

Development and Psychometric Properties of Pursuer-Distancer Movement Scale

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Abstract

Pursuer Distancer Movement Scale was developed to provide a measure of Fogarty's theory of pursuit (nag) and distance (withdrawal) in every day relationships. Two independent scales of pursuing and distancing are comprised of 18 items each. Both scales were found to be reliable and valid. High levels of concurrent and construct (both convergent and discriminant) validity were found. Scale components tap the core dimensions of pursuers and distancers according to Fogarty. Pursuers are characterized by high communication, high social ability and high emotional expressiveness. Distancers are characterized by low communication, low emotional expressiveness and a strong sense of autonomy.

Keywords: pursuer-distancer, nag-withdrawal, marital interaction

Introduction

A key concept in intimate personal relationships is the pursuer-distancer interactional sequence between partners. This process is a core feature of the relationship and is constantly manifested both under stress as well as non-stress conditions. Measurement of this process is important both for psycho-educational programs and clinical interventions as well as for basic research on the process. The social and behavioral sciences have long sought to explain the individual personality characteristics and the interactional processes manifested in intimate emotional relationships. Efforts to understand this phenomenon both from an individual perspective as well as from a systems perspective have been predicated on an understanding that human beings have both an intrinsic need to maintain a sense of self while also simultaneously needing to be connected to another person. (Fishbane, 2007).

Early systems theorists based largely on their clinical work developed concepts to capture the interactional sequence between couples. Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson, (1967) suggested a "nag-withdraw" interaction with the wife nagging and the husband withdrawing. Napier (1978) described "Type I" (pursuer) and "Type II" (distancer) individuals who engage in an "intrusion-rejection" pattern based on a dominant need for autonomy versus connection. Fogarty (1976, 1979) coined the terms "pursuer" and "distancer". His terms for the interactional process between a couple are more general and emotionally neutral in their connotations. Pursuing and distancing behaviors do not necessarily imply a clinical state of conflict or distress as the "nag-withdraw" or "intrusion-rejection" terminology suggests. At the present time the pursuer-distancer interaction pattern has been widely adopted as a useful framework by clinicians worldwide (DeAngelis, 2011). In spite of this fact there has been a significant lack of development of successful instruments designed to measure the personality characteristics of pursuers and distancers and the process between them, particularly under non-conflict conditions. Such an instrument would be useful in clinical work with couples. The vast majority of recent work has employed laboratory research designs, which have studied couples in conflict and/or distress. Questionnaires such as the Communication Pattern Questionnaire (Christensen & Sullaway, 1984) and observational rating schedules such as the Couples Interaction Rating System (Heavey, Gill & Christensen, 2002) or the Brief Romantic Interaction Coding Scheme (Humbad, Donnellan, Klump, & Burt, 2011) have been used to measure the nag-withdraw process.

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Nagging behavior has been operationalized typically with dimension of blame, accusation, criticism and pressure tactics. Withdraw behavior has been operationalized by dimensions of avoidance, refusal and delaying tactics. While this research has been well done and provides important information, it deals with limited aspects of the pursuer-distancer phenomenon, i.e. the focus has been on more extreme manifestations of the behaviors under conflict conditions. Gottman and Levenson (2000) have demonstrated the relationship between extreme pursuit and distancing to divorce. Berns, Jacobson and Gottman (1997) related extremes of the process to marital violence. Heavey, Christensen and Malamuth (1995) related extremes to marital dissatisfaction and Papp, Kouros and Cummings (2009) have related the process to depression. In order to acquire a more complete understanding of the pursuer-distancer process there is a particular need to investigate its everyday manifestations. An instrument is needed that operationalizes a broad conceptualization of this pursuer-distancer process rather than only measuring extreme manifestations. In this regard Fogarty's conceptualizations of the pursuer-distancer process is particularly relevant.

Fogarty conceptualizes the pursuer-distancer relationship as moving along four axes: movement, rhythm, time and space. The movement category focuses on the interactive process between the pursuer and the distancer, defined as "moving toward" and "moving away" respectively. Pursuers move toward people with considerable verbal and emotional engagement; distancers move toward objects and ideas with emphasis on logic and reason, preferring thinking to emotional expressiveness. The axis of rhythm focuses on the pace with which pursuers and distancers behave. Pursuers tend to be more excitable emotionally with highs and lows; distancers tend to behave with a flat emotional rhythm. Pursuers prefer direct communication and clear commitment; distancers engage in a more indirect and qualified, if not evasive, manner. Pursuers like change; distancers like constancy. Pursuers are more spontaneous; distancers are more controlled. Pursuers are initiators, distancers are reactors. With regard to time, the pursuer tends to be impatient and wants everything yesterday; thus, this viewpoint of time is short range, barely going beyond the present. Time for the distancer is crucial and carefully defined for whatever purpose. He or she is very aware of time and can be more willing to be patient. In the realm of space the pursuer tends to downplay self-space and prefers to move into relationship. Distancers vigilantly protect their own space with more rigid boundaries. Pursuers value relationship time; distancers value alone time. Pursuers are motivated by a fear of abandonment, distancers are motivated by a fear of being engulfed in a relationship.

Method

Scale Development and Initial Validation

It has been well established for some time (Jackson, 1970) that the relationship between relevant theory of a construct and the operationalizing of the construct in a scale is mutually beneficial to both. DeVelles (2003) reiterates this fact when he states that theory plays a critical role in the development of a sound scale. The item content of the scale should be consistent with important theoretical manifestations of the construct. As such, the senior author in consultation with Fogarty developed a preliminary pool of items that were deemed indicative of typical behaviors exhibited by pursuers and distancers as they interacted with each other. When the test items were completed it appeared that most of the items could be grouped under three headings: (1) comfortableness with amount of verbal communication, (2) comfortableness with amount of emotional expressiveness, and (3) preference for connection to other versus autonomy. Pursuers manifested high communication, high emotional expressiveness and high social involvement. Distancers manifested low communication, low emotional expressiveness (preferring non-emotional factual logic) and low social involvement.

The initial pool of 46 items was submitted in random order to five senior family therapists trained by Fogarty to verify content validity. Judges were asked to determine if an item reflected characteristic behavior of either a pursuer or a distancer. An item was retained for further analysis only if there was consensus across all five judges that it was a manifestation of pursuing or distancing behavior. A total of 40 items remained after the process, 18 items for the Pursuer scale and 22 items for the Distancer scale. The items that were unanimously confirmed by the judges were administered to a sample of 20 undergraduate college students and 20 married adults to determine the internal consistency of each scale using Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951). A total of four items were eliminated from the Distancer scale due to their low or negative calculations with other Distancer items. The elimination of these four items resulted in an increase in alpha from 0.63 to 0.78 for the Distancer scale. All Pursuer items were kept and resulted in an alpha of 0.83, indicating satisfactory internal consistency for both scales. Therefore, a total of 18 items for the Pursuer scale and 18 items for the Distancer scale remained in the final version of the PDMS.

Participants and Enrollment

Ethics approval for all of the participants in the studies was obtained from the authors' university institutional review board. All participants signed institutional review boards-approved consent forms. Confidentiality was assured. Some participants at the author's host university were part of a subject pool and therefore received course credit to participation in the study. A total of 603 undergraduate and graduate students were recruited from a medium size university in the United States. Two additional samples were obtained from universities outside the United States: a sample of 36 undergraduates was obtained in Puerto Rico and a sample of 60 undergraduates was obtained in Ireland. Institutional review board-approved procedures were followed in each case. In addition to the student participants 40 married adult participants who were in marital therapy participated in the validity studies. Because various sub-studies used different sub-samples, the actual sample size used for each analysis is reported in the Results section. Unless noted otherwise, all samples were recruited from the United States.

Instruments/Variables

Pursuer-Distancer Movement Scale (PDMS). The newly developed PDMS is a self-report measure consisting of 36 items which are rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (not at all characteristic) to 5 (totally characteristic). The items consist of different behaviors that are exhibited by individuals in a committed relationship under both stress and non-stress conditions. The instructions ask the participants to respond to the items based on how they act in the relationship with their "significant other" or "special relationship partner". Two scores are obtained from the scale. The Pursuer Score is obtained from the total score of the 18 odd numbered items on the test (i.e., the Pursuer sub-scale). The Distancer Score is obtained from the total score of the 18 even numbered items on the test (i.e., the Distancer sub-scale). **Fellows Adjective List (FAL).** The FAL (Fellows, 1999) consists of six scales; High Communication, Low Communication, High Social Involvement, Low Social Involvement, Thinking, and Feeling. The content validity of the original 117 items was obtained via three raters who were graduate students in a Ph.D. clinical psychology program. Items were retained if there was a consensus as to the applicability of adjectives to describe each of the six domains. Content validity is frequently achieved by such rational analysis (Scandura, 1993). Chronbach's Alpha Coefficient (Chronbach, 1951) was used to assess internal consistency. Following the suggestion of Mumford and Owens (1987) items that did not reach a cut-off score of .30 were eliminated from the original 117 items. The final version of the Fellows Adjective List has alphas ranging from 0.79-0.92 for the six scales. For use in the present research participants were asked to indicate the degree to which any given adjective represented their behavior in a significant relationship on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 = extremely unlike me and 5 = extremely like me.

Brief Interpersonal Relations Scale (BIRS). The BIRS (O'Shea & Beninato, 2000) is a six item self-report rating scale. The content of the items deals directly with the validated dimensions of the FAL (High Communication, Low Communication, High Social Involvement, Low Social Involvement, Emotional Expressiveness and Rationality). It is formulated with a 5-point Likert scale (0 = not at all characteristic, 5 = totally characteristic). **Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Revised (EPQR).** The EPQR (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1991) is an established 100 item self-report questionnaire measuring the three dimensions of Psychoticism (P), Extroversion (E), and Neuroticism (N). In addition there is a Lie (L) scale. This questionnaire is in a yes/no format. The Extroversion scale was used in the current research. **Interpersonal Dependency Scale (IDS).** The IDS (Hirschfeld, Klerman, Gough, Barret, Korchin, & Chodoff, 1977) is a 46 item self-report questionnaire that consists of a number of sub-scales. It is formatted with a 4-point Likert scale (1 = very characteristic of me; 4 = not characteristic of me). Two sub-scales of the IDS were used in our study: Emotional Reliance on Another and Assertion of Autonomy. **Family Gender Role Socialization Inventory (FGRSI).** The FGRSI (Freda, 1998) is an unpublished 45-item self-report questionnaire that assesses both perceived gender socialization messages one received from parents as well as one's self identified traits. Participants are asked to rate the degree to which mothers and fathers expected certain behaviors to be acquired, e.g. empathy, autonomy, etc. Participants also rate their own behavior on these same dimensions. Ratings are made on a 7-point Likert scale. Items that reflect empathy, relationship orientation, caring, emotional expressiveness, autonomy and stoicism were used in the present research. **Coping Strategies Inventory-Short Form (CSI-SF).**

The CSI-SF (Tobin, Holroyd, Reynolds, & Wigal, 1989) is a 33-item self-report instrument that measures two overall coping styles: engagement and disengagement. Each of the two broad coping styles can be subdivided further into a problem versus an emotional approach. The participant is asked to rate each item on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much). Skinner, Edge, Altman, and Sherwood (2003) recommended the CSI as one of the best adult coping measures. Hazen-Shaven Adult Attachment Style (HSAAS). The HSAAS (Hazen & Shaver, 1987) is a well validated self-report instrument measuring the three attachment styles originally conceptualized by Bowlby (1978). Respondents are asked to identify the degree to which each of three paragraphs describes their feelings on a 7-point Likert scale. The three paragraphs represent three attachment styles: securely attached, avoidant-dismissive, and anxious-ambivalent, respectively. Modified Interpersonal Relationship Scale (MIRS). The MIRS (Garthoeffner, Henry, & Robinson, 1993) is a 49-item self-report measure. Participants answer items with a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). The scale measures potential for intimacy and general relationship quality by its six subscales: Trust, Self-Disclosure, Genuineness, Empathy, Comfort, and Communication. The total intimacy score obtained from the six subscales was used in the present research. Subjects are asked to think of an intimate relationship past or present and to answer the question by giving a true picture of their feelings as they are or were when involved in the relationship. Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ). The PAQ (Spence, & Helmreich, 1978) is a 24-item self-report questionnaire that consists of three major subscales: Masculinity Scale, Femininity Scales, and Masculinity-Femininity Scale. Each scale consists of 8 items with two anchoring adjectives that are bi-polar in nature for which there is a 5-point Likert rating scale. Respondents answer in terms of how much they believe that they possess a specific gender stereotype personality trait. Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R). The ECR-R (Fraley & Waller, 1998) is a 36-item measure that assesses adult romantic attachment. Respondents use a 7-point Likert style scale ranging from 1 (disagree strongly) to 7 (agree strongly). The scale consists of two 18-item subscales assessing the dimensions of anxiety and avoidance that yields four possible attachment categories: anxious, avoidant, anxious-avoidant, and secure. Spielberger Self-Evaluation Questionnaire (SSEQ). The SSEQ (Spielberger, 1983) is an established 29-item self-report measure of state and trait anxiety with two forms. State Trait Anxiety Form Y-1 used in this study is the measure of state anxiety. Participants are asked to indicate how they feel right now, i.e., at this moment. Item responses are in a 4-point Likert scale where 1 = not at all and 4 = very much so.

Analysis Plan

Dimensionality and reliability. Principle component analyses (PCA) were used to explore the dimensionality of the Pursuer and the Distancer scales, respectively. Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization was applied to generate the rotated component matrices for components with eigenvalues greater than one (Kaiser, 1960). In addition, Cronbach's coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1951) was used to examine the internal consistency of each subscale, and correlation coefficient was computed for the test-retest reliability, based on two repeated measurements with a time interval of one week. Validity. The predictive validity of the scales was investigated by comparing subject matter experts' ratings to the scale scores. Three therapists, experts with Fogarty's concepts, provided data on a sample of 20 couples that were in couples psychotherapy with their spouses ($n=40$). Therapists made a dichotomous classification as to whether each individual was more of a pursuer or a distancer in their relationship with their spouse. Each of the psychotherapy clients took the PDMS. The dominant score on the PDMS (Pursues or Distancer) was compared to the therapist classifications. The convergent validity of the Pursuer and Distancer scales was first examined by a hierarchical cluster analysis on the scale scores and the six variables of Fellows Adjective List (i.e., High Communication, Low Communication, High Social Involvement, Low Social Involvement, Thinking, and Feeling). The construct validity of the scales was further established by computing the correlation coefficients between the scale scores and the construct scores in the nomological network shown in Table 1. Relationship between Pursuer and Distancer traits; gender difference. We calculated the Pearson correlation between the Pursuer and the Distancer scale scores. In addition, a scatter plot was used to visualize the relationship. To show the gender difference, independent sample t-test procedures were used on each subscale score. Gender difference was also analyzed using t-test at the item-level responses, with Bonferroni adjustment. Missing data. Less than 1% of the data were missing in the overall sample and each of the subsamples. Listwise deletion was used when missing data were presented.

Results

Dimensionality of Each Scale

A total of 223 subjects (with four cases excluded due to listwise deletion) were used in the PCA analyses. Given where the "elbow" occurred in the scree plots both scales suggested a strong first dimension. According to Kaiser's rule (Kaiser, 1960), the Pursuer scale had five components with eigenvalues greater than one, and the total variance explained by these components were decomposed as the first dimension for 22.21%, the second for 8.49%, the third for 7.69%, the fourth for 6.96%, and the fifth for 6.45%. For the Distancer scale, six components had eigenvalues greater than one, and the total variances explained by the first to the sixth components were 21.25%, 8.36%, 7.14%, 6.45%, 6.14%, and 5.87%, respectively. Tables 2 and 3 showed the standardized loadings greater than 0.40 in the PCA analyses, for the Pursuer and Distancer scales, respectively. Pursuer components. The first component indicates the strong tendency for a pursuer to engage in a high level of communication. The second component reflects the pursuer's need for intensity both in communication and emotional expressiveness. The third component reflects the need for a pursuer to be proactive and their ease with change. The fourth component reflects their need for social connection. The fifth component reflects their need to initiate interaction and not be content to remain alone. These results are consistent with the dimensions that Fogarty outlined for the various pursuer behaviors. He classified the behaviors under four dimensions. In regard to the dimension of movement he indicated that pursuers move toward people. With regard to the dimension of rhythm he indicated that pursuers have high energy and like change. With regard to the dimension of time pursuers like to act quickly and therefore initiate interactions. With regard to the space dimension pursuers value connection with others and therefore share space.

Distance components. The first component provides evidence on how much distancers prefer autonomy over verbal and/or emotional connection. The second component speaks to the distancer's preference for a slow, rational and logical overall style to life. The third component reflects the distancer's preference for problem solving with a solitary-thinking approach rather than a highly interactive verbal brainstorming approach. The fourth component reflects the distancer's use of logic and reason by which to live life in that they prefer rules and structure by which to operate. The fifth component reflects their preference for a slow and non-impulsive approach to problem solving. The sixth component highlights their tendency to not initiate but to be more comfortable in a reactive-defensive position to life. Again, these results are consistent with Fogarty's understanding of how the distancer's behaviors fit into dimensions of this theory. In regard to movement, the distancer moves toward objects and ideas rather than people. In regard to rhythm the distancer is low keyed and relatively unemotional. In regard to time the distancer has a slower and more methodical pace. In regard to space the distancer prefers not to share space with others but prefers more separateness.

Internal Consistency and Test-retest Reliability

With a subsample of 233 participants, the internal consistency, as measured by the Cronbach's coefficient alphas, were 0.77 for the Pursuer scale and 0.76 for the Distancer scale, suggesting acceptable internal consistency. The test-retest reliabilities over a one week period were very high for Pursuer ($r=0.91$, $p<0.01$, $n=25$), and moderately high for Distancer ($r=0.79$, $p<0.01$, $n=25$).

Predictive Validity

On the sample of 20 married couples ($n=40$) in marital therapy the classification by therapists on whether an individual was more of a pursuer or a distancer in their relationship with their spouse agreed 100% with the classification by the scale scores on PDMS. The inter-rater agreement, Cohen's Kappa, was 1.00.

Construct Validity

The hierarchical clustering analysis ($n=63$) on PDMS and FAL demonstrated that when broken down into two clusters the variables grouped in the expected direction. Specifically, Pursuer was grouped together with High Communication, High Social and High Feeling, while Distancer was grouped together with Low Communication, Low Social and Low Feeling.

The convergent validity of the Pursuer scale was further shown by significant and positive correlations with the Extraversion Scale of the EPQ-R ($r=0.29$, $p<0.01$, $n=78$) (Hazell, 1997), the Social Extroverted Style scale of the BIRS ($r=0.32$, $p<0.05$, $n=60$ for an Irish sample; $r=0.43$, $p<0.05$, $n=30$ for an Irish-American sample) (O'Shea & Beninato, 2000), the Emotional Reliance Scale on Another of the IDS ($r=0.43$, $p<0.01$, $n=74$) (McNamara, 1998), various scales of the FGRSI specifically Emotional Expressiveness ($r=0.50$, $p<0.01$, $n=51$), Empathy ($r=0.36$, $p<0.01$, $n=51$) and Caring for Other ($r=0.38$, $p<0.01$, $n=51$) (Freda, 1998), the Emotional Engagement coping style by CSI-SF ($r=0.39$, $p<0.01$, $n=48$) (Noble, 2009), Anxious Attachment by HSAAS ($r=0.41$, $p<0.01$, $n=48$) (Noble, 2009), the Intimacy scale of the MIRS ($r=0.32$, $p<0.05$, $n=95$) (Thom, 2004), and the feminine scale of the PAQ ($r=0.21$, $p<0.05$, $n=95$) (Thom, 2004). We also showed evidence for discriminant validity for the Pursuer scale by significant and negative correlations with the Masculinity scale of the PAQ ($r=-0.44$, $p<0.01$, $n=95$) (Thom, 2004), and the Avoiding Attachment style using ECR-R ($r=-0.46$, $p<0.01$, $n=80$) (Goodman, 2006). The discriminant validity of the Pursuer scale was also documented by non-significant relationships with the Autonomy scale of the IDS ($r=-0.10$, $p>0.05$, $n=74$) (McNamara, 1998), various scales of the FGRSI, specifically Autonomy ($r=-0.26$, $p>0.05$, $n=51$), Stoicism ($r=-0.19$, $p>0.05$, $n=51$) and Logical ($r=-0.16$, $p>0.05$, $n=51$) (Freda, 1998), as well as the Anxiety score on the SSEQ ($r=-0.04$, $p>0.05$, $n=74$) (McNamara, 1998).

The Distancer scale demonstrated convergent validity with socially Introverted Style in interpersonal relationships on the BIRS ($r=0.58$, $p<0.01$, $n=60$) for an Irish American sample (O'Shea and Beninato), and ($r=0.37$, $p<0.05$, $n=30$) for Puerto Rican sample (Fisher, 2001), the masculinity scale of the PAQ ($r=0.32$, $p<0.05$, $n=95$) (Thom, 2004), Avoiding Attachment style on the HSAAS ($r=0.40$, $p<0.01$, $n=48$) (Noble, 2009), an Emotional Disengagement Coping style of the CSI-SF ($r=0.31$, $p<0.01$, $n=48$) (Noble, 2009), and Avoidance Attachment style on the ECR-R ($r=0.42$, $p<0.01$, $n=80$) (Goodman, 2006). The discriminant validity of the Distancer scale was shown by non-significant relationships with Extraversion on the EPQR ($r=0.13$, $p>0.05$, $n=78$) (Hazell, 1997), Emotional Reliance on Another on IDS ($r=0.02$, $p>0.05$, $n=74$) (McNamara, 1998), Empathy on the FGRSI ($r=-0.07$, $p>0.05$, $n=51$) and Caring for Other on the FGRSI ($r=-0.26$, $p>0.05$, $n=51$) (Freda, 1998).

Relationship between Pursuer and Distancer Traits and Gender Difference

Across the sample ($n=233$ with four cases excluded by listwise deletion), the Pursuer and the Distancer traits were negatively but non-significantly correlated ($r=-0.11$, $p>0.10$). Inspection of a scatterplot showed no obvious trend, either by the entire sample or across genders ($n=56$ for male and $n=166$ for female). The independent sample *t*-test suggested no gender difference for each scale scores (for Pursuer, $t=-0.96$, $p>0.10$, $df=216$; for Distancer, $t=5.56$, $p>0.10$, $df=216$). Item-level analyses suggested no gender difference for all 36 items.

Discussion

The goal of this research was to create a self report assessment that would in a reliable and valid manner effectively measure the dimensions of Fogarty's theory of the pursuer and distancer interaction process between a committed couple under both non stress and stress conditions. The findings from this research clearly demonstrated that the Pursuer scale and the Distancer scale were reliable and valid. Reliability data from multiple studies were all within an acceptable and very good range. Internal consistency as measured by Cronbach's coefficient alphas ($n=233$) were 0.77 for the Pursuer scale and 0.76 for the Distancer scale. These reliabilities are acceptable especially given that the item content of the scales reflects multiple latent variables that are intrinsic to the concept of pursuit and distance. Test – retest reliability when assessed over a one week period was very high for the Pursuer scale ($r=0.91$, $p<0.01$, $n=25$) and moderately high for the Distancer scale ($r=0.79$, $p<0.01$, $n=25$).

Content validity for the Pursuer and Distancer scales was provided by five senior family therapists who had been trained by Fogarty. All items were unanimously agreed upon as manifestations of pursuer and distancer behaviors. Predictive validity as provided by three marital therapists on 20 couples in marital therapy was very high as assessed by Cohen's Kappa =1.00. Construct validity on the concept of pursuer and distancer was provided by convergent and discriminant validity across multiple studies. Pursuers have a preferred socially extraverted style that is closely associated with identification with a culturally stereotype of femininity. Their connection to others is preferred over autonomy and is manifested with personal expression of emotionality as well as emotional caring for others. With increased stress, their coping style is characterized by emotional engagement with others to problem solve. At a core level, their sense of well-being is contingent upon becoming attached to another and maintaining that attachment. Distancers have a preferred socially introverted style that is more closely identified with a culturally stereotype of masculinity.

They prefer to be less emotionally reliant on others and do not express personal or relationship emotionality easily. With increased stress they prefer to emotionally disengage in order to cope and problem solve. Overall they tend to avoid attachment and attempt to find security in their autonomy. These results not only validated Fogarty's conceptualization of the pursuer – distancer process but are also consistent with much of the literature by the other authors cited above. The relationship between attachment style, coping style and pursuer – distancer style confirmed results by Barry and Lawrence (2013) who found a relationship between attachment avoidance and conflict avoidance and disengagement. The PCA suggested a strong first dimension for both scales. The first component of the Pursuer Scale indicated a strong tendency for a pursuer to engage in a high level of communication. Pursuers engage in communication to establish and maintain social connection and provide a forum for emotional expressiveness. The additional four components of the Pursuer Scale indicated a pursuer's tendency to initiate interaction in their desire for change, and the intensity of the expression of their feelings and ideas. These factors relate well to Fogarty's model but indicated that communication may need a more prominent position in the theory. The fact that the Pursuer Scale has such a strong first factor measuring communication suggests that it may be an appropriate instrument for those researchers who emphasize the communication aspect of the demand – withdraw process.

The PCA suggests that the strong first dimensions for the Distancer Scale demonstrated their need for autonomy. Their need for autonomy is accompanied by a preference for limited communication and limited emotional expressiveness. The additional five components for the Distancer Scale revealed a preference for constancy over change, a tendency to react rather than initiate, a slow tempo and "rule guided" approach to change when it is necessary. Again, these components are consistent with Fogarty's theory but suggest the need to give more prominence to autonomy in the understanding of a distancer while recognizing that this also involves dimensions of limited communication and limited emotional expressiveness. Across the sample ($n=233$) the Pursuer and Distancer Scales were negatively but non-significantly correlated. ($r=-0.11$, $p>0.10$). This result confirms Fogarty's conceptualization that the tendency to pursue and the tendency to distance are independent dimensions. Fogarty indicated that all individuals have both a tendency to pursue and a tendency to distance. Not all individuals have these two tendencies to the same degree and they will use each tendency selectively based on situational factors, the nature of the issue, and relationship factors. Supportive evidence for pursuing and distancing behaviors to be independent of one another was also provided by the different components of the two scales from the PCA in the current research. The independent sample t-test suggested no gender difference for each scale score (for Pursuer, $t=-0.96$, $p>0.10$, $df=216$; for Distancer, $t=5.56$, $p>0.10$, $df=216$). Item-level analysis suggested no gender difference for all 36 items. This strong evidence was somewhat unexpected given the data that most women prefer a pursuer tendency, while most men prefer a distancing tendency. This result needs to be replicated with new, more diverse samples.

Limitations and Future Research

The participants in this study were mostly non married young adults who were in a committed relationship with a modal length of two years duration. There were two samples of married couples one of whom was in marital therapy. Almost all of the participants were from the American North-East with the exception of two samples from Ireland and Puerto Rico. Although there were consistent results found across married and non-married participants as well as across country of natural origin of the participants this sample selection is a limitation of the study. Future research needs to be completed on more diverse samples in more varied status of marital duration and satisfaction. The alpha and test – retest reliabilities as well as the factor structure of the PDMS needs to be cross validated. Clinical applications of the PDMS by the senior author and colleagues have produced encouraging results for clinical utility. Couples report that the test has meaningful face and ecological validity for them. They easily see the relevance of the item content to their relationship. On the other hand, individuals often have an over investment in their own preferred style and a corresponding under appreciation for their partner's preferred style. Peters (1999) found this with 20 married couples who were not experiencing marital discord. The senior author has observed that this tendency to overvalue one's own preferred style and to undervalue a partner's preferred style is even stronger in couples who are in marital therapy. In addition, couples in marital therapy often have an exaggerated misperception of how their partner only uses either pursuit or distance in polar opposition to their own preferred style. A useful exercise for such couples who are in marital therapy is to have them take the PDMS twice with different instructions, once under standard conditions, and once as they think their partner will answer the items.

Differences between self-perception and other-perception on important behaviors become explicit and can be a focus of the therapy. Correcting misperceptions and educating couples about the legitimacy of both pursuing and distancing styles contributes significantly to their ability to modify their own behavior, to compromise on issues and cope with stress more effectively. Future research is needed to clarify how this process can be more successful. In addition it would be helpful to investigate the conditions under which an individual can modify their preferred style so that they might become more balanced in their ability to employ both distancing and pursuing behaviors appropriate to the situation.

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Table 1: Nomological Network for Validity Study

	Pursuer		Distancer	
Construct	Instrument	Construct	Instrument	
Convergent Validity				
Extraversion	EPO-R	Socially introverted style		BIRS
Social extraverted style	BIRS	Masculinity		PAQ
Emotional reliance on another	IDS	Avoidance-chronic attachment style		HSAAS
Emotional expressiveness	FGRSI	Emotional disengagement coping style		CSI-SF
Empathy	FGRSI	Avoidance attachment style		ECR-R
Caring for others	FGRSI			
Emotional engagement coping style	CSI-SF			
Anxious-ambivalent attachment style	HSAAS			
Intimacy	MIRS			
Femininity	PAQ			
Discriminant Validity				
Masculinity	PAQ	Extraversion		EPO-R
Avoidance attachment style	ECR-R	Emotional reliance on another		IDS
Assertion of autonomy	IDS	Empathy		FGRSI
Autonomy	FGRSI	Caring for others		FGRSI
Stoicism	FGRSI			
Logical	FGRSI			
Anxiety	SSEQ			

Table 2: Component Matrix for Pursuer, with Loadings Greater Than 0.40

Item Content	Component		
I prefer to discuss an issue with my partner repeatedly until it is solved.	0.64		
When I am upset, the most helpful thing for me is to be able to express my feelings to my partner.	0.63	0.41	
When I am in conflict with my partner, I need to talk to him/her even if I am not sure of my thoughts or feelings on the issue.	0.60		
I prefer long and detailed conversations with my partner about our differences and issues.	0.59	-0.41	
I believe that all important decisions should be discussed in detail from beginning to end with my partner.	0.57		
I don't like to leave an argument until I have resolved my differences with my partner.	0.55		
It gets me more upset when my partner won't talk to me when we have a problem.	0.52		
My style with my partner is to be vigilant for potential problems between us and to move on them quickly before they get out of control.	0.51		
I tend to overstate (rather than understate) my ideas and feelings to my partner.	0.50	0.51	
I don't feel complete as an individual unless I am closely connected with my partner.	0.48		
When my partner is emotionally upset, I tend to quickly move toward him/her to fix the problem by giving emotional support.	0.47	-0.41	
My relationship with my partner is most satisfying when there is intense and varied emotions expressed between us.	0.45		
When my partner and I are separated for extended periods of time I tend to be the one who keeps in touch by phone or letter.	0.41		0.44
In my relationship with my partner I am quick to anger and quick to get over it.		0.68	
During personal time with my partner, I tend to be the one who initiates conversation.		0.40	-0.53
It is easy for me to move toward outside help when I am distressed about something with my partner.			0.55
I believe that it is more important to do something about a problem than it is to waste time analyzing it.		0.42	-0.45
Even when the routine between my partner and myself is going well I like to discuss potential changes we can make in our relationship.		-0.55	

Table 3: Component Matrix for Distancer, with Loadings Greater Than 0.40

Content	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
When my partner insists upon talking about his/her feelings during an argument it only takes it more difficult for me to figure out a solution	0.60					
I become irritated when my partner brings up his/her complaints too frequently.	0.60					
When I am upset about something, I pull back from my partner, think more, and become more cautious.	0.58					
I find that I often have to back away from my partner's enthusiasm toward me in order to maintain a strong sense of myself.	0.57					
I find that I can resolve conflicts with my partner better when he/she gives me time and space to be alone.	0.57					
After an argument, I tend to wait a long time before confronting my partner with my negative feelings about his/her behavior	0.57					
I believe that arguments are best settled when there is a time limit placed on the discussion before you begin.	0.56			0.40		
I don't like long, drawn-out goodbyes when I leave my partner.	0.54					
Often with my partner I feel that it is best to leave our problems alone and just live with our differences.	0.51					
I need to spend time "warming up" in the relationship with my partner before I can discuss serious problems.	0.17			0.12		
I like to solve problems by myself and then give the solution to my partner.	0.45				-0.45	
It bothers me when my partner repeats himself/herself in our arguments.	0.41		0.51			
Before I say something that may hurt my partner I "filter" it thoroughly and choose my words carefully.		0.56				-0.48
When I am upset, I find that the most of my energy goes into trying to clarify my thinking on the issues.		0.41	-0.43			0.42
I prefer a slow and methodical approach to resolving conflict with my partner rather than a rapid "shotgun" approach.		0.40			0.45	
It bothers me when my partner won't stick to the rules when we are trying to resolve conflicts.				0.51		
I prefer a partner who takes the initiative in planning our social activities.						0.48
I am more comfortable if my partner tells me what is bothering him/her first rather than my having to ask him/her what is wrong.						