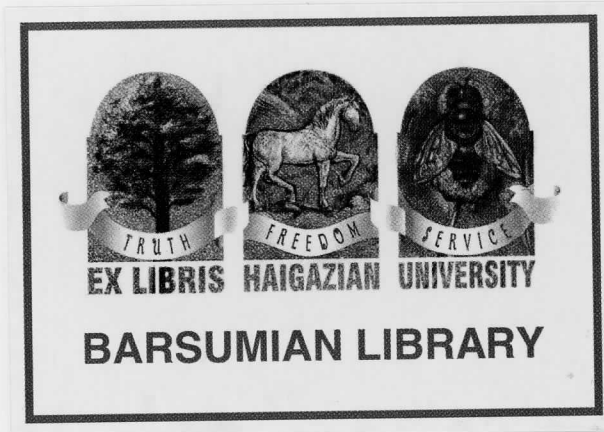


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### Parental Affectionate Communication and Youth Fear of Relational Intimacy

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A Thesis  
submitted to the Faculty of Social and Behavioral Sciences in  
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts  
degree in Counseling Psychology  
at Haigazian University

Beirut, Lebanon  
January, 2012

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS  
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I offer my sincerest gratitude and thanks to my thesis Chair Dr. David Tawil. It has been his unwavering support, patience, and expertise that have helped me succeed. I have immensely enjoyed our long and humorous conversations. I am also grateful to my committee members, Dr. Hanine Hout and Dr. Daisy Warren. Thank you for your support and advice.

## Parental Affectionate Communication and Youth Fear of Relational Intimacy

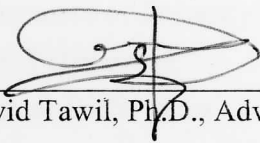
Dikran and Ruby, my brother and sister, you have gently offered counsel and have been a steady anchor in my life. I am extremely indebted to you.

Vicken, you have been an enormous encouragement to me. Your constant support, understanding, and patience have helped me stay determined. I would be a lesser person without you.

I would not be at this point in my life not for the unconditional love and support of my parents. Your constant prodding to get this thesis finished had me wondering when I started it more.

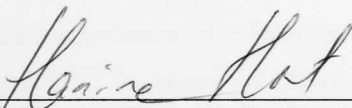
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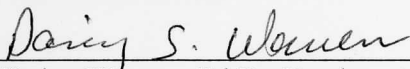
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Dr. David Tawil, Ph.D., Advisor



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Dikran and Ruby, my brother and sister, you have gently offered counsel and have been a steady anchor in my life. I am extremely indebted to you.

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## Abstract

Based on results of previous western research, associations regarding three dimensions (parental affectionate communication, maternal affectionate communication, paternal affectionate communication) and two measures of fear of intimacy (Part A and B) and perceived intimacy of others were assessed in a sample of Lebanese university females and males ( $N=205$ ). Perceived intimacy of others was measured by the use of a photograph of a couple in an intimate setting. Participants rated the intimacy of the couple. There were 4 hypotheses. 1 predicted a negative relationship between parental affectionate communication and fear of intimacy. 2 predicted a negative relationship between paternal affectionate communication and male fear of intimacy. 3 A stronger negative relationship was predicted between maternal and female fear of intimacy compared to males. 4 A negative correlation was predicted between fear of intimacy and perceived intimacy of others. Bi-variate correlations, and linear regression were conducted to test for the hypotheses. Results tended to fully support H1 and H3 and partially supported H2 and H4. The role of maternal affectionate communication was inferred from the partial significance of H2. Male self-disclosure patterns explained the partial significance for H4. Results across gender of parent and gender of adults are discussed further.

on attachment theory, parenting style, and parental affection indicate that early experiences with caregivers may have substantial impact on an individual's later feelings of security in adult relationships, as well as a wide variety of behaviors in such relationships (Bowlby, as cited in Lewis & Feiring, 1989; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Therefore, it can be safely asserted that the primary affectionate exchange between the caregiver and the child is significant for other subsequent adult relationships.

## The Background of the Study

When researchers examine the processes that make close relationships satisfying, love and intimacy are usually among the most influential factors (Reis, 2001; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). The apparent importance of love and intimacy to human well-being has instigated longstanding interest by both scholars and researchers. Empirically minded researchers are relatively new to this quest, perhaps because of the challenges in studying subjective concepts as these (Reis, 2001). Research on affection, affectionate communication and relational intimacy is abundant, yet research involving parental communication of affection and adult

## CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

When people think about the issues that are important in their lives, they usually place close relationships at or near the top of the list. Since relationships hold this significant value, there is a long history that demonstrates interest in studying parent-child relationships, which is reflected in a large and rich literature (Young, Miller, Norton, & Hill, 1995). Due to the importance of the parent-child relationship, considerable research has examined the influence of parenting behaviors on children's personality development and behavior. It is the involuntary nature of the parent-child relationship and the effects each individual relationship has on those involved in the triad that make the familial relation intriguing to study. Research on attachment theory, parenting style, and parental affection indicate that early experiences with caregivers may have substantial impact on an individual's later feelings of security in adult relationships, as well as a wide variety of behaviors in such relationships (Bowlby, as cited in Lewis & Feiring, 1989; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Therefore, it can be safely asserted that the primary affectionate exchange between the caregiver and the child is significant for other subsequent adult relationships.

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fear of intimacy is comparatively rare. Furthermore, studies dealing with their associated relationship are virtually nonexistent. The purpose of this study is to review the existing body of research related to adults' connections between parental affection and fear of intimacy.

## Parental Attachment & Individual Relationships

In 1954, Abraham Maslow introduced his hierarchy of needs; the hierarchy structured human behavior and the underlying motivations for our actions, which included love and belongingness (love and affectionate relationships). The need to be liked, valued, and appreciated by others was among the most fundamental human need since individuals needed validation, belongingness, and affection (Brown & Levinson, as cited in Floyd, & Mikkelson, 2007a; Maslow, 1968; Schutz, as cited in Floyd, Hess, Miczo, Halone, Mikkelson, Tusing, 2005).

Both attachment theory and object relations theory have focused on the ways in which we symbolize our relatedness to others. A consistent belief of object relations theory was that individuals' characteristic ways of representing self and others develop in their relationships with their parents and continue to influence interpersonal expectancies, behaviors, and feelings throughout their life span. Related to this perspective of attachment theory, where Bowlby (1979) similarly suggested that infants' and children's expectations about whether caregivers are emotionally available and responsive served as the foundations for their working models of self and others, and that these original prototypes influenced subsequent behavior and representations in new relationships.

In fact, Baldwin's (as cited in Collins & Sroufe, 1999) suggestion that "each person has developed over time a set of expectations about the likely course of events in various contexts, and these cognitive models guide their information processing and behavior in the current situation" is compatible with Bowlby's (1979) propositions. Bowlby stated that "each individual builds working models of the world and of himself in it, with the aid of which he

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perceives events, forecasts the future, and constructs his plans" and that "on the structure of these complementary models are based that person's forecasts of how accessible and responsive his attachment figures are likely to be should he turn to them for support". Parents or primary caregivers have the privilege and responsibility to mold their children's character and behavior. Children's success in future personal decision-making and the psychological capability to deal with stressful relationships lies within this primary relationship between parent and child.

Attachment theorists have therefore stated that children construct internal working models—schemes of the self, others, and relationships—out of their early interactions with caregivers (Bowlby, 1979; Bretherton, 1990). For young children, most of their relational experience comes within the context of the family; therefore, it seems logical to contend that the quality of the relationships within the family is influential in a child's construction of personal and relational understandings.

Research has supported this idea and has found links between the quality of mother-toddler conflict, the amount of shared positive affect in mother-child dyads, and the quality of dyadic discourse and children's prosocial representations of relationships (Laible & Thompson, 2002; Laible, 2004). Through both verbal and nonverbal expressions of emotion to children, parents not only teach children when it is appropriate to display emotion, but also teach them about the role of emotion in human relationships. Therefore, as a result of the pattern of expressiveness that children are exposed to in the family, children develop expectations about the role of emotional expressiveness in relationships. For example, families that are high in positive expressiveness (where displays of affection and warmth are high) are likely to have children who develop the expectation that such displays of warmth are part of human relationships and thus expect peers and other partners to respond similarly. In contrast, children from families where negative emotions are frequently expressed are

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likely to develop more hostile representations of relationships and come to expect that other relational partners will engage in similar displays of aversive affect (Laible & Thompson, 2002; Laible, 2004; Saarni, 1979).

Although infancy is not destiny, numerous studies have shown substantial evidence for continuity of attachment styles from infancy through the school years and into adulthood (Sroufe, Fox, & Pancake, 1983; Mikulincer & Florian, 1997; Crowell, Fraley, & Shaver, 1999; Waters, Hamilton, & Weinfeld, 2000). The attachment theory approach to adult love relationships has been developed most completely by Hazan and Shaver (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1988; Shaver, Hazan, & Bradshaw, 1988). According to their view, variations in early social experience produced relatively permanent differences in relationship styles, and the same three attachment styles described in infant literature are manifested in adult romantic love. Hazan and Shaver (1988) have presented theoretical and empirical evidence for the relevance of attachment style to romantic love. They have found that internal working models shape both adult romantic relationships and the ways parents interact with their own children (Brennan, Wu, & Loev, 1998; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). For example, expectant mothers' attachment status are highly predictive of their unborn infants' future attachment styles (Fonagy, Steele, & Steele, 1991). Existing literature has also shown that family interactions such as family support and affection in the home promote increased future relational adjustment. (Gerard, & Buehler, 2004; Spencer, Cole, Dupree, & Glymph, 1993).

## Parental Affection & Individual Relationships

As early attachment to caregiver has a crucial role in later relationships, so does affectionate communication. According to the pioneers in research, Bowlby (as cited in Lewis, & Feiring, 1989) and Harlow (1974), affection is central to the communicative process of personal relationships and plays a critical role in developmental psychological processes. Observations indicated that children reared by parents who expressed high levels

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of affection had fewer problems associated with adjustment, fewer conduct disorders, and higher peer affiliation (Aunola & Turmi, 2005). In fact, receiving affection from parents has been identified as a basic survival need by a number of researchers (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Burgoon & Hale, 1988; Rotter; Chance, & Phares, 1972; Maslow, 1968; Schutz, as cited in Floyd, Hess, Miczo, Halone, Mikkelson, Tusing, 2005). Also, the ability to express affection has important implications for the source as well as the recipient (Floyd, 2001, 2002, 2006b). For example, research indicated that highly affectionate communicators tend to be happier and have higher self-esteem, less fear of intimacy, and less susceptibility to depression (Floyd, 2002). They had healthier adult attachment styles, and higher relationship satisfaction (Ozen, 2004). Affection plays a vital role in the strengthening of relational communication with spouses (Beatty & Dobos, 1993), in the improvement of mental well being, the reduction of loneliness (Downs & Javidi, 1990), and in the enhancement of physical health (Komisaruk & Whipple, 1998; Komarovskiy (as cited in Merves-Okin, Amidon & Bernt, 1991). To sum up; those individuals who receive positive affection from their parents grow to become highly affectionate individuals themselves and acquire the emotional, physical, and relational benefits.

## Intimacy in Individual Relationships

Many relationship theorists share the perspective of conceptualizing intimacy as a complex process that cuts across two levels of analysis: the psychology of the individual self, and the psychology of interaction and relationships. Individual differences among adults reflect both personality (including genetically determined and learned qualities) and past experiences in close relationships (Lippert and Prager 2001).

Definitions of intimacy are so diverse; they may be based on individual preference and his/her experience. Conceptions of intimacy usually address one (or more) of three phenomena: intimate interactions, intimate relationships, or intimate experiences. First,

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intimate interactions are communicative exchanges between people. In line with the etymological origins of the word intimacy, most definitions of intimate interaction unite on a notion of sharing the personal (i.e., innermost, private) aspects of the self. Verbal sharing can involve self-disclosure of personal facts, opinions, and beliefs, and the verbalization of feeling and emotion. However, nonverbal sharing can include a shared meaningful glance, affectionate touching, or shared expressions of emotion such as tears or laughter, and sexual encounter. (Burgoon, Buller, Hale, & DeTruck 1984). Sharing the personal means sharing vulnerable aspects of the self. At this phase, individuals are constantly making decisions regarding trust, revealing personal details, thoughts, flaws, and the possibility to their feelings and actions be unreciprocated or even rejected.

Second, intimate relationships, in contrast, "imply a series of interactions between two individuals known to each other . . ." (Hinde, 1981). They are relationships in which partners know each other well and maintain positive, loving feelings towards the other whom they have come to know well. Finally, intimate experiences are the feelings and thoughts people have during, and as a result of their intimate interactions (Hinde, 1981).

In order to sustain intimate relationships, the communication of positive, loving feelings towards one's partner is an important aspect, both as a disclosure and as a response to disclosure (Lippert & Prager 2001). Therefore, partners who communicate positive regard to one another may be in a better position to sustain intimacy in their relationship. Work by Sandra Murray, (2000) suggested that people determine how much vulnerability they will risk with their partners, in part, on the basis of how positively they believed their partners perceived them. Thus, expressions of positive feelings contributed uniquely to a couple's daily experiences of intimacy (Lippert and Prager 2001).

Intimacy is distinguished depending upon the individual's emotional, intellectual, and physical commitments to the relationship. In addition, several factors are associated with

## Affectionate Communication & Fear of Intimacy

attaining intimacy in relationships: gender, individual differences, relationship type, and length of time married or dating. Both gender and attitudes towards intimacy in relationships appear to be associated. Also, the type of relationship influences intimacy attained in relationships. Yet, research concerning the length of the relationship and intimacy is contradictory (Swensen, Eskew, & Kohlepp (1984). These elements will be further discussed in the literature review.

It is widely believed that intimacy is essential to human well-being and that its absence can cause significant emotional distress: for example, many studies have demonstrated that the existence of intimate ties and social interactions was associated with higher levels of social and psychological development, and with better mental and physical health. Research results have concluded that the capacity to make intimate emotional bonds with other individuals is regarded as a principal feature of effective mental health and personality functioning (Bowlby, 1979; Berger & Bardac, 1982; & Floyd, 1997, 2002).

### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the current study is to investigate differences in reported affectionate communication among adults as a function of sex of parent, sex of child, and type of affection (verbal, Direct-non-verbal & Indirect-nonverbal). These variables are examined with respect to adult's fear of intimacy in their significant relationships. Finally, what is also a major factor of interest is the relation between parental affectionate communication and relational fear of intimacy is of interest.

Specifically, the present study is designed to determine the role of the communication of affectionate communication in adult fear of intimacy. This study will examine the functional significance of the variability in verbal, non-verbal and supportive communication of affection from parent to child in relation to youth's fear of relational intimacy.

## Affectionate Communication & Fear of Intimacy

While relatively little is known about the association of affectionate communication and fear of intimacy in adult relationships, it is important to assess their connection with relationship outcomes. If healthy affectionate communication between parents and their offspring decreases fear of intimacy in adult relationships, it is important to know how this process happens. This study examines the link between the implications of different patterns of childhood affectionate communication and adult capacities for intimate dating or romantic relationships.

The present study will investigate issues relating to attachment, affection, affectionate communication, intimacy, and relational satisfaction and their subsequent connections. How important is parental verbal and non-verbal affection to be able to form fear-free relational intimacy with another? What role does affectionate communication of a parent play in the success of relationships in youth, as well as their own perception of other couple's intimacy level? Rotter, Chance, & Phares, (1912) assert the importance of affection in human social interaction, where they have referred to "love and affection" as one of six fundamental human needs. In addition, they emphasize that affectionate messages communicated are very important in relationships as they are linked to multiple emotional, physical, and relational benefits (Floyd, 2006b). Similarly, affectionate communication is critical for relational development and definition. According to Berger & Bardac (1982) and Floyd, (2002), it can reduce uncertainty about the state of the relationship and can cause relational partners to feel valued and cared for.

In light of the above findings, the following associations are hypothesized in the Lebanese culture, particularly, the Lebanese college student:

(H1) Parental affectionate communication is negatively associated with adult fear of intimacy.

(H2) Paternal affectionate communication is negatively associated with adult-male fear of intimacy.

## Affectionate Communication & Fear of Intimacy

(H3) Maternal affectionate communication is more negatively associated with adult-female fear of intimacy than with adult-male fear of intimacy in relationships.

(H4) Perceived intimacy of others is negatively associated with self-reported fear of intimacy.

### The Significance of the Study

The lack of abundant research addressing the direct and indirect effects of parental affectionate communication and adult fear of intimacy lent itself to the purpose of this study. Therefore, this study is an attempt to extend knowledge on past research regarding affectionate communication and relational satisfaction.

The study aims to investigate the relationship between parental affectionate communication and adult fear of intimacy in the Lebanese culture, particularly, the Lebanese youth. How does parental communication of affection manifest in the Lebanese college youth, and what are the effects it yields on youth's fear of relational intimacy with other individuals? In this paper, the process under study is the relationship between parental affectionate communication patterns, as perceived by the adult respondents, and the youth's fear of intimacy in close relationships.

This thesis also provides information for the marriage and family counselor who may work with people who wish to experience increased levels of intimacy in their relationships. The marriage and family counselor needs knowledge of how the individual can benefit in terms of understanding intimacy, loving oneself, and realizing one's own potential as an intimate person. Thus the knowledge of the characteristics that influence achievement of intimacy is important. One, with intimacy being the major concern for couples participating in counseling, pinpointing the parental relationship consequences to understand why they are in such polarized positions can aid to bridge the gap between them. Two, as individuals in a

## Affectionate Communication & Fear of Intimacy

relationship strive for intimacy; the results of this thesis may lead to novel ways of thinking about parental affectionate communication style and fear of intimacy.

### Methodology

The present study is of a quantitative nature. It was administered in three English system universities among undergraduate students, where the association between parental affectionate communication and fear of intimacy was examined. The independent variable measured was: perceived maternal/paternal affectionate communication. The dependant variables measured were: Fear of intimacy and perceptual intimacy of others. Three self-administered scales were utilized: Affectionate Communication Index (Floyd, & Morman, 1998) was used to assess *perceived maternal and paternal affectionate communication*. Fear of Intimacy Scale (Descutner, & Thelan, 1991) was used to assess *fear of intimacy in adults*. *Perceptual intimacy* was assessed using the Intimacy Sale (Walker, & Thompson, 1983).

### Definitions of Key Concepts

#### Attachment

Attachment refers to the affectional bond or tie between an individual and an attachment figure (usually a caregiver). Such bonds may be reciprocal between two adults, but between a child and a caregiver these bonds are based on the child's need for safety, security and protection, which paramount in infancy and childhood. The attachment theory proposes that children attach to caregivers instinctively for the purpose of survival and, ultimately, genetic replication. The biological aim is survival and the psychological aim is security. To operationalize attachment in terms of attachment behaviors is to say that approaching, touching, looking, clinging, protesting separation, etc., are valid "indices" or measures of attachment (Bowlby, 1979; 1980).

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### Affect

Affect refers to the experience of feeling or emotion. Affect is a key part of the process of an organism's interaction with stimuli. The word also refers sometimes to affect display, which is "a facial, vocal, or gestural behavior that serves as an indicator of affect" (Vandenbos, 2006).

### Affection/Affectionate Communication

It is important to distinguish between affection and affectionate communication. (1) Affection represents an internal psychological state of positive, often intimate regard for another. It encompasses those behaviors through which people convey feelings of love, fondness, and appreciation to others. (2) Communication of affection is conceptualized as an individual's intentional and overt enactment or expression of feelings of closeness, care, and fondness for another (Floyd, & Morman, 1998).

### Intimacy

The basic meaning of the term "intimacy" (from the Latin *intimus*, or innermost) is to get "inside" or "into" another person (Rubin, Z., 1970). Another sort of getting into occurs by means of the purposeful giving and receiving of information about personal thoughts, feelings, and experiences, a process which Sidney Jourard (1971) has called "self-disclosure." Reis and Shaver (1988) have defined intimacy as: "An interpersonal process within which two interaction partners experience and express feelings, communicate verbally and nonverbally, satisfy social motives, augment or reduce social fears, talk and learn about themselves and their unique characteristics, and become close." Briefly, Intimacy is described as closeness to another person and as openness in describing and sharing thoughts and feelings (Berndt & Hanna, 1995; Prager & Buhrmester, 1998; Shulman, Elicker, & Sroufe, as cited in Collins, & Sroufe, 1999).

## Affectionate Communication & Fear of Intimacy

### Fear of Intimacy

Fear of intimacy was defined as "...the inhibited capacity of an individual, because of anxiety, to exchange thoughts and feelings of personal significance with another individual who is highly valued" (Descutner, & Thelen, 1991).

#### Limitations of the Study

Like all studies, this one enjoyed certain strengths and involved certain limitations. The sample was large enough to provide adequate statistical power, but it was also a rather homogenous group with respect to education level and ethnicity, limiting the ability to generalize these findings.

All of the measures used in this study were adult self-reports. The parental perception of their own affectionate communication towards their children was not considered in this study; therefore, this didn't provide a clearer picture as to whether parental self-reports would have yielded similar results. Also, observer's ratings were not included to get an objective representation for both patterns of behavior: the youth and their parents. Such ratings could help eliminate any bias that could take place due to personal interpretation. Although it is important to mention that the perception of parents' behavior may be more related to one's adjustment, than the actual behavior of the parent (Schaefer, 1965).

Moreover, the selected samples were those that which were convenient to the researcher: the college student in the American system colleges, due to its accessibility. Concerning the Lebanese French speaking students, they will be excluded from this study due to the lack of access to this environment. Lower income families were primarily excluded from this sample, so the results will only give us an understanding of parental affectionate communication in the Lebanese English speaking middle class society. It will be advantageous for future studies to recruit a sample with greater variance, both to increase statistical power and to determine

## Affectionate Communication & Fear of Intimacy

whether observed associations are operative at low, medium, and high levels of socioeconomic status.

This study was comprised of nonmarried individuals engaged in a heterosexual romantic relationship. Further, these were primarily undergraduate college students, which may impact their perceived level of intimacy differently than older, married, non-university based individuals. Also, future studies might determine whether intimacy is related to the specific type of relationship in which a person is engaged. Lastly, most of the participants were from the urban areas attending Universities with highly diverse ethnic populations. Differing geographic locations may lead to other results, as there may be different societal pressures against unmarried couples.

## CHAPTER 2

### Literature Review

The present chapter organizes the review by focusing specifically on fear of intimacy's associations with (1) the experience of parental affectionate communication; (2) communication of intimacy in an individual's closest relationship; and (3) the individual's perception of other couple's intimacy. It is proposed that there is a potential link between affectionate communication and fear of intimacy, as they seem to affect relational satisfaction in opposite ways. There is a positive relationship between parental affectionate communication and the experience of intimacy in the adult's relationships, and an inverse relationship between fear of intimacy in adults and parental affectionate communication.

#### Affection & Affectionate Communication

Few communicative behaviors have carried greater significance for the development, maintenance, and satisfaction of personal relationships than the communication of affection (Floyd, & Morman, 2005). Several investigations have even demonstrated that the

## Affectionate Communication & Fear of Intimacy

communication of affection is significantly related to closeness and satisfaction in parent–child relationships and marriages (Floyd & Morman, 2000; Morman & Floyd, 1998).

However, it is necessary to differentiate between “affection” and “affectionate communication”. On the one hand, affection has been defined as an “internal psychological state of positive, often intimate regard for one another” (Floyd & Voloudakis, 1999). Put simply, affection is the act of experiencing feelings of liking, love, trust, and acceptance (Steверink & Lindenberg, 2006). “Affectionate communication,” on the other hand, is the expression of feelings of love, fondness, and positive regard through nonverbal and verbal behaviors (Floyd, Hess, Miczo, Halone, Mikkelson, & Tusing, 2005).

### Expression of Affection

As noted above, the expression of affection has been proven to carry a vast significance for individuals and relationships. Individuals express affection both verbally (e.g. “I love you”) and nonverbally (e.g. through hugs, kisses, touch; Guerrero & Floyd, 2006). Floyd and Morman (1998) proposed that nonverbal affectionate behaviors should be placed into two categories: Direct and indirect. Direct nonverbal affectionate behaviors are overt affectionate behaviors, in which all individuals concerned understand the meaning conveyed, including those observing the behavior (e.g. hugging and kissing). Guerrero and Floyd (2006) included hugging, kissing, caressing another’s face, holding hands, touching one’s arm or leg, and so forth as ways to communicate affection. However, indirect nonverbal affectionate behaviors, or supportive affection, are covert behaviors, in which the meaning may not be easily interpreted. For example, doing favors for someone or helping with a particular task may express affection through the use of helpfulness and supportiveness (Guerrero & Floyd, 2006).

Love and affection, personal validation, trust, and self-disclosure are all necessary components in building intimacy in relationships. The expression of affection and growth of a

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relationship is not a simple or a linear process. As mentioned above, most forms of emotional expression carry some type of relational meaning in addition to their literal meaning. For example, when one partner expresses fear or anxiety to another, he or she is also implicitly communicating a perception of trust for the other (Watzlawick, Beavin, & Jackson, 1967). With affectionate expressions, however, the relational meaning is frequently more overt. Thus, when one partner says, "I love you," the expression communicates an unambiguous meaning about the other and about the state of their relationship. Relational development could often be interrupted by the occurrence of such expressions (for example, relational partners often remember the first hug, the first kiss, or the first time the words "I love you" were spoken (Owen, 1987). Reis and Shaver stated that emotionally close interactions at all ages gain significance not only from mutually self-disclosing behaviors, but from the experiences of feeling understood, validated, and cared for as a result of them (Collins & Sroufe, 1999). Hence, it can be inferred that verbal and nonverbal expression of affection are undeniably important in developing and sustaining intimacy in relationships.

### Inability to Express Affection

To understand the significance of expressing affection in relationships, one needs to examine the detrimental impact that lack of affectionate expressions have on relationships. In Theron, Alexander's research (1951), a projective test was administered to twenty-five teachers. The projective test consisted of child and child-adult situations and was similar to Murray's Thematic Apperception Test (Murray, 1938). Observations of each teacher were also made. The projective data were analyzed for the characteristics of the self, which have been found to prevent affectionate exchange: 1) Devaluation of the self - When others do not seem to hold another to be of value, he/she tends to see himself as devalued; 2) Dependency - In affectionate exchange one is somewhat dependent upon another for affection. Individuals with extreme feelings of dependency cannot tolerate dependency in others; 3) Anxiety -

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Individuals who have a high level of anxiety are afraid for others to see that they are desirous of giving themselves to another. This impedes the emotional exchange in the relationship; and 4) Conflict - A person with a severe inner conflict must devote his energy and perceptive abilities to get at solutions. Conflict interferes with affectionate behavior in two ways: loss of energy and loss of ability to perceive and make use of necessary stimuli.

Findings from the projective data and observation data were in accord. Teachers' own characteristics of devaluation, dependency, anxiety and conflict interfered with their interaction and exchange of affectionate feelings with others (Alexander, 1951). The projective test confirmed findings from past research regarding the personal and relational benefits the ability of affectionate communication possessed. It went on to show that the inability to express affection had damaging effects on the person and their affectionate exchange with others. That is, individuals who struggled with self-devaluation and dependency, which are components that prevent affectionate exchange, were unable to articulate affectionate emotions. These findings show that those who are unable to express affectionate feelings cannot feel warmly toward another person nor can they be accurately aware of feelings in other people.

### Benefits of Expressing Affection

The benefits of expressing affection have begun to receive scholarly attention only of late. In a recent study, Floyd (2002) investigated the extent to which one's trait level of affectionate communication toward others was associated with a number of individual- and relational-level benefits. In this study, Floyd gathered subsamples of highly affectionate and nonaffectionate adults, who were asked to complete a battery of assessments regarding their mental, physical, and emotional well-being, their marital/relational status, and their satisfaction with their romantic relationship. A manipulation check, conducted with the Trait Affection Scale\* Given (TAS-G) instrument, verified that the two subsamples differed

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significantly in their trait affection levels. The mean comparisons indicated that the affectionate group was advantaged over the nonaffectionate group on every variable measured. Specifically, compared to nonaffectionate communicators, affectionate communicators were happier, had higher self-esteem, were in better mental health, were less stressed and less likely to be suffering from depression, were more likely to be married or in a long-term romantic relationship, and among those who were in such relationships, were more satisfied in those relationships. Moreover, the study also found that people in the affectionate group reported receiving more affection from others than did people in the nonaffectionate group. The results indicated that one of the personal and relational benefits of being highly affectionate was the development of intimacy and satisfying relationships with other individuals. The next section will discuss characteristics and components of intimacy, which is regarded to be a crucial element in healthy couple relationships.

### Characteristics of intimacy

No consensus exists for an operational definition of intimacy in research; since the empirical researches conducted on the subject of the intimate process could be questionable and uncertain (Coleman, 1988). Some of the definitions utilized and developed in research were the following. The American Heritage Dictionary (1985) defined intimacy as “the condition of being intimate.” Libby & Whitehurst (1979) defined intimacy as the “experiencing of the essence of one’s self in intense intellectual, physical, and/or emotional communion with another human being.” Wynne and Wynne (1986) defined intimacy as “a subjective relational experience in which the core components are trusting self-disclosure to which the response is communicated empathy.” Thus, intimacy is the willingness to share personal positive or negative feelings, experiences, and meaningful thoughts. One should expect that the person listening would accept what has been revealed and not exploit that trust. Likewise, Lewis and Feiring (1989) described intimacy as “a seed that may die if it

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does not get proper nourishment.” Couatts (1973) description of intimacy was in the following way:

“A young couple in their thirties slowly walk the length of a wooden pier, each so unconsciously in harmony with the other, so totally aware of the other’s being that they both move as one. He makes her laugh by saying something, and she moves her shoulder up against his as they walk. His eyes quietly study her face as they talk. Their eyes seldom leave each other.”

Intimacy provides a feeling of comfort, warmth, and well being. It changes the view one has of life and his or her place in it. It provides a sensation that one is in control of his or her subsistence. The absence of intimacy can provide a feeling of dissatisfaction and negativism in all that one experiences. In the absence of intimacy there is either separation or alienation. Separation occurs if two people are not together psychologically, while alienation is separation based on resentment or hostility (Couatts, 1973). Individuals need to resolve these negative and alienating elements for the growth of intimacy in the relationship.

Some regard the capacity for intimacy as a classic developmental phenomenon. By this they mean that it has “both "emergent properties", not being fully specified by capacities that precede it, and that it nonetheless evolves in a logical manner from precursors through a series of transformations” Collins, & Sroufe, (1999). At each phase of life, beginning in the formative years, foundations are laid down that support the capacity for intimacy. These foundations include experiences with parents, as well as experiences with peers (Collins, & Sroufe, (1999). The capacity for intimacy could be suspended or altered by the parent-child relationship; however, the characteristics of intimacy although formed in infancy, are developed through the experiences that the individual has during his/her lifetime. One such experience is intimacy in couple relationships, where a couple’s reciprocal emotional support and disclosure define the characteristics, quality, and frequency of intimate experiences.

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### Types of intimacy in Couple Relationships

Couples share intimacy in a variety of different areas. Schaefer & Olson (1981) described the 5 different areas of intimacy in the Procedure Manual of the Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships (PAIR) Inventory. According to them, the first area of intimacy was emotional intimacy, and it was described as “the experiencing of closeness of feeling; the ability and freedom to share openly, in a non-defensive atmosphere when there is supportiveness and genuine understanding.” The second area was social intimacy in which the couple shares a common group of friends, acquaintances and a similar social network. The third area included sexual intimacy, which was defined as the experience of sexual activity as well as giving and receiving affection, touching, and physical closeness. The fourth area, the sharing of ideas, talking about and discussing issues related to job and life was called intellectual intimacy. Finally, the fifth is recreational intimacy, which was described as sharing hobbies, pastimes, and participating in sporting events and leisure activities.

Intellectual, emotional, and physical intimacies were considered to be the very foundation of meaningful and real experiences (Schaefer & Olson (1981). Intellectual intimacy was described by Coutts (1973), as “Two people are intellectually intimate when they share a mutual, exact understanding of each other’s expressed ideas and thoughts.” In this case, each person listens with complete attention, and the conversation is very stimulating; each thought leads to many subjects, and some thoughts must go unspoken. Therefore, intellectual intimacy ultimately occurs when two people have similar intelligence and learning experience. Two people feel intellectually intimate when the other can see what his partner sees and understands. Intimacy involves feeling free to say anything and knowing that the other person is listening (Dorwick, 1991). Since people want so desperately to be understood, it is that understanding that brings such satisfaction in a relationship.

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As stated above, individuals are emotionally intimate when they have similar feelings at the same time. Emotional intimacy involves spiritual, psychic, conscious, and unconscious feelings (Robinson & Blanton, 1993). It increases as mutual feelings are shared. Therefore, when people experience anger, fear, sadness, or happiness, the potential for emotional intimacy increases. A necessary element for emotional intimacy is one in which people should not apologize for or defend feelings. People often attempt to invalidate other's feelings by convincing them they really aren't lonely, worried, or afraid. For example, a spouse who is feeling a sense of isolation is not experiencing the emotional connectedness associated with intimacy (Robinson & Blanton, 1993).

Maslow (1954) referred to "psychological intimacy" as "the desire to obtain a fuller knowledge of one another". A couple shares secrets and gestures that only they understand. Another important factor in relational intimacy is physical intimacy. Physical intimacy encompasses sexual contact as well as physical closeness and touching. According to Coultts, (1973) in the western culture, physical and sexual intimacy were considered to be the highest form of faithfulness. He further stated that sexual intimacy had become the greatest preoccupation of the western society. People who tried to satisfy the physical aspect of a relationship would be separating thinking and feeling from intimacy.

In conclusion, well-established relationships should encompass all types, emotional, psychological, intellectual, sexual, and social forms of intimacy. Relational stability and satisfaction can only be experienced when all elements fall into place. The hindrance or absence of these elements puts the relationship at risk.

## Self-Disclosure & Intimacy

Research on self-disclosure has played a particularly influential role in the development of knowledge about intimacy. The pioneering studies of Altman and Taylor (1973), have defined intimacy in terms of the "depth and breadth of one person's revelation of nominally

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private facts and feelings to another person.” The “breadth” refers to “range of shared activities,” and depth relates to the “sharing of core aspects of the self,” which is the most difficult to achieve. This work has supported two general conclusions: that self-disclosure moves from superficial to intimate topics as partners become acquainted; and that partners tend to reciprocate levels of self-disclosure. In other words, too little or too much disclosure, in comparison to personal standards, situational norms, or a partner’s behavior, tends to hamper relationship development (Altman and Taylor, 1973). Each of these dimensions contains intellectual, physical, and emotional intimacies.

As noted above, self-disclosure is a vital component of intimacy, and it is related to greater emotional involvement, fulfillment of needs and relationship satisfaction (Prager and Buhrmester, 1998). Partners' self-disclosures vary in personalness and in emotional content, where each of these dimensions is positively associated with intimacy. In Lippert and Prager's (2001) research explorations, when participants revealed more personal, vulnerable aspects of themselves through self-disclosure, and when they expressed feelings about what they have disclosed, they perceived their interactions to be more intimate. Self-disclosure was also more intimate when it addressed issues that were immediate to the time and place of the interaction and significant to the discloser and recipient. Therefore, self-disclosure facilitated the development of intimacy in relationships and helped maintain its growth.

Waring, Schaefer and Fry (1994) investigated changes in self-disclosure and the impact on perceived marital intimacy. The Waring Intimacy Questionnaire (WIQ) was administered to 20 married couples. Step-wise multiple regression analyses were computed from WIQ intimacy areas to determine what relationship existed between intimacy and self-disclosure. They found that more intimate self-disclosures were connected with increases in perceived marital intimacy. Intimacy also increased as a result of the spouses being able to self-disclose negative information in an intellectual way.

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However, Schaefer & Olson (1981) suggested “that the relationship between self-disclosure and relationship satisfaction may be curvilinear, and that there may exist a point at which increased self-disclosure actually reduces satisfaction with the relationship.” This concept was further reinforced by Harper & Elliot, (1988) who concluded that the relationship with marital satisfaction and intimacy was a linear one and curvilinear with self-disclosure. Therefore, too much or too little disclosure can have an adverse affect on a marriage.

It has been noted by Coleman, (1988) that major psychological and emotional changes occur, as partners grow closer. He found that an increase in interactions led to the interaction occurring for longer time periods and in many different settings. Partners attempted to regain proximity when they were separated. They also found partners were more open to criticism and disclosed secrets when intimacy increased. In addition, partners were more able to establish affective communication, have stable patterns of interaction, as well as an enhanced level of investment in personal interests between them. Nevertheless, Coleman, (1988) also indicated that intimacy took on different forms as it increased. Some couples achieved intellectual and physical closeness but lacked emotional connections. Not only that, but the degree of trust and commitment and quality of communication also varied. These are all indications that the development of intimacy is a complicated process and that it is susceptible to changes as the relationship grows. Nevertheless, the prevalence of intimacy is crucial to the couple relationship.

Harper & Elliot (1988) examined a couples’ perception of actual (perceived) and expected level of intimacy to determine marital adjustment. They found that the amount of intimacy a couple perceived in their marriage was not as important in determining the extent of marital satisfaction as was the incongruity a couple felt between the amount of intimacy perceived and the amount of intimacy desired. Therefore, if the discrepancy between actual and desired intimacy was low and there was a low level of intimacy, it did not necessarily

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mean that the couple needed to increase their intimacy. What it meant was that there needed to be a harmonious relationship between what they actually shared and what they actually desired. Other studies supported this in that a congruent perception of the relationship as strong appeared to be related to an increase in intimacy. They also maintained that as well as “congruent perceptions,” positive communication skills and relevant disclosure enabled intimacy in relationships (Robinson & Blanton, 1993).

### Non-Verbal Intimacy

While liking or loving is expressed verbally (Booth-Butterfield & Trotta, 1994; Owen, 1987), in some ways, the nonverbal behaviors used to express love can be more instigating than verbal communication. For one, they may be enacted with less conscious control than verbal behaviors and may therefore be supposed to reflect more accurately the emotional status of the communicator (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). They may also entail less risk for the communicator than verbal expressions of affection because their intended meanings may be easier to deny if the sentiment is not reciprocated.

Studies that focused on the encoding and decoding of nonverbal behaviors consistently identified a small number of nonverbal cues for liking, affection, or intimacy. For example, **smiling** was associated with affiliation and intimacy (Burgoon, & Hale, 1988), liking, and attempts to gain approval (Palmer & Simmons, 1995). Similarly, **gaze** was related to liking and affiliation. Individuals exhibited more gazes with friends and others they liked than they did with strangers and those they disliked (Exline & Winters, 1965; Mehrabian, 1969; Russo, 1975). Moreover, gaze produced increases in perceived intimacy, closeness (Kleck & Nuessle, 1968), immediacy (Burgoon & Hale, 1988) and liking (Palmer & Simmons, 1995). Finally, **Touch** has also been associated with relational affiliation and affection (Floyd, 2006b). People touch and expect to be touched more in close relationships (Burgoon,

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Walther, & Baesler, 1990; Henley, 1977), and touch evokes more liking from receivers than does the lack of touch (Boderman, Freed, & Kinnucan, 1972).

Two similar nonverbal cues that are also consistently associated with perceptions of liking and affiliation are **proximity** and **forward lean**. Proximity is used as a means of communication of affection (Floyd & Morman, 2001); for instance, individuals were more proximal with friends and those they liked than with strangers and those they disliked (Sundstrom & Altman, 1976). Similarly, forward lean was associated with messages of understanding (Trout & Rosenfeld, 1980), intimacy (Burgoon, et al, 1990), and liking (Palmer & Simmons, 1995).

Finally, **behavioral congruence**, another nonverbal gesture, has been linked with perceptions of intimacy and rapport in a number of reseraches. For instance, Bernieri (1988) found that behavioral congruence was positively related to feelings of rapport within couples (Floyd, 1999; La France, M., Hecht, M. A., & Paluck, E. L. (2003).

While many of the studies have focused on single behaviors as cues for liking, other studies have examined the effects of multiple-cue combinations on the encoding and decoding of, for example, touch. Palmer and Simmons (1995) reported that when people were asked to communicate liking to strangers, they increased gaze, smiling, and forward lean. Moreover, increases in gaze and smiling were associated with actual increases in liking on the part of the receiver.

### Emotional Support & Partner Responsiveness

Effective provision of emotional support is important for a relationship as well as for the individual partner. Partners who were agile providers of emotional support in the early stages of their relationships had less marital distress later on. People are able to acquire the ability to provide effective emotional support (Johnson & Greenberg 1994) but its acquisition requires sensitivity to the partner because there is no single means of providing emotional

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support that is effective for everyone.

Some intimate interactions were characterized by emotional support, in which one partner shares a difficulty, and the other offers comfort, reassurance, confidence building, and alternative perspectives for thinking about the problem. Adults who perceived that others, especially their partners, were available to provide emotional support if and when they needed it enjoyed many positive outcomes, including better physical and mental health and improved immune functioning (Johnson & Greenberg, 1994).

The extent to which relationship-partners actively attended and conveyed interest understanding and empathy for the other's perspective was partner responsiveness (Miller & Lefcourt, as cited in Reis & Shaver, 1988). In Reis, & Shaver's (1988) model of intimate interactions, intimacy was a process that began when one person communicated personally relevant and revealing information to another. According to them an interaction was intimate if a discloser perceived that his/her listener conveyed understanding, acceptance, validation, and care towards the discloser and her/his communication.

### Intimacy in Relationships

According to attachment theorists (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bowlby, 1979; Sroufe & Fleeson, as cited in Collins, & Sroufe, 1999), earlier and later forms of closeness reflect processes linking distinct relational experiences across time. Individuals and relationships were reciprocally related, such that individuals were both the products and the architects of the relationships in which they participated (Collins & Sroufe, 1986).

Swann, De la Ronde, & Hixon (1994) researched married and dating couples to determine how positive, negative, or self-verifying evaluations affect intimacy levels. Each person completed the Self-Attributes Questionnaire (SAQ). In examining the responses of the dating participants, the data indicated intimacy increased as the favorability of partners' evaluations increased. Dating partners with negative self-views were most intimate with those who

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evaluated them favorably. Swann et al. found that the married couples were most intimate with partners who evaluated them in a self-verifying manner. That is, a spouse with positive self-views felt more intimate with a spouse who evaluated him or her more favorably. In addition, intimacy increased when the other spouse evaluated the other with a negative self-view unfavorably.

Intimacy has been verified to be a cornerstone of a healthy and enduring couple relationship. The Results of a study conducted by Robinson & Blanton (1993) showed that a key characteristic of an enduring marriage (30+years) was intimacy. The couples in the study described aspects of the marriage, which included emotional, physical, and spiritual relations with each other. This closeness grew through sharing thoughts, feelings, activities, as well as pains and was facilitated by mutuality, support, and caring. Wynne & Wynne (1986) described mutuality as an integration of attachment and caregiving, communicating, and joint problem solving into a pattern of connectedness. The couple had a shared commitment to one another to nurture the relationship. They further maintained that although mutuality optimized the likelihood for intimacy, intimacy occurred before mutuality developed. Therefore, the formation of intimacy was not only essential to the sustainment of commitment in the relationship but it was also a precursor.

Some studies indicated that intimacy might decrease as a result of time. According to Rowe and Meredith (1982) as the length of marriage increased, spouses were less likely to name each other as intimates; couples also expressed love less frequently. Swensen, Eskew, and Kohlepp (1984) agreed that for the average marriage, changes over time did lead to devitalization. Swensen et al. however stated that those who are were at the more complex stages of ego development, who coped actively with problems and conflicts in the relationship, and who had created security in their relationship by a personal commitment to

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each other, created a vital, stimulating, and satisfying intimate relationship that did not deteriorate.

Partners whose intimacy needs were compatible were more likely to have their needs met and less likely to encounter conflict. Prager & Buhrmester (1998) discovered that partners whose needs were met more frequently had more intimate contact and less conflict. On the other hand, people whose partners did not meet their expectations or standards (Vangelisti & Daly, 1997) reported lower levels of relationship satisfaction. Partners who argued about intimacy-related issues, such as how much each should express to the other about his and her private feelings and thoughts, or how often partners should have sexual relations, reported higher levels of marital distress than those who had other kinds of incompatibilities.

### Development of Intimacy

Intimacy is a "detailed knowledge or deep understanding" of the other, acquired over time within the context of a loving relationship (Bargarozzi, 1999). Across repeated interactions, relationship partners form general perceptions that reflect the degree to which the relationship is intimate. Over time, these perceptions take on an emergent property that extends beyond the experiences contained within any particular interaction (Chelune, Robison & Krommor, 1984). These perceptions, or intimacy schemas, eventually encapsulate each partner's experience with the other and buffer the impact of individual interactions. Intimacy schemas, if they are mostly positive experiences, can result in a backdrop of loving, constructive feelings about the partner that buffer the relationship from the inevitable negative emotions that arise. This positive sentiment override can sustain the relationship even when shared intimate experiences are not immediately forthcoming (Weiss 1980). Finally, the information gathered from intimate interactions becomes a base of knowledge and understanding of the partner that goes beyond understanding a particular message or communication. As two people become more intimate, partners come to perceive one another as each perceives her-or

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himself, yet in a more positive light (Murray et al., 2000). When a deeper, richer knowledge of the other is accompanied by acceptance and respect for the partner's interests, preferences, and tendencies, the partners then would by definition have formed an intimate relationship.

### Gender Differences

Every couple's relationship exists in a broader context that affects their opportunities for intimacy and the quality of their intimate interactions. Gender is a contextual variable that is both present within the dyad (such as the gender of the partners and the nature of their relationship) while being simultaneously reflected in the broader culture within which the couple lives (i.e., sets of roles and socio-cultural norms) (Vangelisti & Daly, 1997).

Intimacy has come to be associated with females and femininity in modern U.S. culture (Steil, 1997). Women are believed to be "relationship experts," and are encouraged to place more emphasis upon becoming skillful at relating intimately than men are (Steil 1997). Perhaps, as a result of this, men tend to disclose less and describe themselves as less concerned with meeting emotional intimacy needs than women (Prager, 1995). Komarovsky (as cited in Merves-Okin, Amidon & Bernt, 1991) found differences in relational intimacy between men and women also. One, women were more likely to self-disclose than men. Two, women indicated a greater desire to communicate feelings. Third, women listened more intently and carefully to the ideas being communicated. Finally, women were found to convey more unpleasant and negative thoughts than men, yet both self-disclosed positive feelings at about the same level (Prager, 1995).

Research results have shown that the male is generally not overly communicative (Orosan and Schilling (1992). Therefore, in seeking to satisfy her needs for closeness and intimacy, the female becomes discouraged by her mate's lack of communication. The female has historically nurtured intimate sharing whereas the male has opted for the more closed boundaries and cautious disclosures approach. Orosan and Schilling (1992) used a 45-minute

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interview with 15 white female and 15 male undergraduates to determine how definitions of intimacy differ between the sexes. By employing student t-tests it was found that women and men do not differ significantly when describing their own perceptions of intimacy. Both sexes expressed affective components such as caring, mutual disclosure, and trust in the definitions. However, women and men differed in their descriptions of their own intimate relationships. Women focused on affective characteristics whereas men focused on the activities and experiences shared.

Regarding physical intimacy, Johnson & Greenberg (1994) wanted to determine what level of commitment a person expected when touches became more intimate as a function of gender. The researchers utilized 152 undergraduate and ethnically diverse students attending a southern university. A two-way analysis of variance revealed that women had a tendency to equate sexual intimacy with commitment more than men. While women seemed to expect a higher level of commitment when touch grew more intimate, men seemed to expect sexual intimacy sooner than the women (Merves-Okin, Amidon & Bernt, 1991).

Rampage (1994) maintained that men tended to consider intimacy as being equal to sexuality. When a man was intimate, he experienced vulnerable feelings. His intention was to feel closer to his spouse, but closeness for the spouse was a “precondition” and was synonymous with foreplay. Rampage further contended that a level of collaboration, empathy, and equality in the relationship was conducive to an intimate experience for couples. Dorwick (1991) supported the assertion that men strongly associated sexual activity with intimacy. Dorwick also maintained that intimacy for women was more a state of being than doing. In women’s opinion intimacy was described as a mutual feeling of tenderness, sharing feelings and openness.

Merves-Okin, Amidon & Bernt (1991) examined how gender affected attitudes concerning intimacy, self-disclosure, and marital satisfaction. The researchers gave 75

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married couples a self-instructional packet. Marital satisfaction data were analyzed by means of a multiple regression analysis. They found in their study of perceptions of intimacy in marriage that support, encouragement, and verbal expression of feelings contributed to the wife's satisfaction level. Whereas husbands not only agreed with verbal expression of feelings, support, and encouragement, but also felt "toleration of less pleasant aspect of the partner" contributed to his level of marital satisfaction. The results of the study also provided empirical support for the linear relationship between marital satisfaction and a high frequency of verbal expression of positive feelings. Communicating positive feelings was practically the same as in perfecting the marriage role.

Overall sex differences were lessened in heterosexual romantic relationships where women and men reported similar patterns of self-disclosure (Antill and Cotton 1987). Despite these similarities in women and men's self-reported disclosure levels with their romantic partners, women were lonelier in their romantic relationships than men were. Also, women initiated more separations, and reported more problems (Rubenstein and Shaver 1982). Furthermore, Vangelisti & Daly (1997) found that women and men had similar standards for their romantic relationships, but that women were more likely to report that their partners were not meeting these standards. Either women's socialization to be relationship experts caused them to be more aware of relationship problems, or women were more effective relationship partners than men were, resulting in men experiencing fewer relationship problems (Steil 1997).

### Individual differences

There's an inevitable balance of pleasures and risks in the attainment of intimacy for individuals. Hence individual differences would exist in the strength of people's intimacy needs and in their tolerance for the anxiety associated with its risks (Sanderson and Evans 2001). Some people would be content with much less openness, emotional support, sexual

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contact, and/or affectionate expression than others (Prager 1995). Consequently, disagreements and irresolvable conflicts about intimacy would arise and be considered problematic in couple relationships. Sanderson and Evans' (1988) research on intimacy motivation has supported the notion that some people desire and seek out opportunities for intimate interaction more frequently than others. This high intimacy motivation may be an advantage, as individuals high in intimacy motivation experience greater satisfaction in their dating and marital relationships, and provide more social support to their partners.

To conclude, empirical research and studies have established intimacy to play a significant role in the creation and duration of intimate relationships. Gender and individual differences have proven to either enhance the experience of intimacy in the relationship or rather hinder it. Although studies have indicated that intimacy requires intense bonding and self-disclosure by both partners, it also necessitates autonomy and privacy. The subtle balance of these elements would only be achieved through the course of time, personal growth and an ardent commitment to the relationship.

### Fear of intimacy

Intimacy vs. Isolation is the psychological conflict of early adulthood, which is resolved positively when young adults give up some of their newfound independence and make a permanent commitment to an intimate partner (Berk, 2007). The Intimacy vs. Isolation conflict occurs in early adulthood, where the developmental task of this stage is to establish intimate bonds of love and friendship. This stage comes into effect after most young adults have dealt with their identity issues and economic/independent standing. Most young adults reach a maturity level that will allow them to alter their independence and identity so that they can fit their partner's self into their lives. Nevertheless, due to this adjustment, many young adults are not willing to get involved with another person intimately which causes some to never leave this stage and to turn to loneliness and isolation. This tie between

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intimacy and identity is stronger and more complex in a relationship in women than it is for men (Berk, 2007). In addition, this psychological conflict involves individuals establishing intimate ties with others, and if this is not completed, individuals will remain in isolation.

Couples also need to regulate intimacy in order to preserve each partner's perception of him or herself as a distinct individual. Because intimacy involves some blurring of individual boundaries in the interest of each knowing the other and maintaining the bond between them, intimate times need to be balanced with time alone or time for separate interests. Intimacy and autonomy may exist in a dialectical tension in relationships, in which neither needs to conflict with the other but both can and must coexist for a relationship to function well (Baxter & Wilmot 1985). Perhaps intimacy can coexist with either autonomy or emotional dependency, but the highest levels of satisfaction accompany intimacy and autonomy in combination.

Couples balance their experiences of closeness with experiences of felt security, and prevent themselves from risking more vulnerability than they can tolerate. Partners' tolerance for the risks of intimacy are related to their level of confidence in their partner's admiration, reciprocated affections, and commitment (Prager 1999). Such stakes seem to necessitate a certain degree of caution, yet more secure partners may well be willing to risk more.

In established relationships, a climate of safety, which comes from each partner's sensitivity and positive regard of the other, allows partners to continue sharing their vulnerability with one another in intimate interactions. Taking risks—of being hurt, exposed, or made to feel foolish—was an integral part of intimate relating. The result of risk taking in the absence of negative consequences was trust, which fostered further intimacy.

One way that couples regulate the risk of rejection and relationship dissolution is through selective disclosure and withholding of disclosure. Baxter & William (1985) found that disclosure regarding certain topics (e.g., extra-relationship activity, relationship norms,

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conflict-inducing topics) was avoided in college student dating relationships because these topics were perceived as threatening to the relationship. Another factor that may also be used to prevent some of intimacy's risks is secrecy (Finkenauer & Hazam 2000).

In order to reap the rewards of intimacy without experiencing undue anxiety and rejection, couples look for ways to regulate intimate contact in their relationships. Each couple seeks their own balance between intimate encounter and risk, based on their respective individual intimacy capacities and preferences, as well as on the other strengths of their relationship (Fitzpatrick 1988).

### The Importance of Affection & Intimacy

The importance of affection is mentioned in nearly every typology of fundamental human needs (Floyd, et. al (2007a). The American psychologist, Henry Murray (1938), developed a theory of personality that was organized in terms of motives, presses, and needs. According to Murray, these psychogenic needs function mostly on the unconscious level, but they play a major role in our personality. Murray classified five affection needs: 1. Affiliation (spending time with other people); 2. Nurturance (taking care of another person); 3. Play (having fun with others); 4. Rejection (rejecting other people); and Succorance (being helped or protected by others). A growing body of literature suggests that humans are biologically hardwired to form close relationships and to connect with others (Steверink & Lindenberg, 2006), since these social interactions influence future development (Reis & Collins, 2004). Therefore, we can safely deduce that humans are inherently driven by a need for affection and intimacy.

The need for affection and intimacy as simulated within the context of expressing and receiving affection in personal relationships has been associated with numerous benefits for mental health, physical health, and relational well-being. For example, Floyd (2002) found that individuals who described themselves as highly affectionate were happier, possessed higher self-esteem and were more satisfied with their relationships. Consequently, they were

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less prone to stress, depression and fear of intimacy than individuals who described themselves as less affectionate. (Floyd, et al., 2005). Not only has expressing affection been shown to be beneficial in self-reports of psychological and emotional well-being, but it has also been shown to benefit objective markers of physical health, such as cholesterol levels as well as blood pressure, heart rate, and blood glucose levels (Floyd, et. al (2007b).

A substantial body of research illustrates on the protective influence of social relationships on physical health (Avlund, Lund, Holstein, & Due, 2004; House, Landis, & Umberson, 1988), as well as on psychological well-being and mental health (Berscheid & Reis, 1998). These authors, building on the vast research literature in neuroscience, share the perspective that relationships are crucial to brain development and neural functioning throughout the life cycle. As Siegel and Hartzell (2003) put it, “The brain becomes literally constructed by interactions with others. . . . Our neural machinery . . . is, by evolution, designed to be altered by relationship experiences”. Thus interpersonal neurobiology identified how the brain was wired through relationships and connection.

Our need for secure attachments and our vulnerability to the ups and downs of our relational lives continue throughout adulthood. Whereas distressed adult relationships are correlated with increased secretion of stress hormones and lowered immune functioning, nurturing relationships were correlated with better physical health, including heart and immune function, as well as resistance to stress (Cozolino, 2006). As Lewis, Amini, and Lannon (2000) put it, “Stability means finding people who regulate you well and ...staying near them.” Healthy interdependence in adulthood entailed a balance between self-regulation on the one hand, and looking to others for resonance and soothing in intimate relationships on the other hand.

The neurobiology of love in adult relationships has also received attention in scholarly literature. For better or worse, intimate partners affect each other’s well-being, both

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emotionally and physically. As Goleman (cited in Fishbane, 2007) put it, the “fluidity of boundaries between people who feel close allows a two-way coregulation, influencing each other’s biology.” In short, we help (or harm) each other not just emotionally but at a biological level. Conversely, data from a number of large epidemiological studies suggested that toxic relationships were as major a risk factor for disease and death as were smoking, high blood pressure, cholesterol, obesity, and physical inactivity (Goleman, as cited in Fishbane, 2007).

The paradox underlying much of the push-pull ambivalence in human relationships was that we were wired for self-protection and for connection. “Human connections create neuronal connections” (Siegel, 2003). Therefore, the kind of parenting we received as children, the nature of our relationships throughout life, and the experience of therapy all change the brain by changing synaptic connections and circuits.

Affectionate communication is an adaptive trait that stimulates humans to gain reproductive and survival rewards by forming and maintaining relationships (Floyd & Mikkelsen, 2004; Floyd, 2006a). Those who were more affectionate were better capable of managing stress, and evidence indicated that they had healthier cardiovascular and metabolic systems (Floyd, 2005, 2006a, 2007b). This observation helped to account for why highly affectionate communicators differed on these psychological, behavioral, and health variables when compared to their less affectionate counterparts.

### Perceived Intimacy of Others

The absence of intimacy in a relationship has been identified as a contributing factor in the onset of depressive symptoms in adults (Costello, 1982; Solomon & Bromet, 1982). Aneshensel & Stone (1982) suggested that lack of intimacy might have contributed to the development of depressive symptoms independent of life events. Adults who had fear of intimacy experienced that lack in their significant relationships. In connection to past

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research, new research led by an Oxford neuropsychologist, Robert Rogers (2009) found that the judgments we make about the intimacy of other couples' relationships appear to be influenced by the brain chemical serotonin. The role of serotonin as a contributing factor for depression is well established in past literature. Researchers, in this study investigated if levels of serotonin contributed to changes in the way individuals perceived personal relationships, or even in their ability to maintain positive personal relationships.

The study involved giving amino acid drinks to two groups in order to manipulate blood concentrations of the amino acid tryptophan, which is a vital ingredient in the synthesis of serotonin. Both groups were asked to make judgments about sets of photographs of couples, then the differences in the judgments made by the two groups reflected changes in their serotonin activity. The experimental group consistently rated the couples in the photos as being less "intimate" and less "romantic" than the control group (Rogers, 2009).

The results raised the possibility that lower serotonin activity, as in people with depression and other psychiatric conditions could contribute to changes in the way they perceived personal relationships, or even in their ability to maintain positive personal relationships. Depression is a condition that often results in compromised intimacy (Rogers, 2009). Hence, it can be asserted that individuals who experience fear of intimacy also perceive lower levels of intimacy in others than those who do not have insecurities or fear of intimacy.

## Conclusion

Substantial attention has been given to how factors of family affection, family functioning, perceptions of intra-family context, and social contexts shape adult relational adjustment, which has been identified as a fundamental indicator of well-being in adulthood. Theoretical and empirical literatures provide a basis for assessing the application of specific family processes, intrapersonal development, and social constructs on adult adjustment

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(Baumrind, 1966). Subsequently, attention has been paid to aspects of family context, such as parental involvement, parenting style, family conflict, and family support (Mayo & Christenfeld, 1999) in an attempt to identify joint determinants of relational success with a goal of identifying how families can function to allow adults to flourish in their significant relationships.

The question then arises about the factors that are most salient in determining relational success. Intimacy is the cornerstone of a good couple relationship, and it facilitates the health and well-being of the partners. In an intimate interaction, partners reveal their private selves to one another, sharing parts of themselves that are ordinarily hidden. Ideally, they receive one another's personal revelations with nonjudgmental acceptance, continued interest, attraction, and care. They also validate one another by indicating that they too have had such thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

Individuals who perceive their partners to be supportive confidantes are protected from the pathogenic effects of stress. The effect of this buffering is best observed when major stressors appear (e.g., births, illnesses, deaths), and with various stress-related outcomes (e.g., depression, anxiety, illness) from which they are shielded. In contrast, people whose intimacy needs are not met feel lonelier (Rubenstein and Shaver 1982), and their relationships are more prone to termination (Hendrick 1981).

It is not surprising to find out that the creation of the enhancement of intimacy is a goal of many couples. The research results cited in the literature review support the idea that positive interpersonal relationships promote mental and physical wholeness. To reiterate, the level and quality of intimacy is seen as an indicator of psychological and physiological well-being. Intimacy is a crucial component of a healthy relationship (Kenny & Acitelli, 2001), and is highly prized as a reward for a strong relationship (Schaefer & Olson, 1981). Couples who possess a low level of intimacy are more prone to emotional illness and psychiatric help-

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seeking since the greater number of interpersonal problems is related to intimacy, leading couples to seek therapy (Waring, 1983).

In conclusion, it has been confirmed that a lack of emotional intimacy ranks highest as contributing to relational dissatisfaction. Missing from these relationships were aspects such as self-disclosure, emotional support, and companionship. At a minimum, it is safe to conclude that fear of intimacy wouldn't have been present had affectionate communication and healthy self-disclosure been more existent in a couple's relationship.

Therefore, the present research examines the patterns between Lebanese college youth's perception of his/her own parental affectionate communication and its relationship with his/her relational fear of intimacy and perceived intimacy of others. These relationships are assessed through the following hypotheses:

(H1) Parental communication of affection is negatively associated with adult fear of intimacy.

(H2) Paternal affectionate communication is negatively associated with adult-male fear of intimacy.

(H3) Maternal affectionate communication is more negatively associated with adult-female fear of intimacy than with adult-male fear of relationship.

(H4) Perceived intimacy of others is negatively associated with self-reported fear of intimacy.

## CHAPTER 3

### Method

#### *Participants*

In the present study, the adult respondents are from American system universities. A college-based, self-reported survey was conducted targeting students of ages ranging between 18- 24 yrs. Classes that participated are freshman to senior, males and females. The Universities selected followed the American program due to the convenience of the sample.

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The data was collected during the fall semester of 2011. Anonymity was assured by the use of ID numbers.

The number of participants was 205 females and males. They were from Notre Dame University (NDU), Haigazian University (HU), and the Lebanese American University (LAU). Refer to the table below for a statistical summary.

**Table 1. Sample Characteristics**

Demographic Variables	N (%)
<b>Gender</b>	
Females	115 (56.1)
Males	90 (43.9)
<b>Age Range</b>	
18-21	169 (82)
21-24	36 (18)
<b>University</b>	
NDU	96 (46.8)
HU	62(30.2)
LAU	43(23)
<b>Religious Affiliation</b>	
Christian	149 (72.7)
Muslim	34 (16.6)
Druze	9 (4.4)
None	13 (6.3)
<b>Relational Status</b>	
Dating	93 (45)
No Longer in Rel.	85 (41.7)
Engaged	15 (7.4)
Never Been in Rel.	12 (5.9)
<b>Parental Status</b>	
Married	163 (79.5)
Divorced	22 (10.7)
Widowed	9 (4.4)
Separated	4 (2)
None	7 (3.4)

### Materials

The following tools are used to provide data for the testing and analysis of the hypotheses.

The independent variables measured are: perceived maternal affectionate communication and perceived paternal affectionate communication.

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The dependent variables measured are: Fear of intimacy, perceived intimacy of others.

### *Background Information*

This short form requests demographic information such as gender, age, college major, nationality, relationship status (e.g., whether currently in a relationship), and parental marital status (e.g., divorced, separated).

*Affectionate Communication Index (ACI):* Affectionate communication of a parent is measured using the factor based Affectionate Communication Index (ACI: Floyd & Morman, 1998). The ACI measures the frequency of affectionate behavior in a specific relationship. It consists of 19 Likert-type items measuring the amount of affection communicated to a particular target using subscales of verbal expressions, direct nonverbal gestures, and supportive behaviors. The respondent is required to rate each item as it best describes his/her mother's/father's communication of affection. Answers range from 0 (never or almost never does this) to 7 (always or almost always does this). The minimum and maximum scores of the scale range between 0 and 35. Research has evidenced multiple forms of validity and reliability (Floyd & Mikkelsen, 2005). The scale shows a high level of reliability in past studies ( $\alpha = .93$ )

*Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS):* Fear of intimacy of the adult is measured with the Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS: Descutner & Thelan, 1991). FIS is a 35-item self-report measure designed to assess the degree of inhibition of an individual's capacity to exchange thoughts and feelings of personal significance with another highly valued individual. Items are worded in the first person. The scale assesses the individual's anxiety about close and dating relationships, whether or not they are in such a relationship. The scale consists of two parts. **Part A** contains 30 statements that require respondents to imagine that they are in a "close, dating relationship" and indicate how strongly they agree or disagree with each statement on a 5-point Likert scale. **Part B** consists of five statements pertaining to their past relationships

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that respondents rate on a 5-point scale. For each item, respondents indicate the degree to which (1 = not at all like me, 5 = extremely like me) each statement is characteristic of them. Scores from the FIS range from 35 to 175. Higher scores on the scale indicate a greater fear of intimacy.

The FIS has proven to be a valid and reliable measure of individuals' anxiety regarding close, romantic relationships (Descutner & Thelan, 1991). Internal consistency was demonstrated by an alpha coefficient of .93. Test-retest reliability yielded a Pearson correlation of .89 ( $p < .001$ ). The FIS demonstrated convergent validity through its significant correlations with overlapping constructs such as loneliness, self-disclosure, and low social intimacy when social desirability effects were statistically controlled. Further support for the validity of the FIS was demonstrated by positive correlations between individuals' FIS scores and their therapists' ratings of their FIS scores.

*Intimacy Scale (IS):* The adult's perceived intimacy of others is measured with the Intimacy Scale (IS: Walker & Thompson, 1983). IS is a 17-item scale measuring general intimacy. The scale has been used to study relationships among female/female pairs (Walker and Thompson, 1983), male/male and male/female dyads, and unmarried sexually active male and female college students (Moret, Glasser, Page, Barger, 1998). To adapt the Walker and Thompson (1983) IS scale for use in this present study the pronoun "she/he" to "they" and the pronoun "her/him" to "each other." The Cronbach Alphas measures ranged from .91 to .97 depending on respondent and relationship being examined.

Furthermore, the respondents were presented with a photograph of a couple in a close setting. The picture represented a male-female couple, gazing at each other, engrossed in a conversation. Each subject was presented with the picture and was asked to report their perceptions of intimacy using the IS scale.

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### *Procedure*

Initially, a pilot study was conducted on randomly chosen university undergraduates. Their participation aided in clarifying whether there would be any difficulties in any item comprehension of the various scales, in addition, in timing the whole research procedure. The surveys were completed with no difficulties reported. The timing slot assigned was 30 minutes.

Consequently, The administration of the participating universities were sent a letter to inform them of the purpose of the study in order to obtain an informed consent that allows the students to participate in the research. Testing of the college students was scheduled in advance and conducted during regular class periods. Questionnaire packets included a background information form, the affectionate communication index, fear of intimacy scale and the intimacy scale and the photograph. Thereafter, 30 minutes of the class was required for the completion of the surveys. The teacher present during that period assisted in conducting the research. An ID number was assigned to each survey after data collection.

### *Statistical Analysis*

All statistical analyses were done using SPSS (version 18). Descriptive statistics - including means, standard deviations and proportions were computed. Group comparisons were then conducted using independent t-tests and ANOVA to determine whether the independent variables (i.e., paternal/maternal affection scores...) differed for adult male or female youth. The Pearson test was used to assess the Bi-variate correlations between the independent variables and dependent variables. A p-value of 0.05 or less was considered statistically significant.

Finally, generalized linear regression was performed on all three scales; Affectionate communication Index, Fear of intimacy scale and Intimacy Scale to test for the various effects of perceived parental affection (both maternal and paternal), fear of

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intimacy and perception of intimacy of others. The Beta (B) scores of the independent variables were calculated; their 95% confidence intervals and p-values were reported.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Essentially, the goal of this research project is to measure the relationship between affectionate communication (how parents communicate affection to their sons/daughters), fear of intimacy (the son’s/daughter’s fear of intimacy in close relationships), and perception of intimacy of others (how they perceive the intimacy of others). The impetus for examining the relationships between parent-child affection, fear of intimacy, and perception of intimacy of others sheds light on the impact parental affection has on youth’s fear of intimacy in their own significant relationships.

The current study utilized three self- administered scales: *Parent affectionate Communication* was examined using the Affectionate Communication Index (ACI; Floyd & Morman, 1998) adapted for maternal and paternal affectionate communication. *Fear of Intimacy* was examined using the Fear of Intimacy Scale (FIS; Descutner & Thelan, 1991). The *perception of Intimacy* was measured using two items. The Intimacy Scale (IS; Walker & Thompson, 1983) and a photograph of a couple in an intimate setting. The internal reliability of each scale was assessed and determined by calculating Cronbach’s alpha. See Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the scales are reported in Table 2.

**Table 1 Cronbach’s alphas of the scales used**

Scale	Previous Cronbach’s alpha	Current Cronbach’s alpha
<b>Affectionate Communication Index</b>	<b>0.93</b>	Maternal Affectionate Communication <b>0.936</b>
		Paternal Affectionate Communication <b>0.933</b>
<b>Fear of Intimacy</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>0.926</b>
<b>Intimacy Scale</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>0.940</b>

Table 2 Bi-variate Correlations between parental affectionate communication and adult fear of

**Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of the Scales by Gender**

Scales	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Parent Affection	Male	88	131.3864	33.30542	3.55037
	Female	114	134.1140	37.03855	3.46898
Maternal Affection	Male	88	73.6250	16.96264	1.80822
	Female	114	72.1228	23.91990	2.24030
Paternal Affection	Male	90	58.3889	20.90787	2.20388
	Female	115	62.1304	23.91965	2.23052
Fear of Intimacy	Male	79	88.6076	21.96875	2.47168
	Female	109	87.9358	26.13366	2.50315
Perceived Intimacy	Male	84	72.9524	18.00061	1.96403
	Female	114	69.0175	20.76969	1.94526
Maternal Verbal	Male	89	23.4494	6.66744	0.70675
	Female	115	23.0435	8.94367	0.83400
Maternal Direct Nonverbal	Male	89	23.2022	7.38423	0.78273
	Female	115	22.7913	8.74141	0.81514
Maternal Indirect Nonverbal	Male	89	26.8539	5.39476	0.57184
	Female	114	26.2368	7.96819	0.74629
Paternal Verbal	Male	90	19.8333	8.23564	0.86811
	Female	115	18.9217	8.81600	0.82210
Paternal Direct Nonverbal	Male	90	16.3667	7.96686	0.83978
	Female	115	20.4261	9.22436	0.86018
Paternal Indirect Nonverbal	Male	90	22.1889	7.66268	0.80772
	Female	115	22.7826	7.70370	0.71837

also calculated between paternal affectionate communication and Fear of Intimacy Part B in

**Hypothesis 1:** Parental affectionate communication is negatively associated with adult fear of intimacy

#### *Bi-Variate Correlation*

To test for the relationship between perceived parental affectionate communication and fear of intimacy, bi-variate correlations were computed. The hypothesis was fully confirmed. Parental affectionate communication was negatively correlated with adult female and male fear of intimacy ( $r = -0.345^{**}$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ). See Table 3.

together ( $r = -0.146^{*}$ ;  $p = 0.046$ )

**Table 3 Bi-variate Correlations between parental affectionate communication and adult fear of intimacy.**

Scale	Parental Affectionate Communication
Fear of Intimacy Both	$r = -0.345^{**}; p = 0.000$
Fear of Intimacy Female	$r = -0.421^{**}; p = 0.000$
Fear of Intimacy Males	$r = -0.214^*; p = 0.015$

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

**Hypothesis 2:** Paternal affectionate communication is negatively associated with adult-male fear of intimacy.

*Bi-Variate Correlation*

Bi-variate correlations were computed to test for the relationship between perceived paternal affectionate communication and adult-male fear of intimacy.

The hypothesis was partially confirmed. Paternal affectionate communication showed partial significant correlation with adult-male fear of intimacy. A significant correlation was also calculated between paternal affectionate communication and Fear of Intimacy Part B in adult males ( $r = -0.236^*; p = 0.029$ ). There was also a significant correlation between paternal affectionate communication subscale of Indirect-nonverbal affection and adult males and females together. See Table 4.

Further investigations were conducted to study the hypothesis across paternal affectionate communication and both adult-males and females. See Table 4.

**Paternal:** The results of the correlation between paternal affectionate communication and fear of intimacy showed a significant negative correlation among adult females and males together ( $r = -0.146^*; p = .046$ ).

**Table 4** Bi-variate Correlations between paternal affectionate communication and adult fear of intimacy.

Scale	Paternal Affectionate Communication	Paternal Affectionate Communication Subscale Indirect-nonverbal
Fear of Intimacy Both	$r = -0.146^*$ ; $p = 0.046$	$r = -0.178^*$ ; $p = 0.014$
Fear of Intimacy Part B Males	$r = -0.236^*$ ; $p = 0.29$	-

\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

In summary, **hypothesis 2** was partially confirmed. Results indicated a significant negative relationship between paternal affectionate communication and fear of intimacy Part B in adult males. Furthermore, a significant negative relationship existed between paternal affectionate communication Indirect-nonverbal affection and fear of intimacy in both adult males and females together.

**Hypothesis 3:** Maternal affectionate communication is more negatively associated with adult-female fear of intimacy than with adult-male fear of relationship.

#### *Bi-Variate Correlation*

Bi-variate correlations were computed to test for the relationship between perceived maternal affectionate communication and adult-female/male fear of intimacy. The hypothesis was fully confirmed. There was a stronger negative correlation between maternal affectionate communication and adult-female fear of intimacy than adult-male fear of intimacy (adult-female  $r = -0.474^{**}$ ;  $p = 0.000$ , adult-male  $r = -0.287^*$ ;  $p = 0.011$ ). See Table 5.

Further investigations were conducted to study the hypothesis across the subscales of maternal affectionate communication (Verbal, Direct-nonverbal, Indirect-nonverbal) and adult male and female fear of intimacy.

**Verbal:** Considering the analysis done for verbal affectionate communication as reported in Table 5, and adult female and male fear of intimacy, there was a negative correlation between maternal verbal affectionate communication and adult-female fear of intimacy.

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**Direct-Nonverbal:** Considering the analysis done for direct-nonverbal affectionate communication as reported in Table 6, and adult female and male fear of intimacy, there was a stronger negative correlation between maternal direct-nonverbal affectionate communication and adult-female than male fear of intimacy.

**Indirect-Nonverbal:** Considering the analysis done for indirect-nonverbal affectionate communication as reported in Table 5, and adult female and male fear of intimacy, there was a stronger negative correlation between maternal indirect-nonverbal affectionate communication and adult-female than male fear of intimacy.

In summary, **hypothesis 3** was fully confirmed specifically posing a significantly higher negative relationship between perceived maternal affectionate communication and fear of intimacy in adult-females than adult males. Moreover, a stronger negative correlation between every maternal affectionate communication subscale of; verbal, direct-nonverbal, and Indirect-nonverbal, and adult-female than male fear of intimacy.

**Table 5 Bi-variate Correlations between maternal affectionate communication and adult female/male fear of intimacy.**

Scales	Female Fear of Intimacy	Male Fear of Intimacy	Both
<b>Maternal Affectionate Communication</b>	$r = -0.474^{**}; p = 0.000$	$r = -0.287^*; p = 0.011$	$r = -0.414^{**}; p = 0.000$

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

**Table 6 Bi-variate Correlations between maternal affectionate communication subscales and adult female and male fear of intimacy.**

Scale	Female Fear of Intimacy	Male Fear of Intimacy
<b>Maternal Verbal Affectionate Communication</b>	$r = -0.433^{**}; p = 0.000$	-
<b>Maternal Direct-nonverbal Affectionate Communication</b>	$r = -0.459^{**}; p = 0.000$	$r = -0.227^*; p = 0.045$

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**Table 6** (continued)

<b>Maternal <u>Indirect-nonverbal</u> Affectionate Communication</b>	$r = -0.426^{**}; p = 0.000$	$r = -0.392^{**}; p = 0.000$
--------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------

\*\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 level

\*Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

**Hypothesis 4:** Perceived intimacy of others is negatively associated with self-reported fear of intimacy.

*Bi-Variate Correlation*

To test for the relationship between perceived intimacy of others and adult male and female self-reported fear of intimacy, bi-variate correlations were computed. The hypothesis was partially confirmed. Perceived intimacy of others was negatively correlated with self-reported fear of intimacy in adult-females with  $r = -0.289^*$ ;  $p = 0.002$ .

**Linear Regression**

To further examine the various effects of perceived parental affectionate communication and adult-female/male fear of intimacy, a generalized linear regression analysis was calculated. See Model 1.

**Consider model 1:** Maternal affectionate communication subscales of direct-nonverbal and Indirect- nonverbal were mostly predictive of fear of intimacy in adult-females/males; particularly, with every unit of increase in the maternal direct-nonverbal affectionate communication score by  $t = -1.944$ , fear of intimacy score of adult-female/male decreased by 1 unit ( $p$ -value  $< 0.054$ ) showing significance. Furthermore, with every unit of increase in the maternal indirect-nonverbal affectionate communication score by  $t = -2.912$ , fear of intimacy score decreased by 1 unit ( $p$ -value  $< 0.004$ ) showing significance.

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Model 1. *Regression analysis for perceived maternal affectionate communication, subscales, gender, adult relational status and parent relational status.*

Parameter	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
Maternal Verbal Affection	.216	.377	.573	.567
<b>Maternal Direct Affection</b>	<b>-.634</b>	.326	-1.944	<b>.054</b>
<b>Maternal Indirect Affection</b>	<b>-1.128</b>	.387	-2.912	<b>.004</b>
Gender	-3.400	3.434	-.990	.324
Adult Rel. Status	.968	1.149	.843	.401
Parent Rel. Status	2.463	1.907	1.292	.198

Dependent Variable: Fear of Intimacy

To further examine the various effects of perceived parental affectionate communication and adult-female/male perceived intimacy of others, a generalized linear regression analysis was calculated. See Model 2.

**Consider model 2:** Maternal affectionate communication subscales of indirect-nonverbal was mostly predictive of adult-female/male perceived intimacy of others; particularly, with every unit of increase in the maternal indirect-nonverbal affectionate communication score by  $t = 2.179$ , perceived intimacy of others score increased by 1 unit ( $p$ -value  $< 0.031$ ) showing significance.

Model 2. *Regression analysis for perceived maternal affectionate communication, subscales, gender, adult relational status and parent relational status.*

Parameter	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
Maternal Verbal Affection	.212	.309	.685	.494
<b>Maternal Direct Affection</b>	.035	.269	.130	.896
<b>Maternal Indirect Affection</b>	<b>.707</b>	.324	2.179	<b>.031</b>
Gender	-3.131	2.780	-1.126	.262
Adult Rel. Status	.769	.937	.820	.413
Parent Rel. Status	1.376	1.535	.063	.371

Dependent Variable: Perceived Intimacy of others

## CHAPTER 5

## Discussion

This study examined the relationship between the perceived parental affectionate communication and fear of intimacy in adults. Parental affectionate communication factors used in this study were verbal expression, direct-nonverbal gestures, and indirect-nonverbal or supportive behaviors. It was hypothesized that low parental affection would be significantly related to increased fear of intimacy while high parental affection would be significantly related to decreased fear of intimacy among adults. Additionally, it was suggested low parental affection would be significantly related to low perception of others' intimacy.

This study was unique in that it was the first to link parental affectionate communication to relational fear of intimacy in adults and thus exposed a puzzle-piece for understanding the structures underlying its implications. The results revealed interesting patterns and paved the way for several interpretations.

**Parent Affectionate Communication & Fear of Intimacy in Adults**

The first hypothesis states that parental communication of affection is associated with adult fear of intimacy, such that adults reporting high levels of parental affectionate communication have lower fear of intimacy in comparison to those reporting low parental affectionate communication. The hypothesis was fully confirmed.

Parental affectionate communication was negatively associated with adult male and female fear of intimacy. As in past research, the present findings confirm the role of parental affection on the adult's well being. It has shown that children learn about attachment, love, and security from their early caregivers, typically their parents (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bowlby, 1979, 1980). Hazan & Shaver (1987) were the pioneers to study the influence of parental attachment, expression of affection and their intricate links in an adult's ability to forge successful relationships. The present findings have served to add credence for a

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significant relationship between a parent's ability to express affection, verbally and non-verbally to the adult-child, and its subsequent effect on the adult child's ability and quality to forge intimate relationships. Parental affectionate communication was an important antecedent in the development of intimacy in the adult child's significant relationships with the opposite sex.

#### **Paternal Affectionate Communication and Adult-Male Fear of Intimacy**

The second hypothesis states that that paternal affectionate communication is associated negatively with adult-male fear of intimacy. The hypothesis was partially confirmed. Further investigations revealed that there was a significant negative relationship between paternal affectionate communication and fear of intimacy Part B in adult males. The Part B of the fear of intimacy scale consists of 5 items relating to the respondent's past fear of intimacy. The statements were as follows: "I have held back my feelings in previous relationships" and "There are people who think that I am afraid to get close to them." The results have shown that paternal affectionate communication has influenced the adult male's fear of intimacy in their past relationships but not in the present ones. A possible explanation could be that the father's initial role in influencing the adult-males patterns of relational intimacy was minimal to begin with. The present finding demonstrates that explanation. The significant relationship between the father's communication of affection with the male-adult's past fear of intimacy was weak and therefore, did not have a lasting influence on his present fear of intimacy.

To interpret the partial significant relationship between paternal affectionate communication and adult-male fear of intimacy we need to examine related past research findings. Studies on the importance of the father-son relationship to men's adult lives and relationships disclose the following interesting findings. When fathers were actively involved in the lives of their sons, their sons turned out to be better able to express feelings of vulnerability and sadness (Floyd, K. and Morman, M. 2000). The paternal involvement was

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described not only in providing quality time and emotional support but also in directly raising and parenting their sons. Marsh (1988,1989,1990) referred to this role as “masculine domesticity.” These fathers raised sons who were better able to resolve conflict, were more caring, had healthier relationships, and exhibited a heightened capacity for sharing intimacy (Beatty & Dobos, 1993; Berry, 1990; Martin & Anderson, 1995).

Communication of affection was integral in these father-son dyads. The findings clearly indicated that fathers who stayed at home, raised their sons and communicated affection had a significant impact on their son’s relational satisfaction and expression of intimacy. They were also more relaxed concerning gender role expectations of traditional masculinity (Pollack, 1998; Morman, and Floyd, 2000). The traditional masculine role is often characterized by restrictive emotionality, a preoccupation with success, the inhibited expression of affection, and a need for control and power (O’Neil, 1981; Pollack, (1998). In short, fathers who had motherly qualities as being less authoritarian or controlling and more nurturant and affectionate, raised sons who modeled the same attitude and behavior.

The present study investigated the impact of affectionate communication alone on the adult male’s relational intimacy. The results conclude that paternal affectionate communication alone did not breed similar results as in past research. However, paternal indirect-nonverbal affectionate communication influenced both, adult-male and female fear of intimacy, yet not separately, and that is because of the inevitable impact of culture. The role of culture on the father-child relationship is manifest in both, western and non-western communities. In western literature, research on father and son affectionate communication patterns, is mainly focused on the negative aspects of the relationship, such as dysfunction (Lee, as cited in Floyd & Morman, 2001), conflict (Comstock, as cited in Floyd & Morman, 20101), and role inadequacy (Floyd, 2005). This symbolizes the traditional father role. The traditional father typically models a detached, controlling, unaffectionate model (Griswold, as cited in Morman

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and Floyd, 2002). The Lebanese culture although highly westernized, is considered to be part of the Arab culture and this traditional model of fatherhood is ever present in the Lebanese father (Dwairy and Achoui 2006). The father's shortcomings of being verbally unaffectionate, uninvolved and distant have made them ill prepared for the role of fatherhood (Floyd, 2005).

Another important finding related to the present research is that fathers and sons tend to express their affection toward each other more through supportive activities, such as doing favors for each other or helping each other with projects, than through direct verbal statements (e.g., saying "I Love you") or direct nonverbal gestures (e.g., hugging; Morman and Floyd, 1999). This supported the relational significance between paternal Indirect-nonverbal affectionate communication and male/female fear of intimacy. Out of all three subscales of verbal, nonverbal and Indirect-nonverbal affectionate communication subscales, Indirect-nonverbal gestures were the most that impacted the adult child's relational intimacy.

It is worthy to note here that maternal affectionate communication had a significant impact on adult-male fear of intimacy. This was not surprising since the modeling hypothesis states that individuals replicate the parenting style and the relational involvement they experienced while growing up. Identification between parent and child is the strength of the modeling hypothesis (Kagan, & Moss, 1962). It is an important causal variable operating in the theory. According to developmental perspectives such as social learning theory (Bandura, as cited in Richters & Waters, 1991), people encode modeling only to the extent that they identify with, or feel positively toward, the source of the behavior (fathers and male children). When the child views another favorably, then he/she sees rewards in imitating the other's behavior (in this case, the mother). This latter dimension is of utmost importance to the present study. Males identified with their mother and modeled that behavior in their relational involvement with the opposite sex. Hence, this explains why male children in identifying with affectionate mothers experienced lower fear of intimacy.

### **Maternal Affectionate Communication and Adult-female Fear of Intimacy**

The third hypothesis stated that there is a stronger negative correlation between maternal affectionate communication in association with adult-female fear of intimacy than with adult-male fear of relationship.

The present research indicated females scored numerically higher than males in terms of relational fear of intimacy and negative perception of others' intimacy. The female-adult was more influenced with the pattern of her mother's affectionate communication than the male-adult. The maternal verbal, direct-nonverbal and Indirect-nonverbal affectionate communications have all had a significant impact on the female's fear of intimacy part A and part B of the scale. This finding illustrates that the mother's role and style in expressing affection have influenced the level of intimacy in present and past relationships in females.

As discussed in the literature review, identity formation in adulthood provides an important explanation in understanding the effects of this relationship. Steil (1997) suggested that women's identity development revolved around the issues of who one is in relation to others. Men's identity development revolved around the issues of competence and knowledge, where it is lined with interpersonal separateness, while women's identity development relied on connectedness with others. (Gilligan, as cited in Årseth, Kroger, & Martinussen, 2009). Further longitudinal research also showed that relational connections were a central part of women's identity development Josselson's (as cited in Årseth, et al., 2009). The present findings of this study emulated past research in emphasizing the role of identity in female adults. Moreover, the biological role it played lead to their subsequent functional or dysfunctional connection with male partners.

### **Fear of Intimacy and Perceived Intimacy of Others**

The fourth hypothesis stated that perceived intimacy of others is negatively correlated with self-reported fear of intimacy. It was partially significant. The results were only confirmed

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between the adult-female fear of intimacy and perceived intimacy of other. The higher the fear of intimacy in adult-females the lower was their perception of intimacy in others. Females had projected their own fear of intimacy in their present relationships onto the level and quality of intimacy of the other couple. This finding conveys the following interpretation, that adult females who perceived their parents to be less affectionate, specifically their mothers, experienced more fear of intimacy in their significant relationships with men. Hence, this fear influenced their judgment concerning other couple's ease in personal and emotional self-disclosure, level of trust and love towards each other. Their own inability to express their emotions or be vulnerable and risk being hurt was generalized into a belief that others were also incapable of doing the same.

Further investigations revealed that gender was the contributing factor for this negative relationship between adult-female fear of intimacy and perceived intimacy of others. The adult-females, parental status, religious affiliation or present relational status (e.g., dating, no longer dating, never dated) were not a predictive factor. Therefore, the most prevalent influencers were their gender together with the affection they had received from their mothers.

Past literature studies, mentioned in the literature review, can clarify the insignificant relationship between adult-males' fear of intimacy and perceived intimacy of others. That could be due to the fact that women were encouraged to place more emphasis on becoming skillful at relating and being intimate than men were, as stated in past research (Steil 1997). Accordingly, men tend to disclose less and describe themselves as less concerned with meeting emotional intimacy needs than women (Prager, 1995). This gender difference could account for the perceptual difference of intimacy of others. If men do not experience the same need to relate and connect as women do, then their perception of what constitutes to be intimate differs also. Hence, their own fear of intimacy would be significantly lower than women (as it was apparent in the results) and so would their evaluation of other couple's

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intimacy. To conclude, adult-males not only experienced lower fear of intimacy in their own relationships but also their fear of intimacy did not affect their perception of intimacy in others.

### **Maternal Direct and Indirect-nonverbal Affection**

As stated in the data analysis section a multiple regression was used to predict overall affectionate communication. The combination of paternal and maternal affectionate communication (verbal, non-verbal, and supportive actions), fear of intimacy, and perception of intimacy accounted for a significant and substantial amount of the variance when assessing overall maternal affectionate communication. However, looking more specifically at the combination of the individual variables and the regression analysis, maternal direct and indirect non-verbal affectionate communication yielded significant results in relation to male and female fear of intimacy and perception of intimacy.

Regression analyses showed that the most important factor in predicting fear of intimacy in adult males & females was first, the maternal indirect non-verbal and second, direct non-verbal affectionate communication. Maternal Indirect affectionate communication was defined for example as, “helps me with my problems”, “praises my accomplishments”, and example for direct-nonverbal affectionate communication were, “sits close to me”, “puts her arm around me”. These types of affectionate messages influenced adult female/male fear of intimacy and perceived intimacy more than verbal messages of, “I love you” and “I care about you”. The nonverbal communication patterns between mothers and their adult daughters and sons affected these adults’ fear of intimacy in their relationships. Not only did it influence their perceptions of their own relationships but also their perceptions of other couples’ intimacy level. The mother’s nonverbal cues of affection had a larger impact on the adult’s ability to form healthy, fear-free relationships.

It has been evident in past research on attachment that the mother-child relationship is

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more predictive of child outcomes, compared with father-child interaction (Hollier, as cited in Berndt, et al., 1995). The maternal relationship has greater influence on children's mental, psychological and social behavior than the paternal (Ainsworth, et al., 1978; Bowlby, 1979). The results in this study not only replicate those same results but also highlight the influence of maternal nonverbal affectionate communication on adult relationships. For instance, mothers who showed affection through supportive gestures as, solving problems and encouraging personal accomplishments, raised more secure adults. More specifically, these adults were better able to attain healthier and more functional relationships.

### **Intimacy in Therapy**

The present study conveyed the fact that intimate relationships require positive self-concept, positive self-disclosure and constructive feedback. Successful adult relationships are characterized by a sense of connectedness, good communication and the ability to ask for and give support. Positive self-concept permits one to be his own person- his own identity, yet risk enmeshing with another without the fear of losing oneself. Feedback is a constructive response to another's self-disclosure and usually involves reciprocal self-disclosure. When these are absent from the couple relationship, judging, blaming, withholding information, and unhealthy control creep into the relationship. In this case, healthy intimacy would be replaced with destructive fear of intimacy. These positive qualities are primarily established in someone during the childhood years as result of the relationship of the child's parents. However, successful relationships can still be established and maintained even if someone's childhood has been less than ideal that is if the person is willing to learn and change.

The results in this research indicated that males and females experienced fear of intimacy when parents were unaffectionate. It was shown that females experienced far more fear of intimacy in general and that was especially heightened when their mothers were unaffectionate. Therefore, when couples have difficulty creating or maintaining intimacy they

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may resort to counseling or couple therapy. The present findings gear counseling towards several directions. First, the maternal affectionate style has proven to have such an influence on males and females that it cannot be left untapped. During counseling, this maternal relationship has to have priority in the exploration process. With the aid of the mediator, the nature of affectionate communication between mother and child, especially daughter, has to be disclosed. Second, A closer look at the verbal and nonverbal affectionate patterns can reveal reasons for lack of trust and vulnerability, over protectiveness and fear of getting close to someone. A partner's tolerance for the risks of intimacy is related to their level of assurance in the partner's reciprocal affection and commitment. Here, the therapist has a unique role to play in aiding the client to introspect his/her relational patterns, perceptual coping mechanisms to be able to bridge this gap created by past negative experiences.

### Strengths and Limitations

There were three main limitations to the study that should be considered when examining the research. Demographically speaking the sample collected was relatively homogeneous in nature. Drawing from three American streamed universities, the 78% Christian sample lacked ethnic diversity, which could have contributed to the breadth of the research. In many other ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds the ways in which child rearing and relationships are socially constructed could offer further assistance in explaining the current notions of parent-adult relationships.

A second potential limitation was the reliance on self-report measures of perceived affectionate communication and fear of intimacy. Two concerns about self-report measures are particularly significant. The first is that people's reports of their behavior may not be congruent with their actual behavior. This is a legitimate concern, but one that is at least partially assuaged here because the ACI and FIS have undergone extensive validation with

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behavioral as well as perceptual measures. The second issue is that self-presentation concerns could cause participants to respond to the measures in ways that reflect their desired image rather than their actual behavior. The social desirability effect is also a legitimate concern but it is not at all unique to self-report measures. Indeed, any method of data collection is susceptible to social desirability bias if the participants know that they are taking part in a study. However, there is no reason to assume, that is, that people modify their behavior for social desirability purposes to any less an extent than they modify their reports of their behavior. A third limitation of the present study was the relatively small sample size. The sample size can limit both generalizability and statistical power. Smaller samples lead to the attenuation of power; thus, a larger sample might have been helpful in identifying results that did not emerge as significant in this study (such as our tests of Hypothesis 2).

### Recommendations

In summary, the exploration of the Lebanese parental affectionate communication in this study was translated in the examination of two constructs: Maternal affectionate communication and paternal affectionate communication. Also, adult fear of intimacy and perceived intimacy of others were examined. The significant associations between parental affectionate communication, adult fear of intimacy and perceived intimacy of others were reported; hence, the following recommendations are suggested.

The present study examined the impact parental affectionate communication had on college-age adult males and females. Participants in this study were all in the stage of early adulthood (age range of 18-23 years), so they had just recently undergone the transition from late adolescence to early adulthood. Further research focused on later adulthood could bring different results, since adults at the later stages of adulthood would have more stable identities and emotional stability. Couples during late adulthood would have more focused

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intimacy goals, would be better equipped with conflict resolution and would be able to make more accurate positive/negative attributions for their partner's behavior (Acitelli, 1992; Karetsky & Sanderson, 2000). Therefore, intimate relationships in late adulthood would be different in intimacy goals and quality. These components may lead to different results concerning adults' fear of intimacy in general.

Further research could also be done on a larger heterogeneous sample concerning the parental status of the participants. Most of the participants' parents were married in this sample group. A larger sample representing participants that come from parents who were either divorced or separated could derive different results. Furthermore, the relational status of the participants could be another influencing factor in a study where the sample represents participants in different types of relationships as dating or married couples.

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\_\_\_ Helps me with problems

\_\_\_ Says "I Love you"

\_\_\_ Kisses me

\_\_\_ Acknowledges my birthday

\_\_\_ Says how important I am to her

\_\_\_ Hugs me

\_\_\_ Praises my accomplishments

\_\_\_ Says I am her best friend

\_\_\_ Shares private information

\_\_\_ Says "I care about you"

\_\_\_ Gives me compliments

\_\_\_ Says I am a good friend

\_\_\_ Puts her arm around me

\_\_\_ Sits close to me

\_\_\_ Gives me a massage or backrub



Appendix B

**The Affectionate Communication Index**

We would like you to think about how your **father** expressed love or affection to you. That is, how did your **father** let you know that he loved you? To what extent would you say he did each of the following things as a way to express affection to you?

Indicate your response by writing the appropriate number on the line preceding each item according to the scale below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never or Almost Never Does This						Always or Almost Always Does This
_____	Helps me with problems				_____	Says I am his best friend
_____	Says "I Love you"				_____	Shares private information
_____	Kisses me				_____	Says "I care about you"
_____	Acknowledges my birthday				_____	Gives me compliments
_____	Says how important I am to him				_____	Says I am a good friend
_____	Hugs me				_____	Puts his arm around me
_____	Praises my accomplishments				_____	Sits close to me
_____					_____	Gives me a massage or backrub
_____	8. I would feel at ease telling O that I care about him/her.					
_____	7. I would have a feeling of complete togetherness with O.					
_____	8. I would be comfortable discussing significant problems with O.					
_____	9. A part of me would be afraid to make a long-term commitment to O.					
_____	10. I would feel comfortable telling my experiences, even sad ones, to O.					
_____	11. I would probably feel nervous showing O strong feelings of affection.					
_____	12. I would find it difficult being open with O about my personal thoughts.					
_____	13. I would feel uneasy with O depending on me for emotional support.					
_____	14. I would not be afraid to share with O what I dislike about myself.					
_____	15. I would be afraid to take the risk of being hurt in order to establish a closer relationship with O.					
_____	16. I would feel comfortable keeping very personal information to myself.					
_____	17. I would not be nervous about being spontaneous with O.					

## Appendix C

**Fear-of-Intimacy Scale**

**Part A Instructions:** Imagine you are in a *close, dating* relationship. Respond to the following statements as you would *if you were in that close relationship*. Rate how characteristic each statement is of you on a scale of 1 to 5 as described below, and put your responses on the line preceding each item.

*Note.* In each statement "O" refers to the person who would be in the close relationship with you.

1	2	3	4	5
not at all characteristic of me	slightly characteristic of me	moderately characteristic of me	very characteristic of me	extremely characteristic of me

- \_\_\_ 1. I would feel uncomfortable telling O about things in the past that I have felt ashamed of.
- \_\_\_ 2. I would feel uneasy talking with O about something that has hurt me deeply.
- \_\_\_ 3. I would feel comfortable expressing my true feelings to O.
- \_\_\_ 4. If O were upset I would sometimes be afraid of showing that I care.
- \_\_\_ 5. I might be afraid to confide my innermost feelings to O.
- \_\_\_ 6. I would feel at ease telling O that I care about him/her.
- \_\_\_ 7. I would have a feeling of complete togetherness with O.
- \_\_\_ 8. I would be comfortable discussing significant problems with O.
- \_\_\_ 9. A part of me would be afraid to make a long-term commitment to O.
- \_\_\_ 10. I would feel comfortable telling my experiences, even sad ones, to O.
- \_\_\_ 11. I would probably feel nervous showing O strong feelings of affection.
- \_\_\_ 12. I would find it difficult being open with O about my personal thoughts.
- \_\_\_ 13. I would feel uneasy with O depending on me for emotional support.
- \_\_\_ 14. I would not be afraid to share with O what I dislike about myself.
- \_\_\_ 15. I would be afraid to take the risk of being hurt in order to establish a closer relationship with O.
- \_\_\_ 16. I would feel comfortable keeping very personal information to myself.
- \_\_\_ 17. I would not be nervous about being spontaneous with O.
- \_\_\_ 18. I would feel comfortable telling O things that I do not tell other people.

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- \_\_\_ 19. I would feel comfortable trusting O with my deepest thoughts and feelings.
- \_\_\_ 20. I would sometimes feel uneasy if O told me about very personal matters.
- \_\_\_ 21. I would be comfortable revealing to O what I feel are my shortcomings and handicaps.
- \_\_\_ 22. I would be comfortable with having a close emotional tie between us.
- \_\_\_ 23. I would be afraid of sharing my private thoughts with O.
- \_\_\_ 24. I would be afraid that I might not always feel close to O.
- \_\_\_ 25. I would be comfortable telling O what my needs are.
- \_\_\_ 26. I would be afraid that O would be more invested in the relationship than I would be.
- \_\_\_ 27. I would feel comfortable about having open and honest communication with O.
- \_\_\_ 28. I would sometimes feel uncomfortable listening to O's personal problems.
- \_\_\_ 29. I would feel at ease to completely be myself around O.
- \_\_\_ 30. I would feel relaxed being together and talking about our personal goals.

6 = Almost always

**Part B Instructions:** Respond to the following statements as they apply to your past **relationships**. Rate how characteristic each statement is of you on a scale of 1 to 5 as described in the instructions for Part A.

- \_\_\_ 31. I have shied away from opportunities to be close to someone.
- \_\_\_ 32. I have held back my feelings in previous relationships.
- \_\_\_ 33. There are people who think that I am afraid to get close to them.
- \_\_\_ 34. There are people who think that I am not an easy person to get to know.
- \_\_\_ 35. I have done things in previous relationships to keep me from developing closeness.

9. They care about each other's feelings

10. They feel like they are a unit.

11. There is a great amount of unselfishness in their relationship.

12. They always think of each other's best interest.

13. They are lucky to have each other in their lives.

14. They always make each other feel better.

15. They are important to one another.

16. They love each other.

17. They are sure of this relationship.

## Appendix D

**Picture-Rating Scale****Intimacy Scale (IS; Walker & Thompson, 1983)**

Imagine that the following couple in the picture is in a serious relationship. Please indicate your perception of their relationship using the following scale.

1 = Never

2 = Occasionally

3 = Sometimes

4 = Often

5 = Frequently

6 = Almost always

7 = Always

Record your perception in the space to the left of each item.

- \_\_\_ 1. They want to spend time together.
- \_\_\_ 2. They show that they love each other.
- \_\_\_ 3. They are honest with each other.
- \_\_\_ 4. They can accept each other's criticism of their faults and mistakes.
- \_\_\_ 5. They like each other.
- \_\_\_ 6. They respect each other.
- \_\_\_ 7. Their lives are better because of each other.
- \_\_\_ 8. They enjoy the relationship.
- \_\_\_ 9. They care about each other's feelings.
- \_\_\_ 10. They feel like they are a unit.
- \_\_\_ 11. There is a great amount of unselfishness in their relationship.
- \_\_\_ 12. They always think of each other's best interest.
- \_\_\_ 13. They are lucky to have each other in their lives.
- \_\_\_ 14. They always make each other feel better.
- \_\_\_ 15. They are important to one another.
- \_\_\_ 16. They love each other.
- \_\_\_ 17. They are sure of this relationship.

## Appendix E

Photograph of Couple