

2013

The Impact of a Student's Attachment to God on College Adjustment

Cody J. Lloyd

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THE IMPACT OF A STUDENT'S ATTACHMENT TO GOD
ON COLLEGE ADJUSTMENT

A thesis

Presented to

The School of Graduate Studies

Department of Higher Education and Student Development

Taylor University

Upland, Indiana

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Higher Education and Student Development

by

Cody J. Lloyd

May 2013

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**Higher Education and Student Development
Taylor University
Upland, Indiana**

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER'S THESIS

This is to certify that the Thesis of

Cody J. Lloyd

entitled

The Impact of a Student's Attachment to God on College Adjustment

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the

Master of Arts degree
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Abstract

This study examined the impact a student's attachment to God has on his or her college adjustment. Past research has indicated that a person's parental attachment can impact their ability to adjust. More recent research builds upon the construct that an attachment relationship can be formed with God. Using the Attachment to God Inventory and the Student Adaptation to God Questionnaire, 141 students were surveyed at a mid-sized, faith-based institution located in the Midwest. Using a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), the influence of attachment to God was measured on overall college adjustment as well as the sub-categories of academic adjustment, social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, and attachment to the institution. The results indicated that a student's adjustment to college was impacted in all areas of college adjustment by their attachment to God. Specifically, a person with a secure attachment to God adjusted better than those with a fearful attachment to God. One interesting finding was that those with a dismissive attachment to God adjusted similarly to students with a secure attachment to God. This seemed to indicate that the level of anxiety a student has in his or her relationship with God had a larger impact than their avoidance in their relationship with God. The results of this study supported the need for institutions to acknowledge the role spirituality plays in a student's developmental process, especially the process of adjusting to college. Further research is needed to examine the impact that attachment to God plays in overall college student development.

Acknowledgements

The completion of my research would not have been possible without the support of my family, friends, and faculty. I would like to especially thank Dr. Todd Ream for his invaluable support during the entire process of my thesis, his thoughtful and critical feedback allowed me to develop a strong research paper. Another person that cannot go without mention is my wife, Sarah. Her understanding and supportive attitude made the pursuit of my further education possible, along with the completion of this work. In conclusion, I acknowledge God, to Whom I give all the glory (1 Corinthians 10:31).

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Over the course of their lives, people face many different periods of transition. However, the transition to independence is one that appears to have a larger developmental impact on a person than many others. The transition from home to college is one of the most influential periods in the move to independence. Making this transition can be tumultuous, smooth, or daunting. Entering and adjusting to college includes a variety of dyadic events from academic and social interaction, to identity development and emotional introspection (Fass & Tubman, 2002; Wei, Russell, & Zakalik, 2005).

The process of adjusting well to college is a vital one. It has been shown that the progress a student makes in adjusting to college during the first year will impact the remainder of his or her college experience (Hurtado et al., 2007). A student who fails to make the transition to college in a healthy way, will not only impact his or her development, but may eliminate the possibility of a college career. An average of 40% of students will leave college without a degree, and 75% of those students make the choice to leave during their first two years of school (Porter, 1990; Tinto, 1987).

Many factors influence whether college adjustment is a positive or negative event. Researchers found that gender, living environment, ethnic identity, intrinsic motivation, coping styles, and a variety of emotional and social factors all impact college adjustment (Kneipp, Kelly, & Cyphers, 2009). One additional factor critical in the process of college

adjustment is theorized to be an individual's adult attachment style (Lapsley & Edgerton, 2002).

Attachment can be described as a "lasting psychological connectedness between human beings" (Bowlby, 1969, p. 194). The construct of attachment forms during infancy as a result of how a caregiver fulfills a supportive role in a child's day-to-day life (Ainsworth et al., 1978). A person can be classified into one of several different attachment styles by how he or she interacts in his or her environment when separated from the attachment figure. The four different attachment styles are secure, avoidant, ambivalent/resistant, and disorganized/disoriented (Kirkpatrick, 2005). Attachment styles generally remain the same throughout a person's lifetime because of the solidified internal working model that is developed during childhood; although a person does have the ability to form multiple attachment figures (Bowlby, 1969). Attachment relationships are not interchangeable and are more hierarchal with one main attachment figure and multiple back-ups. Attachment relationships can range from parents, romantic partners, peers, or spiritual deities.

Attachment styles affect students' ability to develop and adapt to the changes in academics, social exchanges, emotional stability, personal independence, and spiritual exploration (Martin, Swartz-Kulstad, & Madson, 1999). Creasey, Jarvis, and Gadke (2009) found adult attachment styles are positively correlated with the quality of collegiate relationships and other factors of adjustment. College life is a stressful endeavor that creates a need for adequate coping methods, and interaction with one's attachment figures is hypothesized to be one of these methods (Seiffge-Krenke & Beyers, 2005).

Summary of Problem

The kind of attachment style a person forms can influence the sensations one expresses or represses, friends made, and even the type of marriage one may have established by age 50 (Gavin & Furman, 1996; Kobak & Hazen, 2002). The style of attachment that is developed can have either a positive or negative effect on a person's overall personality, integrity, adjustment, and emotional stability (Allen, Moore, Kupermine, & Bell, 1998). Therefore, it is not only vital to understand attachment in infancy and childhood, but to understand attachment and its impact over the duration of a lifetime. As a result, understanding attachment's impact during this time will help student development practitioners recognize its role throughout a student's adjustment to college.

Purpose

While there are many different factors that impact healthy college adjustment, they can be categorized into three main areas: academic success, personal-emotional stability, and social interaction. A number of studies have focused on the effects of parental attachment on college student adjustment. Research has demonstrated that attachment has a profound impact on psychosocial functioning and academic success. (Allen et al., 1998; Fass & Tubman, 2002). Fass and Tubman (2002) indicated that if an insecure attachment is found, it generally correlates with low sense of self, which impacts the social, emotional, and academic adjustment of students in college. The idea of a relationship between attachment styles and college adjustment is also supported by the research, showing that individuals with high separation anxiety and insecure parental relationship are more likely to have decreased success in college adjustment (Lapsley & Edgerton, 2002).

An ultimate attachment figure for a person would be one that is perceived to be constantly available in order to provide care and support in times of need. This attachment figure could be contacted immediately at any time or place if a need arises. If a person would have a secure attachment to God, it may be possible that he or she would adjust to the academic, social, and personal-emotional demands of college even better than if they had a secure attachment to a parent.

Several studies have focused on understanding the role God can play as a secure base of attachment. Kirkpatrick (1999) found that forming an attachment relationship with God met the criteria outlined by Ainsworth (1985) as conditions for attachment bonds. Additionally, Beck (2006) found using God as a secure base aided in the process of exploration and theological self-discovery. Minner (2009) suggested that a secure attachment to God could feed into positive psychological adjustment. The concept that a relationship with God functions as a crutch to psychological adjustment is also supported in Kirkpatrick's (2005) review of several studies in which he found that religious commitment was positively correlated "with a sense of internal locus of control...a sense of personal competence and control...an active, flexible approach to problem solving...and a sense of optimism and hope with respect to both the long-term and short-term future" (p. 68). Thus, it seems that God can be a base of secure attachment for someone facing a period of adjustment and, in fact, aid in the process of adjustment.

Unfortunately, the relationship between college adjustment and attachment to God remains relatively unexplored. While it has been shown that parental attachment bonds can impact college adjustment and that God could serve as an attachment figure, no studies have focused on the impact God can have as an attachment figure on college

adjustment. Kelly et al. (2009) looked at the impact of religiosity on college adjustment and found a strong positive correlation between the two. Unfortunately, their study did not review the impact of having God as an attachment figure; nor did it study the impact of this attachment bond on college adjustment.

Research Questions

1. Is academic adjustment to college impacted by a student's attachment to God?
2. Is social adjustment to college impacted by a student's attachment to God?
3. Is personal-emotional adjustment to college impacted by a student's attachment to God?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Attachment in Childhood

Knowing that attachment greatly affects the college experience and beyond, it is important to understand the background concerning how attachment influences students before they enter college. Attachment theory originated through the joint efforts of Bowlby and Ainsworth (Bretherton, 1992).

Bowlby drew on various concepts such as ethology, developmental psychology, and psychoanalysis to formulate his idea of attachment and its purpose. Bowlby's first empirical work on this topic was achieved "through detailed examination of 44 cases [in which Bowlby] was able to link their [maladjusted children's] symptoms to histories of maternal deprivation and separation" (Bretherton, 1992, p. 760). Through these studies, Bowlby concluded a clear relationship between the event of separation and its effects on the parent-child relationship that existed (Bretherton, 1992). Bowlby claimed that during a child's early life he or she cannot perform certain physical and mental operations. Because of these inabilities, children are dependent on their mothers to perform tasks such as becoming oriented to time and space, providing an environment, and even allowing children to satisfy certain wants while restricting others. The attachment figure is a child's caregiver and becomes a secure base for exploration and affirmation. How well the attachment figure fills these roles is dependent on the level of social interaction

and sensitivity to a child's signals of separation anxiety (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Weinfield et al., 1999).

When faced with separation from the attachment figure, Bowlby, Robertson, and Rosenbluth (1952) identified a three-stage response: protest, despair, and denial or detachment. Bowlby claimed a child who was well-loved will most likely protest at separation but would eventually become more self-reliant. He also believed a child exhibiting little or no signs of separation anxiety reflected signs of erroneous maturity. Children who showed extreme separation anxiety were ones who had experienced negative family experiences, such as threats of abandonment/rejection or other undesirable life events.

Although Bowlby postulated the attachment behavioral system as a uniform ethological concept, he recognized individual differences in the way children discovered and approximated to their attachment figure. Ainsworth then noted that a method drawing upon Bowlby's concepts could be empirically tested—an experimental process called the *Strange Situation* (Bretherton, 1992). This process was tested in a laboratory setting in which parent and child interactions were observed. In the *Strange Situation*, infants and their attachment figure were systematically separated, reunited, and introduced to a stranger in an eight episode mini-drama. (See table in Appendix A for descriptions of each attachment style).

In a lifetime, a person has the ability to form multiple attachments. These can be siblings, friends, day-care providers, etc. These additional attachment relationships are not interchangeable, according to Bowlby (1969), but rather are formed in a hierarchy

where there is one main attachment figure and the others serve as something of a back-up.

Attachment in Adolescence/Adulthood

Generally, attachment remains stable over time with various models accounting for this stability. Bowlby (1969) proposed, “infants in their development of attachment relationships also form internal working models of themselves and the social world” (p. 120). Bowlby continued by stating, “although change in this internal working model is possible, over the course of early childhood the internal working model becomes less flexible and consciously accessible and so may be less susceptible to change” (p. 121). The internal working models ask the mental question: “Can I count on my attachment figure to be available and responsive when needed?” (Kirkpatrick, 2005). The answer is either “yes” (secure), “no” (avoidant), or “maybe” (anxious), according to Hazan and Shaver (1994).

The creation of important peer relationships is a major developmental task of adolescents and holds a conceptual link to attachment behavior. According to both Ainsworth (1989) and Bowlby (1980), peer relationships may be so strong that they become attachment relationships themselves. Attachment during this time in a person’s life can manifest itself in many ways, such as: forming peer relationships (Gavin & Furman, 1996), impact on thought processes (Bowlby, 1973), internalized depression (Kobak, Sudler, & Gamble, 1991), and externalized aggression (Allen et al., 1998).

The effect of attachment does not stop at adolescence. It continues through adulthood, influencing relationships and the ability to adjust to change in ways that are more significant than those experienced during childhood. As a person ages, her or his

personality becomes less flexible to change and factors such as attachment continue to impact internal and external events that surround major and minor life changes.

Attachment and College Adjustment

Early adulthood is marked by many changes. One of the most important changes is the transition to independence. For many adolescents, this period in life is marked at the time of college induction. The study of college adjustment resonates within researchers as “[t]he first year of college is critical to student success because it sets the stage for the remaining undergraduate experience” (Hurtado et al., 2007, p. 842). A review of literature related to college adjustment reveals three predictors of healthy college adjustment: social interaction, emotional stability, and academic success (Allen et al., 1998; Fass & Tubman, 2002; Larose & Boivin, 1998). These factors describe college adjustment as a whole and many studies combine these factors into the broad term psychosocial adjustment (Jones et al., 2000).

Research has shown a correlation between students with poor adjustment levels and their likelihood to have low academic success, low coping abilities, high stress levels, high withdrawal rates, seek psychological services, and have a lower overall perception of a satisfying college career (Benson, Harris, & Rogers, 1992; Martin et al., 1999; McCarthy, Moller, & Fouladi, 2001; Seiffge-Krenke & Beyers, 2005). Research supports the assertion that college adjustment is both a byproduct of attachment and a variable that affects other areas of collegiate life. It is critically important to study multiple factors of collegiate adjustment when attempting to understand college students (Lidy & Kahn, 2006).

Personal-emotional adjustment. One of the major areas that should be considered when measuring college adjustment is emotional health. Emotional health encompasses emotional intelligence, which has been defined as an understanding and regulation of one's own emotions as well as others' (Chapman & Hayslip, 2005). Aware that the undercurrents of attachment are experienced through emotions (Kirkpatrick, 2005), Bowlby (1980) described this well when he wrote:

...many of the most intense emotions arise during the formation, the maintenance, the disruption and the renewal of attachment relationships. The formation of a bond is described as falling in love, maintaining a bond as loving someone, and losing a partner as grieving over someone. Similarly, threat of loss arouses anxiety and actual loss gives rise to sorrow while each of these situations is likely to arouse anger. The unchallenged maintenance of a bond is experienced as a source of security and the renewal of a bond as a source of joy. (p. 40)

In the light of the strong connection that exists between emotions and attachment relationships, it is critical to understand the role that attachment relationships have on the personal-emotional adjustments students may go through as they transition into college.

Stress & coping. Having to adapt to something new may cause a person to experience heightened stress and, therefore, generate a need to cope. Adjustment to college is thus an item placed on the extreme end of the adaptation spectrum. Moving from a secondary education level to the post-secondary level often brings a wide variety of stressors associated with greater expectations related to the classroom and adjustment to living environment. Such changes include environments in which students meet new people while living apart from family/friends for the first time. Understanding the role

that attachment figures in coping with stress will help in the understanding of its role in college adjustment.

The internal working model created through one's attachment style dictates how one will approach or avoid persons, places, or things during moments of stress (Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985; Shaver, Belsky, & Brennan, 2000). The attachment style one portrays dictates how he or she copes with stress. Securely attached individuals seek out support from their attachment figure as they try to actively reduce stress. Insecurely attached individuals tend to avoid active coping mechanisms as they still seek out attachment figures. Those with dismissing attachments tend to receive little support from their attachment figures and thus avoid social support as a means of coping (Seiffge-Krenke & Beyers, 2005). Some scholars suggest that if one's attachment figure is a parent, a higher level of perceived coping resources are present when compared to one whose attachment figure is a peer (Brack, Gay, & Matheny, 1993). Individuals with insecure parental attachments may have higher levels of stress symptoms and stress-producing emotions compared to those with secure parental attachments (McCarthy, Lambert, & Moller, 2006).

Depression. Along with the change and stress associated with college adjustment comes an increased risk of depression among the student population. A person's attachment style impacts the way he or she deals with negative-life events. The negative internal models of a person's ability to fulfill his or her attachment needs might be one of the connections between attachment insecurity and anxiety/depression (Bowlby, 1973). Having an insecure attachment style may lead to internalizing behaviors. One study found adolescents who were insecurely attached were the most depressed of those who

showed any sign of depression (Kobak, Sudler, & Gamble, 1991). Wei, Russell, and Zakalik (2005) found that freshman college students experience feelings of loneliness followed by depression when they have higher levels of attachment anxiety.

Social adjustment. It appears that social anxiety and emotional intelligence together impact adjustment, particularly in college students (Chapman & Hayslip, 2005; Summerfeldt, Kloosterman, Antony, & Parker, 2006). This interaction between emotional and social elements shows the need to study college adjustment while also inspecting collegiate social adjustment, including social interaction, anxiety, and social perception. According to Lidy and Kahn's research (2006), "[e]motionally stable, socially bold, and less abstract [students] reported better adjustment to college, apparently because of their heightened perceptions of available social support" (p. 130). A study by Anders and Tucker (2000) found that students who are insecurely attached have lower levels of perceived social support and smaller and less satisfying social networks that are needed for adequate social adjustment. Freeney (2002) supported the notion that offspring's with positive parental relations had higher levels of social competencies, positive peer relations, and a positive perception of social support. It appears sociability profoundly affects college adjustment, including a student's decision to remain in college. Sociability also appears to enhance academic success of students as a result of increased social interaction with professors and belief that professors are able to assist them in the academic arena (Lidy & Kahn, 2006).

Academic adjustment. The measure of college adjustment must also include academic success as a key component. When a student is not meeting the academic standards, it often serves as an indicator that other areas are maladjusted as well. The

findings of Hurtado et al. (2007) supported the idea that students with strong emotional stability and time management skills often maneuvered the academic environment successfully. A study on student-professor attachment relationships indicated that students with more secure attachments to professors had higher levels of academic performance and satisfaction with the environment (Lopez, 1997). A study by Kolkhorst, Yazedjian, and Toews (2010) found first-year college GPA had a positive correlation with parental attachment. In other words, there appeared to be a correlation between high first-year GPAs and a first-year student's sense of high levels of parental support.

In their study, Kolkhorst, Yazedjian, and Toews (2010) found that while attachment was positively related to GPA in the first year, by the third year GPA was no longer related to parental attachment. This finding could indicate that as students' progress through college and successfully adjust to the change in their life, they become more independent. While a correlation exists between GPA and attachment, Kolkhorst, Yazedjian, and Toews found that it was not a reliable predictor of overall college GPAs. Another study by Fass and Tubman (2002) found a strong relation between parental attachment and scholastic competence.

Attachment to God

Religion as a relationship. Faith, according to the work of Kierkegaard, is the commitment to belief in something even in the face of uncertainty (McDonald, 2012). Kierkegaard believed that as uncertainty rose, so did the amount of faith needed to overcome the situation. He viewed Christianity as the greatest exertion of faith that a person would face. Martin Buber viewed the formation of a relationship with God as something that can only happen through a belief in God and a total commitment of faith;

through this action of faith a person's relationship with God transforms from an "I—It" relationship to an "I—Thou" relationship (Zank, 2008). William James' view of faith is that the truth of a belief should be measured by what is gained from it. James believed faith in God brought significant change into the life of the believer in the form of optimism and an awareness of support that accompanies it (James, 1897). While there is a shared philosophical perspective on the role of religion as a relationship, it is important to consider the theological view on relationships/religion.

A well-known passage from the Bible reads:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16-17)

This is one of many biblical verses that summarize the orthodox Christian understanding of God's desired relationship with humanity. The Bible includes numerous references to God's love for humanity and His desire to help those that are hurting and in need. Thus, for the Christian, there is clearly a philosophical and theological basis to view religion as a relationship. However, it is important to evaluate whether or not this description matches the actual experiences of adherents to the Christian faith.

The idea of a relationship with God is expressed clearly in a key study by Gallup and Jones (1989). In their survey of religion in America, Gallup and Jones found that when asked the question "Which of these statements comes closest to your own view of 'faith' . . .," 51% of those asked responded with "a relationship with God." Another relevant finding in this study was that over half of the participants stated, "growing into a

deeper relationship with God” was “very important.” Hughes confirmed in his 1989 study that Christians tend to view God as someone who is willing to be involved in their everyday life. Kirkpatrick and Shaver (1992), in their survey of college students, found that over two-thirds of respondents indicated that they had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ/God. The stronger belief one has in something, the stronger the commitment, and the stronger the commitment, the stronger the relationship. Surveys such as those cited in this section indicate that the majority of Christians view their faith as a relationship with God.

A psychological attachment to God. According to Ainsworth (1985) [paraphrased by Kirkpatrick, 2005] there are five defining characteristics that must be present to distinguish attachment relationships from close relationships.

(1)The attached person seeks proximity to the care giver, particularly when frightened or alarmed; (2) the caregiver provides care and protection (the haven of safety function) as well as (3) a sense of security (the secure base function); (4) the threat of separation causes anxiety in the attached person; and (5) loss of attachment figure would cause grief in the attached person. (p. 56)

Kirkpatrick (2005) provides a theoretical outline of how a relationship with God meets all of Ainsworth’s criteria for an attachment relationship. Hypothetically, if one were to develop a relationship with God that aligned to these criteria, not only would one have a strong spiritual relationship with God but also form a strong psychological attachment to him as well.

Seeking and maintaining proximity to God. While one cannot be physically proximal to God, a person can still perceive an attachment figure as readily available and

responsive (Bowlby, 1973). Just as developing children do not need to see their attachment figure to feel secure as long as they have potential availability, one can view God and maintain a perception of proximity even without being able to physically see Him (Bretherton, 1987). The belief in God's omnipresence, the psychological proximity of a religious symbol (such as a crucifix), and for many, the power and communion of prayer helps provide the sense of proximity to God needed in order to maintain attachment.

God providing care and protection. The second characteristic that the relationship to God must meet in order for Him to be considered an attachment figure is to provide care and protection in the face of fear, illness, injury, and other negative life events. For example, Hood et al., (1996) found that people are most likely to "turn to their gods in times of trouble and crisis" (p. 386). Numerous other studies portray God as a haven of safety such as in times of crisis and distress (Argyle & Beit-Hallahmi, 1975; Kildahl, 1972; Ross, 1950), illness and injury (Bearon & Koenig, 1990; Duke, 1977; O'Brien, 1982), and death/grieving (Haun, 1977; Loveland, 1968; Parkes, 1972).

God providing a sense of security. The third point Ainsworth discussed is how a caregiver provides a sense of security (a secure base). The idea of a secure base provides a person with a sense of confidence to go out in the world around them, helping them to live their daily lives with a sense of security. God/Jesus meets that role for Christians and is described as such throughout the Scriptures. While there are countless verses that develop the sense of safety felt with God, one of the most well-known verses is Psalm 23, which states:

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for His name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me...

In the face of loss and separation from God. The third and fourth characteristics Ainsworth described were based from the anxiety and grief experienced when a person was separated from, or experienced the loss of, a caregiver. This raises the question of whether or not someone with an attachment to God would experience anxiety and grief at the separation or loss of their God. This construct is difficult to measure with regard to attachment to God because one does not lose contact with God in the same ways one would with a parent, peer, or teacher. In addition, traditional Christian doctrine includes the possibility of being permanently separated from God because of sinful actions and living a life apart from God. Traditional Christian doctrine teaches the existence an eternal separation from God spent in hell. This thought is a source of great grief and sorrow for some and is a significant influence on their perception of God and their relationship with Him. Another aspect of this characteristic can be applied to those who feel abandoned by God during a time of need. Their relationship with Him is marked by anxiety, grief, and fear over who they have become and the uncertainty of the future.

Correspondence or compensation? Attachment to God, arguably, occurs in one of two ways (or both), either through the correspondence model or the compensation model. The most common form of attachment to God is through the correspondence model (Kirkpatrick, 2005), which states that a person's attachment style is consistent

across all attachment relationships. For example, if a person was securely attached to a parental attachment figure, he or she will be securely attached to the romantic partners and in his or her relationship with God. This hypothesis is supported through numerous studies (Beck & McDonald, 2004; Brokaw & Edwards, 1994; TenElshof & Furrow, 2000). The compensation model states that individuals with an insecure attachment can experience a religious conversion that allows them to view God as a secure attachment figure. For example, someone who has lacked a secure interpersonal relationship (parents/romantic partners) may experience a sudden religious conversion through which God becomes a secure attachment figure (Kirkpatrick, 2005). Support for this hypothesis has been demonstrated repeatedly (Granqvist & Hagekull, 1999; Kirkpatrick, 1999; Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990). While some researchers feel these two models cannot both be functional hypotheses for developing attachment to God, others feel that these two models can both function independently and parallel to each other (Kirkpatrick, 2005). Kirkpatrick (2005) further clarified that both hypotheses cannot be true at the same time for the same person, but that both methods are supported and viable.

Attachment to God, styles in context. Beck (2007) provided a strong overview of the attachment to God styles that clarifies how attachment relationships work within the context of a relationship with God. Those who are securely attached to God will view God as readily available and responsive, and they actively seek that support when in need. Those with a preoccupied attachment view God as not being reliable and, thus, do not believe that they can rely on his support. Often what occurs with a preoccupied person's prayer life is that prayers to God are clingy and demanding because of the unresolved reliability of God's help when it is needed (Hall, 2007). Those that are

dismissive do not expect God to be available and, as a result, often disconnect from their attachment relationship. In fact, they may not even think a close relationship with God is possible (Hall, 2007). Fearfully attached individuals often desire a close relationship with God, but avoid those close relationships as a result the fear of rejection by God or not feeling worthy of being cared for and loved (Hall, 2007).

College Students and Attachment to God

As previously reviewed, the process of adjusting to college is a daunting one. Students moving away from home for the first time are in a transition between attachment figures. They are forming peer and romantic attachments and have the possibility of forming an attachment to God. If students were to form an attachment to God, this relationship could, in turn, aid them in the process of adjusting to college. It is clear the process of adjusting to college is related to one's attachment style on many levels (socially, personally/emotionally, and academically) and that God can serve as an attachment figure. If Kaugman (1981) is correct, and God is an "absolutely adequate attachment-figure" (p. 67), who can be perceived as more readily available in a time of need, then college students with a secure attachment to God should navigate the process of adjusting to college with greater ease.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship of a student's attachment to God to the process of adjusting to college. With that in mind the hypotheses of this study were as follows:

H1: Students with a secure attachment to God will score higher on their overall adjustment to college than those with dismissing (avoidant), preoccupied (anxious), or fearful attachments.

H2: Students with a secure attachment to God will score higher on the subscales of academic adjustment, social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, and attachment to the institution than those with dismissing (avoidant), preoccupied (anxious), or fearful attachments.

Chapter 3

Methods

Participants

The participants in this study included 160 first-year college students. Once participants who either did not meet the study requirements or incorrectly completed the survey were removed from the sample, the overall usable sample for this study consisted of 141 participants. Due to the 58 incomplete biographical questionnaires, a comprehensive review of the demographic information was not feasible. However, from the available biographical responses, 55% of participants were female and 45% were males. The age range for participants was from 18-20 ($M=18.74$) years of age. The sample was drawn from a mid-sized, faith-based, private, liberal arts university located in the Midwest region of the United States. All of the participants selected for this study were enrolled in a freshman discussion group as a part of the university course requirements.

Instrumentation

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used two instruments to obtain data from the participants. These instruments included the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ, Appendix B) and the Attachment to God Inventory (AGI, Appendix C).

Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ). The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) was designed by Baker and Siryk (1989).

Questions in the survey measured participant's adjustment to college according to academic adjustment, social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, and attachment. The academic adjustment subscale (24 items) measured student ability to cope with educational demands of college (Cronbach's alpha = .84). The social adjustment subscale (20 questions) measured student ability to cope with the interpersonal-social demands of college (Cronbach's alpha = .84). The personal-emotional subscale (15 items) measured student psychological and physical strain during the transition to college life (Cronbach's alpha = .81). The attachment subscale (15 questions) measured student overall satisfaction with the experience in college thus far (Cronbach's alpha = .80). All items were ranked on a 9-point Likert scale, one (1) indicating that item applied very much to the test-taker and nine (9) indicating that the item did not apply to the test-taker at all.

Attachment to God Inventory (AGI). The Attachment to God Inventory was developed by Beck and McDonald (2004) and based from the Experience in Close Relationships Scale created by Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (1998). This was a 28-item survey rated on a 7-point Likert scaled ranging from one (1) "Disagree Strongly" to seven (7) "Agree Strongly." Those completing the survey were grouped into one of two attachment to God styles: avoidance or anxiety, based on the standard survey scoring. Fourteen of the items contained in this inventory were on the anxiety subscale (Cronbach's alpha = .87) and another fourteen items were on the avoidance subscale (Cronbach's alpha = .86). Both factors demonstrated strong internal consistency.

Procedure

A convenience sample was taken from various freshmen discussion groups whose group leaders were willing to allow their classes to participate in the study. All

participants were asked to voluntarily take part in a quantitative study that required them to complete two separate questionnaires. Before the surveys were distributed, students were informed of necessary details of the research study via a packet cover letter and an introduction from the discussion group leader (see Appendix D). The surveys were administered in person with paper and pencil to each group. The medium of the paper-pencil survey was used in order to increase completion rates.

The demographic information was gathered as a part of the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire. Demographic information included the gender, date of birth, class rank, semester, and ethnicity. A One-Way Analysis of Variance was used in order to compare the scores on the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire to the Attachment to God Inventory.

Chapter 4

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The 141 participants were classified into one of four attachment styles that were grouped into either secure attachment or insecure (dismissive, avoidant, or fearful) attachment. The Attachment to God Inventory (AGI) scored participants on two scales, producing an avoidance score and an anxiety score. Using the same method as Cooper, Bruce, Harman, and Boccaccini (2009), a median split was used on the avoidance and anxiety scales of the AGI. Participants were divided into secure attachment, dismissive attachment, preoccupied attachment, and fearful attachment (see Appendix E).

Using this method, 31.9% (n=45) of the participants were classified as securely attached, 17.7% (n=25) had a dismissing attachment style, 17% (n=24) were preoccupied, and 33.3% (n=47) had a fearful attachment style.

In addition to identifying participants' attachment styles, their adjustment to college was measured in terms of overall college adjustment, academic adjustment, social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, and attachment to the college. The minimum and maximum scores, means, and standard deviations for each variable are presented in Table 3 along with a breakdown of scores by attachment style in Table 4.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Adjustment Variables

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Overall College Adjustment	228.00	569.00	438.69	54.32
Academic Adjustment	100.00	196.00	152.63	20.32
Social Adjustment	57.00	175.00	134.05	22.93
Personal-Emotional Adjustment	45.00	129.00	89.81	16.74
Attachment	46.00	134.00	111.63	16.52

Inferential Statistics

Overall college adjustment. In order to examine the influence of attachment to God on overall college adjustment, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. Overall college adjustment differed significantly across all attachment styles, $F(3, 137) = 8.99, p = .000018$. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for secure attachments ($M = 458.56, SD = 46.54$) was significantly different than fearful attachments ($M = 409.32, SD = 60.71$), $p = .000036$. Significant post hoc comparisons were also found between fearful attachments ($M = 409.32, SD = 60.71$) and dismissive attachments ($M = 458.31, SD = 44.65$), $p = .001$. For a full review of the overall college adjustment post hoc comparison, including non-significant results, see Appendix F.

Academic adjustment. In order to examine the influence of attachment to God on academic adjustment, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. Academic adjustment differed significantly across all attachment styles, $F(3, 137) = 8.15, p = .000049$. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score

for secure attachments ($M = 161.97$, $SD = 17.44$) was significantly different than fearful attachments ($M = 142.74$, $SD = 18.75$), $p = .000018$. Significant post hoc comparisons were also found between fearful attachments ($M = 142.74$, $SD = 18.75$) and dismissive attachments ($M = 155.46$, $SD = 19.32$), $p = .037$. For a full review of the academic adjustment post hoc comparison, including non-significant results, see Appendix G.

Social adjustment. In order to examine the influence of attachment to God on social adjustment, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. Social adjustment differed significantly across all attachment styles, $F(3, 137) = 4.03$, $p = .009$. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for dismissive attachments ($M = 141.78$, $SD = 23.26$) was significantly different than fearful attachments ($M = 125.17$, $SD = 24.08$), $p = .016$. For a full review of the social adjustment post hoc comparison, including non-significant results, see Appendix H.

Personal-emotional adjustment. In order to examine the influence of attachment to God on personal-emotional adjustment, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. Personal-emotional adjustment differed significantly across all attachment styles, $F(3, 137) = 7.91$, $p = .000066$. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for secure attachments ($M = 95.69$, $SD = 15.32$) was significantly different than fearful attachments ($M = 82.75$, $SD = 18.62$), $p = .001$. Significant post hoc comparisons were also found between secure attachments ($M = 95.69$, $SD = 15.32$) and preoccupied attachments ($M = 84.98$, $SD = 10.89$), $p = .037$. The Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for preoccupied attachments ($M = 84.98$, $SD = 10.89$) was significantly different than dismissive attachments ($M = 97.12$, $SD = 13.59$), $p = .037$. Significant post hoc comparisons were also found between dismissive

attachments ($M = 97.12$, $SD = 13.59$) and fearful attachments ($M = 82.76$, $SD = 18.62$), $p = .002$. For a full review of the personal-emotional adjustment post hoc comparison, including non-significant results, see Appendix I.

Attachment to the institution. In order to examine the influence of attachment to God on attachment to the institution, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. Attachment to the institution differed significantly across all attachment styles, $F(3, 137) = 5.04$, $p = .002$. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for secure attachments ($M = 114.56$, $SD = 13.77$) was significantly different than fearful attachments ($M = 104.35$, $SD = 19.74$), $p = .013$. Significant post hoc comparisons were also found between fearful attachments ($M = 104.35$, $SD = 19.74$) and dismissive attachments ($M = 116.46$, $SD = 14.34$), $p = .013$. The Tukey HSD test also indicated that the mean score for preoccupied attachments ($M = 115.38$, $SD = 11.81$) was significantly different than fearful attachments ($M = 104.35$, $SD = 19.74$), $p = .032$. For a full review of the attachment to the institution post hoc comparison, including non-significant results, see Appendix J. For a review of all significant results see Table 10.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics by Attachment Style

	Attachment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Overall College Adjustment	Secure	45	458.5624	46.54284	362	569
	Dismissive	25	458.3122	44.65266	376	533
	Preoccupied	24	438.509	37.55398	362	504
	Fearful	47	409.3145	60.71053	228	511
Academic Adjustment	Secure	45	161.9725	17.4361	123	196
	Dismissive	25	155.4577	19.3172	106	194
	Preoccupied	24	151.5499	21.42563	112	191
	Fearful	47	142.737	18.74469	100	179
Social Adjustment	Secure	45	136.6544	22.38912	80.00	175.00
	Dismissive	25	141.7745	23.25562	92.55	175.00
	Preoccupied	24	138.4842	16.04133	102.00	159.00
	Fearful	47	125.1707	24.08388	57.00	167.00
Personal- Emotional Adjustment	Secure	45	95.6868	15.32351	59.00	129.00
	Dismissive	25	97.1200	13.58713	74.00	118.00
	Preoccupied	24	84.9749	10.89123	61.00	100.00
	Fearful	47	82.7508	18.61806	45.00	116.00
Attachment to Institution	Secure	45	114.5601	13.76916	77.00	134.00
	Dismissive	25	116.4620	14.34118	82.00	133.00
	Preoccupied	24	115.3750	11.80572	73.00	129.00
	Fearful	47	104.3531	19.73515	46.00	134.00

Table 10

Significant Results

	Attachment	Attachment	Sig.
Overall College Adjustment	Secure	Fearful	.001
	Dismissive	Fearful	.001
Academic Adjustment	Secure	Fearful	.001
	Dismissive	Fearful	.037
Social	Dismissive	Fearful	.016
Personal-Emotional Adjustment	Secure	Preoccupied	.037
	Secure	Fearful	.001
	Dismissive	Preoccupied	.037
	Dismissive	Fearful	.002
Attachment to Institution	Secure	Fearful	.013
	Dismissive	Fearful	.013
	Preoccupied	Fearful	.032

Chapter 5

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the impact a student's attachment to God on his or her college adjustment. While overall adjustment to college was studied, so were the subsets of academic adjustment, social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, and attachment to the institution. The results indicated that a student's adjustment to college was impacted by his or her attachment to God. The impact was not limited to overall college adjustment and, in fact, the results were significant in all subsets of college student adjustment; a student's attachment to God impacts academic adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, social adjustment, and attachment to the institution. Minner (2009) found similar results with her study on attachments and psychological adjustment (anxiety/existential well-being) and argued attachment to God "is a foundation for positive adjustment" (p. 122).

Students with a secure attachment to God adjusted to college better than students with a fearful attachment to God. This result was also true within the areas of academic adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, and attachment to the institution. One subset that showed no statistically significant difference involved students securely attached to God and their social adjustment to college. While somewhat surprising, this result may indicate the socially-supportive college campus that took part in this study. Students on this campus had a wide variety of support mechanisms, including a very close-knit

residential community which fostered peer support and involvement. Such a socially-supportive environment could account for the lower mean differences in this construct.

Another interesting derived from those students that had a dismissive attachment to God. The scores of students with dismissive attachments were very similar to the scores of securely attached students. In fact, they did not have any statistically significant differences in their scores. Securely attached students had a close relationship with God and had little or no anxiety in their relationship with God. Students with a dismissive attachment to God had a distant relationship to God but did not experience high anxiety in that relationship. This result indicated that students with dismissive attachment to God adjust to college as well as those with a secure attachment to God.

This result also seems to be pointing to a deeper theme with some of the underlying classifications of the attachment relationships. Both securely attached individuals and students with dismissing attachments had low anxiety scores when looking at the median split of the AGI. Students with either a preoccupied or fearful attachment had high anxiety scores and were the only attachment groups that showed statistically significant lower scores within the different scales of college adjustment. This could indicate that a student's level of anxiety in his or her attachment relationship had more of an impact on adjustment to college than levels of avoidance in attachment relationships.

The result was true specifically for the area of personal-emotional adjustment. In this subset both fearful and preoccupied attachments scored lower than secure and dismissive attachments. This result was supported by the Reiner, Anderson, Hall, and Hall (2010) study on attachment in relation to stress. Their study found that a person's

levels of anxiety in his or her relationship with God had a significant connection to level of stress. When students experienced higher anxiety in their relationships with God, they may have had higher levels of stress while already dealing with the stressors of college adjustment.

Within all other levels of college adjustment, students with a fearful attachment to God were the only ones that had significantly lower scores. This result was to be expected as students with a fearful attachment scored high on both their anxiety and avoidance in their attachment to God. In other words, students who had a fearful attachment tended to experience a distant relationship with God and felt anxiety in that distant relationship resulting in poor adjustment to college.

While it was hypothesized that securely attached students would score higher in all areas of college adjustment when compared to those with insecure attachments (dismissive, preoccupied, and fearful), the results showed somewhat different results. Students who were securely attached to God showed higher levels of college adjustment than students who were fearfully attached. Securely attached students also adjusted better in the area of personal-emotional adjustment to college when compared to students with preoccupied attachments. This result indicated that the anxiety students had in their relationship with God impacted their adjustment to college. This was especially true for students with a fearful attachment for they lacked a close relationship to God while at the same time experiencing high levels of anxiety in the absence of that attachment relationship.

The findings also revealed that students with dismissive attachments to God typically did not show a difference in their adjustment to college when compared to other

attachment styles. This seemed to indicate that students with a dismissive attachment to God were self-reliant and processed their adjustment to college on their own. Hall's (2007) study supported this finding, noting that "when they [dismissively attached individuals] are distressed, they generally continue in their self-reliant coping strategies, keeping God, and their spiritual community on the periphery..." (p. 25).

Limitations

One of the primary limitations of this study was not being able to identify whether the student's attachment to God was their primary attachment relationship. A person can have multiple attachment relationships, but he or she can only have one primary attachment relationship at a time. Thus, while the study might indicate that a person has a secure attachment to God, the student could still be using a parent as the primary attachment figure. This study assumed that students rely on God as their primary attachment figure.

The construct of attachment to God has only been studied in the context of the Judeo-Christian faith. If a student completed this study as an adherent to another faith tradition, his or her perceptions of God(s) may be different than the relationship that is assumed in the Attachment to God Inventory classification system. In line with the classification system, another limitation of this study was the use of a median split. By creating a median split, the highs and lows of the attachment classification system were calculated from the sample and may not have constituted an accurate portrayal of the whole population. Although the percentage of participants in each classification aligned with the results from past studies, the sample used may well have had an abnormally high percentage of securely attached participants.

By splitting the students into four attachment styles, two of the group sample sizes went below the desired number of participants needed for statistical confidence.

However, the levels of significance were so strong that the lower group sample sizes were judged to be adequate. As with all studies that rely on self-reporting techniques, there was also the danger of a self-reporting bias. This was especially possible among participants with dismissive attachments, who are often out of touch with emotions.

Implications for Practitioners

One of the primary goals student development practitioners have during the first year of a student's college experience is to help him or her adjust well to college. Another goal for practitioners is to promote holistic student development. In order to better accomplish both of these goals, practitioners should consider evaluating a student's attachment to God and provide an environment that is conducive for growth. This could be done formally through administering the Attachment to God Inventory or through informal conversations on faith. Regardless of the method, an understanding of how attachment styles are manifested in a student's relationship with God is a key component in this discussion.

The present study demonstrated that in several areas of adjustment, a student with a secure attachment to God will adjust better to college. While a practitioner cannot change a student's attachment style, he or she can give students the tools that they need to establish a more secure attachment to God. The reason students tend not to be securely attached to God often stems from deeper relational issues unconsciously manifested in their relationship with God. Practitioners can educate students in what a healthy relationship with God looks like. This would involve discussion and modeling of prayer,

God's unconditional love, and the value of every life in God's sight. Often students with insecure attachments feel unworthy of love or fear that God will not be responsive to them.

In order to help students have a better understanding of what a healthy relationship with God looks like, a formal program could be developed on campuses. Most faith-based campuses have a program that focuses on the spiritual formation of students. Consideration might be given to the development a spiritual formation program that intentionally focuses on cultivating a secure relationship with God. Often programs that are already in place neglect the psychological aspects of person's faith and relationship with God while only looking at the spiritual aspects. Practitioners involved in an institution's spiritual formation programs need to recognize how a student's mindset and cognitive understandings will impact his or her spiritual relationship. The results of this study provided an example of how a student's psychological view of relationships will impact his or her relationship with God in a negative way. If spiritual formation is to occur, the unhealthy worldviews of incarnate and spiritual relationships must be addressed.

A Christian understanding is that God designed the attachment system so that a child will seek a safe haven with his or her caregiver during infancy (Hall, 2007). During the transition to college, students should become more securely attached to God than to human relationships so that they can lower the amount of anxiety and avoidance in their relationship with God and, in turn, grow more fully in their faith. While this process is a spiritual one that others cannot control, student development practitioners can, according to Hall (2007), "...foster it, facilitate it, encourage it, and incarnate it..." (p. 22). While

this process has many terms, it can fall under the moniker of spiritual formation—a vital part of whole-person development that should be nurtured during college.

The results indicated that a student's attachment style impacts a wide variety of areas in terms of college adjustment. While helping students in their spiritual formation, practitioners also need to consider the struggles that students with insecure attachments face while adjusting to college. Students with insecure attachment will have a harder time with academic, social, and emotional adjustments to college. It is important to keep in mind that if a practitioner notices a student struggling in his or her relationship with God, the student is likely to also be struggling in some other area of college adjustment.

While many schools have developed an “early alert” system that identifies students who are struggling academically, very few institutions integrate faith within the alert systems. This study supports the conclusion that faith, especially a student's attachment relationship with God, is an integral component in successful early alert systems. Not only should the academic standing of a student be reviewed, but so should his or her social and personal-emotional adjustment to college. Data reported in this study suggest that students will struggle on each of these levels while facing a time of adjustment and having an insecure attachment system.

Further Research

While this study provided a strong start for research in the area of attachment to God and college adjustment, this connection needs further exploration. Continued research should focus on the connection between attachment to God and attachment to parents in order to better understand the correspondence versus compensation debate. A study focused on the connection of attachment to God to the broader field of college

student spirituality would be beneficial. This study took place at one institution, and the results of a study conducted at multiple institutions of varying faith types could prove beneficial. If done in a longitudinal format, this study could yield interesting results on the impact schools have on the formation of college students' attachment to God. Another area for further research is how well attachment to God can be measured when applied to students from religious faiths other than Christianity. Individual studies conducted on each of the subsets of college adjustment could provide important insight regarding how attachment to God is influenced by factors other than those identified in this study.

The results of this study helped to identify the impact attachment to God has on college adjustment. It has also helped uncover the underlying role that anxiety within these relationships plays in a student's ability to adjust. It is important to keep in mind that if a practitioner notices a student struggling in his or her relationship with God, the student is likely to also be struggling in some area of college adjustment. Support systems need to be put in place and programs need to be developed that will focus on the development of a student's psychological view of faith, not just spiritual practice. While a measure could be developed to identify primary attachment relationships, this study still possesses strong implications for future practice and research.

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Appendix A

Strange Situation Classification Group

Table 1

Strange Situation Classification Group

Group	Brief description
Secure (B) (Ainsworth et al., 1978)	Uses mother as secure base for exploration. Separation: Signs of missing parent, especially during the second separation. Reunion: Actively greets parents with smile, vocalization, or gesture. If upset, signals or seeks contact with parent. Once comforted, returns to exploration. <i>(Approximately 60% of children fall into this category)</i>
Avoidant (A) (Ainsworth et al., 1978)	Explores readily, little display of affect or secure-base behavior. Separation: Responds minimally, little visible distress when left alone. Reunion: Looks away from, actively avoids parent; often focuses on toys. If picked up, may stiffen, lean away. Seeks distance from parent, often interested instead in toys. <i>(Approximately 25% of children fall into this category)</i>
Ambivalent or resistant (C) (Ainsworth et al., 1978)	Visibly distressed upon entering the room, often fretful or passive; fails to engage in exploration. Separation: Unsettled, distressed. Reunion: May alternate bids for contact with signs of anger, rejection, tantrums; or may appear passive or too upset to signal or make contact. Fails to find comfort in parent. <i>(Approximately 15% of children fall into this category)</i>
Disorganized/ disoriented (D) Main & Solomon, 1990)	Behavior appears to lack observable goal, intention, or explanation—for example, contradictory sequences or simultaneous behavior displays; incomplete, interrupted movement; stereotypies; freezing/stilling; direct indications of fear/apprehension of parent; confusion, disorientation. Most characteristic is lack of a coherent attachment strategy, despite the fact that the baby may reveal the underlying patterns of organized attachment (A, B, C).

Note: Found in Kirkpatrick (2005), original use in Solomon & George (1999, p. 291).

Appendix B

Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire

ANALYSIS OF CLUSTER SCORES

In this section of the report, all of the items are organized into 12 critical clusters. These clusters represent different aspects of each subscale and were derived through logical analysis. The clusters for each subscale are grouped together. The mean raw score

for each cluster will be reported, along with the raw score for each item in the cluster and a brief description of the items. Examination of the clusters may be helpful in exploring the quality of a student's adjustment to college. The higher the item raw score, the better the self-evaluated adjustment to college.

ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT

Cluster 1: Motivation Mean of item raw scores: 8.2

Item Number	Raw Score	Description
5	9	Is definite about reasons for being in college
19	9	Has well-defined academic goals
23	9	Considers college degree important
32	9	Doubts value of college degree
50	8	Enjoys academic work
58	5	Most interests are not related to course work

Cluster 2: Application Mean of item raw scores: 9.0

Item Number	Raw Score	Description
3	9	Keeps up-to-date with academic work
17	9	Does not work as hard as he or she should
29	9	Is not motivated to study
44	9	Attends classes regularly

Cluster 3: Performance Mean of item raw scores: 6.2

Item Number	Raw Score	Description
6	5	Finds academic work difficult
10	5	Does not function well during exams
13	8	Is satisfied with academic performance
21	6	Does not feel smart enough for course work
25	9	Does not use study time efficiently
27	5	Enjoys writing papers for courses
39	6	Has trouble concentrating when studying
41	6	Does not do well academically, considering effort
52	6	Has trouble getting started on homework

Cluster 4: Academic Environment Mean of item raw scores: 7.8

Item Number	Raw Score	Description
36	9	Is satisfied with variety of courses
43	8	Is satisfied with quality of courses
54	8	Is satisfied with program of courses
62	6	Is satisfied with professors
66	8	Is satisfied with academic situation

SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

Cluster 1: General Mean of item raw scores: 5.7

Item Number	Raw Score	Description
1	8	Fits in well with college environment
8	5	Is very involved with college social activities
9	6	Is adjusting well to college
18	5	Has several close social ties
37	7	Has adequate social skills
46	5	Is satisfied with social participation
65	4	Is satisfied with social life

Cluster 2: Other People Mean of item raw scores: 5.4

Item Number	Raw Score	Description
4	5	Is meeting people and making friends
14	4	Has informal contact with professors
33	9	Gets along well with roommates
42	5	Has difficulty feeling at ease with others at college
48	5	Does not mix well with opposite sex
56	5	Feels different from others in undesirable ways
63	5	Has good friends to talk about problems with

Cluster 3: Nostalgia Mean of item raw scores: 4.0

Item Number	Raw Score	Description
22	2	Is lonesome for home
51	5	Feels lonely a lot
57	5	Would rather be home

Cluster 4: Social Environment Mean of item raw scores: 6.3

Item Number	Raw Score	Description
16	8	Is pleased about decision to attend this college
26	5	Enjoys living in a dormitory
30	6	Is satisfied with extracurricular activities

PERSONAL-EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT

Cluster 1: Psychological Mean of item raw scores: 5.7

Item Number	Raw Score	Description
2	5	Feels tense or nervous
7	5	Feels blue and moody
12	5	Being independent has not been easy
20	5	Is not able to control emotions well lately
31	9	Has thought about seeking psychological help recently
38	5	Gets angry too easily lately
45	6	Sometimes thinking gets muddled too easily
49	5	Worries a lot about college expenses
64	6	Has trouble coping with college stress

Cluster 2: Physical Mean of item raw scores: 5.5

Item Number	Raw Score	Description
11	5	Feels tired a lot lately
24	8	Appetite is good
28	4	Has a lot of headaches
35	4	Gained or lost a lot of weight lately
40	4	Is not sleeping well
55	8	Feels in good health

ATTACHMENT

Cluster 1: General Mean of item raw scores: 8.3

Item Number	Raw Score	Description
15	7	Is pleased with decision to go to college
60	9	Thinks a lot about dropping out of college permanently
61	9	Is thinking about taking time off from college

Cluster 2: This College Mean of item raw scores: 8.3

Item Number	Raw Score	Description
16	8	Is pleased about attending this college
34	8	Would prefer to be at another college
47	8	Expects to finish bachelor's degree
59	9	Is thinking about transferring to another college

Appendix C

Attachment to God Inventory

The following statements concern how you feel about your relationship with God. We are interested in how you generally experience your relationship with God, not just in what is happening in that relationship currently. Respond to each statement by indicating how much you agree or disagree with it. Write the number in the space provided, using the following rating scale:

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

- ___ 1. I worry a lot about my relationship with God.
- ___ 2. I just don't feel a deep need to be close to God.
- ___ 3. If I can't see God working in my life, I get upset or angry.
- ___ 4. I am totally dependent upon God for everything in my life.
- ___ 5. I am jealous at how God seems to care more for others than for me.
- ___ 6. It is uncommon for me to cry when sharing with God.
- ___ 7. Sometimes I feel that God loves others more than me.
- ___ 8. My experiences with God are very intimate and emotional.
- ___ 9. I am jealous at how close some people are to God.
- ___ 10. I prefer not to depend too much on God.
- ___ 11. I often worry about whether God is pleased with me.
- ___ 12. I am uncomfortable being emotional in my communication with God.
- ___ 13. Even if I fail, I never question that God is pleased with me.
- ___ 14. My prayers to God are often matter-of-fact and not very personal.
- ___ 15. Almost daily I feel that my relationship with God goes back and forth from "hot" to "cold."
- ___ 16. I am uncomfortable with emotional displays of affection to God.
- ___ 17. I fear God does not accept me when I do wrong.
- ___ 18. Without God I couldn't function at all.
- ___ 19. I often feel angry with God for not responding to me when I want.
- ___ 20. I believe people should not depend on God for things they should do for themselves.
- ___ 21. I crave reassurance from God that God loves me.
- ___ 22. Daily I discuss all of my problems and concerns with God.
- ___ 23. I am jealous when others feel God's presence when I cannot.
- ___ 24. I am uncomfortable allowing God to control every aspect of my life.
- ___ 25. I worry a lot about damaging my relationship with God.
- ___ 26. My prayers to God are very emotional.
- ___ 27. I get upset when I feel God helps others, but forgets about me.
- ___ 28. I let God make most of the decisions in my life.

Appendix D

Research Cover Letter

A study on: The Impact of a Student's Attachment-to-God on College Adjustment

You are invited to participate in a research study on how college adjustment is impacted by your relationship with God. You were selected as a possible participant because this study is focusing on adjustment to college, and, as a freshman, you are currently in the process of adjusting to college. The study is being conducted by Cody Lloyd, a graduate student in the Masters of Art in Higher Education (MAHE) program here at Taylor University. If you agree to participate, you will be one of approximately 200 students who will be involved in this research. There are several other Foundations discussion groups taking part in this study. If you agree to be in this study you will do the following:

- Complete two questionnaires: the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire & the Attachment to God Inventory

The risks of completing the surveys could cause you to be uncomfortable answering certain questions. While completing the survey, you can choose not to answer a particular question or not to finish the survey. It is reasonable to expect that the benefits of participation in this study would help clarify your view on how you relate to God, and what is involved in adjusting to college. If you chose not to be in this study, you have the option of taking the next few minutes while others complete the survey to reflect on the discussion that will take place during the remainder of the class.

The researcher will not be collecting any identifiable information such as name or ID number, and your answers cannot be tracked back to you. All answers will be kept on file until the research is complete, and then they will be destroyed. For questions about the study, contact the researcher, Cody Lloyd at (407) 406-3654.

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to take part or may leave the study at any time. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your current or future standing in this class or any other activity on the Taylor University campus.

If you chose not to complete the surveys, leave them blank, and let me know at the end of class that you were uncomfortable with answering the questions.

Please DO NOT write your name on the surveys. DO NOT fill out the surveys on top of each other as one of them creates carbon copies and will be voided if the other survey is filled out while on top of it.

Appendix E
Median Split Descriptions

Table 2

Median Split Descriptions

Attachment Style	Avoidance Score	Anxiety Score
Secure	<i>Low</i>	<i>Low</i>
Dismissing	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>
Preoccupied	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
Fearful	<i>High</i>	<i>High</i>

Note. * Low & High = Below or Above Group Median

Appendix F

Overall College Adjustment Post Hoc

Table 5

Overall College Adjustment
Tukey HSD

Attachment Style	Attachment Style	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Secure	Dismissive	.25017	12.52034	1.000
	Preoccupied	20.05335	12.68691	.393
	Fearful	49.24785*	10.46844	.000
Dismissive	Secure	-.25017	12.52034	1.000
	Preoccupied	19.80318	14.34385	.514
	Fearful	48.99768*	12.42483	.001
Preoccupied	Secure	-20.05335	12.68691	.393
	Dismissive	-19.80318	14.34385	.514
	Fearful	29.19451	12.59267	.099
Fearful	Secure	-49.24785*	10.46844	.000
	Dismissive	-48.99768*	12.42483	.001
	Preoccupied	-29.19451	12.59267	.099

Note. * = The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Appendix G
Academic Adjustment Post Hoc

Table 6

Academic Adjustment
Tukey HSD

Attachment Style	Attachment Style	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Secure	Dismissive	6.51472	4.72006	.514
	Preoccupied	10.42255	4.78286	.134
	Fearful	19.23545*	3.94651	.000
Dismissive	Secure	-6.51472	4.72006	.514
	Preoccupied	3.90783	5.40751	.888
	Fearful	12.72073*	4.68406	.037
Preoccupied	Secure	-10.42255	4.78286	.134
	Dismissive	-3.90783	5.40751	.888
	Fearful	8.81291	4.74733	.252
Fearful	Secure	-19.23545*	3.94651	.000
	Dismissive	-12.72073*	4.68406	.037
	Preoccupied	-8.81291	4.74733	.252

Note. * = The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Appendix H
Social Adjustment Post Hoc

Table 7

Social Adjustment
Tukey HSD

Attachment Style	Attachment Style	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Secure	Dismissive	-5.12005	5.54244	.792
	Preoccupied	-1.82980	5.61617	.988
	Fearful	11.48374	4.63411	.068
Dismissive	Secure	5.12005	5.54244	.792
	Preoccupied	3.29025	6.34966	.955
	Fearful	16.60379*	5.50016	.016
Preoccupied	Secure	1.82980	5.61617	.988
	Dismissive	-3.29025	6.34966	.955
	Fearful	13.31354	5.57446	.084
Fearful	Secure	-11.48374	4.63411	.068
	Dismissive	-16.60379*	5.50016	.016
	Preoccupied	-13.31354	5.57446	.084

Note. * = The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Appendix I
Personal-Emotional Adjustment Post Hoc

Table 8

Personal-Emotional Adjustment
Tukey HSD

Attachment Style	Attachment Style	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Secure	Dismissive	-1.43323	3.89688	.983
	Preoccupied	10.71187*	3.94872	.037
	Fearful	12.93601*	3.25824	.001
Dismissive	Secure	1.43323	3.89688	.983
	Preoccupied	12.14510*	4.46444	.037
	Fearful	14.36924*	3.86715	.002
Preoccupied	Secure	-10.71187*	3.94872	.037
	Dismissive	-12.14510*	4.46444	.037
	Fearful	2.22414	3.91939	.942
Fearful	Secure	-12.93601*	3.25824	.001
	Dismissive	-14.36924*	3.86715	.002
	Preoccupied	-2.22414	3.91939	.942

Note. * = The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Appendix J

Attachment to the Institution Post Hoc

Table 9

Attachment to the Institution
Tukey HSD

Attachment Style	Attachment Style	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.
Secure	Dismissive	-1.90194	3.95265	.963
	Preoccupied	-.81494	4.00524	.997
	Fearful	10.20696*	3.30487	.013
Dismissive	Secure	1.90194	3.95265	.963
	Preoccupied	1.08700	4.52833	.995
	Fearful	12.10890*	3.92250	.013
Preoccupied	Secure	.81494	4.00524	.997
	Dismissive	-1.08700	4.52833	.995
	Fearful	11.02190*	3.97549	.032
Fearful	Secure	-10.20696*	3.30487	.013
	Dismissive	-12.10890*	3.92250	.013
	Preoccupied	-11.02190*	3.97549	.032

Note. * = The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

