The need to belong is a fundamental human need to form and maintain a minimum number of positive, enduring relationships (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Need to belong theory suggests that one relationship can be replaced with another in order to maintain one’s sense of belonging. However, some relationships seem less easily replaceable than others. Ruehlman and Wolchik (1988) found that there were particular benefits connected with the most significant relationship in a person’s life (e.g., parent or romantic partner) and that once people have one strong, close attachment, additional relationships are not as satisfying.

The purpose of this study is to examine one implication: interpersonal investment in different types of relationships. I expect that individuals will seek acceptance from less replaceable relationships to a greater extent than relationships that are more easily replaceable.

Participants will be 40 undergraduate students (20 men and 20 women). They will complete a questionnaire packet containing revised versions of the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ; Rohner, 1990) and the Triangular Love Scale (TLS; Sternberg, 1988). Both of these scales will be adapted to reflect behavior/thoughts pertaining to specific (e.g., romantic) and general (e.g., friendship) relationships.

I will analyze the data using a series of one-way ANOVAs with relationship type (e.g., romantic, parental, friendship) as the subject variable and the subscales of the PARQ and TLS as dependent variables. Results are expected to show that less replaceable relationships will be associated with greater distress in response to rejection and greater investment as measured by feelings of love.