contact are factors characteristic of romantic

adult relationships. These factors are essential for sexual partners to care for their offspring (Birnbaum, 2010). The physical proximity and intimate contact exchanged between partners likely contribute to the maintenance of attachment bonds in the relationship (Birnbaum, 2010).

Davis, Shaver, and Vernon (2004) hypothesized that sexual behavior can serve the needs of the attachment system (Davis et al., 2004). Further, they found the attachment and caregiving behavioral systems that shape sexual motivation and sexual behavior can also serve the needs of those systems (Davis et al., 2004). This gives reason to expect that an individual's attachment style influences his/her personal motives for having sex. Romantic partners simultaneously fill the role of attachment figure and sexual partner. As this occurs, attachment needs are satisfied by the romantic partner. In sexual relationships, attachment needs motivate sexual behavior. Thus, both systems, attachment and sexual, work together (Birnbaum, 2007; 2010; Davis et al., 2004).

Different attachment styles affect a person's motives for sex. Moreover, a person's attachment style affects how they use sex to meet a variety of his/her needs (Schachner & Shaver, 2004). The sexual behavior of an anxiously

attached individual is motivated by his/her need for emotional closeness, reassurance, self-esteem enhancement, and stress reduction (Schachner & Shaver, 2004).

Individuals with anxious attachment constantly worry when they feel there is threat of their partner leaving which leads them to use sexual behavior to lessen their worries, should their partner respond to their needs for close proximity and intimacy through sexual behavior (Schachner & Shaver, 2004).

Individuals with an avoidant attachment use sex to manipulate and exert power over his/her partner (Schachner & Shaver, 2004). Additionally, due to the doubts of the partner's availability and dependability, avoidant individuals use or withhold sex to protect themselves from his/her partner's negative affect (Schachner & Shaver, 2004). The functions of attachment and sexual systems are interconnected and individual sexual behavior is reflective of individual needs for attachment (Davis et al., 2004; Schachner & Shaver, 2004).

When couples are distressed, their sexual relationship is likely to be negatively affected (Birnbaum, 2007; Johnson & Zuccarini, 2010; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Therefore, a secure attachment is compromised and the act

of sex and emotional connection is lessened. This signifies that the attachment needs of each individual are unfulfilled and contributes to the couple's sexual issues and dysfunctions (Johnson & Zuccarini, 2010). Sexual issues and dysfunctions that manifest in couple relationships may be attributed to the individual attachment style they bring to the relationship.

For example, sexual functioning within a securely-attached couple is likely to be mutually satisfying with wants and needs openly discussed, compromised, and accepted (Birnbaum, 2007; 2010; Hazan & Shaver, 1994; Johnson & Zuccarini, 2010). When partners are securely attached, their relationships tend to be healthy and devoid of problems because they are available for their partners, respond to relationship events with flexibility, and are comfortable with being close to their partners (Davila, 2003; Schachner & Shaver, 2004). Secure individuals perceive their partner as caring and sexual activity is seen as promoting closeness in the relationship (Birnbaum, 2007).

Securely attached individuals tend to have long, stable, and satisfying relationships (Birnbaum, 2006; Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Stephan & Backman, 1999). They

enjoy sexual activity, are open to explore sexuality, and engage in a variety of sexual activities (Birnbaum, 2006; Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Stephan & Backman, 1999). These relationships are characterized by trust, friendship, warmth, support, and cohesion. Partners maintain a high emotional investment and experience more positive emotions and fewer negative emotions (Birnbaum et al., 2006; Birnbaum, 2010; Brassard et al., 2007; Schachner & Shaver, 2004). Securely attached individuals have positive mental models of self and a higher level of self-confidence, thus affecting their interactions with partners, including their conflict-resolution strategies (Birnbaum, 2007; 2010). They utilize good conflict resolution skills to resolve conflict which causes minimal damage to the relationship and may heighten sexual motivation and emotional closeness. Therefore, securely attached couples not only have closeness in their relationship, but also have a high relationship quality (Birnbaum, 2007; 2010).

Individuals with insecure attachments are more likely to see their partner as less caring and responsive, and experience lower levels of intimacy and arousal (Birnbaum, 2007). When partners are insecurely attached, their

relationships are characterized by dysfunctional patterns of communication. This leads to an inhibited expression of sexual needs and sexual dissatisfaction (Davis et al., 2006). Individuals with an anxious attachment may have a difficult time enjoying sex because they are preoccupied with worries about the relationship, potentially resulting in an increased risk for greater sexual dysfunction (Birnbaum, 2010; Davis et al., 2006; Hazan & Shaver, 1994). They tend to become obsessed with their romantic partner and are constantly concerned about rejection and abandonment (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; 1994).

Anxious partners view positive sexual experiences as more positive and negative sexual experiences as more negative (Birnbaum et al., 2006). They tend to increase their sexual actions and use sex in an attempt to secure their partner's attention (Davis et al., 2004; 2006; Schachner & Shaver, 2002; Tracy, Shaver, Albino, & Cooper, 2003). Sexual behavior fulfills several attachment needs such as approval, reassurance, and caregiving behavior from a partner and becomes a signifier of their partner's feelings towards them (Cooper et al., 2006; Davis et al., 2004, Impett, Gordon, & Strachman, 2008) Anxious partners allow the sexual relationship to affect the relationship

quality by merging both sexual and emotional aspects (Birnbaum, 2007). Anxiously attached individuals depend on sex; without sex they feel that their need for security and love will not be fulfilled. They have a difficult time enjoying sex because they are preoccupied with worries about the relationship (Birnbaum, 2010). Furthermore, they become unsure of their partner's feelings for them, thus sex may become confused with love (Birnbaum, 2007).

Conversely, individuals with avoidant attachment patterns exhibit different behaviors in sexual relationships than individuals with anxious attachment. Individuals with an avoidant attachment are relatively less interested in romantic, long-term, committed relationships (Hatfield, Brinton, & Cornelius, 1989; Shaver & Brennan, 1992). Avoidant partners tend to view positive sexual experiences as less positive and negative sexual experiences as less negative (Birnbaum et al., 2006). This viewpoint can allow the individual to limit intimacy and exercise control in the relationship (Collins & Read, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Mikulincer & Florian, 1999; Shaver & Brennan, 1992). Sex, therefore, may be used to avoid closeness and maintain distance, thus

contributing to the autonomy they seek (Birnbaum, 2006; 2007; 2010; Birnbaum et al., 2006; Gentzler & Kerns, 2004).

Individuals with an avoidant attachment style may experience a sexual relationship that is characterized by having sexual fantasies where they and their partner are interpersonally distant or they might participate less frequently in sexual activities as a way to potentially avoid intimacy and limit closeness (Birnbaum et al., 2006; 2008). When an individual with avoidant attachment engages in sexual activity with their partner, they feel estranged and alienated which leads them to provide low levels of physical affection toward their partner (Birnbaum, 2006; 2007; Birnbaum & Reis, 2006; Birnbaum et al., 2006). Avoidant partners experience a detachment between relationship quality and sex. Therefore, sex is not part of the relationship and does not affect the way the avoidant partner views the rest of the relationship (Birnbaum, 2010).

Insecurely attached couples maintain extreme concerns of abandonment and intimacy, which results in staying within chronically unhappy marriages (Davila, 2003). Anxious and avoidant attachments are positively associated with negative sex-related feelings and low relationship

quality (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003). The stability of these relationships are based on insecurity rather than relationship satisfaction. Insecure relationships are characterized by low satisfaction and higher break-up rates (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994). Therefore, these relationships are at risk for higher dysfunction and could present to therapy with a need to increase security and support within the relationship (Davila, 2003).

The Importance of Attachment in the MFT and Sex Therapy Fields

In an effort to breach the gap between research and practice, information on attachment is important to the fields of MFT and sex therapy in that it facilitates a direction for the therapist when presented with couples in treatment. Given that individual attachment styles manifest in couple relationships in myriad ways, it is important to consider where therapists gather strategies and information to treat attachment-related issues, which can include sexual problems. Content analyses conducted within the MFT field have identified three ways in which therapists gather treatment strategies and learn about any topic within the MFT field (Blumer, Green, Knowles, & Williams, 2011, in

press; Blumer, Hertlein, Smith, & Allen, 2011, in review; Clark & Serovich, 1997).

First, therapists gather treatment strategies and information through attending workshops and/or lectures at professional organization meetings (Blumer et al., 2011, in press; Blumer et al., 2011, in review; Clark & Serovich, 1997). The professional organizations for MFT and sex therapists are the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) and the American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counselors, and Therapists (AASECT) respectively. The AAMFT conference guide for 2010 shows that only 7 out of 118 total workshops, open forums, plenaries and/or caucuses were devoted solely to attachment, and only 7 focused on adult sexual relations. Non-specific meetings such as business meetings, awards dinners, exhibit hall grand openings, etc. were excluded. Furthermore, only 2 of the 110 poster presentations addressed the topic of attachment specifically and a mere 3 had adult sexual relations as the focus.

In the AASECT conference guide for 2010, there were no workshops, open forums, plenaries and/or caucuses devoted to attachment; however, 23 out of 59 focused on adult sexual relations. Additionally, none of the poster

presentations addressed the topic of attachment, although 12 of the 18 posters focused on adult sexual relations. This is surprising given the popularity of attachment theory and the value that therapists place on understanding the impact of multiple aspects (like those of a sexual nature) of couple systems on presenting problems.

Second, therapists may learn of treatment strategies and information through coursework and training in their academic programs (Blumer et al., 2011, in press; Blumer et al., 2011, in review; Clark & Serovich, 1997). It is possible that students are receiving information on attachment and sex in their training programs. For instance, according to the AAMFT, who dictates the standard of practice for therapists, minimal coursework on human sexuality and sex therapy is required. The accrediting body for MFT, the Commission on the Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE), requires that COAMFTE-accredited programs should include "content in issues of gender and sexual functioning, sexual orientation, and sex therapy as they relate to couple, marriage, and family therapy theory and practice" in their clinical knowledge component (COAMFTE, 2005). These

standards fall short of addressing sexuality and sexual problems and only considers standards for couple therapy.

The reverse is true for AASECT and the Society for the Scientific Study of Sexuality (SSSS), who stress the importance of sex therapy training, but fail to emphasize couple therapy (Hertlein & Weeks, 2009), including evidence-based treatments that have attachment processes as part of their core modality (i.e. Emotionally-Focused Therapy by Sue Johnson and the Principles of Making Marriage work by John Gottman, etc.). Certainly the standards set by the prominent MFT and sex therapy organizations demonstrate some overlap in treatment, yet it is clear that more training needs to occur in MFT and sex therapy programs on the relationship between attachment and sexual processes in order to effectively treat such issues in practice.

Finally, the third means by which therapists can gather treatment strategies and information is through research of current scholarly literature (Blumer et al., 2011, in press; Blumer et al., 2011, in review; Clark & Serovich, 1997). In terms of the scholarly literature, most of the journals which attend to sex issues are not generally part of the MFT's library; however, those that

attend to attachment styles and processes frequently are and the reverse is true in the library of the sex therapist. In each of these cases, valuable information is being overlooked by therapists in both fields.

Couple and sex therapists may overlook important clinical information and treatment strategies as the information is generally found in journals outside of their respective fields. For MFTs, they may not be aware of the information on sex as it usually exists within sex therapy and research journals (*American Journal of Sexuality Education, Archives of Sexual Behavior, Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy, Journal of Sex Research, Sexual and Relationship Therapy, and Sexualities*). The reverse is true for sex therapists as information on attachment is more commonly found in journals of the MFT field (*American Journal of Family Therapy, Contemporary Family Therapy, Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, etc.*). Therapists may be aware of the information on attachment and sex within their respective fields; however, they may have difficulty accessing such information because the journal databases that therapists are associated with generally do not provide access to journal databases outside of their respective field. Moreover, it is common for therapists to

have access only to the common journals of their affiliated professional organizations (Hertlein, Lambert-Shute, & Piercy, 2009).

Therefore, the scholarly literature, which addresses both attachment-related issues and sex, are generally left unread by the practicing therapists who are encountering such issues in their practice. Consequently, due to a limited exposure to important information on attachment-related issues and sex, therapists have a tendency towards misinformation, misunderstanding, confusion, and unguided treatment on the impact that attachment processes have on the sexual dynamics of couple relationships. Such limited information can result in dated and uniformed ethical decisions with regard to clinical practices (O'Malley, 1995; Harder, 2002; Haug, 1995; Shapiro & Schulman, 1996).

In short, because of the significant attention paid to attachment theory in sister disciplines, and the need to better understand couple relationships, including sex-related components, it is clear that such concepts need to be addressed within both MFT and sex therapy training, coursework, workshops, and within the clinical and conceptual literature. Such training is more so necessary in the field of sex therapy since less attention has been

paid to these two concepts together when compared to other fields like that of MFT. Therefore, conducting a content analysis is the next logical step towards adding to the current literature within the sex therapy field, as well as exploring the literature that is already included.

There are three reasons that contribute to the significance of this content analysis. First, therapists need awareness around how they are currently attending to attachment-related issues and sex, particularly since previous literature has documented the connection between these two processes in the lives of couples (Birnbaum, 2007; Birnbaum, 2010; Birnbaum et al., 2006; Birnbaum et al., 2008; Bogaert & Sadava, 2002; Brassard et al., 2007; Cooper et al., 2006; Davis et al., 2004; 2006; Johnson & Zuccarini, 2010; Mikulincer & Goodman, 2006; Schachner & Shaver, 2004). Second, therapists are ethically required to stay informed of relevant concerns of their clients and their concerns to provide services that are competent at the very least and at best in alignment with current best practices. Third, researchers' knowledge base can be enhanced and become more accurate if issues related to attachment and sex in the lives of couples are included as important variables worthy of study.

CHAPTER 3

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to analyze articles in sex therapy and sex research journals to determine the extent to which the journals attend to attachment within the context of adult couple sexual relationships. The research questions that guide this study are:

1. To what extent and in what manner do sex therapy and sex research journals attend to attachment?
2. To what extent do sex therapy and sex research journals attend specifically to attachment in the context of adult sexual relationships?

Method

To date, no such content analysis on attachment and adult sexual relationships has been conducted. Therefore, guidelines for this content analysis were based upon those analyses conducted by others with regard to other areas (Blumer et al., 2011, in press; Blumer et al., 2011, in review; Clark & Serovich, 1997; Tatman & Bischof, 2004).

Existing peer-reviewed journal articles used for this analysis came from sex therapy and/or sex research journals. Six sex therapy and/or research journals were identified and included the *American Journal of Sexuality*

Education, Archives of Sexual Behavior, Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy, Journal of Sex Research, Sexual and Relationship Therapy, and Sexualities.

Upon obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to conduct the content analysis (Protocol #1109-3935), independent searches were conducted to gather information about the number of articles that discuss attachment from the selected journals. Electronic copies of the journals were looked through in university e-journal offerings, specifically InformaWorld, PsychINFO, and SAGE Premier 2007.

The search included articles between January, 1 2005 through December 31, 2010. Much of the research on sex and attachment began in the early 2000s. The research on adult attachment and its influence in the couple relationship began in the late 1980s and into the 1990s (Johnson, 1999; Johnson & Greenberg, 1988; Johnson, Hunsley, Greenberg, & Schindler, 1999). Most of this work, however, only focused on attachment and the couple relationship, as opposed to attachment and sex in couple relationships. During this time, the research was being published within MFT journals without much association and research on attachment and sexual problems. Therefore, when research on sex and

attachment began in the MFT field (Davis et al., 2004; Birnbaum, 2007; Birnbaum, 2010; Bogaert & Sadava, 2002; Brassard et al., 2007; Johnson & Zuccarini, 2010), it follows that a similar trend began in sex therapy and research journals with a focus on such content issues taking place in the 2000s, but with a slight delay in comparison to their MFT journal-peers. Thus, articles published during the mid to late 2000s are a logical place to start this content analysis of sex therapy and research journals in looking for both attachment and sex related content.

Within the identified journals, articles with the term "attachment" in the title, abstract, literature review, procedures, results, and/or discussion were included in this study. Articles without the term "attachment" in the aforementioned areas were included in the total number of articles published within each journal. Only peer-reviewed articles were included in the analysis. Book reviews, case reports, clinical updates, letters to the editor, peer commentaries, essays, and editorials were counted only in the total count of articles published in the identified journals within the specified years.

The researcher also reviewed the impact rating and immediacy index in *Journal Citation Reports* (2010) and the SJR (SCImago Journal Rank) and SNIP (Source Normalized Impact per Paper) in Scopus for each of the journals selected for inclusion. The impact factor reflects the number of articles cited in the previous year whereas the immediacy factor is the average number of times an article was cited in the year it was published (Impact Factor, 2010; Immediacy Index, 2010). The SJR measures the "scientific prestige of scholarly sources" whereas the SNIP measures the "source's contextual citation impact" (Elsevier, 2011a; 2011b). Journals that do not have ratings were still included in the analysis, because they are a product of sex therapy and research organizations (e.g. AASECT, SSSS, etc.) or because they are recognized as influential in the field of sex therapy. The conducting of such a review of the journals for inclusion in this content analysis is essential in determining the popularity and validity of those selected. Table 1 presents the number of research articles in the selected journals during the specified years, the number of articles with attachment content, percentages of articles with attachment content in relation to the total number of articles in the selected

journals, impact factors and immediacy indices, and SJR and SNIP.

Table 1. *Information of Articles*

Journal Title	Total Articles	Articles with Attachment Content	%	Impact Factor	Immediacy Index	SJR	SNIP
American Journal of Sexuality Education	144	4	2.78	NA	NA	0.030	0.352
Archives of Sexual Behavior	825	35	4.24	3.660	1.044	0.165	1.958
Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy	291	12	4.12	NA	NA	0.093	1.238
Journal of Sex Research	325	3	0.92	1.488	0.298	0.78	1.221
Sexual and Relationship Therapy	333	6	1.8	NA	NA	0.050	0.595
Sexualities	339	13	3.83	0.935	0.079	0.035	1.066

In order to determine the contents of the journals and focus specifically on content regarding attachment and sex, a similar sorting procedure used in prior content analyses (Blumer et al., 2011, in press; Blumer et al., 2011, in review; Clark & Serovich, 1997; Tatman & Bischof, 2004) was utilized. The first-order sort involved searching e-journal offerings via the key term "attachment". Any article that contained "attachment" within the title, abstract, literature review, procedures, results, and/or discussion were included in the first-order sort. This sort resulted

in 152 articles out of the 2257 articles published between January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2010.

The 152 articles that resulted from the first-order sort were reduced by the researcher's second-order sort, which eliminated the book reviews, case reports, clinical updates, letters to the editor, peer commentaries, essays, and editorials that contain attachment. Additionally, articles that used "attachment" in the verb or noun format which do not fall into the context of attachment theory were also removed. For example, in an article by Zheng, Lippa, and Zheng (2010), the term attachment was used in the context of "email attachments" (Zheng, Lippa, & Zheng, 2010). Therefore, only 73 peer-reviewed articles in the correct context remained. 9 of the 73 articles paid attention to attachment and sex and qualified to be counted as part of the forth-order sort. The other 64 articles were used in the third-order sort.

In the third-order sort, the researcher sorted the 64 articles into four categories: (1) attachment theory or attachment in general as an explanation/factor/contributor in article but is not main idea/focus, (2) child/parent/caregiver attachment, (3) emotional attachments within relationships, and (4) romantic/intimate

attachments within relationships. A few articles (Edwards & Barber, 2009; Mah & Binik, 2005; Marshall, 2010; Owen & Fincham, 2010) mentioned attachment and sex within the article, which could have been counted as part of the fourth-order sort; however, these articles used attachment and sex as separate ideas, rather than the researcher's intent to see attachment and sex used as combined concepts in the articles. For example, Edwards and Barber (2009) used attachment theory to further explain rejection sensitivity, which the researchers identified as similar to attachment theory. The researchers studied the link between rejection sensitivity and condom use (Edwards & Barber, 2009). Thus, attachment theory was not used specifically in studying condom use and instead was used as a link to rejection sensitivity. The aforementioned articles were categorized as follows: Edwards and Barber (2009) and Owen and Fincham (2010) in attachment theory or attachment in general as an explanation/factor/contributor in article but is not main idea/focus, Mah and Binik (2005) in emotional attachments within relationships, and Marshall (2010) in child/parent/caregiver attachment. Table 2 lists the percentages of distribution of the four categories of attachment.

Table 2. *Percentage Distribution of Attachment Categories*

Attachment Categories	n	Percentage Distribution
Attachment theory or attachment in general as an explanation/factor/contributor in article but is not main idea/focus	32	50.0%
Child/parent/caregiver attachment	14	21.9%
Emotional attachments within relationships	12	18.8%
Romantic/intimate attachments within relationships	6	9.3%

In the fourth-order sort the researcher specifically looked at the degree to which attachment and sexual relationships are being given attention in the literature. The nine articles identified for this sort were examined to see how the attachment articles within sex therapy and research journals are paying attention to attachment and sexual relationships. Four categories emerged: (1) attachment and sex as primary concepts, (2) sex as primary concept with attachment mentioned, (3) attachment and sex used in the development of a theoretical model, and (4) attachment as primary concept with sex mentioned. Table 3 shows the percentage of attachment and sex articles published within the selected journals, as well as the percentages of distribution of the four categories of attachment and sex.

Table 3. *Percentage of Distribution of Attachment and Sex Categories*

Attachment Categories	n	Percentage Distribution
Attachment and sex as primary concepts	3	33.3%
Sex as primary concept with attachment mentioned	3	33.3%
Attachment and sex used in development of theoretical model	2	22.2%
Attachment as primary concept with sex mentioned	1	11.1%

CHAPTER 4

Findings

Sex therapy and sex research journals published a total of 2257 articles within the chosen years. Of these articles, 64 attended to attachment, thus equaling to 2.8%. The content of the resulting 64 articles from the third-order sort focused on the following categories (listed in order from greatest to least amount of articles): attachment theory or attachment in general as an explanation/factor/contributor in article but is not main idea/focus (32 articles, 50%), child/parent/caregiver attachment (14 articles, 21.9%), emotional attachments within relationships (12 articles, 18.8%), and romantic/intimate attachments within relationships (6 articles, 9.3%).

Only 9 out of 2257 articles attended to attachment and sex which makes up 0.4%. The content of the resulting nine articles from the fourth-order sort focused on the following categories (listed in order from greatest to least amount of articles): attachment and sex as primary concepts (3 articles, 33.3%), sex as primary concept with attachment mentioned (3 articles, 33.3%), attachment and sex used in the development of a theoretical model (2

articles, 22.2%), and attachment as primary concept with sex mentioned (1 article, 11.1%). The following abbreviated codes were developed to denote the category of each article: articles that mention attachment theory or attachment in general as an explanation/factor/contributor in the article but attachment is not the main idea/focus of the article (GA), child/parent/caregiver attachment (CA), emotional attachments within relationships (EA), romantic/intimate attachments within relationships (RA), and attachment and sex articles (AS). These codes appear in the reference section next to their corresponding article.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Given that attachment style has been mentioned as influential in sexual relationships (Birnbaum, 2007; 2010; Birnbaum et al., 2006; 2008; Bogaert & Sadava, 2002; Brassard et al., 2007; Cooper et al., 2006; Davis et al., 2004; 2006; Johnson & Zuccarini, 2010; Mikulincer & Goodman, 2006; Schachner & Shaver, 2004), it is surprising to find that only 0.4% of sex therapy and sex research journal articles focus on attachment and sex. With these results, it could be the case that the field of sex therapy does not see value in attachment theory and its application to clinical work.

It is important to note, however, that several articles do attend to attachment just as separate from sex. The articles resulting in the third-order sort mention attachment theory at least one time throughout the article, demonstrating attachment's influence in areas such as adult relationships (Erzar & Erzar, 2007; Spitalnick & McNair, 2005), friendships (Peter & Valkenburg, 2010) and childhood (Phillips & Tooley, 2005). Specifically, Erzar and Erzar (2007) describe the intergenerational pattern of insecure attachment and adult children's childhood attachment style

and its effect on their romantic adult relationships (Erzar & Erzar, 2007). Additionally, Spitalnick and McNair (2005) suggested that couples therapy for female couples should incorporate some establishment of a secure attachment within the couple relationship (Spitalnick & McNair, 2005). Peter and Valkenburg (2010) explored the influence of an adolescent's attachment to friends with regard to the use of "sexually explicit internet material" (Peter & Valkenburg, 2010). Furthermore, Phillips and Tooley (2005) describe the importance of establishing parental attachment during childhood, specifically with parents who experienced complicated births and have infants in the neonatal intensive care unit. As evidenced by these articles, sex therapy and research journals attend to attachment in a broad manner.

In addition, the third-order sort findings suggest that sex therapy and research journals recognize attachment generally within child and parent/caregiver relationships and emotional and romantic/intimate relationships. For instance, attachment is mentioned in general as an explanation/factor/contributor within articles with topics such as adolescent sexual offending (Dwyer & Boyd, 2009), the development of Gender Identity Disorder (Owen-Anderson,

Bradley, & Zucker, 2010; Hill, Menvielle, Sica, & Johnson, 2010), and child sexual abuse (Hayatbakhsh, Najman, Jamrozik, Mamun, O'Callaghan, & Williams, 2009).

Despite the broad coverage of attachment in sex therapy and research journals exemplified by the articles mentioned, attachment-related issues and sex are minimally available. This may mean that sex therapists receive training regarding attachment theory in a general way. Since child/parent/caregiver attachment was the second most frequent way in which sex therapy and research journals attend to attachment, it is possible that sex therapists receive attachment information primarily in regards to child/parent/caregiver attachment. In addition to this type of knowledge, it may be beneficial for sex therapists to also learn about attachment theory and sex-related issues as it is relevant to the type of clients they will see in treatment.

Consequently, considering the results of attachment and sex articles, sex therapy and research journals contain a limited amount of attachment and sex content. Thus, practicing sex therapists may remain uninformed with regard to attachment and sex-related clinical issues. This can be problematic in that several researchers have discussed the

importance of attending to the connection between sex and attachment processes. Bouchard, Godbout, and Sabourin (2009), for instance, researched the sexual behavior in romantic relationships of women diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder. The authors suggest the benefit of exploring the attachment motives of individuals due to their findings on the influence of attachment on sexual behavior. Findings from research such as this implies that therapists in the sex therapy field could attend to attachment and sex-related issues further in their clinical work as it may be beneficial for treatment. Further, understanding individual attachment motives is an important factor for clinicians and clients to gain clearer understanding of what moves individuals to behave in problematic ways in their sexual lives (Bouchard et al., 2009).

Research Implications

Despite searching through six sex therapy and/or research journals, only three journals contained attachment and sex content. The nine resulting articles with attachment and sex content originated from three journals: (1) *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, (2) *Journal of Sex Research*, and (3) *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*. Thus,

not only is attachment and sex content being minimally attended to, but the journals that do attend to such content is limited. *Archives of Sexual Behavior* published 5 out of 9 articles, *Journal of Sex Research* published 3 out of 9 articles, and *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy* published 1 out of 9 articles. Appendix 1 lists the author, title, year, journal, and abstract (directly taken from each article) of each of the 9 attachment and sex articles.

The limited attention to attachment and sex-related issues within sex therapy and research journals suggest that little value is seen in the role of an individual's attachment style in their sexual lives. Moreover, with attachment and sex articles only being published in three sex therapy and/or research journals, it can be said that only particular journals see value in publishing attachment sex articles.

Johnson and Zuccarini (2010) highlight the growing research of attachment and sex in recent years. Their article suggests that sexual problems and relationship distress lead some couples to seek help from sex therapy clinicians. Without attending to the attachment styles that each individual brings to the relationship, the motives behind their sexual behavior is unaccounted for and

bypassed (Johnson & Zuccarini, 2010). Thus, a comprehensive understanding of a couple's presenting sex-related issues is missed. This lack of comprehensive treatment may be a disservice to both client and therapist. Therefore, not attending to attachment and sex-related issues in sex therapy and research journals keeps sex therapy clinicians misinformed on the impact that attachment processes can have on sexual dynamics of couple relationships.

Limitations

A few limitations arose throughout the writing and conducting of this study. First, unlike other content analyses conducted (Blumer et al., 2011, in press; Blumer et al., 2011, in review; Clark & Serovich, 1997; Tatman & Bischof, 2004), only one researcher fully explored the content of the sex therapy and/or research journals. This means that reliability and validity of the sorting process and the categories developed by outside sources has yet to be conducted. This limitation is inherent within the process of thesis writing; as this is a method that is limited to a solo researcher. The major professor, however, did serve to review the articles identified and emergent categories by the researcher in a general overview. In so

doing this, a degree of credibility and confirmability in the findings was established (Patton, 2002).

Second, this study was limited by an overlapping of content contained within a few articles. Specifically, there was significant overlap between two articles (Hald, 2006; Hald & Malamuth, 2008) making it difficult to make a determination on the categorization of the articles. Both articles used the same data set, however, each article tested different research questions. This can become a limitation for content analyses because despite the significant overlap in the articles, they must be treated as separate contributions to the analysis. This may potentially skew the reported results of the content analysis.

Third, the researcher discovered the difficulty in writing about seminal theories such as that of attachment theory. Throughout the process of writing the literature review portion of this study, the author needed to be hypervigilant of the possibilities of plagiarism. Since the development of attachment theory, several authors have written about this theory, which has made it a challenge to do so in an original voice. Therefore, a limitation of this study is the difficulty and uniqueness in writing about

attachment theory in childhood attachment processes, adult attachment processes, and adult attachment processes and sex.

Future Directions

The attachment and sexual systems have been found to have a reciprocal relationship. Research in the sex therapy and research journals does focus on attachment, however, further research published would be bolstered through the inclusion of focusing on attachment processes and styles and how they manifest in a couple's sexual functioning. The addition of attachment and sex-related issues research in sex therapy and research journals can only enhance therapist's knowledge base and provide therapists with more information and guidance in treating their clients. The inclusion of such variables, which have been demonstrated to be worthy variables of study, would ultimately move sex therapy and research journals towards providing information to clinicians in the sex therapy field with a more comprehensive treatment strategy and understanding of attachment and sexual systems.

Appendix 1. *Fourth-order Sort Articles*

Author	Title	Year	Journal	Abstract
Birnbaum & Reis	Women's sexual working models: An evolutionary-attachment perspective.	2006	<i>Journal of Sex Research</i>	In three studies, we developed and validated a self-report measure of women's sexual working models. In a pilot study we created an initial version of the Women's Sexual Working Models Scale (WSWMS), administered it to an exploratory sample of 470 women, and identified its 5-factor structure. Study 1 confirmed the 5-factor structure in a new sample: (1) Fostering commitment; (2) Evaluating a sexual partner's suitability; (3) Promoting frequent sexual activity through positive affect; (4) Restricting sexuality through shamefulness; and (5) Negative emotions that signal incompatibility with relationship goals. In Study 2, 444 Israeli women completed the WSWMS. Confirmatory factor analysis provided cross-national evidence for the generalizability of the underlying factor structure of the WSWMS
Bisson & Levine	Negotiating a friends with benefits relationship.	2009	<i>Archives of Sexual Behavior</i>	Friends with benefits (FWB) refers to "friends" who have sex. Study 1 (N = 125) investigated the prevalence of these relationships and why individuals engaged in this relationship. Results indicated that 60% of the individuals surveyed have had this type of relationship, that a common concern was that sex might complicate friendships by bringing forth unreciprocated desires for romantic commitment, and ironically that these relationships were desirable because they incorporated trust and comfort while avoiding romantic commitment. Study 2 (N = 90) assessed the relational negotiation strategies used by participants in these relationships. The results indicated that people in FWB relationships most often avoided explicit relational negotiation. Thus, although common, FWB relationships are often problematic for the same reasons that they are attractive.

Bouchard, Godbout, & Sabourin	Sexual attitudes and activities in women with borderline personality disorder involved in romantic relationships.	2009	<i>Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy</i>	Women with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) are prone to have sexual relationship difficulties and dysfunctional attitudes toward sexuality. A sample of 34 heterosexual couples composed of women meeting BPD criteria was compared to a sample of dating or married women from the general population. A short form of the Sexual Activities and Attitudes Questionnaire (SAAQ) was used to measure six types of sexual attitudes. Women diagnosed with BPD did not differ from controls on the frequency of three types of sexual activities in the last year but their subjective sexual experiences differed: they showed stronger negative attitudes, felt sexually pressured by their partners, and expressed ambivalence toward sexuality. Regression analyses suggest that anxious attachment mediates the association between BPD and feeling pressured to engage in sex.
Brotto, Knudson, Inskip, Rhodes, & Erskine	Asexuality: A mixed-methods approach.	2010	<i>Archives of Sexual Behavior</i>	Current definitions of asexuality focus on sexual attraction, sexual behavior, and lack of sexual orientation or sexual excitation; however, the extent to which these definitions are accepted by self-identified asexuals is unknown. The goal of Study 1 was to examine relationship characteristics, frequency of sexual behaviors, sexual difficulties and distress, psychopathology, interpersonal functioning, and alexithymia in 187 asexuals recruited from the Asexuality Visibility and Education Network (AVEN). Asexual men (n = 54) and women (n = 133) completed validated questionnaires online. Sexual response was lower than normative data and was not experienced as distressing, and masturbation frequency in males was similar to available data for

				<p>sexual men. Social withdrawal was the most elevated personality subscale; however, interpersonal functioning was in the normal range. Alexithymia was elevated in 12%. Social desirability was also in the normal range. Study 2 was designed to expand upon these quantitative findings with 15 asexuals from Study 1 through in-depth telephone interviews. The findings suggest that asexuality is best conceptualized as a lack of sexual attraction; however, asexuals varied greatly in their experience of sexual response and behavior. Asexuals partnered with sexuals acknowledged having to "negotiate" sexual activity. There were not higher rates of psychopathology among asexuals; however, a subset might fit the criteria for Schizoid Personality Disorder. There was also strong opposition to viewing asexuality as an extreme case of sexual desire disorder. Finally, asexuals were very motivated to liaise with sex researchers to further the scientific study of asexuality.</p>
De La Rosa, Dillon, Rojas, Schwartz, & Duan	Latina mother-daughter dyads : Relations between attachment and sexual behavior under the influence of alcohol or drugs.	2009	<i>Archives of Sexual Behavior</i>	<p>Associations among mother-daughter attachment, mother and daughter substance abuse, and daughter's sexual behavior under the influence of drugs and alcohol were investigated among 158 adult U.S. Latina daughters. Latina daughters were sampled from four mother-daughter dyad types: substance abusing mother and daughter, substance abusing mother only, substance abusing daughter only, and nonsubstance-abusing mother and daughter. Substance abusing daughters with substance abusing mothers, and daughters who were less strongly attached to their mothers, reported more sex under the influence of drugs. Age, marital status, substance abuse, and mother's substance abuse all influenced the daughter's</p>

				sex under the influence of alcohol. An unexpected positive association between attachment and sex under the influence of alcohol was found for daughters who were more closely attached to a substance abusing mother. Implications for future research, and HIV/AIDS and drug prevention and treatment programs for Latinas are discussed.
Lawrence	Clinical and theoretical parallels between desire for limb amputation and gender identity disorder.	2006	<i>Archives of Sexual Behavior</i>	Desire for amputation of a healthy limb has usually been regarded as a paraphilia (apotemnophilia), but some researchers propose that it may be a disorder of identity, similar to Gender Identity Disorder (GID) or transsexualism. Similarities between the desire for limb amputation and nonhomosexual male-to-female (MtF) transsexualism include profound dissatisfaction with embodiment, related paraphilias from which the conditions plausibly derive (apotemnophilia and autogynephilia), sexual arousal from simulation of the sought-after status (pretending to be an amputee and transvestism), attraction to persons with the same body type one wants to acquire, and an elevated prevalence of other paraphilic interests. K. Freund and R. Blanchard (1993) proposed that nonhomosexual MtF transsexualism represents an erotic target location error, in which men whose preferred erotic targets are women also eroticize their own feminized bodies. Desire for limb amputation may also reflect an erotic target location error, occurring in combination with an unusual erotic target preference for amputees. This model predicts that persons who desire limb amputation would almost always be attracted to amputees and would display an increased prevalence of gender identity problems, both of which have been observed.

				Persons who desire limb amputation and nonhomosexual MtF transsexuals often assert that their motives for wanting to change their bodies reflect issues of identity rather than sexuality, but because erotic/romantic orientations contribute significantly to identity, such distinctions may not be meaningful. Experience with nonhomosexual MtF transsexualism suggests possible directions for research and treatment for persons who desire limb amputation.
Owen, Rhoades, Stanley, & Fincham	"Hooking up" among college students: Demographic and psychosocial correlates.	2010	<i>Archives of Sexual Behavior</i>	This study investigated 832 college students' experiences with hooking up, a term that refers to a range of physically intimate behavior (e.g., passionate kissing, oral sex, and intercourse) that occurs outside of a committed relationship. Specifically, we examined how five demographic variables (sex, ethnicity, parental income, parental divorce, and religiosity) and six psychosocial factors (e.g., attachment styles, alcohol use, psychological well-being, attitudes about hooking up, and perceptions of the family environment) related to whether individuals had hooked up in the past year. Results showed that similar proportions of men and women had hooked up but students of color were less likely to hook up than Caucasian students. More alcohol use, more favorable attitudes toward hooking up, and higher parental income were associated with a higher likelihood of having hooked up at least once in the past year. Positive, ambivalent, and negative emotional reactions to the hooking up experience(s) were also examined. Women were less likely to report that hooking up was a positive emotional experience than men. Young adults who reported negative and ambivalent emotional reactions to hooking up also reported

				<p>lower psychological well-being and less favorable attitudes toward hooking up as compared to students who reported a positive hooking up experience. Based on these findings, suggestions for psychoeducational programming are offered. Additionally, directions for future research are provided.</p>
Strachman & Impett	Attachment orientations and daily condom use in dating relationships.	2009	<i>Journal of Sex Research</i>	<p>This daily experience study examined the roles of attachment orientations and daily relationship satisfaction in shaping daily condom use among college students in dating relationships. Seventy-five participants completed an initial measure of attachment orientation and then reported their relationship satisfaction and condom use each day for 14 consecutive days. The results showed that attachment anxiety was associated with less frequent use of condoms on a daily basis. Daily satisfaction was also associated with a decreased likelihood of using condoms, and this association was stronger for those high in attachment anxiety and mitigated for participants high in attachment avoidance. The associations between attachment orientations and daily condom use remained significant when controlling for important covariates including participant gender, use of another form of birth control, frequency of sex, and knowledge of a partner's sexual history. Implications for sexual risk-taking behaviors and future research using daily diary methods to study sexuality in intimate relationships are discussed.</p>
Toates	An integrative theoretical framework for understanding sexual motivation, arousal, and behavior.	2009	<i>Journal of Sex Research</i>	<p>An integrative theoretical framework and model for understanding sexual motivation, arousal, and behavior is presented, combining the principles of incentive motivation theory and the hierarchical control of behavior. It is intended to</p>

			<p>stimulate discussion. The framework can serve as a ``route map'' in understanding the links between different component processes and their interactions, as well as the relations between different academic perspectives on understanding sexuality. It is suggested that both excitation and inhibition of sexual motivation, arousal, and behavior act at various levels in a hierarchical structure, and much confusion can be avoided by distinguishing these levels. The model integrates information from different branches of psychology: biological, evolutionary, clinical, cognitive, developmental, and social. It describes interactions between sexual behavior and anxiety, attachment, aggression, and drug taking; and it is applied to gender differences, evolutionary psychology, sexual deviancy, sexual addiction, and the biological bases of sexuality.</p>
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Vita

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Kathryn Zambrano Devis

Degrees:

Bachelor of Arts, Psychology, Summa Cum Laude, 2008
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Publications:

- Devis, K. Z.**, Kolhoss, B. L., & Papaj, A. K. (in review). A reckless journey of transformation: Movie review of Black Swan. *Feminist Family Therapy*.
- Thompson, K. L., **Devis, K. Z.**, & Louder, M. A. (in press). Intervention exchange - Roving reporter. *Journal of Family Psychotherapy*.
- Tincani, M. & **Devis, K. Z.** (2011). Quantitative Synthesis and Component Analysis of Single-Participant Studies on the Picture Exchange Communication System. *Remedial and Special Education, 32*(6), 458-570. doi: 10.1177/0741932510362494

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Thesis Examination Committee:

Major Professor, Markie L. C. Blumer, Ph. D.
Committee Member, Gerald Weeks, Ph. D.
Committee Member, Katherine Hertlein, Ph. D.
Graduate Faculty Representative, Larry Ashley, Ed. S.