

## ABSTRACT

### Attitudes Toward Interpersonal Silence within Dyadic Relationships

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Silence as a dynamic and symbolic form of human communication is not without implications for dyadic relationships. Attitudes toward silence, when occurring within interpersonal interactions, may provide insights into relational quality and satisfaction. This study seeks to understand how various types of dyads feel about silence and what connections may exist between attitude, sex, and relationship type. Comparisons are made between heterosexual married couples, male-female platonic friends, and same-sex friends using satisfaction, involvement, closeness, commitment, and gender as variables to determine their connection to attitude.

Attitudes Toward Interpersonal Silence within Dyadic Relationships

by

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A Thesis

Approved by the Department of Communication Studies

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Goals of the Study	
2. METHODS	14
Participants	
Procedure	
Measures	
3. RESULTS	19
Data Analysis	
4. DISCUSSION	23
Limitations and Future Research	
APPENDICES	30
REFERENCES	49

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

Despite the generally unnoticed nature of silence, its occurrence has the power to communicate meaning and activate human response similar to any other conversational communication behavior. Silence is a clear and multifaceted component of communication, both in meaning and function. It is omnipresent within human interaction, meaning that every interpersonal situation is affected by its existence. Silence communicates respect, intimacy, thought, and other such qualities, but despite its universal presence and multiple meanings, research has continued to neglect this topic. Silence as a dynamic and symbolic form of human communication warrants further exploration.

The word silence is generally defined as the absence of sound, or "...a total lack of audible vocal signals" (Jaworski, 1993, p. 73). Silence is the occurrence of quiet that precedes, interrupts, punctuates, or follows a communicative engagement. In the narrower context of interpersonal relationships, silence is the absence of speech, but not necessarily the absence of message and meaning between individuals who are engaging in an interaction (Jaworski, 1997).

Human communication is made possible through mutually understood verbal and nonverbal symbolic interaction (Ghronkite, 1986); "Human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings those things have for them" (Blumer, 1969, p. 2). Meaning is constructed and maintained socially and can be communicated in various ways, both

verbally and nonverbally. Interpersonal silence is a form of nonverbal communication that represents more than a lack of speech. It is a communicative act that conveys specific messages and meanings to those involved (Johannesen, 1974); silence is a distinct, intentional, meaningful form of interpersonal communication. Silence is not the absence of communication – instead, it has the potential to provide great insights into human thought, emotion, relationship, and attitude (Richmond & McCroskey, 2003). Silence serves as a meaningful break within any given interaction and is usually able to be understood and interpreted by those involved. Although there are no vocal messages being exchanged during a silent moment, this does not negate nonverbal message exchange (Cook, 1964). Humans attach meaning to interpersonal silence because internal thought, intentionality, and nonverbal communication continue in the presence of silence (Johanneson, 1974).

Silence and speech are both integral forms of communication. Instead of perceiving speech as the primary form of communication and silence as an opposing force, Bruneau (1973) argued that the two are complimentary and inform each other. Silence can be considered the backdrop of any vocal interaction or, as Bruneau (1973) noted, “Silence is to speech as the white of this paper is to this print” (p. 18). Speech always arises from and returns to silence (van Manen, 1990). And while silence gives birth and potential meaning to speech (Picard, 1952), it is also true that individuals use what is said to interpret the intervening silence. The more unexpected a silence, the more potential it has to be analyzed by those involved (Jaworski, 1993). Within the field of communication, silence is seen as possessing a distinct cooperative quality. Only one

person has to speak in order to banish silence, but both partners in an interaction must choose to be quiet for silence to reign (Jaworski, 1993).

Though silence is an inherently valueless occurrence (i.e., possessing no negative or positive meaning in itself), individuals develop their own set of interpretations of its meaning. The many mantras and proverbs passed down throughout the years in regard to silence are evidence of the wide array of values attached to the topic. Phrases such as, “silence is golden,” “silence is deadly,” or “awkward silence” are examples of value assignment. Opinions and uses of silence are also culturally based. Various authors have noted the differences that exist between American perceptions of silence and those of the Japanese (Kogure, 2007), Native American (Dumont, 1972), and Amish cultures (Enniger, 1984). In all three cases, research findings reported that Americans are generally less comfortable with, and less appreciative of silence than were the other cultures studied. According to Bruneau (2008), long silences make many Americans anxious and may be associated with past experiences of death, anger, hurt, or conflict.

While there are many reasons for silence, there are also many functions. For instance, most cultures develop and practice, to varying extents, what Ephratt (2007) explains as the “eloquent silence.” This category includes use of silence at religious ceremonies, with certain acts of fasting, during moments of memorial, at funerals, as a legal privilege, or in response to a rhetorical question (Ephratt, 2007). Eloquent silences are widely acknowledged, well-recognized instances of quiet that serve a particular purpose and communicate clear, intentional meaning. Other functions of interpersonal silence would include (but are not limited to) lack of enough information to respond, no sense of urgency to respond, pondering or processing information, topic avoidance,



agreement, disagreement, indecisiveness, boredom, expression of great joy or awe, disregard for another person, insecurity, daydreaming or preoccupation, sulking (Johanneson, 1974), anger, frustration, attentive listening, uncertainty (Myers, 1973), self-reflection, disdain, hesitancy, the expression of comfort or sympathy toward another (i.e., “just being there”), admittance to a particular charge, an attempt to punish another, and/or disinterest. Silence is often the result of contemplation, feelings of nostalgia, meditation, daydreaming, resting, or a variation of these activities (Bruneau, 2008). Corporately, the use of silence can play a role in the segregation of different groups, acting as a barrier between superiors and subordinates, particularly in the arena of business (Shelton, 1993). Clearly, silence is a distinct form of nonverbal communication that holds meaning in a number of contexts.

Silence as a form of human communication has been studied intermittently throughout the years with research focusing primarily on silence’s place in conversation (Jenson, 1973; Richmond & McCroskey, 2003), silence as nonverbal communication (Kogure, 2007), silence practices in other cultures (Jaworski, 1989; Kogure, 2007; Pang, 1996), and silence’s use within the context of psychotherapy (Frankel, 2006; Gale, 2005; Ladany, 2004; Ronningstam, 2006). Few studies, however, have explored how individuals interpret and react to silence within their close, interpersonal relationships. A majority of the current body of literature on the subject is either definitional or descriptive in nature. Few, if any, methodologically-driven studies have examined the interpersonal meanings and outcomes associated with silence perceptions.

The study of silence warrants scholarly attention for several reasons. First, silence is not widely acknowledged or understood as a form of communication. It is

commonly seen simply as a pause or gap between talk, while talk is viewed as the primary and/or most meaningful channel for communication. For this reason, further study of silence is important because silence *does* often serve as a means of message and meaning exchange. At the very least, silence is a backdrop that offers contextual cues and provides relational partners with the opportunity for greater understanding of interpersonal communication (Bruneau, 2008; Johansen, 1974).

Second, silence is important because it is arbitrary in nature. Interpretations can and will differ significantly based on situation and participant. As a fluid concept, silence can inform interpersonal practices, attitudes, and differences – and can be informed by them as well (Bruneau, 1973; Knapp & Hall, 2006; Shelton, 1992).

Third, as previously noted, silence has multiple communication and interactional functions. Silence has diverse functionality within the interpersonal context, mainly because there are many causes and motivators for the occurrence of silence between individuals (Baker, 1955; Bruneau, 1973; Johanssen, 1974).

Fourth, to some degree, silence is a part of every communication act. It is a universal component of communication because of its constant, natural, underlying presence (i.e., darkness is eradicated by light just as silence ends when talk begins). Silence is an ongoing reality that exists apart from speech. It provides context and contrast to talk, informing verbal interaction. Silence serves as an omnipresent backdrop that gives and finds meaning through speech (Johanssen, 1974; van Manen, 1990).

Finally, silence is meaningful for interpersonal relationships. Communication nuances that go unnoticed and unanalyzed by those involved are often those which hold the greatest significance to relationships *because* of their inconspicuousness. The very

nature of silence as an overlooked yet meaningful form of communication warrants further study of its functions and effects within human interaction.

Understanding how individuals develop values about silence and how they feel when silence occurs will help bolster the understanding of the effects of interpersonal silence on human relationships (Shelton, 1992). More research on this topic is needed if our knowledge of the social implications of silence is to grow and deepen. Therefore, the overall goal of the current study is to more fully understand associations and attitudes surrounding interpersonal silence within human relationships. In an attempt to do so, the study will explore sex and relationship differences in regards to interpersonal silence. Comparisons will be made between various relational dyads in order to discern what connections might exist between sex, relationship type, and attitude towards silence. Following a discussion of the main arguments for the study, methods and results will be presented.

### *The Current Study*

Research into interpersonal silence is grounded in several types of literature – including psychology, social psychology, and sociology – and has focused on a few aspects of the topic, including meaning and interpretation of silence. As discussed, silence is a regularly occurring phenomenon within human communication, capable of communicating meaning within relationships and able to signal maturity, comfort, unity, harmony, and a variety of other qualities associated with relational functioning and development. The current study aims to further understand individuals' overall attitudes toward the occurrence of interpersonal silence within specific dyadic relationships. Additionally, the study seeks to determine how sex and relationship type influence or

predict attitudes toward silence. Though we are clearly aware that silence plays a role within communication and that people often hold to socially-constructed notions about its occurrence, what is not known and what has not been studied is the influence of sex and/or relationship type on perceptions of interpersonal silence shared between members of a dyad.

### *Marriage and Opposite-Sex Friendship*

Marriage and opposite-sex friendship are two types of relationships that offer a wealth of comparison in terms of the distinct similarities and differences they share. Fundamentally, both are opposite-sex relationships, but there are undeniable differences in expectations and physical closeness that should be considered. Traditional marriage is commonly characterized by physical and emotional intimacy and often enjoys unrivaled levels of interpersonal closeness; this is due, in part, to the fact that married couples typically know and understand each other better than do members of other relational dyads such as friendship. Marriage offers a clearly defined structure, both legally and traditionally, and provides an opportunity for increased time, experience, comfort, certainty, and acceptance between spouses. Because of the nature of the marital relationship, spouses are able to develop deep levels of emotional intimacy. Positive attitudes toward silence would seem natural in this case, given the lack of relational ambiguity that exists between partners who have connected on intimate emotional levels; as such, silence could possibly serve as an indicator and/or expression of the intimacy that exists between husband and wife.

While the marital union is a strong example of an interpersonal relationship that reduces certain aspects of relational ambiguity, one particular relationship that struggles

with ambiguity is the cross-sex friendship. Cross-sex friendships are often very different from romantic or married relationships in the level of intimacy that is experienced, the motives for the relationship, and the types of interactions that take place. Platonic friendships are generally seen as less intimate than romantic relationships, primarily because more obstacles to intimacy exist within a cross-sex friendship. For example, male-female friends must determine what kind of emotional bond will be shared, what feelings of sexual attraction will be allowed or restricted, what balance of role equality will be struck, and what image of the relationship will be presented to the public (O'Meara, 1989). While romantic relationships must also be mutually negotiated, the cross-sex friendship faces unique challenges in terms of survival, perhaps more so than any other dyadic relationship. This is due, in great part, to the fact that cross-sex friendships struggle with issues of ambiguity (Rawlins, 1982; Booth & Hess, 1974) as relational members navigate questions of roles, norms, and appearances. There are no solid rules, contexts, or expectations that have been set or modeled for cross-sex friendships (O'Meara, 1989); sexual, emotional, or power jealousy can easily arise, making it difficult for some cross-sex friends to reach deep levels of emotional intimacy without romantic or sexual feelings interfering (Davis & Todd, 1982). In light of these challenges, instances of silence between cross-sex friends may serve to potentially *increase* the ambiguity and tension that is constantly being negotiated. If greater levels of intimacy are indicative of more comfort with silence and less ambiguity overall, then a relationship that has more ambiguity has the potential to be adversely affected by silence, making its occurrence undesirable for platonic cross-sex friends unless a mediating

activity is involved (i.e., studying, watching TV, etc.), giving context to the interpersonal silence.

Though both of these dyads must mediate the opposite-sex aspect of the relationship, there is potentially a marked difference in the level of closeness that is commonly experienced. Therefore, based on the basic understanding of the potential associations between silence, relationship type, intimacy, and ambiguity, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*Hypothesis 1: Married couples will have more favorable attitudes toward interpersonal silence than cross-sex friends.*

### *Men, Women, and Silence*

For both men and women, communication within their same-sex and opposite-sex friendships has much to do with socialized learning and sex similarity. A great deal of scholarly work has focused on male and female communication styles (Campbell, 1973; Coates, 1986; Coates & Cameron, 1989; Hall & Langelier, 1988; Kramarae, 1981; Lakoff, 1975; Tannen, 1990a, 1990b) in an effort to further understand the differences and similarities that exist. According to some scholars, even at a very young age, boys and girls are socialized into different communication patterns, in part by the games they play (Lever, 1978; Mead, 1934; Piaget, 1965; Tannen, 1990a). Maltz and Borker (1982) argue that typical boy games such as football, fort building, or “capture the flag” are structured in a way that does not necessitate talking. In these games, activity is the focus while talk is primarily used to negotiate power or rules, not to build closeness or relationship. However, when girls play games like dress-up, house, or tea party, talking serves as a way for participants to learn about each other. Intimacy is developed through

talking and the activity is seen as secondary to the communication taking place (Maltz & Borker, 1982). These socially cultivated communication styles may facilitate relatively simple same-sex communication patterns for those interacting with another member of the same sex, but men and women often experience difficulty communicating with each other because of the opposing focuses on activity and talk.

As seen, men and women have different ways of developing relational closeness, which can further contribute to barriers that exist in the creation and maintenance of opposite-sex friendships. Swain (1989) was the first to coin the phrase “closeness in the doing” to describe the way in which men foster friendship. In fact, over two thirds of the men Swain surveyed cited an activity other than talking as being the most meaningful aspect of their friendship(s). This idea was further developed by Wood and Inman (1993) who argued for an acceptance of different styles of closeness (e.g., closeness in the doing versus closeness in the dialog). Both sexes desire intimacy in their relationships, but it is achieved in different ways. Men value activity exchange while women prefer verbal exchange (Wood & Inman, 1993). Men rely on activity and nonverbal bonding in the establishment of their close relationships, however, women’s friendships grow out of self-disclosure and emotional support (Rubin, 1985). Women tend to share a broad spectrum of their lives with other women, creating a multi-faceted, complex sense of closeness (Aries & Johnson, 1983; Johnson, 1996). Neither relational method is inferior; both promote a type of intimacy that is welcome and understood within each sex (Wood & Inman, 1993). Floyd (1995) echoes this with the idea of “gendered closeness,” which challenges the assumption that women experience closer relationships than do men. Although men and women develop closeness differently, they enjoy similar levels of

relational satisfaction within their same-sex relationships. Again, men associate closeness with sharing interests and participating in activities such as sports or drinking together, while women develop closeness through verbal expressions – talking about problems, feelings, and fears or affirming each other.

Furthermore, Wright (1982) introduced the concept of masculine and feminine body orientations while interacting. Wright argued that women maintain a face-to-face orientation, talking to each other very directly and sharing their feelings and emotions. Face-to-face orientation promotes individuals' focus on each other, including more awareness of nonverbal communication and less need for action. Conversely, men prefer a side-by-side orientation, sharing activities, playing games, and watching sports together as a means of relationship creation and maintenance. Side-by-side orientation encourages an increased focus, not on the individuals themselves, but on the activity at hand. Focus is on the doing, not the talk.

In light of this research, it is easy to understand why opposite-sex friendships – in which these styles of closeness and body orientation come into conflict – are often harder to navigate for both men and women because of the lack of similarity in communication styles. Men and women are able to develop closeness within same-sex friendships more easily than within opposite-sex friendships because of the way communication is socially learned throughout life and the sex similarities that exist, both biologically and socially. This being the case, it could be argued that men and women would have more positive attitudes toward silence within same-sex friendships than they would within opposite-sex friendships. Additionally, because of the heightened ambiguity and uncertainty that can exist within cross-sex friendship, this relationship may potentially experience more



negative attitudes toward silence than would a same-sex friendship. As mentioned, cross-sex friends must negotiate roles, sexual feelings, and public presentation (O'Meara, 1989), while same-sex friends benefit from more clearly defined relational boundaries and more commonly known expectations for the relationship. Therefore, the following three-part hypothesis is proposed:

*Hypothesis 2a: Same sex friendships will experience more favorable attitudes toward interpersonal silence than cross-sex friendships.*

*Hypothesis 2b: Men in same sex friendships will have more favorable attitudes toward interpersonal silence than men in opposite-sex friendships.*

*Hypothesis 2c: Women in same sex friendships will have more favorable attitudes toward interpersonal silence than women in opposite-sex friendships.*

#### *Same-Sex Friendship and Marriage*

Finally, having discussed the differences between married and platonic relationships and between same- and cross-sex friendships, questions remain as to the interpersonal differences between marriage and same-sex friendship. We know that married couples experience levels of love and intimacy that are not normally experienced equally in other types of dyads (Rubin, 1970). The commitment associated with marriage can lend itself to greater development of emotional closeness, while friendships are often more temporary and transitional. However, given the myriad of research on the differences men and women must overcome in communication, as well as the power of the same-sex similarity principle, same-sex friendship may have an advantage over marriage in terms of attitude towards silence because, fundamentally, marriage is an

opposite-sex relationship subject to many of the same challenges faced by non-married, opposite-sex friends. One such between-sex dissimilarity is that men and women maintain different body orientations while interacting: men tend to practice a side-by-side orientation while women prefer a face-to-face orientation (Wright, 1982). In an opposite-sex relationship such as marriage, participants create a side-to-face orientation which can pose unique challenges to effective communication, particularly in terms of nonverbal communication. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*Hypothesis 3: Same-sex friends will have more favorable attitudes toward interpersonal silence than married couples.*

## CHAPTER TWO

### Methods

#### *Participants*

Participants ( $N = 384$ ) in this study were recruited from two different sources. The first group (73.7%) originated from the population of a mid-sized, private, southwestern university and numbered 118 male and 165 female undergraduate communication students enrolled in the basic speech course. The second group (26.3%) consisted of 37 married males and 64 married females from two separate mid-sized nondenominational churches in the Southwest. Overall, 155 men (40.5%) and 228 women (59.5%) participated in the study, ranging in age from 17 to 65 ( $M = 23.03$ ,  $SD = 8.40$ ). A majority (77.8%) identified themselves as Caucasian, followed by those indicating Hispanic (7.6%), Black/African American (7.3%), Asian/Pacific Islander (3.7%), Native American (1.8%), and “Other” (1.8%) as their ethnic background. At the time of the study, 76.5% of participants had obtained their high school diploma/GED or were pursuing a Bachelor’s degree; others reported having earned an Associate’s degree (2.1%), Bachelor’s degree (13.3%), graduate degree (3.9%), doctoral degree (0.3%), professional degree (0.5%), or were currently pursuing a graduate degree (3.4%). A majority of respondents (72.6%) reported being single, while 27.4% self-identified as married.

For the purpose of the study, unmarried participants were randomly divided into two groups, one of which reported based on the nature of their closest platonic, cross-sex

friendship, while the other group reported based on their closest same-sex friendship. Married participants were asked to respond with their spouse as the focus of their answers. Participants were asked to include demographic information about their same-sex friend, cross-sex friend, or spouse. Length of same-sex friendships ranged from 10 months to 21 years ( $M = 6.44$ ,  $SD = 5.26$ ), while cross-sex friendships ranged in length from 8 months to 20 years ( $M = 5.01$ ,  $SD = 4.35$ ). Marriages ranged in duration from 6 months to 44 years ( $M = 9.61$ ,  $SD = 11.34$ ). Across all three groups, average relationship duration was approximately six years ( $M = 6.75$ ,  $SD = 7.35$ ).

### *Procedure*

This study utilized pencil and paper questionnaires. To encourage honesty among respondents, participants were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality and were informed of their rights as subjects in the study. As mentioned previously, the unmarried population was randomly assigned to one of two conditions – one asked participants to answer the questions according to their closest same-sex friendship and the other asked participants to answer according to their closest opposite-sex, non-romantic friendship. The surveys were distributed to students enrolled in two sections of the basic speech course, completed in class, and returned upon completion. The third and final survey was distributed to married individuals associated with two mid-sized nondenominational churches. In this survey, participants were asked to answer questions by referencing their relationship with their spouse. All surveys were completed on-site and collected immediately following completion. At the opening of the survey, respondents were asked to report simple demographic information about their same-sex friend, opposite-sex friend, or spouse. This measure served to promote thought generation about the

relationship in question. Additionally, at the conclusion of the survey, participants were asked to complete demographic information about themselves.

### *Measurements*

In order to gain information about the quality of the participants' relationships, the surveys employed specific scales to determine relational satisfaction, involvement, commitment, closeness, attitude towards silence, assertiveness, and responsiveness. Most scales on the questionnaires employed a 7-point Likert-type scale in which 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree.

*Relationship satisfaction* was measured by Floyd and Morman's relational satisfaction scale (2000). Using six Likert-type items, the scale measured the extent of participants' satisfaction with the nature of their relationship with their friend or spouse as demonstrated by such items as, "My relationship with my same-sex friend is just the way I want it to be" ( $\alpha = .873$ ). This item was altered to reflect the focus on opposite-sex friends and spouses in the other two surveys used for the study.

*Relationship involvement* was measured by a series of seven Likert-type items developed by Floyd & Morman (2000). This scale included items that assessed how much time is devoted to each other in the friendship or marriage, how involved participants feel in each other's lives, and how positive their interactions are, as illustrated by such comments as, "I am always spending time with my friend" ( $\alpha = .925$ ). Again, the items were changed to reflect the focus on opposite-sex friends and spouses in the other two surveys used for the study.

*Relationship commitment* was assessed with a modified version of the Investment Model Scale by Rusbolt, Martz, and Agnew (1998). This five-item commitment scale

was used to measure the degree to which commitment varied within participants' friendships or marriages. The original Investment Model Scale is a 37-item, self-report, Likert-type scale instrument used to measure a person's perceptions of commitment to a personal relationship. Items were modified to reflect the specific friendship or marriage focus of the current project, (e.g., "I want our friendship to last for a very long time") ( $\alpha = .918$ ).

*Relationship closeness* was measured with the Inclusion of Other in the Self (IOS) scale developed by Aron, Aron, and Smollan (1992). The IOS scale asserts that in a close relationship, an individual acts as if there is a degree of inclusion of the *other* within them; close dyads believe they are interconnected with each other. The IOS scale consists of a set of Venn-like diagrams, each representing varying levels of overlap. One circle in each pair is labeled "self" and the other circle is labeled "other." The participants were instructed to select the pair of circles that best depicted the nature of perceived closeness in the relationship with their friend or spouse. If a participant was close to their friend/spouse, they chose more overlapped circles; if they were not as close to their friend/spouse, they chose more separated circles. The IOS scale has been extensively validated in both experimental and correlation research paradigms (see Aron et al., 1992).

A scale to measure *attitudes toward interpersonal silence* was developed for the current study. The eight-item semantic differential scale included corresponding pairs of words such as "nervous/relaxed," "uncomfortable/comfortable," and "distant/close." For each item, subjects were asked to circle a number (1-7) on a continuum which indicated

how closely they identified with the feelings associated with each pair of concepts ( $\alpha = .951$ ).

Finally, gender orientation was assessed with Richmond and McCroskey's (1990) Assertiveness-Responsiveness scale. Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they felt each of the ten personality characteristics for Assertiveness (e.g., independent, assertive, competitive) ( $\alpha = .582$ ) and the ten personality characteristics for Responsiveness (e.g., helpful, sincere, sympathetic) ( $\alpha = .610$ ) applied to their personality while interacting with others.

At the conclusion of the study, participants answered demographic questions about themselves, including age, sex, race, education, and marital status.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *Results*

The primary purpose of the current study was to attempt to understand the attitudes individuals have toward the occurrence of silence in the context of their interpersonal relationships. For the purpose of comparison, the relationship dyads chosen for study consisted of same-sex friendships, opposite-sex friendships, and marriage relationships. Three main hypotheses were proposed regarding the connection between relationship type, sex, and attitude towards silence. The results of the analysis are detailed here.

#### *Silence in Marriage Versus Opposite-Sex Friendship*

The first hypothesis predicted that married individuals would have more favorable attitudes toward silence than would opposite-sex friends. In order to test the hypothesis, an ANOVA was conducted with sex and relationship type as the independent variables and attitude towards silence as the dependent variable. No main effect was found for either sex or relationship type, such that married individuals do not, in fact, have more favorable attitudes ( $M = 5.78, SD = 1.16$ ) toward interpersonal silence than individuals in opposite-sex friendships ( $M = 5.69, SD = 1.06$ ) ( $F(2, 382) = .3, p = .74, \eta^2 = .002$ ). Hypothesis One is not confirmed.



### *Silence in Male and Female Same-Sex Friendships*

Hypothesis Two-A predicted that, overall, members of a same-sex friendship dyad would have more favorable attitudes toward silence than would members of an opposite-sex friendship dyad. To test this hypothesis, an ANOVA was conducted with relationship type as the independent variable and attitude as the dependent variable. The ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for relationship type ( $F(2, 382) = 9.72, p = .00, \eta^2 = .05$ ). Tukey HSD post-hoc follow-up analysis revealed significant differences between groups, such that members of a same-sex friendship did, in fact, have more favorable attitudes toward interpersonal silence ( $M = 6.22, SD = .89$ ) than did members of an opposite-sex friendship ( $M = 5.69, SD = 1.06$ ). Hypothesis Two-A is confirmed.

Hypothesis Two-B predicted that men in same-sex friendships would have more favorable attitudes toward silence than would men in opposite-sex friendships. Using only the data from the men in the study, an ANOVA was conducted with relationship type as the independent variable and attitude as the dependent variable. The ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for relationship type ( $F(2, 154) = 4.09, p = .02, \eta^2 = .05$ ). Tukey HSD post-hoc follow-up analysis confirmed there was a significant difference between groups, such that men in same sex friendships do, in fact, have more favorable attitudes ( $M = 6.17, SD = .91$ ) toward interpersonal silence than men in opposite-sex friendships ( $M = 6.61, SD = 1.08$ ). Hypothesis Two-B is confirmed.

Hypothesis Two-C predicted that women in same-sex friendships would have more favorable attitudes toward silence than would women in opposite-sex friendships. Using only the data from the women in the study, an ANOVA was conducted with relationship type as the independent variable and attitude as the dependent variable. The

ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for relationship type ( $F(2, 228) = 6.45, p = .002, \eta^2 = .054$ ). Tukey HSD post-hoc follow-up analysis confirmed there to be a significant difference between groups, such that women in same-sex friendships do, in fact, have more favorable attitudes ( $M = 6.25, SD = .88$ ) toward interpersonal silence than women in opposite-sex friendships ( $M = 5.75, SD = 1.05$ ). Additionally, female same-sex friends ( $M = 6.25, SD = .88$ ) were also found to have significantly more favorable attitudes toward interpersonal silence than married women ( $M = 5.75, SD = 1.12$ ). Hypothesis Two-C is confirmed.

#### *Silence in Same-Sex Friendship Versus Marriage*

The third and final hypothesis predicted that members of a same-sex friendship dyad would have more favorable attitudes toward silence than would married individuals. An ANOVA was conducted with relationship type as the independent variable and attitude towards silence as the dependent variable. The ANOVA revealed a main effect for relationship type ( $F(2, 382) = 9.72, p = .00, \eta^2 = .05$ ). Tukey HSD post-hoc follow-up analysis revealed significant differences between groups, such that members of a same-sex friendship did, in fact, have more favorable attitudes toward interpersonal silence ( $M = 6.22, SD = .89$ ) than did members of a marital dyad ( $M = 5.78, SD = 1.16$ ). Hypothesis Three is confirmed.

#### *Further Investigations*

In addition to the study's interest in the main effects of sex and relationship type on attitudes toward silence, key variables of relational quality were also assessed within the survey, including satisfaction, involvement, commitment, closeness, and gender role

orientation. A series of simple Pearson correlations were conducted across all variables in the study, revealing five significant relationships.

In regards to relational satisfaction, a significant positive correlation was discovered between relational satisfaction and attitude towards interpersonal silence ( $r = .353, p = .000$ ), suggesting that the more satisfied an individual is with his or her relationship, the more favorable their attitude will be towards occasions of interpersonal silence within the relationship. Second, a significant positive correlation was found between relational involvement and attitude towards silence ( $r = .292, p = .000$ ), indicating that the more involved two individuals in a relationship are with each other, the more favorable their attitudes will be toward the occasion of silence between them. A third significant positive correlation was revealed between relational commitment and attitude towards silence ( $r = .217, p = .000$ ), suggesting that the more committed the relational partners are to each other, the more favorable their attitudes will be toward interpersonal silence. A fourth significant positive correlation was found between closeness and attitude towards silence ( $r = .221, p = .000$ ), indicating that the closer the members of a relationship feel to each other, the more favorable the individuals' attitudes will be toward the occurrence of silence within the relationship. Finally, through use of the Assertiveness-Responsiveness scale (Richmond and McCroskey, 1990) which measured gender orientation, a positive correlation was discovered between feminine gender orientation and attitudes toward silence ( $r = .140, p = .006$ ), suggesting that the more feminine (i.e., responsive) a person is within his or her relationship, the more favorable the attitudes toward interpersonal silence will be.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to assess the relationship between sex, relationship type, and attitudes toward interpersonal silence. The overall finding of the study was that, although there were limited sex effects in terms of attitude, there were meaningful relationship type differences, such that participants in same-sex friendships reported more favorable attitudes toward interpersonal silence than those in opposite-sex friendships or those who were married. Additionally, the data revealed that key factors of relational quality (i.e., satisfaction, involvement, commitment, closeness, gender) were significantly associated with attitude, such that the more positive the level of relational quality, the more favorable the attitude towards interpersonal silence.

Hypothesis One predicted that married individuals would be more comfortable with silence than those in opposite-sex friendships. This hypothesis was based on the idea that the intimacy fostered in a marriage relationship would seem to mitigate the ambiguity that is often present within an opposite-sex friendship and would allow for more positive attitudes toward silence. However, the analysis found that married individuals do not, in fact, have more favorable attitudes toward silence than opposite-sex friends. While it seems logical to argue that marriage contains the unique aspect of romance and certainly allows for higher levels of physical and emotional intimacy between members of the relationship, it is still fundamentally an opposite-sex relationship, making it similar in many ways to opposite-sex friendship. Men and

women, no matter the level of intimacy in their relationship, have differing communication styles in some regards, which may potentially cause uncertainty or doubt during a silent period because each sex may be unsure of the other's state of mind, intention, or expectation during silence. Marriage and opposite-sex friendship show no marked differences in attitude because, fundamentally, both are vulnerable to the challenges of opposite-sex relationships, such as different communication needs, expectations, understanding, and outcomes (O'Meara, 1989). There appears to be no advantage for marriage in regards to attitudes toward silence and opposite-sex communication styles seem in no way mitigated by marital status. This may be due, in part, to the idea that women tend to be more emotionally expressive than men (Rubin, 1985). Men also seek emotional support from women more so than from other men (Umberson et al, 1996) and this expectancy for talk and disclosure as a means to social support may not differ simply because of marital status – in fact, marriage may actually increase expectations for more openness, expression, and disclosure. Additionally, physical intimacy does not necessarily equate to emotional intimacy, especially for men. Simply being married does not appear to change the communication expectations or provide any deeper insights in terms of understanding or comfort with silence.

Hypothesis Two-A asserted that, overall, same-sex friendships would enjoy more positive attitudes toward silence than opposite-sex friendships. The data confirmed this hypothesis, indicating that the similarities and clearer expectations found within same-sex friendships serve to make same-sex friends more comfortable with mutual silence than opposite-sex friends would be. As discussed previously at length, there are many issues such as role distinctions, sexual tension, public presentation, and overall ambiguity that

can impede comfort and closeness within opposite-sex friendships (Rawlins, 1982; Booth & Hess, 1974). Additionally, the same-sex similarity principle, and more broadly the similarity-attraction effect, would argue that similarities between people attract them to each other in relationships and promote continued relationship maintenance (Byrne, 1971). This, coupled with the platonic nature of same-sex friendship which reduces relational ambiguity, can create a more clearly defined environment for same-sex friends.

Hypothesis Two-B claimed that men in same-sex friendships (i.e., male-male friendships) will experience more favorable attitudes toward silence than will men in opposite-sex friendships (i.e., male-female friendships). This hypothesis was also confirmed by the data. Men have a unique way of expressing friendship and closeness with other men, as seen by the way men value activity rather than talk in their relationships (Floyd, 1995; Swain, 1989). Even from childhood, boys are typically socialized to communicate much differently than girls (Tannen, 1990a); talk is seen as a means of more efficiently accomplishing the task or activity at hand, rather than for the purpose of self-disclosure and sharing. The same-sex similarity principle would argue that, for men, similarities in communication styles serve to decrease the level of ambiguity experienced within the same-sex relationship. Biological as well as stylistic similarities encourage closeness and relational clarity. Men often spend time with other men by engaging in activities such as playing sports or video games, watching sports together, or participating in other activities which do not necessitate continuous talk (Monsour, 1992; Sherrod, 1989; Williams, 1985). Activity-based orientation may promote more favorable attitudes toward silence in male same-sex friendships because men do not necessarily have expectations for a great deal of personal or intimate talk with

their same-sex male friends. On the other hand, silent moments or periods of time within opposite-sex friendships may call attention to the ambiguity that is constantly being negotiated.

Hypothesis Two-C argued that women in same-sex friendships would also have more favorable attitudes toward silence than women in opposite-sex friendships. The data confirmed this hypothesis and revealed that women in same-sex friendships hold more favorable attitudes toward silence than women in opposite-sex friendships. Regardless of how often silence occurs in either the male-male friendship or the female-female friendship, both sexes reported having more favorable attitudes toward silence when it occurred between them and a friend of the same-sex. Again, the same-sex similarity principle would argue that women share significant perceived similarities based on sex and gender, affecting the mutual understanding of the friendship. There is typically less ambiguity in a female-female friendship than there would be in a female-male friendship because, in the former context, the woman does not have to equally navigate public presentation, what feelings to allow, how to negotiate sexual tension, or how much power to assume (O'Meara, 1989). There are much clearer expectations and potentially fewer questions that might arise internally during a silent moment between women. Additionally, given the more feminine orientation of many women's same-sex relationships (an orientation which promotes self-disclosure, intimacy, empathy, cooperation, helping, service, and a variety of other supportive relational qualities), there are likely to be strong elements of relational connection and understanding that are shared between women, bringing meaning to silent times rather than discomfort. Shared femininity and responsiveness would seem to fuel this finding. Just as men create

understanding through activity, women understand each other through perceived similarity and mutual empathy (Wood & Inman, 1993). Similar life experiences promote a sense of feminine understanding, which may explain why women have more favorable attitudes toward silence in their same-sex friendships.

Finally, Hypothesis Three predicted that individuals in same-sex friendships would have more favorable attitudes toward silence than married individuals. This hypothesis was confirmed and, again, the same-sex similarity principle provides insight and support for this finding. Just as same-sex friendship was found to have more favorable attitudes than opposite-sex friendship, same-sex friendship also exceeded marriage in terms of positive attitudes toward interpersonal silence. Despite the romantic and sexual aspects of marriage and the opportunity for the development of much deeper physical and emotional intimacy, fundamentally, heterosexual marriage is an opposite-sex relationship and therefore theoretically subject to many of the same issues other opposite-sex relationships must manage. One such issue is that of the body orientation men and women assume while interacting; when the side-by-side male orientation and the face-to-face female orientation are combined, as in the context of an opposite-sex relationship, communication can be affected. Marriage does not negate the challenges of an opposite-sex relationship; in fact, some might argue that these challenges increase within marriage because of internal and external stressors. The marriage relationship may be more intimate in many regards, but that does not appear to have an effect on attitude towards interpersonal silence. The finding that same-sex friends are more comfortable with the occurrence of silence than are married individuals may have to do



with the fact that each relationship carries very different expectations for interpersonal interactions.

Through use of Pearson correlations, the data revealed that certain relational variables are positively associated with attitudes toward interpersonal silence. Specifically, relational satisfaction, involvement, commitment, closeness, and responsiveness (i.e., femininity) were found to be related to favorable attitudes toward silence, such that increased relational quality in any of these areas appears to positively influence the experience of interpersonal silence within a relationship, regardless of relationship type.

Ultimately, interpersonal silence is arbitrary and ambiguous, i.e., silence needs a contextual framework in order to possess meaning. According to the findings of this study, relationship type appears to be an important context for understanding interpersonal silence, thus allowing for the establishment of relational meaning. Understanding attitudes toward silence as influenced by relationship type and relational quality advances our knowledge of interpersonal silence as an important component of nonverbal communication.

### *Limitations and Future Research*

This study faced certain limitations that should be mentioned. First, the study was limited in terms of its use of subjects. Approximately three-fourths of the participants surveyed were of college-age. Additionally, the remaining one fourth of the population was sampled from area churches. Increasing the married sample in number and distributing the survey to a different type of sample of married couples, i.e., couples not involved in church, may have influenced the results. Also, the average length of the

marriages surveyed was nine years; perhaps marriages of longer terms would have reported different attitudes and levels of relational quality, making allowances for the familiarity that is developed over long periods of time together. A majority of the respondents self-reported as Caucasian, limiting the ethnic diversity that would otherwise have been preferred. Finally, the low Alpha scored for masculinity and femininity scales limits the reliability of the gender results.

This study focused on attitudes toward interpersonal silence. However, there is much to be studied in terms of silence avoidance behavior. Future research should examine what specific actions are taken in order to avoid silence and should look at the broader scope of the negative value American culture has placed on interpersonal silence, a type of nonverbal interaction which actually has the potential for numerous positive relational benefits.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### Same-Sex Friendship Survey

#### Attitudes Toward Interpersonal Silence in Dyadic Relationships

This is a study about how people feel when there is a silent moment or period of time between them and a *friend of the same sex*. You will be asked to select your closest friend of the same sex and to complete this questionnaire in reference to your relationship with him or her. Some of the questions will focus on your friendship while others will concentrate on silence and your attitudes toward it.

Please do not discuss the questions or share your answers with your friend until you have completed and returned your questionnaire. The information you provide will help interpersonal communication researchers to better understand the dynamics of silence within friendship. *Thank you for your participation!*

---

1. How many friendships with the *same sex* do you have that you would consider to be close? Please circle one.

1      2      3      4      5 or more

2. Please complete the following information about your same-sex friend:

#### Closest Same-Sex Friend

FIRST Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Sex:            MALE            FEMALE

Race:

\_\_\_ Black/African American            \_\_\_ Native American            \_\_\_ Caucasian

\_\_\_ Asian/Pacific Islander            \_\_\_ Hispanic            \_\_\_ Other

How long have you been friends with this person (in years)? \_\_\_\_\_

For the remainder of this survey, please think of your closest *same-sex* friend. Please answer the following questions with this person in mind.

3. Satisfaction and Involvement with the Same-Sex Friend:

In this section, we will ask you some questions about your closest same-sex friendship. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement by circling the appropriate number:

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>				<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>		
1. I'm happy with my same-sex friendship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I am highly involved in my friend's life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. My friend and I do lots of things together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. There is not much I would change about the relationship I have with my friend right now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. My friend and I rarely do any kinds of activities together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. My relationship with my friend is not very satisfying.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. My friend and I are an indispensable part of each other's life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. My relationship with my friend is just the way I want it to be.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I am always spending time with my friend.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I am very satisfied with the relationship I have with my friend.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. I wish I could change several things about the relationship I have with my friend.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. My friend and I spend a lot of time together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I consider myself to be very involved in my friend's life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. Commitment to the Same-Sex Friend:

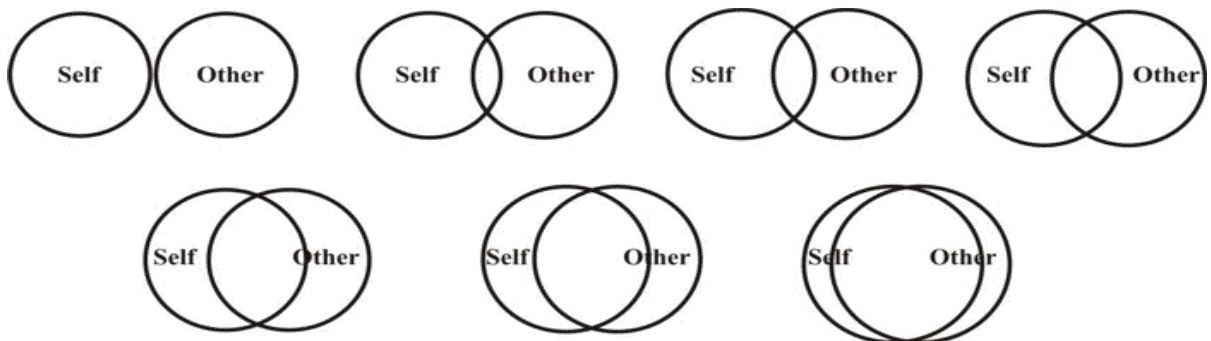
With your closest same-sex friend in mind, please respond to these questions about the nature of your level of commitment to the friendship you currently have with this person:

*When thinking about my friendship with my closest same-sex friend:*

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>					<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	
1. I am committed to maintaining my friendship with my same-sex friend	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I would feel upset if our friendship were to end in the near future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I feel attached to our friendship – strongly linked to my same-sex friend.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I am dedicated to maintaining my friendship with my same-sex friend.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I want our friendship to last for a very long time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. Closeness with the Same-Sex Friend:

How close is your relationship with your best same-sex friend right now? The circles below are meant to depict you (“self”) and your friend (“other”). Please draw an “X” through the pair of circles that best illustrates *how close you and your same-sex friend feel toward each other*.



6. Attitudes Toward Silence in Friendship:

*When a silent moment or period of time occurs while I'm spending time with my same-sex friend, I feel:*

Nervous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Relaxed
Uneasy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Calm
Uncomfortable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Comfortable
Worried	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Carefree
Doubtful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Confident
Insecure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Secure
Dissatisfied	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Satisfied
Distant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Close

7. Assertiveness - Responsiveness Measure:

Below is a list of different personality characteristics. Next to each item, write a number indicating how much you feel that item applies to you, according to the scale below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Not at all like me</i>						<i>Very much like me</i>
_____ Helpful		_____ Defends own beliefs		_____ Warm		
_____ Independent		_____ Responsive to others		_____ Friendly		
_____ Forceful		_____ Strong personality		_____ Aggressive		
_____ Sympathetic		_____ Compassionate		_____ Tender		
_____ Assertive		_____ Sensitive to the needs of others		_____ Acts as a leader		
_____ Dominant		_____ Sincere		_____ Competitive		
_____ Gentle		_____ Willing to take a stand				

8. About Yourself:

Finally, we have some questions about you.

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Sex:

\_\_\_ Male

\_\_\_ Female

3. How would you describe your own ethnic background? (check all that apply)

\_\_\_ Black/African American

\_\_\_ Native American

\_\_\_ Caucasian

\_\_\_ Asian/Pacific Islander

\_\_\_ Hispanic

\_\_\_ Other

4. Which of the following best describes your marital status? (check one)

\_\_\_ Single, never married

\_\_\_ Divorced

\_\_\_ Married

\_\_\_ Widowed

5. What is your highest degree of education attained to date? (check one)

\_\_\_ High School diploma/GED

\_\_\_ Associate's degree (2-year degree)

\_\_\_ Pursuing a Bachelor's degree (4-year degree)

\_\_\_ Completed a Bachelor's degree (4-year degree)

\_\_\_ Pursuing a Graduate degree

\_\_\_ Completed a Graduate degree

\_\_\_ Doctoral degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D.)

\_\_\_ Professional degree (e.g., MD, JD, DVM)



Thank you for your participation in this study.

Once you have finished filling out this questionnaire, please return it to the survey administrators.

We appreciate your time and effort in completing this questionnaire. The information you have provided will help researchers to better understand the nature and dynamics of silence within friendship.

If you have comments or questions for the researchers you may include them on a separate note. However, please be certain you have not written your name or any other identifying information on the questionnaire itself.

## APPENDIX B

### Opposite-Sex Friendship Survey

#### Attitudes Toward Interpersonal Silence in Dyadic Relationships

This is a study about how people feel when there is a silent moment or period of time between them and a *friend of the opposite sex*. You will be asked to select your closest friend of the opposite sex and to complete this questionnaire in reference to your relationship with him or her. Some of the questions will focus on your friendship while others will concentrate on silence and your attitudes toward it.

Please do not discuss the questions or share your answers with your friend until you have completed and returned your questionnaire. The information you provide will help interpersonal communication researchers to better understand the dynamics of silence within friendship. *Thank you for your participation!*

---

1. How many friendships with the *opposite sex* do you have that you would consider to be close? (not your romantic or dating partner) Please circle one.

1      2      3      4      5 or more

2. Please list the 1<sup>st</sup> name of your closest opposite-sex friend – not your romantic or dating partner, but your closest friendship with the opposite sex.

#### Closest Opposite-Sex Friend

FIRST Name \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Sex:            MALE            FEMALE

Race:            \_\_\_\_\_ Black/African American            \_\_\_\_\_ Native American            \_\_\_\_\_ Caucasian  
                     \_\_\_\_\_ Asian/Pacific Islander            \_\_\_\_\_ Hispanic            \_\_\_\_\_ Other

How long have you been friends with this person (in years)? \_\_\_\_\_

For the remainder of this survey, please think of your closest *opposite-sex* friend – not your dating or romantic partner, but your closest friend of the opposite sex. Please answer the following questions with this person in mind.

3. Satisfaction and Involvement with the Opposite-Sex Friend:

In this section, we will ask you some questions about your closest opposite-sex friendship. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement by circling the appropriate number:

	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>				<u>Strongly Agree</u>			
1. I'm happy with my opposite-sex friendship.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
2. I am highly involved in my friend's life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
3. My friend and I do lots of things together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
4. There is not much I would change about the relationship I have with my friend right now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
5. My friend and I rarely do any kinds of activities together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
6. My relationship with my friend is not very satisfying.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
7. My friend and I are an indispensable part of each other's life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
8. My relationship with my friend is just the way I want it to be.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
9. I am always spending time with my friend.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
10. I am very satisfied with the relationship I have with my friend.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
11. I wish I could change several things about the relationship I have with my friend.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
12. My friend and I spend a lot of time together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
13. I consider myself to be very involved in my friend's life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

4. Commitment to the Opposite-Sex Friend:

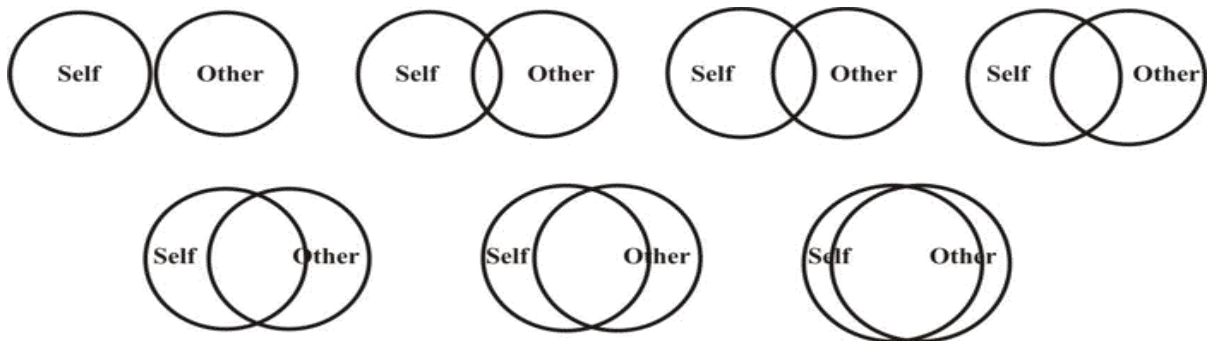
With your closest opposite-sex friend in mind (not your dating or romantic partner), please respond to these questions about the nature of your level of commitment to the friendship you currently have with this person:

*When thinking about my friendship with my closest opposite-sex friend:*

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>					<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	
1. I am committed to maintaining my friendship with my opposite-sex friend	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I would feel upset if our friendship were to end in the near future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I feel attached to our friendship – strongly linked to my opposite-sex friend.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I am dedicated to maintaining my friendship with my opposite-sex friend.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I want our friendship to last for a very long time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. Closeness with the Opposite-Sex Friend:

How close is your relationship with your best opposite-sex friend right now? (again, not your dating or romantic partner, but your closest opposite-sex friend) The circles below are meant to depict you (“self”) and your friend (“other”). Please draw an “X” through the pair of circles that best illustrates *how close you and your opposite-sex friend feel toward each other*.



6. Attitudes Toward Silence in Friendship:

*When a silent moment or period of time occurs while I'm spending time with my opposite-sex friend, I feel:*

Nervous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Relaxed
Uneasy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Calm
Uncomfortable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Comfortable
Worried	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Carefree
Doubtful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Confident
Insecure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Secure
Dissatisfied	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Satisfied
Distant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Close

7. Assertiveness - Responsiveness Measure:

Below is a list of different personality characteristics. Next to each item, write a number indicating how much you feel that item applies to you, according to the scale below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Not at all like me</i>						<i>Very much like me</i>
_____ Helpful		_____ Defends own beliefs		_____ Warm		
_____ Independent		_____ Responsive to others		_____ Friendly		
_____ Forceful		_____ Strong personality		_____ Aggressive		
_____ Sympathetic		_____ Compassionate		_____ Tender		
_____ Assertive		_____ Sensitive to the needs of others		_____ Acts as a leader		
_____ Dominant		_____ Sincere		_____ Competitive		
_____ Gentle		_____ Willing to take a stand				

8. About Yourself:

Finally, we have some questions about you.

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Sex:

\_\_\_ Male

\_\_\_ Female

3. How would you describe your own ethnic background? (check all that apply)

\_\_\_ Black/African American

\_\_\_ Native American

\_\_\_ Caucasian

\_\_\_ Asian/Pacific Islander

\_\_\_ Hispanic

\_\_\_ Other

4. Which of the following best describes your marital status? (check one)

\_\_\_ Single, never married

\_\_\_ Divorced

\_\_\_ Married

\_\_\_ Widowed

5. What is your highest degree of education attained to date? (check one)

\_\_\_ High School diploma/GED

\_\_\_ Associate's degree (2-year degree)

\_\_\_ Pursuing a Bachelor's degree (4-year degree)

\_\_\_ Completed a Bachelor's degree (4-year degree)

\_\_\_ Pursuing a Graduate degree

\_\_\_ Completed a Graduate degree

\_\_\_ Doctoral degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D.)

\_\_\_ Professional degree (e.g., MD, JD, DVM)

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Once you have finished filling out this questionnaire, please return it to the survey administrators.

We appreciate your time and effort in completing this questionnaire. The information you have provided will help researchers to better understand the nature and dynamics of silence within friendship.

If you have comments or questions for the researchers you may include them on a separate note. However, please be certain you have not written your name or any other identifying information on the questionnaire itself.

## APPENDIX C

### Married Survey

#### Attitudes Toward Interpersonal Silence in Dyadic Relationships

This is a study about how people feel when there is a silent moment or period of time between them and their spouse. You will be asked to think of your spouse and to complete this questionnaire in reference to your relationship with him or her. Some of the questions will focus on your marriage while others will concentrate on silence and your attitudes toward it.

Please do not discuss the questions or share your answers with your spouse until you have completed and returned your questionnaire. The information you provide will help interpersonal communication researchers to better understand the dynamics of silence within marriage. *Thank you for your participation!*

---

1. Please provide the following information about your spouse:

#### Spouse

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Sex:           MALE           FEMALE

Race:       \_\_\_ Black/African American       \_\_\_ Native American       \_\_\_ Caucasian  
              \_\_\_ Asian/Pacific Islander       \_\_\_ Hispanic       \_\_\_ Other

How long have you married to this person (in years)? \_\_\_\_\_



For the remainder of this survey, please think of your spouse. Please answer the following questions with this person in mind.

3. Satisfaction and Involvement with Spouse:

In this section, we will ask you some questions about your marriage relationship. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement by circling the appropriate number:

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>				<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>		
14. I'm happy with my marriage.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I am highly involved in my spouse's life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. My spouse and I do lots of things together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. There is not much I would change about the relationship I have with my spouse right now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. My spouse and I rarely do any kinds of activities together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. My relationship with my spouse is not very satisfying.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. My spouse and I are an indispensable part of each other's life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. My relationship with my spouse is just the way I want it to be.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. I am always spending time with my spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. I am very satisfied with the relationship I have with my spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. I wish I could change several things about the relationship I have with my spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. My spouse and I spend a lot of time together.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. I consider myself to be very involved in my spouse's life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. Commitment to Spouse:

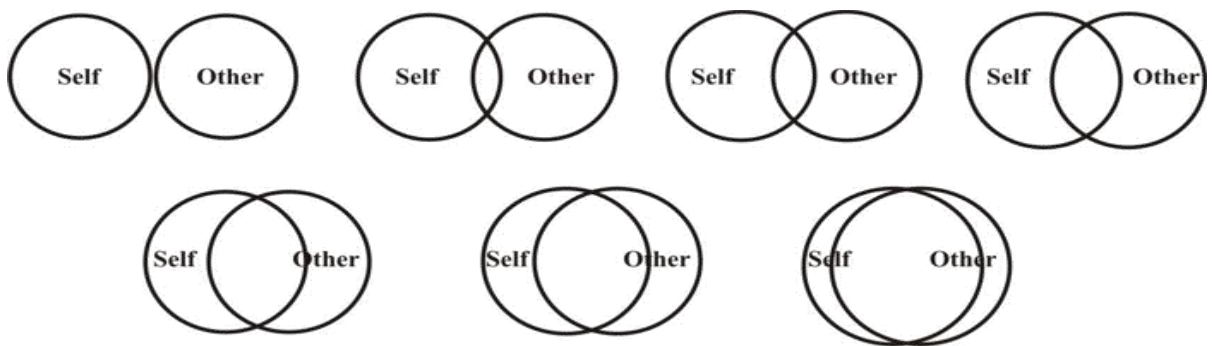
With your spouse in mind, please respond to these questions about the nature of your level of commitment to the marriage you currently share with this person:

*When thinking about my marriage to my spouse:*

	<u>Strongly</u> <u>Disagree</u>					<u>Strongly</u> <u>Agree</u>	
6. I am committed to maintaining my friendship with my spouse	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I would feel upset if our marriage were to end in the near future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I feel attached to our marriage – strongly linked to my spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I am dedicated to maintaining my marriage with my spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I want our marriage to last for a very long time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. Closeness with Spouse:

How close is your relationship with your spouse right now? The circles below are meant to depict you (“self”) and your spouse (“other”). Please draw an “X” through the pair of circles that best illustrates *how close you and your spouse feel toward each other*.



6. Attitudes Toward Silence in Friendship:

*When a silent moment or period of time occurs while I'm spending time with my spouse, I feel:*

Nervous	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Relaxed
Uneasy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Calm
Uncomfortable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Comfortable
Worried	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Carefree
Doubtful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Confident
Insecure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Secure
Dissatisfied	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Satisfied
Distant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Close

7. Assertiveness - Responsiveness Measure:

Below is a list of different personality characteristics. Next to each item, write a number indicating how much you feel that item applies to you, according to the scale below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Not at all like me</i>						<i>Very much like me</i>
_____ Helpful		_____ Defends own beliefs		_____ Warm		
_____ Independent		_____ Responsive to others		_____ Friendly		
_____ Forceful		_____ Strong personality		_____ Aggressive		
_____ Sympathetic		_____ Compassionate		_____ Tender		
_____ Assertive		_____ Sensitive to the needs of others		_____ Acts as a leader		
_____ Dominant		_____ Sincere		_____ Competitive		
_____ Gentle		_____ Willing to take a stand				

8. About Yourself:

Finally, we have some questions about you.

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Sex:

\_\_\_ Male

\_\_\_ Female

3. How would you describe your own ethnic background? (check all that apply)

\_\_\_ Black/African American

\_\_\_ Native American

\_\_\_ Caucasian

\_\_\_ Asian/Pacific Islander

\_\_\_ Hispanic

\_\_\_ Other

4. Which of the following best describes your marital status? (check one)

\_\_\_ Single, never married

\_\_\_ Divorced

\_\_\_ Married

\_\_\_ Widowed

5. What is your highest degree of education attained to date? (check one)

\_\_\_ High School diploma/GED

\_\_\_ Associate's degree (2-year degree)

\_\_\_ Pursuing a Bachelor's degree (4-year degree)

\_\_\_ Completed a Bachelor's degree (4-year degree)

\_\_\_ Pursuing a Graduate degree

\_\_\_ Completed a Graduate degree

\_\_\_ Doctoral degree (e.g., Ph.D., Ed.D.)

\_\_\_ Professional degree (e.g., MD, JD, DVM)

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Once you have finished filling out this questionnaire, please return it to the survey administrators.

We appreciate your time and effort in completing this questionnaire. The information you have provided will help researchers to better understand the nature and dynamics of silence within marriage.

If you have comments or questions for the researchers you may include them on a separate note. However, please be certain you have not written your name or any other identifying information on the questionnaire itself.

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