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Date

Attachment Style and Values in Young Adult Friendships

by

Jacqueline C. Larson

Adviser

Nancy G. Bliwise, Ph. D

Department of Psychology

_____
Nancy G. Bliwise, Ph. D
Adviser

_____
Drew Westen, Ph. D
Committee Member

_____
Richard Williamon, Ph. D
Committee Member

___4/16/10___

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Adviser

Nancy G. Bliwise, Ph. D

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Abstract

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Past research indicates that close friendships are crucial for psychosocial health and well-being. To better understand these important young adult relationships, this study examined young adult friendships in the context of attachment theory and value similarity. Fifty friend pairs were surveyed on their values, attachment style, and friendship quality. Results indicated that generally perceived, but not actual, value similarity is important for maintaining low conflict and high depth within friendships. Friendship quality generally did not differ by attachment style, but there were two interactions suggesting that attachment style moderates the relationship between value similarity and friendship quality. This study concluded that perceived value similarity is important for high-quality friendships, and that although friendships typically are not attachment relationships, attachment style may still impact friendship functioning.

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Young adulthood is a time of great developmental significance, during which people must tackle two primary tasks that will greatly affect their subsequent life course: finding a mate and finding a vocation (Arnett, 2007). This is particularly true of college students, who often are fortunate enough to possess the resources to explore various life options before selecting their paths. Developmental psychology research suggests that people expand their social networks during this period of flux in which they explore their relationship and occupational options, and then begin contracting their social networks upon the selection of a life partner and career (Fischer, Sollie, Sorell, & Green, 1989). Therefore, young adulthood may be a time during which positive peer relationships are critical to optimal development. Since research shows that having good friends supports positive outcomes across normative transitions (Hartup, 1996), it seems likely that the quality of these friendships has important implications for developmental success.

Research shows that close friendships in emerging adulthood are often marked by mutual intimacy and social support, two particularly crucial characteristics during this time of self-definition. While parents still clearly play an important role in their child's development throughout his/her life, peer relationships are a topic of special research interest during this unique period because of their more symmetrical nature, a hallmark of an adult attachment (Weiss, 1982). Research suggest that college friendships may be more intimate, less conflictual, and more egalitarian than a student's relationship with either his/her mother or father (Noack & Buhl, 2004), and that friends foster self-esteem, a sense of well-being and support throughout life transitions (Hartup & Stevens, 1999). During this period in which many emerging adults have left the parental home but have not yet selected a romantic partner (Arnett, 2007), long-term, close friendships may fulfill

certain attachment functions, such as safe haven and proximity seeking, serving as full or partial attachment relationships (Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997).

Following the seminal work of preeminent attachment theorist John Bowlby in 1973, a large body of attachment theory and research has emerged. Attachment style is defined generally as a person's enduring relationship pattern, and an attachment relationship is a close, affectional bond that influences how a person experiences the world (Bowlby, 1973, i.e. Ainsworth, 1989, Main, 1985). Bowlby initiated a perspective in psychology that views close relationships and relationship style as among the most influential factors in humans' lives. Bowlby regarded attachment as a lifelong concept that affects people from the "cradle to the grave," but most attachment research has primarily focused on attachment in infancy and childhood. Adult attachment research has focused on adult romantic relationships, leaving largely unexplored the realm of the relationship between attachment style and friendships.

The first attachment that individuals form is to their primary caregiver in infancy. This relationship possesses great evolutionary value, being formed out of the child's need for safety, security, and protection to survive. The security of this attachment between infant and caregiver depends on several characteristics of the relationship, including: (1) the caregiver adequately and consistently serves as a safe haven from threats and a secure base from which to explore and (2) the child seeks proximity to the caregiver and resists separation. Bowlby believed that the security or insecurity of the initial bond between infant and caregiver defines that relationship, and also serves as a blueprint for future relationships (Waters, Weinfield, & Hamilton, 2000).

Adult attachment style is a concept that is related, but not reducible, to attachment style in infancy and childhood, and focuses less on affectional bonds' adaptive value than on their implications for psychosocial health. Adult attachment style is marked by individuals' internal working models of the self and others in interpersonal relationships (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). These internal working models first develop in infancy during experiences with the caregiver, and they are later influenced by childhood experiences with peers, parents, and other adults (Bowlby, 1973). Internal working models are concerned with expectations about close relationships and include positive or negative global evaluations of the self and others; they may or may not show complete continuity throughout the lifespan (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). For example, if an individual experienced neglectful parenting throughout infancy and childhood, it is likely that the child will learn to avoid proximity to and intimacy with the parent, which may translate to how he/she behaves with others. If the young child develops a mental representation that only the self, not others, can be trusted or relied upon, and that representation is confirmed throughout childhood and adolescence, then that individual will likely display a dismissing attachment style as an adult. This attachment style characterized by a negative evaluation of others, a positive evaluation of the self, high avoidance of relationships, and low desire for relationships would have clear roots in childhood, but is certainly not the only possible outcome. Numerous social, emotional, psychological, and biological factors affect whether adult attachment style completely reflects infant attachment style, but regardless of continuity, attachment style has important implications at all ages (Scharfe & Bartholomew, 1994).

Past research that has studied attachment as a lifelong concept has primarily focused on attachment in the context of adult romantic relationships (i.e. Hazan & Shaver, 1994; Hazan & Zeifman, 1994). While this research has been valuable in expanding the adult attachment literature, it has left open for study the possibly important topic of close friendships as attachment relationships. The research on adult attachment indicates that the primary difference between infant and adult attachment is one of complementarity versus symmetry: while attachment relationships in infancy are complementary or asymmetrical, having been formed out of the infant's need for security from an attachment figure, attachments in adulthood are marked by mutuality and symmetry, with both members giving and receiving care (Weiss, 1982). In childhood, only the child's attachment system is activated; in adulthood, both parties' attachment systems are engaged, with each person functioning as an attachment figure and recipient (Hazan & Zeifman, 1994).

Since research on nonromantic peer relationships has consistently shown that young adulthood is a developmental period in which close friendships are vital and ubiquitous, it is plausible that close, long-term friendships serve as attachment relationships during that period, or longer, if an individual remains single (Peterson, 2006). However, all close friendships are not created equal; from an attachment perspective, some are marked by insecure, less-adaptive relationship styles that likely affect the quality of the friendship. In an attempt to advance attachment and friendship research, this study will examine friendships as attachment relationships in young adults and investigate the effects of different attachment styles on friendship satisfaction.

Additionally, this study aims to incorporate the study of values, or what people believe to be guiding principles and important goals in their life, in the examination of friendships as attachment relationships. Previous research has shown that values may play an important role in the selection of intimate friends, such as those of the young adult friendships being studied (Rokeach, 1973). Past research indicates that often, people are attracted to and associate with others based on similarity of characteristics, including values (Lea & Duck, 1982; Lee, Ashton, Pozzebon et al., 2009). Some research indicates that friends are drawn together based on actual similarity of values, particularly when those values are uncommon or unique (Lea & Duck, 1982). However, other research indicates that perceived similarity of values with other people, rather than actual similarity, may actually be sufficient for affiliation (Lee et al., 2009). Since there is not consensus regarding the relative importance of actual versus perceived value similarity, the present study will examine both, surveying each participant on their values and their friend's perceived values, and investigate any relationship of value similarity to friendship quality.

Friendship as an Attachment

It appears that this study is unique in its approach to values and attachment friendships, but that there are several relevant, related studies that are important to review. While no studies to date were found that examined attachment and values in friendship pairs, some research that has asked whether friendships are important attachments in adulthood. As people move into adulthood, they retain significant relationships from childhood and also add new relationships. These additions can be close friendships, romantic relationships, or relationships with co-workers. Literature is

mixed regarding whether friendships can be attachment relationships, but since attachment as an organization appears to be "integrally related to a range of domains in psychosocial functioning," reflecting "core aspects of the way adolescents process affect in social relationships," it is worthwhile to investigate the possibility that friendships can, under certain circumstances, function as attachment relationships (Allen et al., 1998)

Hazan and Zeifman (1994) attempted to establish a hierarchy of adult attachments based on how well different relationships fulfill the four attachment functions: proximity seeking, separation protest, safe haven, and secure base. In their study of 120 participants ranging in age from 18 to 82, they interviewed participants with a measure designed to assess the four components of attachment. For each question, participants were asked to respond with only a single individual, and questions included, "Who do you turn to for comfort when you're upset?" and "Who do you feel you can always count on?" Participants were divided into three groups according to relationship status: not in a romantic relationship, in a 0-2 year relationship, in a 2+ year relationship. Results indicated that nearly all of the participants in a 2+ year relationship, and about a third of participants in a 0-2 year relationship, cited their partner as fulfilling all four attachment functions. However, participants not in a romantic relationship most often cited a friend as their primary figure for the attachment functions of proximity seeking and safe haven and equal to a parent or sibling (they were grouped together) for separation protest.

Although these results led Hazan and Zeifman to conclude that a "full blown" adult attachment is almost always with a sexual partner, or a parent, if one does not have an established romantic relationship, there may be methodological issues at play. While Hazan and Zeifman (1994) acknowledge that multiple attachments exist and seem to be

on some kind of hierarchy, and intended to study attachment as such, their methodology did not lend itself to the development of an attachment hierarchy. By asking participants to name only one person for each question, they created a focus on each subjects' primary attachment, not allowing for less dominant or developing attachments to be portrayed. It is possible that a romantic partner was indeed the preferred attachment figure for these adults, but that there was a good friend who was a close second on many questions, whom they were not permitted to name.

Moreover, it is likely that because of the great age range of Hazan and Zeifman's community study, many of the people in their sample were experiencing a markedly different developmental stage than the young adults in the current study. While they did not include a mean participant age or descriptive statistics on each relationship category, we expect that the emerging adults in our study will be less likely to be in established long-term relationships, more dependent on friends, and thus more likely to include peers in their attachments.

Another aspect of Hazan and Zeifman's study addresses Weiss' assertion that the development of reciprocal attachments occurs by function. Weiss states that attachments transfer from parents to peers in the follow order: proximity seeking, safe haven, separation protest, and secure base (1982). By age three, children show proximity seeking to peers. Beginning in middle childhood, children begin developing intimate peer relationships, and by late adolescence, peers are typically their safe haven of choice. By adulthood, a long-term romantic partner typically becomes an adult's "secure base", or primary attachment figure, and fulfills all four attachment functions. Hazan and Zeifman contend that development of specific adult attachments follows the same formation

trajectory of attachment components overall. By using a cross-sectional sample, they were able to discern that attachment relationships do indeed appear to develop function by function, in the order of: proximity seeking, safe haven, separation protest, and secure base (Hazan & Zeifman, 1994).

Trinke and Bartholomew (1997) also attempted to construct an "attachment hierarchy" across different types of relationships. They surveyed 240 college students of mean age 21.2 years (*SD* = 4.21) using a measure called the Attachment Network Questionnaire (ANQ) that was developed for this study. The ANQ asked participants to first name all the significant people in their life, regardless of whether those ties were positive, negative, or mixed. Participants provided demographic information regarding each of the people on their list, and then ranked them in the order which they would use them or like to use them for various attachment functions. Thus, Trinke and Bartholomew were able to assess both secure and insecure attachments and the degree to which each one was utilized.

Trinke and Bartholomew found that young adults have, on average, 5.38 attachment figures in their hierarchy, consisting of family members, romantic partners and friends. While almost all subjects in a romantic relationship rated their partner as an attachment relationship, 77% of those subjects also identified a best friend as an attachment figure, a number which rises to 84% when only considering females, and outranks fathers, who were rated attachment figures by only 66% of participants. Additionally, 22% of subjects not in relationships judged their best friend to be their *primary* attachment, highlighting the especially important role that close friends may play for single young adults. While this study does not have the advantage of one-on-one

interviews that allow follow-up questions about the relationships being described, this disadvantage is tempered by the power of its large sample size, made possible by using the more expedient measure of a questionnaire. By expanding the study of attachment to view attachment as not only a single prominent relationship, as it is defined in other studies, but a group of several important relationships, Trinke and Bartholomew uncovered that, for young adults, several types of relationships can serve as attachment relationships (1997).

Values in Friendship

Unlike children, adults choose their important attachments and relationship partners, with one definition of friendship being voluntary association and affective ties with another person (Veroff, 1995). Because of the choice afforded by adult relationships, much research has focused on what factors encourage people to develop and maintain friendships. One consistent finding is that similarity is associated with liking and affiliation, with one particular type of similarity being value similarity (Baron, Byrne, & Branscombe, 2006). Generally, a value is defined as an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable (Rokeach, 1973). In the present study, we will evaluate value similarity using both two types of values identified by preeminent values theorist Milton Rokeach: terminal and instrumental. Terminal values are defined as ideal end states of existence, and instrumental values are defined as ideal modes of behavior (Rokeach, 1973).

In a cross-sectional study of the role of value similarity in friendship development, Lea and Duck found that there was significantly greater similarity of values between friends than non-friends at friendship lengths of 1-2 months, 4-6 months, and

12+ months (Lea & Duck, 1982). At all stages of relationship development, friends were significantly more similar than non-friends in their "uncommon value similarity," with uncommon value similarity being defined as sharing a value that was found to be uncommon among a given population, i.e. being a devout Catholic in a predominately Jewish community. However, friends were typically not more similar in the values about which they were neutral or rejected. This study shows that people who become friends are significantly more likely to endorse similar values, particularly when those values are hard to find. These findings suggest that this value similarity may serve as validation or social support, but this hypothesis was not tested. This study has the advantage of a cross-sectional analysis, in order to address friendships at several stages, but the disadvantage of limited differentiation among longer-term friendships (i.e. friendships of 12+ months). Nevertheless, this study substantiates the commonly held notion that friendships can be built around endorsed values, while revealing the less obvious finding that friendships are not usually built around rejected values. Thus, the present study will only study value similarity as those shared values that are important to both friends.

In another study of college students' values, Lee, Ashton, Pozzebon and colleagues (2009) found that friends overestimated their degree of similarity in their personality characteristics and values. That is, Lee and colleagues (2009) found that perceived similarity was consistently greater than actual similarity. However, results indicated that this falsely high perceived similarity typically occurred for characteristics that were named as central or very important to the individual, perhaps in order to serve as a sort of social affirmation. According to Lee et al. and significant for the present study, values are an important part of people's social relationships: people tend to assume

that their values are shared by those with whom they have close relationships and tend to develop relationships with those whose values are similar to their own. Although this study is limited in that it primarily examined personality characteristics, not values, the characteristics with the greatest assumed similarity between friends– "honesty-humility" and "openness to experience"– are those which corresponded most strongly to personal values. Moreover, an advantage of this study was that it compared actual versus perceived similarity. By doing so, they discovered that assumed similarity is typically greater, particularly for central character traits relevant to their social values system (Lee et al., 2009).

Lee and colleagues' (2009) findings follow from research by Curry and Kenny (1974) indicating that perceived similarity of values is almost always greater than actual similarity of values, particularly when people are good friends. They found that greater perceived similarity may be more important for interpersonal attraction and relationships because as time progresses, friends perceive their similarity to be greater, even if it is not. Because people are most accurate in their perceptions of similarity as acquaintances, not friends, it follows that perceived similarity may be more important for continued friendship quality than actual similarity.

The results from Lee and colleagues' study indicate that friends share more values than non-friends, and that this value similarity increases with increasing friendship intimacy, as well as that friends may even overestimate their value similarity on central characteristics (Lee et al., 2009). These findings, combined with the results from the study by Lea and Duck (1982) showing that people may seek friends who share their values, particularly when those values are uncommon, lend support to the current study's

first hypothesis that friend pairs with higher value similarity will show higher levels of friendship satisfaction, perhaps due to the more supportive nature of that close relationship.

Attachment Style and Friendship Quality

The present study used the four-category model of attachment styles proposed by Bartholomew and Horowitz in 1991 that has been subsequently validated in many studies (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). This model of attachment defines four attachment styles, with one secure type and three insecure types: preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful. Attachment style is marked by an individual's internal working model of the self and the other; that is, whether people have positive or negative global evaluations and expectations of themselves and others in social relationships. Alternately, attachment style can also be defined by a person's position on two orthogonal dimensions: anxiety or dependence regarding relationships and avoidance of relationships. A secure attachment style is defined by a generally positive view of the self and others in relationships, or low anxiety and low avoidance. People with secure attachment styles are comfortable with and desiring of intimacy, but are not anxious about acquiring it. A preoccupied attachment style is defined by a generally negative view of the self and positive view of others, or alternately, high anxiety about and low avoidance of relationships. A prototype of this would be a person who constantly seeks intimacy and is very uncomfortable without close relationships, and uses close relationships to maintain positive self-regard. A dismissing attachment style is defined by a generally positive view of the self and negative view of others, and low anxiety and high avoidance. A person characterized by a dismissing attachment style may appear cold or overly-independent and not desiring of

intimate relationships, in order to maintain positive self-regard. A fearful attachment style is defined by a generally negative view of the self and others, or high anxiety about and high avoidance of relationships. A prototype of this would be a person who desires intimacy but is simultaneously afraid of it, due to concern about eventual disappointment.

Several studies have investigated the effect of individuals' attachment styles on the quality of their friendships. In a study of college students, Bender (1999) found differences in friendship quality between students with a secure versus insecure attachment style. Friends of securely attached participants reported more intimacy in their friendships than did friends of insecurely attached participants. Additionally, self-reports revealed that securely attached participants were more adept at conflict resolution with their friends than were their insecure counterparts, and that secure participants reported feeling closer in their friendships as a result of this ability. Accordingly, insecure participants were more hostile and anxious according to both self- and friend-reports.

These findings show that there are often differences in friendship quality according to differences in attachment style and point to some of the possible mechanisms affecting friendship satisfaction that may function in tandem with attachment style. Moreover, this study highlights the importance of using both self- and friend-reports, since it seems that friends may sometimes more accurately perceive friendship differences than participants themselves. Therefore, the current study will employ both self- and friend-reports of friendship quality. Despite the strengths of Bender's study, she did not employ the four-category model of attachment, instead focusing on the secure–insecure distinction, which may not have allowed specific differences in the friendship quality based on type of insecure attachment to fully emerge.

Because of this limitation, in the current study, we will differentiate among insecure attachment styles to allow any possible differences to be revealed.

Another study on attachments style and friendship quality by Grabill and Kerns (2000) employed both self-report measures and laboratory observation. In the first of their two studies, 600 participants, ranging in age from 17 to 21 years, were administered questionnaires measuring attachment style and intimacy. Three components of intimacy were measured: self disclosure, responsiveness to others, and feelings of being understood, validated, and cared for. Results indicated that the secure participants rated higher than nonsecure participants on all three measures of intimacy. These findings are similar to those of Saferstein, Neimeyer and Hagans, who found that securely attached participants showed higher levels of transcending problems and lower levels of conflict within friendships and that avoidant participants showed higher levels of conflict and lower levels of companionship (2005).

In the second part of Grabill and Kerns' study, they observed 127 friend pairs in a laboratory setting, asking them to discuss something of meaning or importance after an initial warm-up conversation period. Results indicated that self-reported attachment style correlated with self-reported feelings of intimacy in the friendship, with secure participants reporting more validation, understanding, caring, and responsiveness during the interaction. Observational reports showed few significant effects; however, raters did perceive fearful participants and preoccupied men as actually more disclosing of intimate information (Grabill & Kerns, 2000). Overall, however, findings indicated that attachment security enhances intimacy and validation within friendships. Taken together,

these studies suggest that attachment style is related to one's capacity for high-quality, close friendships.

In their study of autonomy support in close friendships, Deci, La Guardia, Moller, and colleagues found that both giving and receiving autonomy support was positively associated with measures of friendship quality and overall well-being (2006). Autonomy support, defined as "one relational partner acknowledging the other's perspective, providing choice, encouraging self-initiation and being responsive to the other," was positively associated with higher friendship quality and need satisfaction, as indicated by attachment security, emotional reliance, dyadic adjustment, and overall psychological health. While the focus of this study was on autonomy support in symmetrical relationships, it further illuminates the importance of close, supportive friendships and demonstrates that attachment style within a friendship correlates with other measures of friendship quality (Deci et al., 2006).

Although several studies have shown that attachment style has implications for friendship quality, not all studies have found that. In a study of 116 college students by Shieh (2000), it was found that adult attachment style was significantly related to aspects of romantic relationship quality, but not to friendship quality. This study used the Adult Attachment Style Scale (Hazan & Shaver, 1987), in which participants choose one of three paragraphs to best describe their interpersonal style; the use of only a single item to determine attachment style was likely a limitation of this study. Nevertheless, this finding demonstrates that thus far, the literature relating adult attachment style to friendship quality is mixed, but with more studies than not supporting a relationship between attachment style and friendship quality.

Statement of the Problem and Hypotheses

Based on the existence of and differences between these four attachment prototypes, we propose that there may be differences in the friendship quality and in the correlation between value similarity and friendship quality for people of different attachment styles. Prior research indicates that several different characteristics of a friendship, including social support, conflict, and depth, influence its quality, and that in order to gain an accurate picture of overall friendship quality, researchers must assess both positive and negative aspects (Pierce, Sarason, & Sarason 1990). Therefore, we will use a friendship quality measure that includes these three aspects of friendship. The first aspect, social support, is defined as the degree to which a person feels they may rely on the other person for assistance in a variety of situations. Conflict is defined as the degree to which a person experiences angry or ambivalent emotions toward his/her friend. The third aspect, depth, is defined as the extent to which individuals believe that they and their friend value the relationship and are committed to it (Pierce, Sarason, & Sarason 1990).

Research on the four dominant attachment styles suggests that people with different attachment styles experience these three aspects of friendship differently. Based on attachment theory and these research findings, we hypothesized that people with dismissing attachment styles would report significantly less social support in their close friendships, since people of that style generally do not wish to seek support from others. Their interactions are characterized by lower intimacy, less self-disclosure, low emotional expressiveness, and less use of others as a secure base than the other attachment styles (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). We predicted that for conflict, people classified with a

preoccupied attachment style would report more conflict than people of all other attachment styles, since research shows that preoccupied people report higher self-disclosure, high levels of emotional expressiveness, greater frequency of crying, and more reliance upon others, as well as lower self confidence and coherence. Since people with preoccupied attachment styles depend very heavily upon others to maintain positive self regard and experience heightened emotionality, we expected that they would report more conflict than people of the other attachment styles (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). We also predicted that reported depth of friendships would differ by the extent to which people of different attachment styles value relationships, and that depth would be ranked from highest to lowest in the order of secure, preoccupied, fearful, and dismissing. We expected people of secure and preoccupied styles to experience the most depth since those styles are characterized by low avoidance of intimacy, and we expected people of fearful and dismissing styles to experience the least depth since those styles are characterized by high avoidance of intimacy (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). We used these same predicted differences in friendship functioning based on attachment in our study of value similarity and friendship quality.

We also anticipated that attachment style differences may affect the extent to which value similarity is important for friendship quality. For people with a preoccupied style, we predicted that value similarity would correlate very strongly with friendship quality measures since people of an anxious style seek external validation and often rely heavily on others for approval. Conversely, we hypothesized that for people with a dismissing style, value similarity would correlate less strongly with friendship quality since they are less likely to use others to as a secure base or to maintain a positive view of

themselves, and thus would not need social confirmation of the validity of their values. We believed that due to the more independent, self-confident nature of these individuals, value similarity would be less of a determining factor in friendship satisfaction. For people of a secure attachment style, we hypothesized a positive correlation between value similarity and friendship quality that likely would lie between the correlations for preoccupied and dismissing. It was unclear what the relationship for people of a fearful style would be, since they rate low on self disclosure, intimacy, and use of others as a secure base, but also low on self-confidence (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Since secure attachment constitutes the majority of people, we believed that the literature moderately relating similarity of values and quality of friendship would generally apply.

Both developmental theory and attachment research suggest that close friendships among young adults may be significant attachment relationships. These relationships may form out of shared values and the quality of the friendships may be influenced by partners' attachment styles. Based on previous research, we studied close college friendships as attachment relationships, and formed the following hypotheses: (1) For friendship quality, social support is lower for people of the dismissing style than all other styles, conflict is greater for those of the preoccupied style than all others, and depth is less for those of dismissing and fearful styles and greater for those of secure and preoccupied styles; (2) Greater perceived and actual value similarity predict higher friendship quality, and this relationship varies by attachment style. Although values seem to play an important role in friendship development and maintenance for all people, we anticipate that differences in relationship functioning based on attachment style may

affect the degree to which value similarity predicts of friendship quality for certain attachment styles more than others.

This study moves research on friendship and adult attachment relationships in a new direction by incorporating the study of values and the role that value similarity may play in attachment relationships. Since satisfying friendships are paramount to well-being and adjustment in both college and life, studying the attributes of successful and less-successful friendships provides useful insight and knowledge for young adults and college counselors, while advancing the study of attachment as a lifelong concept.

Method

Participants

One hundred college undergraduates (54 females and 44 males) participated in this study. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 25, with a mean age of 20.97 (*SD* = .85). We intended to sample only college juniors and seniors, as it was expected that they were more likely than underclassmen to have formed close friendships characterizable as attachment relationships. Two participants nominated close friends that were not juniors or seniors, but since these friend pairs both reported friendship closeness of 5 or above on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (*not that close*) to 7 (*extremely close*) they were included in the study. Participants were accepted into the study in best/close friend pairs; thus the sample was comprised of 50 best friend pairs, however, three pairs were excluded because of one friend reporting only a 2 on the closeness scale, bringing the total pairs studied to 47. Thus, the final sample was 94, with 42.6% male and 57.4% female. The race and ethnicity of the sample was 55.4% Caucasian, 18.5% Asian, 12.0% African-American, 5.4% Hispanic, and 8.7% other. The majority of participants sampled were not

currently in a romantic relationship, with 29.79% of participants being in a relationship, with mean relationship length being 1.87 years (*SD* = 1.60).

Procedure

Participants were recruited face-to-face at randomly selected upper-class residence halls at a moderate-size, private, southeastern university. The investigator knocked on doors and began a recruitment script that was terminated if, at any point, the potential participant expressed disinterest. If the student expressed interest and could provide the name and contact information of a best/close friend who might like to participate in the study, then the investigator thanked the student and contacted the friend. If both friends in the pair agreed to participate, then the two students were entered in the study. All participants were emailed an online link to a consent form, followed by a confidential survey regarding their friendship, attachment style, and values. Friends were asked to complete the survey separately, but entered a confidential code provided by the investigator so that their responses could be linked to those of their friend. Following completion of the online survey, participants were directed to another online link where they could provide their contact information in order to receive their $5 compensation via campus mail. This form was completely separate from their survey responses so that they could not be linked. Participants completed the entire survey online but were given contact information for the student investigator and her faculty advisor, should they want to contact either of them with any questions or concerns about the study.

Measures

This study was conducted using an online, confidential survey. Three standardized instruments addressing attachment style, value similarity, and friendship

quality were used: (1) the Rokeach Values Survey (RVS) (Rokeach, 1973); (2) the Relationship Questionnaire (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991); and (3) the Quality of Relationship Inventory (QRI)-Friendship (Pierce, Sarason, & Sarason, 1991). All measures had been previously used with college students, and demographic information was also collected, in addition to these measures. Participants were also asked to report the length of their friendship and to rate how close they felt to their friend on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not that close*) to 7 (*extremely close*).

The RVS asks participants to rank, in order of importance, a list of 18 instrumental and 18 terminal values (Rokeach, 1973). Instrumental values were defined as extrinsic or contributory – attributes or behaviors that are valued as a means of achieving something else. Instrumental values include being "independent," "loving" or "responsible." Terminal values were defined as intrinsic values or end states of existence, such as "social recognition," "equality" and "salvation." Participants were asked to complete the values survey twice – once in reference to themselves and once in reference to their best friend. Thus, both actual and perceived similarity between friends for their terminal and instrumental values were captured. Rokeach reported that test-retest reliabilities for self-reported values were .79 for terminal values and .69 for instrumental values at three weeks, and were .71 for terminal values and .61 for instrumental values at 16 months (Rokeach, 1973). Rokeach and Parker (1970) reported that the RVS possesses satisfactory concurrent validity.

Perceived value similarity was calculated using the mean of the absolute value of the difference between participants' value rankings and their perceptions of their friends' value rankings. This was done for both terminal and instrumental values, which yielded

Perceived Differences (PD) Terminal and PD Instrumental scores. These scores were used to represent similarity between friends, with lower difference scores reflecting greater similarity. Actual value similarity was calculated using the mean of absolute value of the difference between participants' self-reported value rankings and their friends' self-reported value rankings. This also was calculated for both instrumental and terminal values, yielding Actual Difference (AD) Instrumental and AD Terminal scores. Once again, these scores were used to define similarity between friends, with lower difference scores reflecting greater similarity.

The Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) is a widely-used measure of adult attachment style, and uses the four-category model of adult attachment style proposed by Bartholomew and Horowitz in 1991 that has been subsequently validated in many studies (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). This model of attachment defines four attachment styles, with one secure type – secure – and three insecure types – preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful. The RQ consists of four short paragraphs, each describing one of the attachment styles, as it applies to close relationships in general. For example, the dismissing prototype description reads, "I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me." Participants are first asked to rate on a seven-point Likert scale how well each of the four styles describes them, and then pick the one attachment style that fits them best. This method ensures that we have both a dimensional and categorical assessment of participants' relationship styles, and we can use the dimensional measure to assess the validity of the chosen categorical attachment style.

Bartholomew and Horowitz do not provide reliability and validity data on the RQ; however, ratings four attachment patterns have been found to be moderately stable over an eight-month test-retest period (Scharfe & Bartholomew, 1994). Although brief-self report measures have been found to be only moderately reliable in general, it was out of the scope of this study to conduct extensive attachment interviews. However, this two-dimensional, four category model has been found to have both convergent and discriminant validity in subsequent studies by Griffin and Bartholomew (1994).

The QRI-Friendship measures social support, conflict, and depth within the friendship –which together gave a good indication of the quality of the friendship for each participant (Pierce, Sarason, & Sarason, 1991). The QRI-Friendship is a 25-item questionnaire which allows participates to rate their agreement with the items on a four-point Likert scale. Each question was multiplied by the applicable factor loadings for the social support, conflict, and depth, yielding three subscales for friendship quality. Sample questions included, “How significant is this relationship in your life?” “How much do you depend on this person?” and “How angry does this person make you feel?” Alpha coefficients for the support, conflict and depth subscales were .89, .91, .84, respectively (Pierce, Sarason & Sarason, 1991).

Data Analytic Strategy

We had two primary hypotheses, and for each hypothesis we used planned contrasts based on theory and prior research to test attachment style characteristics. For social support, the contrast coefficients for secure, fearful, preoccupied and dismissing were 1, 1, 1, and -3, respectively. For conflict, the contrast coefficients for secure, fearful, preoccupied, and dismissing -1, -1, 3 and -1, respectively. For depth, the contrast

coefficients for secure, fearful, preoccupied, and dismissing were 2, -1, 1, and -2, respectively.

For the first hypothesis, linear regression was used, in which the predictor variable was attachment style planned contrast and the dependent variable was aspect of friendship quality. For example, for social support, the predictor variable was the social support attachment style contrast and the dependent variable was social support. Regressions were done three times, once for each aspect of friendship quality. Since participants were sampled in pairs, the effect of pair was also entered into the regression to control for any effects of subjects being nested within pairs.

For the second hypothesis, hierarchical linear regression was used, in which the predictor variables were values difference, attachment style contrast and the hypothesized interaction between values difference and attachment style contrast. This regression was done separately with the all of the values difference variables: PD Terminal, PD Instrumental, AD Terminal and AD Instrumental. The same contrasts coefficients used for attachment style in hypothesis one were used again in hypothesis two. The dependent variables were the three friendship quality measures: social support, conflict, and depth. Once again, the fact that participants were sampled in pairs was controlled for by entering "pair" as a nesting factor all regressions.

Results

Prior to hypothesis testing, it was necessary to estimate preliminary descriptive statistics in order to examine the sample. The mean length of the friendships studied was 2.99 years (*SD* = .88). The mean perceived closeness of the friendship was 5.99 (*SD* = .99) on a seven-point scale. For self-reported dominant attachment style, 50.0% of

participants were secure, 22.3% were fearful, 16.0% were preoccupied, and 9.6% were dismissing, with two participants failing to report a dominant attachment style. This distribution is not significantly different than the norms reported by Bartholomew and Horowitz, χ^2 (N = 92) = 4.29, $p > .05$, indicating that our sample was similar to the general young adult population in terms of attachment style distribution (1991).

Analyses of participants' values revealed that, in three out of four statistical tests, there were significant differences between participants' reported values versus their friends' perceptions of their values. For these analyses, paired data were analyzed using repeated measure analysis of variance, and for simplicity, we refer to the two participants in each dyad as participant A and B. Results indicated that participant A's self-ranked terminal values were significantly different than the rankings their partner, participant B, made about them, $F(11) = 2.12$, $p = .01$ (see Figure 1). Results also indicated that participant A's self-ranked instrumental values were significantly different than the rankings their partner, participant B, made about them, $F(11) = 1.94$, $p = .03$ (see Figure 2). Results also indicated that participant B's self-ranked instrumental, but not terminal, values were significantly different than the rankings their partner, participant A, made about them, $F(17) = 2.23$, $p < .01$ (see Figure 3). These significant differences between self-reported actual values and friend-report perceived values confirmed that this study had reason to include measures of both actual and perceived values differences.

For the terminal values of Participant A, the greatest differences between self- and friend-report were in comfortable life and equality, in which their friend overestimated their importance, and in health and true friendship, in which their friend underestimated the importance (see Figure 1). The greatest differences between self- and friend-report for

participant A's instrumental values were being obedient, loving, and loyal. For both loyalty and obedience, participant A valued them less than their friend perceived, and for being loving, the participant reporting valuing it more than their friend perceived (see Figure 2). For participant B's instrumental values, the greatest differences were in being open-minded, polite, and obedient. For obedience and politeness, the friend overestimated their importance to participant B, and for open-mindedness, the friend underestimated its importance to participant B (see Figure 3).

We also used cross tabulation to investigate if the attachment styles of participants in each dyad were related. Results indicated that the attachment styles of participants in each dyad did not occur randomly, with $\chi^2(46) = 16.82$, $p = .05$ (see Figure 4). Secure participants were most likely to be friends with other secure participants, and preoccupied participants were most likely to be friends with other preoccupied participants. Fearful participants were likely to be friends with secure others and fearful others. There were no dismissing-dismissing friend pairs.

The mean of the perceived differences in terminal values was 4.06 ($SD = 1.43$) and the mean of the perceived differences in instrumental values was 4.59 ($SD = 1.54$). The mean of actual differences in terminal values was 4.39 ($SD = 1.06$) and the mean of the actual differences in instrument values was 5.25 ($SD = 1.71$). The top three highest ranked self-report terminal values were family security, health, and true friendship, and the top ranked self-report instrumental values were being honest, responsible, and open-minded. The values that participants perceived as their friends' top three values were family security, true friendship, and freedom for terminal values and loyalty, honesty, responsibleness for instrumental values.

The means and standard errors of support, conflict, and depth scores by attachment style are reported in Table 1.

Test of Hypotheses

We had hypothesized the following: (1) Attachment style will predict friendship quality; (2) Value similarity will predict friendship quality, and the relationship between value similarity and friendship quality will vary by attachment style. For all analyses, an alpha level of .05 was used.

Hypothesis one. In order to test the effect of dominant attachment style on friendship quality, an analysis of variance with planned contrasts was calculated for each aspect of friendship quality. The contrast coefficients were chosen based on differences in attachment style from attachment theory described above. For social support, the contrast coefficients for secure, fearful, preoccupied and dismissing were 1, 1, 1, and -3, respectively. Although in the correct direction, this contrast was not significant. For conflict, the contrast coefficients for secure, fearful, preoccupied, and dismissing -1, -1, 3 and -1, respectively. Once again, although in the correct direction, this contrast was not significant. For depth, the contrast coefficients for secure, fearful, preoccupied, and dismissing were 2, -1, 1, and -2, respectively. This contrast (n = 93) was significant, with $\Delta R^2 = .04$, $\beta = .21$, $p < .05$, indicating that participants with a dismissing attachment style experienced less depth in their friendship followed by those with fearful, preoccupied, and secure styles.

Hypothesis two. In order to investigate the effect of value similarity between friend pairs on friendship quality, and the possibility of this effect varying by attachment style, hierarchical multiple regressions were used. Since participants were sampled in

pairs, it was necessary to control for the fact that participant and friend data were related. This was accomplished by using hierarchical regressions in which the effect of pair similarity was included as a variable in analyses. In order to test for the presence of an interaction between attachment style and value similarity on friendship quality, planned contrasts were entered into the regression using the same weights used in hypothesis one.

Social Support. There were no significant findings relating either perceived or actual value similarity to social support, and there were no significant interactions between value similarity and dominant attachment style.

Conflict. PD Terminal had a significant positive relationship to conflict within the friendship. This means that higher perceived value similarity was associated with lower conflict within the friendship. PD Instrumental also had a significant positive relationship to friendship conflict (see Table 2). There was also a trend for an interaction between attachment style contrast and conflict on PD Instrumental (see Figure 5). As shown in Table 3, AD Terminal was significantly negatively related to friendship conflict, with greater differences predicting less conflict. AD Instrumental was not significantly related to conflict and there was no interaction with attachment security.

Depth. PD Terminal was significantly negatively related to depth, meaning that greater PD in terminal values was associated with less depth within the friendship. Adding the effect of attachment style depth contrast was also significant, but there was no interaction effect. PD Instrumental also was significantly negatively related to depth, meaning that greater PD in instrumental values was related to less depth within the friendship. Adding the effect of attachment style contrast was significant (see Table 4). As shown in Table 5, although AD Terminal was not significantly related to depth,

adding the effect of attachment style contrast was significant. There was also a significant interaction between attachment style contrast and depth for AD Terminal, as shown in Figure 6. AD Instrumental was not significantly related to depth, but adding the effect of the attachment style contrast was significant (see Table 5).

Discussion

The descriptive statistics regarding friendship length and closeness indicate that the friend pairs were characteristic of the type of friendships we were targeting: long-term and close. Results of significant differences between participants' self-reported values and those perceived by their friends suggest two possible interpretations: either that individuals perceive their own values differently than their friends perceive their values, or that an individual's friends do not know the individual's values very well. Research indicates both that people do not always act in accordance with what they report as their values (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), and that values are not a typical discussion topic among friends (Aries, 1983). Thus, either factor could be responsible, or it could be some combination of the two. More of significance for this study and others like it, the findings of differences between self-report actual values and friend-report perceived values confirmed that it is a good approach to include measures of both actual and perceived values differences.

The finding regarding dyadic attachment style indicates that people of certain dominant attachment styles are more likely to form friendships. For example, there were no dismissing-dismissing dyads, which is in keeping with the literature regarding dismissing attachment style. Since dismissing people are highly avoidant of intimacy and do not seek support from others, it makes sense that two people of such a relationship

style would not become friends (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994). It seems that for people who are preoccupied or fearful, they either form friendships with people who are of the same attachment style or with securely attached people. This finding suggests that people seem to be drawn to others with their same insecure attachment style, if they chose a friend with an insecure style, or to those with of a secure style. Results also indicated that secure participants were most like to be friends with other secure participants, possibly because people who are low in relationship anxiety and avoidance are drawn to each other, and then friendship flourishes due to these more intimate, relaxed emotional styles (Kirkpatrick & Davis 1994).

The finding that the attachment styles of adult friend pairs are nonrandom is generally consistent with the literature on adult attachment styles in romantic partners. In their study of 354 young couples, Kirkpatrick and Davis (1994) used Hazan and Shaver's three-category measure of adult attachment to assess the attachment styles within romantic relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Kirkpatrick and Davis (1994) found that securely attached people were most likely to be in romantic relationships with other securely attached people. They found that among people with insecure attachment styles, namely anxious and avoidant styles in this study, people were more likely to be in a romantic relationship with people of the other insecure style. That is, avoidant people were more likely to be paired with anxious people, and vice versa. Although this finding is slightly different than the current study's findings, measurement differences may account for some of this difference. We found that people with dismissing attachment styles, akin to the avoidant style in Kirkpatrick and Davis' study, were more likely to be in friendships with people with fearful or preoccupied insecure styles than with other

dismissing people. Since research suggests overlap between fearful and preoccupied styles (Ross, McKim, & DiTommaso, 2006), this finding is consistent with Kirkpatrick and Davis' findings. We also found that people with fearful and preoccupied styles were likely to pair with people of those same styles, a result that differs from Kirkpatrick and Davis' findings (1994). Overall, the finding that the attachment styles of close friendship pairs are not random is generally consistent with previous literature on the topic. Such a finding provides at least minimal support that friendship development and functioning are influenced by attachment style.

Hypothesis One. Our first hypothesis that dominant attachment style would be related to aspects of friendship quality received only partial support. Results indicated that dominant attachment style did not significantly affect social support or conflict, but that for the friendship characteristic of depth, the attachment style contrast was significant. This attachment style contrast had predicted that participants of dismissing attachment styles would experience the least depth in their friendships, followed by preoccupied, fearful, and secure participants, and such was the case. This finding is in keeping with the literature on attachment style, since a hallmark of dismissing attachment is being highly avoidant of closeness in relationships (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). Thus, it follows that dismissing individuals would feel the least committed to and valuing of friendships, and that secure individuals would feel the most comfortable with and likely to experience significant depth in their friendship.

Hypothesis Two. Our second hypothesis that perceived and actual value similarity would be related to aspects of friendship quality received partial support, and the

prediction that such relationships might vary by attachment security received only minimal support.

We found that social support appears unrelated to actual or perceived value similarity. The lack of significant findings relating value similarity to social support seems to suggest that young adults can give and receive social support for values that are not shared. We had expected that greater value similarity would enhance social support, since previous studies have shown a positive relationship between value similarity and friendship choice, possibly due to value similarity enhancing individuals' confidence in their comparative self-evaluations (Lea & Duck, 1982). Moreover, such similarities would increase the perceived applicability of others' experience and guidance (Thoits, 1986). However, in the present study, such similarity in values did not seem necessary for social support. This finding suggests two possibilities: that by emerging adulthood, people are typically secure enough in their values that they do not require them to be validated by their friends as they seek support, or that people seek social support from others based on the likelihood those others will provide it. If the latter is the case, it is possible that this study was not able to capture this effect, since, as Lea and Duck found, people may target different people for different kinds of value support, i.e. seek religious support from a Bible study group, but seek physical health support from a sports coach.

While social support appears unaffected by differences in values, both conflict and depth within the friendship appear to be at least somewhat affected by value similarity or dissimilarity. There were several significant findings relating value dissimilarity to conflict within the friendship. Since both PD Terminal and PD Instrumental were positively related to conflict, this means that that higher perceived

similarity on both terminal and instrumental values is associated with lower levels of conflict within the friendship and that lower perceived similarity is associated with higher conflict. This finding makes intuitive sense given that agreement is defined by an absence of conflict. However, there was also an unexpected finding that greater similarity in terminal values was associated with more conflict. This finding was unexpected, and since this positive relationship between actual value similarity and conflict was found just once, for terminal values and conflict – and was actually the only significant finding regarding actual value similarity – it may have been a chance finding. However, it is also possible that people who actually are very similar in their terminal values encounter more conflict if they encounter disagreements about how best to achieve those end states of existence that they have agreed are ideal. Nevertheless, since there was just one finding indicating an association between actual value similarity and conflict, future research would need to be conducted before any definitive conclusions could be drawn.

There was also a trend for an interaction between PD Instrumental and attachment style on friendship conflict. This trend indicates that for people of secure, fearful, and dismissing attachment styles, the greater the perceived differences in instrumental values, the greater the conflict. This suggests that for all attachment styles except preoccupied, perceived value similarity is important in maintaining low levels of conflict. This finding makes sense in light of previous research indicating that people of a preoccupied attachment style are typically high on friendship conflict (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Thus, it seems that regardless of perceived values differences, preoccupied people have a stable, and usually higher, level of conflict. Generally however, the findings

regarding friendship conflict indicate that perceived value similarity plays an important role in helping to foster low conflict within close friendship.

There were also significant findings relating value similarity and depth of friendship. Results indicated that both PD Terminal and PD Instrumental were significantly negatively related to depth, which means that greater perceived similarity in terminal and instrumental values was associated with more depth in the friendship. There was also a significant interaction between attachment style and depth on AD Terminal. This interaction indicates that for people of a secure attachment style, higher value similarity is associated with more depth, but that the opposite is true for those of a dismissing attachment style. There appeared to be almost no effect of actual terminal value similarity on people of fearful and preoccupied styles. This interaction indicates that for people of a dismissing attachment style, the association between value similarity and depth occurred in the opposite direction as predicted, with higher value similarity being associated with less depth. Since the measure used defined depth as "the extent to which individuals believe that they and their friend value the relationship and are committed to it," it is possible that dismissing people experienced more depth when their friend was not like them in actual values because dismissing people typically do not value close relationships. Thus, if their friend was dissimilar to them, that friend may value closeness and intimacy, contributing to the dismissing person perceived greater depth.

Overall, the above findings indicate that perceived value similarity that plays an important role in helping to maintain higher levels of depth within the friendship. It seems that perceptions of value consensus may create an atmosphere where friends feel comfortable sharing intimate thoughts and beliefs with each other. These findings are in

keeping with Lee and colleagues' study on the importance of perceived value similarity and indicate that perceive similarity of values foster lower conflict and higher depth within friendships.

Significance of Findings

The present study offers several implications for the field of psychology and its generally separate studies of friendship, attachment, and values. Although several of the results regarding attachment and values were nonsignificant, findings did provide support for the importance of studying perceived value similarity, as well as the usefulness of the four-category adult attachment model. This study found that, in general, adult friendships are not influenced by overall adult attachment style in the same way that romantic relationships are (Hazan & Shaver, 1987).

This study aimed to investigate whether attachment style affects friendship quality, which is a relatively new question in the field. The finding that dominant attachment style was only partially related to friendship quality suggests that attachment style generally is not an important determinant of close friendship quality. Such an interpretation runs contrary to prior research by Bender (1999) and Grabill and Kerns (2000), but is in keeping with research by Shieh (2000). While such an interpretation opposes our initial hypothesis, it would be somewhat heartening – albeit surprising – to discover that young adults' close friendships are largely unaffected by the quality of their attachment style, since approximately 50% of participants had an insecure attachment style. At the present, it seems that attachment style plays only a minor role in directly affecting friendship quality, but may influence other aspects of friendships, including initial friend choice – since attachment styles in friend pairs were not random – and the

extent to which similarity in certain areas – such as personal values – are important for friendship quality. It seems that factors besides attachment style most impact the quality of close friendships.

Although we did not directly measure whether the friendships studied were attachment relationships, the above finding likely indicates that close friendships typically are not attachment relationships, since if they were, they should certainly be affected by attachment style. While these findings do not seem to support our aim to study friendships as attachment relationships, they do provide valuable information regarding the functioning of close friendships and perhaps lend support to Hazan and Zeifman's work suggesting that only sexual relationships, not friendships, possess the intimacy, significance, and commitment to fulfill the four components characterizing adult attachments (1994). However, such an interpretation of our results runs contrary to Trinke and Bartholomew's findings that best friendships are an integral part of the attachment hierarchy experienced by young adults (1997), as well as would also go against research indicating that attachment style has important implications for friendship quality, even if that friendship cannot be strictly defined as an attachment relationship (Bender, 1999; Grabill & Kerns, 2000). Since the present study of college students found them generally to be single, and we cannot conclude that close college friendships serve as attachment relationships, the findings indicate that parents likely still serve as important attachment figures in emerging adulthood.

In this study, our second aim was to investigate whether perceived value similarity, actual value similarity, or both affect friendship quality. We found that generally, it is *only* perceived value similarity that plays an important role in fostering

friendship quality. These findings indicate that typically, perceived similarity of both terminal and instrumental values is important for maintaining low conflict and high depth within friendships. This may be because when there is perceived agreement regarding ideal modes of behavior and end-states of existence, even if this is not accurate agreement, friends experience less friendship ambivalence, instead feeling instead more secure in, committed to and valuing of that friendship.

The finding that perceived value similarity is more influential than actual value similarity is in keeping with Lee et al.'s findings that people tend to assume that they share greater value similarity with the people that they chose to become close to than they actually do (2009), and Lea and Duck's findings that this similarity is important for both friendship formation and maintenance (1982). The finding that actual value similarity is generally unrelated, or even negatively related, to friendship quality was somewhat surprising, although not entirely unrelated to Curry and Kenny's 1974 findings that perceived value similarity is greater than actual value similarity, and that friends increasingly overestimate their degree of similarity as time passes. Such a tendency could explain why actual similarity appears to have almost no bearing on the quality of well-established, close friendships. However, although the finding that perceived value similarity is sufficient for fostering friendship may make sense for friendships initially, assumed similarity may eventually have negative implications, if unfounded assumptions regarding similarity lead to conflict, or even friendship dissolution.

Another aim of this study was to investigate whether value similarity affects people of different attachment styles in different ways. This prediction received only minimal support from our findings, indicating that attachment style seems to play only a

minor role in the functioning and perceived quality of friendships function, particularly in how value similarity affect support, conflict, and depth. However, for friendship conflict, we did find one interaction trend indicating that for more securely attached participants, greater perceived differences in terminal values were associated with greater conflict. There was also one significant interaction between attachment style and AD Terminal on friendship depth. These findings provide some support for our hypothesis that value differences affect friendship quality more for certain attachment styles than others. However, since this study was the first of its kind to investigate this possibility that the effect of values on friendship quality differs by attachment style, and there were limited findings, we cannot conclusively state that such a relationship generally exists.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

It is possible that the methodology of this study did not allow for attachments between friends to be discerned. In Trinke and Bartholomew's study, they developed the Attachment Network Questionnaire (ANQ) to determine whether the relationships they studied were indeed attachment relationships; the ANQ accomplished this by assessing the degree to which each relationship listed, including friendships, fulfilled the four attachment functions (1997). In Bender's study, observational measures were used to assess friendship characteristics, in addition to self-report measures (1999). Since such checks were out of the scope of this study, it is important to consider the possibility that some subset of the friendships we studied were attachment relationships, but that in general, friendships do not serve as attachments. Additionally, since this study assessed attachment style using a questionnaire rather than an interview, it is possible that not all participants were able to accurately report their own attachment style, which could have

affected our findings. Likewise, there may have participant bias in sampling; since all participants were volunteers it is possible that those of certain attachment styles, i.e. dismissing participants, were less likely to volunteer for a study on close friendships since they are typically less interested in relationships and intimacy. Thus, certain insecure attachment styles, particularly the dismissing style, may have been underrepresented in this sample.

Future studies of attachment and friendships may want to examine friendship quality differences by dyadic attachment style or by relationship-specific attachment style. Due to limited resources, the sample employed in this study was only large enough to study attachment style differences at the level of the individual, not the dyad, but future researchers may want to investigate the effect of the attachment style of both the individual and his/her friend on the individual's perceived friendship quality. Additionally, with a larger sample it would also likely be of interest to study mixed-sex dyads, since this study only studied same-sex dyads.

Furthermore, future attachment and friendship research could be done on friendships in more intense or different circumstances. As Weiss suggests, it is possible that friendships may only take on characteristics of full adult attachment relationships during times of stress, such as war buddies during combat, or that on occasion, during long periods of adulthood without a sexual partner, such as unmarried women maintaining an attachment relationship with a best friend, sister, or parent (Weiss, 1982). It is possible that the setting of an affluent college campus does not typically allow for the creation of such friendships, and that by expanding the setting a different context, a researcher might find evidence of adult attachment friendships.

Conclusion

This study moves the study of friendship and adult attachment in a new direction by incorporating the value similarity into our study of friendship quality. While attachment style was only minimally important for friendship quality, we found that perceived similarity in terminal and instrumental values typically is important for maintaining low conflict and high depth within a friendship. Additionally, we found that friends can give and receive social support regardless of their attachment style or values. This research suggests that actual diversity of values can be celebrated and supported within friendships, as long as friends can find some perception of similarity or common ground. Since satisfying friendships are paramount to well-being in both college and life, this study provides hopeful implications for people who lack secure relationship styles, suggesting that they can experience the positive benefits of friendship, regardless of attachment style.

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Table 1

Friendship Quality Scores by Attachment Style

Attachment Style	Support		Conflict		Depth	
	M	*SE*	*M*	*SE*	*M*	*SE*
Secure	.81	.01	.50	.02	.47	.01
Fearful	.81	.02	.49	.03	.44	.02
Preoccupied	.81	.02	.54	.04	.46	.02
Dismissing	.78	.03	.50	.05	.38	.03

Table 2

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Friendship Conflict Using Perceived Values Differences and Attachment Style

	Type of Perceived Values Difference			
	Terminal		Instrumental	
Predictor	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β
Step 1	.02		.02	
Control		-.14		-.14
Step 2	.06*		.08*	
PD Values		.24*		.29*
Step 3	.02		.01	
Attachment Style Contrast		.12		.10†
Step 4	.01		.02	
PD Values x Attachment Style Contrast		-.45		-.47
Total R^2	.11		.12	
n	94		93	

*$p < .05$
†$p < .10$

Table 3

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Friendship Conflict Using Actual Values Differences and Attachment Style

	Actual Terminal Values Difference	
Predictor	ΔR^2	β
Step 1	.02	
Control		-.14
Step 2	.05	
AD Values		-.34*
Step 3	.01	
Attachment Style Contrast		.09
Step 4	.01	
AD Values x Attachment Style Contrast		-.41
Total R^2	.09	
n	94	

*$p < .05$

Table 4

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Friendship Depth Using Perceived Values Differences and Attachment Style

	Type of Perceived Values Difference			
	Terminal		Instrumental	
Predictor	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β
Step 1	.00		.00	
Control		.05		.07
Step 2	.09*		.04*	
PD Values		-.30*		-.21*
Step 3	.03*		.03*	
Attachment Style Contrast		.18*		.18*
Step 4	.00		.00	
PD Values x Attachment Style Contrast		.05		-.05
Total R^2	.12		.08	
n	93		92	

*$p < .05$

Table 5

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Friendship Depth Using Actual Values Differences and Attachment Style

	Type of Actual Values Difference			
	Terminal		Instrumental	
Predictor	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β
Step 1	.00		.01	
Control		.05		.08
Step 2	.00		.01	
AD Values		-.06		-.10
Step 3	.04*		.03*	
Attachment Style Contrast		.20*		.18*
Step 4	.04*		.00	
AD Values x Attachment Style Contrast		-.87*		-.10
Total R^2	.09		.08	
n	94		92	

*$p < .05$

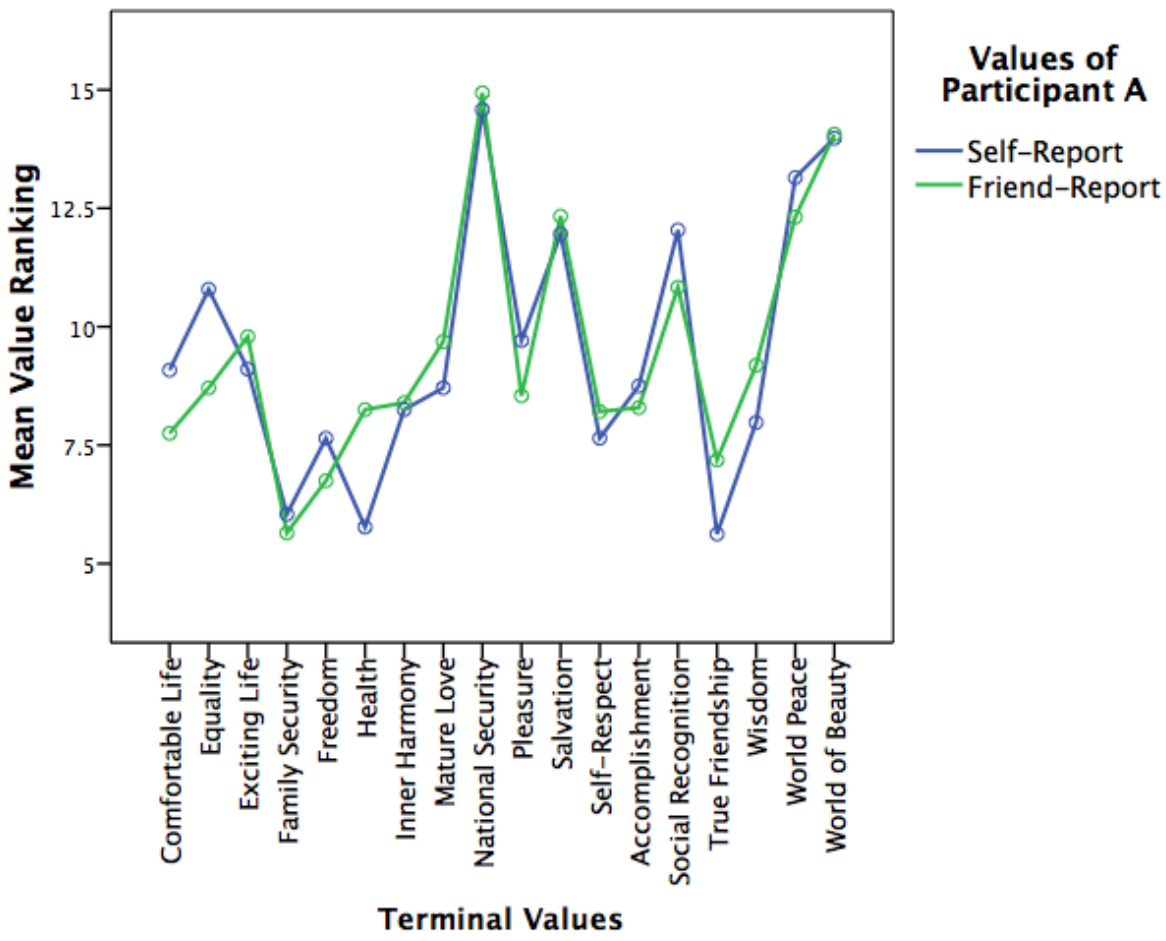

Figure 1. Comparison between self-report and friend-report terminal values of participant A.

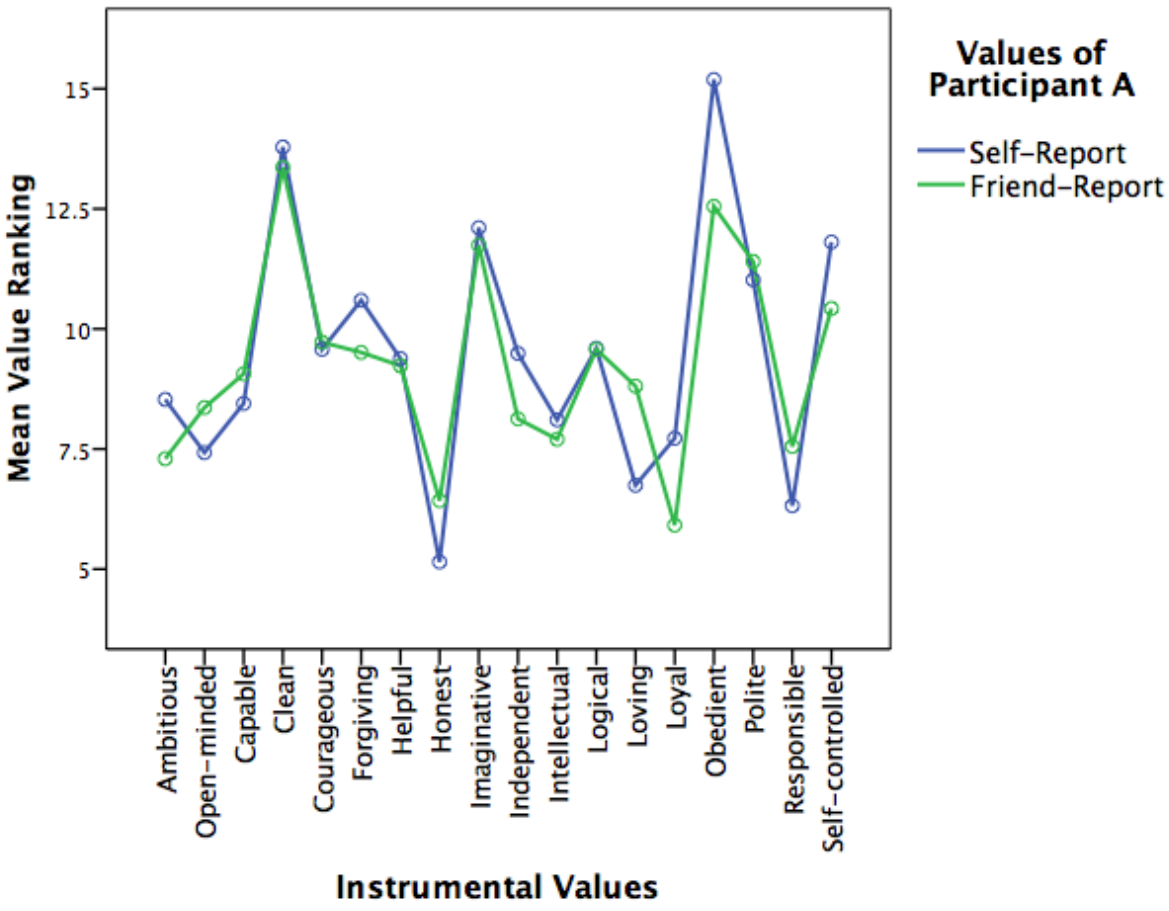

Figure 2. Comparison between self-report and friend-report instrumental values of participant A.

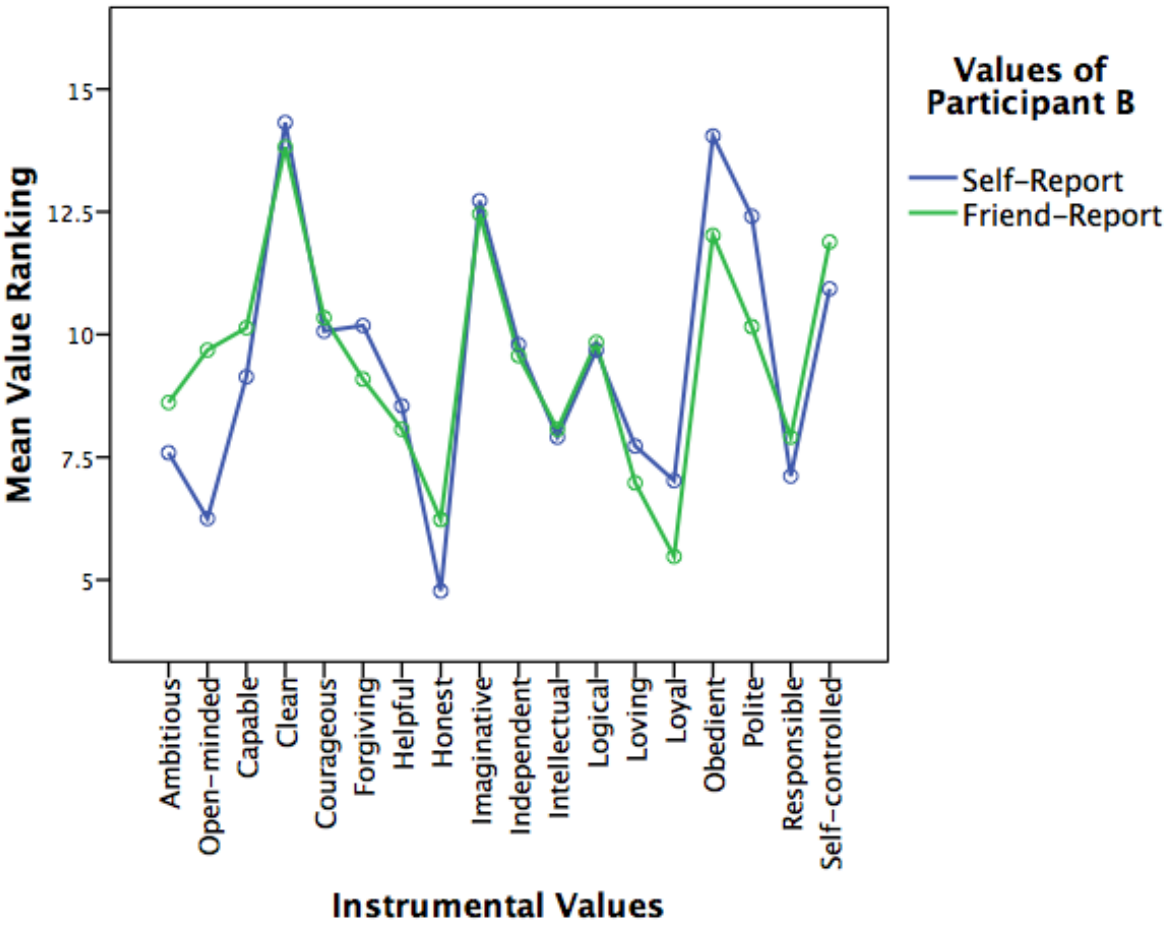

Figure 3. Comparison between self-report and friend-report instrumental values of participant B.

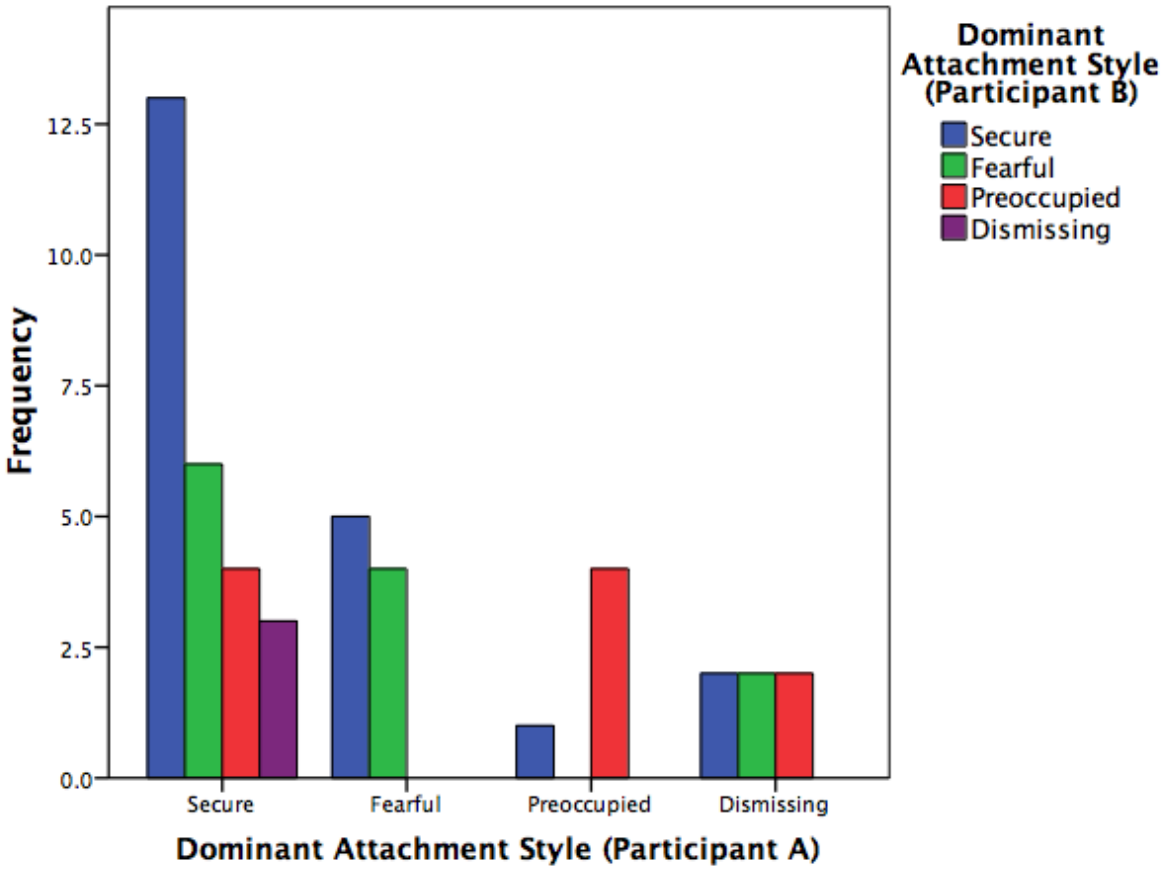

Figure 4. Dominant attachment styles in dyads.

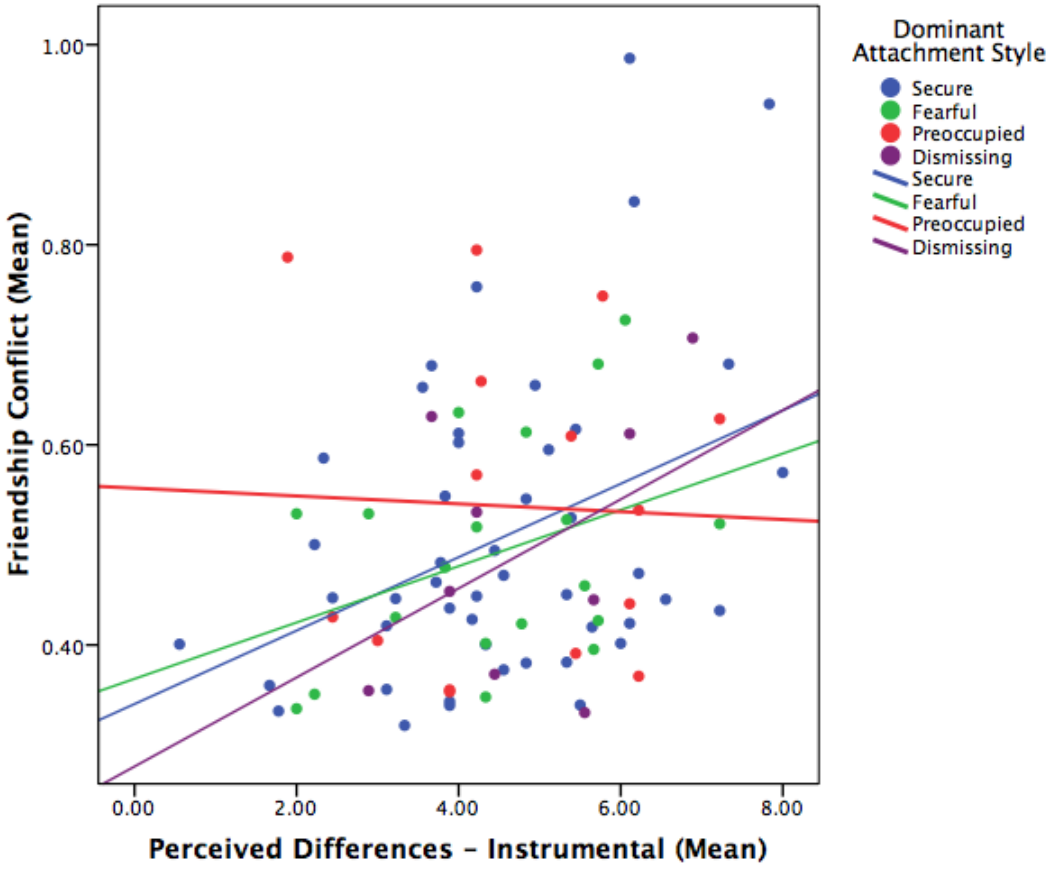

Figure 5. Interaction trend between participants' dominant attachment style and their instrumental value similarity with their friend on friendship conflict.

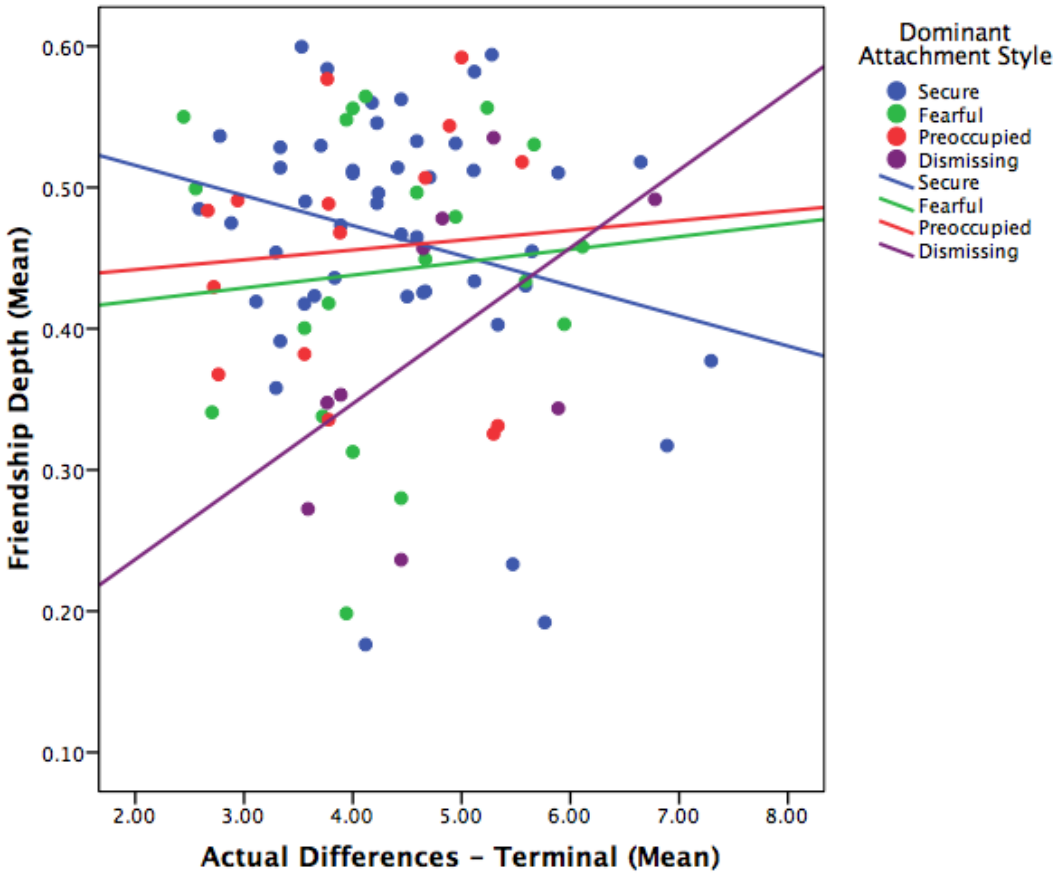

Figure 6. Significant interaction between participants' dominant attachment style and their instrumental value similarity with their friend on friendship depth.