STABILITY AND IMPORTANCE OF PARTNER FLAWS' INFLUENCE ON ROMANTIC AFFECT AND COMMITMENT

By Emily A. Vogels

This study aimed to understand how stability and importance of deterrents to romantic affect impact romantic affect intensity. In particular, the current study investigated how the perceived importance and stability of a romantic partner's negative trait altered romantic affect towards that partner. Only individuals who were currently in a romantic relationship of at least 3 months qualified for this study.

Participants completed a survey about negative traits their partner possesses, and were asked to select three traits their partner has: the most important negative trait, a moderately important negative trait, and a low importance trait. Based on random assignment, they were instructed to elaborate upon either the most important trait or upon the moderately important one, by describing an instance where their partner expressed that trait (*flaw importance manipulation*). Afterwards, they received feedback on the elaborated trait, stating that previous research had found the trait to be stable, unstable, or that they would receive more information at a later time (*flaw stability manipulation*). Finally, they completed a second survey, which assessed their romantic affect towards their partner and included the manipulation checks.

Given that both manipulations failed, and that our manipulation checks and the planned analyses did not reveal significant effects, internal analyses were conducted. Specifically, multiple regressions were run using the manipulation checks as predictors. The interaction between stability and importance was significant for both commitment and relationship evaluations. For stable traits (1 SD above the mean of stability), as importance of that negative trait increased, relationship evaluations became less positive but commitment to the relationship increased. Implications of these findings for romantic relationships are discussed.

STABILITY AND IMPORTANCE OF PARTNER FLAWS' INFLUENCE ON ROMANTIC AFFECT AND COMMITMENT

by

Emily A. Vogels

A Thesis Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

Master of Science in Psychology
Cognitive and Affective Science

at

The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
Oshkosh WI 54901-8621

June 2015

COMMITTEE APPROVAL

Anca Miron — Advisor

6/1/2015 — Date Approved

Member

6/1/2015 — Date Approved

Member

6/1/15 — Date Approved

DEAN OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Susan Cramer

6/3/2015

Date Approved

FORMAT APPROVAL

Marci Hoffman

5/19/15

Date Approved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

Stability and Importance of Partner Flaws' Influence on Romantic Affect and Commitment

No person is without flaws, yet love occurs with knowledge of these flaws. Whereas some people are driven apart by the flaws they see in their romantic partners, others seem unfazed by their partners' flaws. Indeed, negative traits have been found to negatively affect relationship satisfaction in both partners (Robins, Caspi, & Moffitt, 2000; Sprecher, 2001). Moreover, subjective perceptions in relationships are more predictive of relationship satisfaction than objective reality (Flury & Ickles, 2006; Holmes & Murray, 1997; Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996a, 1996b). For instance, perceived importance of a romantic partner's flaw directly influences the intensity of romantic affect and the level of commitment people experience towards their romantic partners (Miron, Knepfel, & Parkinson, 2009). While prior work has examined the role of perceived importance of partner flaws on romantic affect intensity, no research has addressed how perceived stability of a negative partner trait impacts romantic affect when acting in conjunction with the perceived importance of that trait.

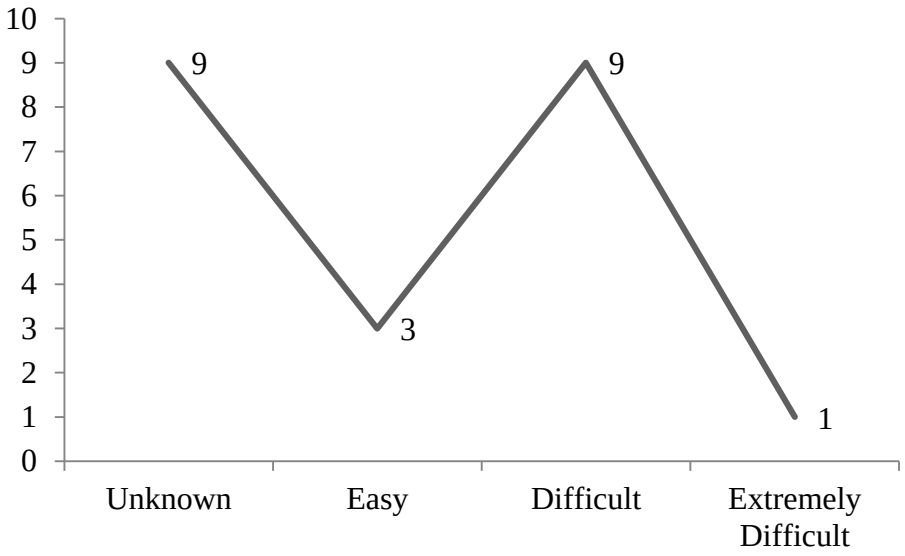
Emotional Intensity Theory

Negative partner traits can be conceptualized as obstacles to feeling love towards one's romantic partner. Emotional intensity theory addresses how intensely an emotion is experienced in response to obstacles to experiencing that emotion (Brehm, 1999). It is best to understand this theory by considering the factors affecting motivation in

accomplishing a goal (Brehm & Brummett, 1998; Brehm, Wright, Solomon, Silka, & Greenberg, 1983). Humans are energy-conservative and will only expend as much effort as is needed to accomplish a goal. When the difficulty is unknown, the effort is set to a high level in order to optimize the chances of attaining the goal. If the obstacle to a goal is minimal, very little effort will be put forth in accomplishing a goal. As the obstacle becomes greater, more effort is put forth in achieving the goal. The increase in effort in response to increasing difficulty of achieving the target goal continues until difficulty becomes too great and the goal becomes impossible to achieve. In this case, effort will decrease substantially as the person will give up on pursuing the goal (see Figure 1 for the theoretical predictions made by Brehm's intensity of motivation model).

Figure 1

Theoretical predictions of the intensity of motivation model



This theoretical pattern has been predicted (Brehm, 1999) and found for a new kind of goals—emotional goals (Brehm, 1999; Brehm, Brummett, & Harvey, 1999; Brehm, Miron, & Miller, 2008; Miron, Knepfel, & Parkinson, 2009). The obstacles to emotional goals are called deterrents. Brehm (1999) found that the intensity of sadness felt due to reading a story about a person being dumped was deterred by the dollar amount of a gift certificate the participants received (i.e., a reason for feeling happy). Three different dollar amounts were used: $1, $2, and $3. Sadness increased from the $1 to $2 condition and was most intense when participants received a $2 gift certificate. A decrease in sadness was noted for $3 when experiencing sadness became too difficult because the $3 gift certificate acted as a strong reason for feeling happy and therefore constituted a high deterrent to sadness.

This finding was conceptually replicated in two additional studies. Brehm et al. (2008) investigated how positive affect experienced in response to eating a chocolate truffle was deterred by information participants received about a potential tuition increase (see Figure 2). The same cubic pattern was found in this study: either a potential small or high tuition increase (2% or 16%; small and high deterrent conditions) resulted in a lower intensity of liking than the 8% tuition increase condition (moderate deterrent condition). When no information was given about a tuition increase (unknown deterrent condition), the intensity of liking was high and was comparable to the 8% increase condition. In a second study, Brehm and colleagues (2008) found that the negative feeling induced by bitter chocolate was deterred by dollar amount of the gift certificate received (see Figure 3). The researchers used five different dollar amounts ($1 through $5 conditions) and a

control condition where no gift certificate was given to the participants. Participants in the control condition reported a high level of negative affect in response to eating bitter chocolate. Receiving a $1 gift certificate reduced negative affect intensity compared to the control condition. A steady increase in negative affect was found as the dollar amount increased from $1 to $4, peaking at an intensity level similar to that of the control condition in the $4 dollar condition (a moderate deterrent to negative affect towards bitter chocolate). A drop in negative affect was found for $5 compared to the $4 condition, suggesting that the $5 gift certificate functioned as a successful high deterrent.

Figure 2

Liking of chocolate as a function of proposed tuition increase manipulation (Brehm et al., 2008)

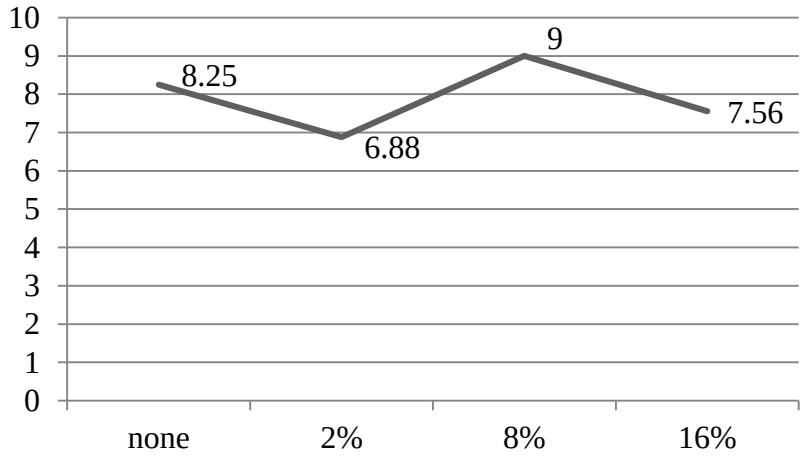
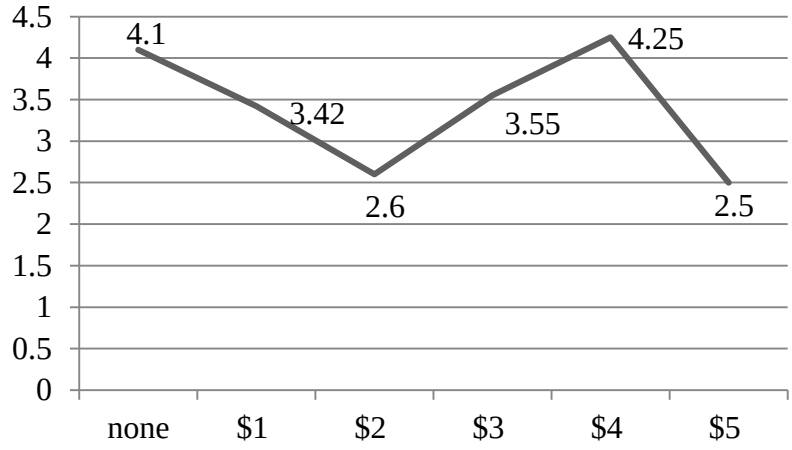


Figure 3

Negative feeling induced by bitter chocolate deterred by manipulation of the dollar amount of gift certificate received (Brehm et al., 2008)



Stability of Traits

Previous research testing Brehm's (1999) emotional intensity theory has not addressed the potential complexity of the deterrents, such as *perceived stability of deterrents*–whether the deterrent is expected by the participants to have a stable effect. In the current study, stability was a key factor and was experimentally addressed through altering individuals' perceptions of their partner's negative trait stability.

Previous research has found that priming can be an effective method for altering perceptions of trait stability (e.g., Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Rattan, Savani, Naidu, & Dweck, 2012). Blackwell et al. (2007) increased math achievement in seventh graders by informing the children that intelligence as an individual trait can change over time. Children who were taught about incremental theory (that intelligence is

malleable and able to be changed through effort) put forth more effort in learning classroom material than the children in the comparison group, who was not told of this theory. The increased effort resulted in higher scores in math (the dependent variable of interest in that study).

More in line with the proposed study's focus on perceptions and beliefs, Rattan et al. (2012) altered people's intelligence beliefs by priming them with statements that suggested that intelligence was either malleable or stable. Individuals from the United States and India were compared across a series of studies. Initial cultural differences (assessed before the priming manipulation) were found in regards to participants' beliefs about the malleability of intelligence. Americans were less likely than Eastern Indians to believe that all individuals held the potential to be intelligent (universal intelligence) and that effort exerted could alter intelligence (incremental intelligence). By priming individuals with statements endorsing universality/non-universality of intelligence, incremental intelligence, or entity intelligence (intelligence as a trait individuals either do or do not possess), participants' responses to a number of dependent measures reflected an endorsement of the ideology with which they were primed. These findings, along with the results of Blackwell et al. (2007) study, suggest that priming can successfully help alter perceptions of the stability of personality traits.

Prior research has also explored the relationship between perception of behavioral stability and relationship behaviors. Davis and Gold (2011) studied how abused victims' perceptions of their aggressors' behavioral stability affected victims' forgiveness, empathy, and perceptions of the aggressor's remorse. These researchers used a 5-item

scale to assess perception of stability, with questions such as, "At the time they remorsefully apologized, how likely did you think it was that your partner would repeat the bad behavior in the future?" and "At the time they remorsefully apologized, how likely did you think it was that your partner would continue to engage in the bad behavior?" Perceived stability was negatively correlated with forgiveness, empathy, and perceived remorse. Furthermore, the relationship between perceived stability and forgiveness was mediated by empathy for the abuser. This shows that perceptions about the stability of negative traits a partner possesses influence how the individual feels towards their partner.

Prior research has also found that negative traits can have a detrimental impact on relationship satisfaction (e.g., Robins et al., 2000; Sprecher, 2001). Although relationship satisfaction is different from romantic affect, they are conceptually related in the sense that romantic affect and relationship satisfaction are both products of the relationship quality and perceptions of the partner. In addition, there are more well-established and validated measures of relationship satisfaction than of romantic affect. Because of that, relationship satisfaction is used more often than romantic affect as a dependent variable in relationship research (e.g., Robins et al., 2000; Rusbult, 1983; Sprecher, 1998, 2001). Therefore, research on relationship satisfaction can be of use when designing a study on romantic affect.

In a study by Robins et al. (2000), negative personality traits in both partners were found to be negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction and relationship quality as reported by both partners. Sprecher (2001) conducted a 5-year longitudinal study on how

equity in relationships influences relationship satisfaction and commitment. Initially, heterosexual men who consistently reported putting more effort into their relationship than did their romantic partners did not show a decrease in relationship satisfaction and commitment. However, the more under-benefitting (not receiving as much from the relationship as is contributed) men reported having been at Time 3 (year 3), the less satisfied and committed to their partners they were at Time 4 (year 4). Although the author did not know how to account for these findings, these results seem to support the idea that perceptions of trait stability across time affect how individuals feel about their relationships and partners.

Previous findings suggest that salience of negative traits in the partner negatively affects relationship satisfaction, and that the stability of negative traits also negatively impacts relationship satisfaction. These findings however do not address how importance of negative partner traits may interact with stability perceptions. The current research attempts to address this gap in the literature by studying how romantic affect is affected by trait importance and perceived trait stability using the framework provided by Brehm's emotional intensity theory.

Importance of Partner Traits

Perceptions of partner traits, rather than actual partner traits, appear to influence how individuals feel and interact with their environment. Research seems to suggest that inaccurate perceptions assuming positive things about a partner increase commitment and

relationship satisfaction (e.g., Flury & Ickles, 2006; Murray et al., 1996a, 1996b; Murray et al., 2005). Low levels of empathic accuracy—accuracy in inferring another's emotions—are found in more stable relationships (Flury & Ickles, 2006). In long-term relationships, couples can become complacent by no longer closely monitoring how their partners feel about the relationship or the other member of the couple. This leads to inaccurate perceptions of how their partner is feeling, often erring on the side of optimistic assumptions.

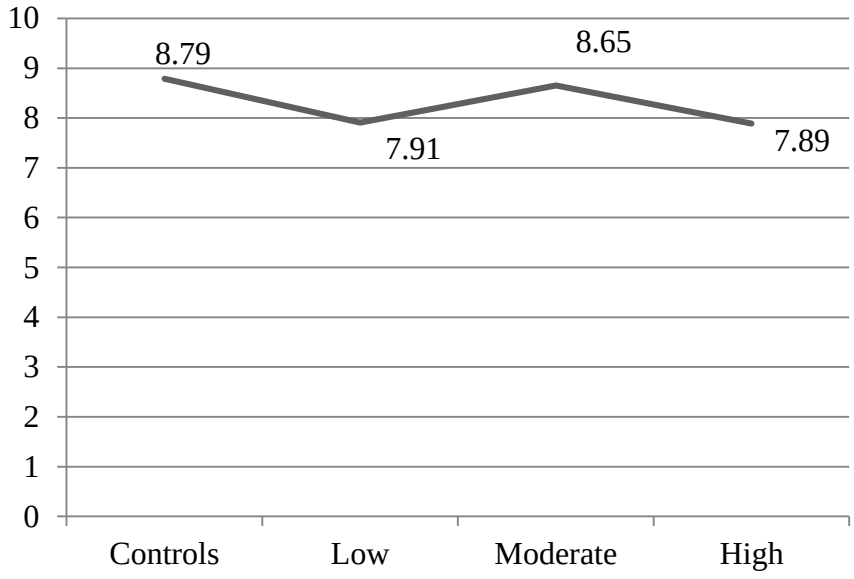
While Flury and Ickles (2006) and other researchers argue for the importance of empathic accuracy in relationships, inaccuracy seems to be useful when not being accurate about the partner's flaws protects the relationship and improves relationship satisfaction. Murray et al. (1996a) explored some of the misperceptions that people have in relationships. People tend to idealize their partner by seeing them as more similar to themselves and more closely fitting their ideal partner than they actually are. Such perceptions are known as positive illusions. Both individuals are happier when this idealization occurs.

Drawing upon several of these topics, Miron and colleagues (2009) conducted a series of studies investigating how importance of romantic partner traits affects the intensity of feelings towards the partner. Emotional intensity theory was used in formulating their hypotheses for all three studies. In Study 1, participants were asked to think of their romantic partner and write down three negative partner characteristics. They were further instructed to elaborate either on the third most important (small obstacle to feeling positively toward the partner), the second most important (moderate

obstacle), the most important partner trait (high obstacle) or no further elaboration occurred (control). Positive affect towards partner and commitment were then measured. When no elaboration occurred, the intensity of romantic affect was high. Those who elaborated either on the third most important flaw or the most important flaw showed a lower intensity of romantic affect than those in the no elaboration condition and those in the second most important flaw condition (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Romantic affect is deterred by flaw importance (Study 1; Miron et al., 2009)

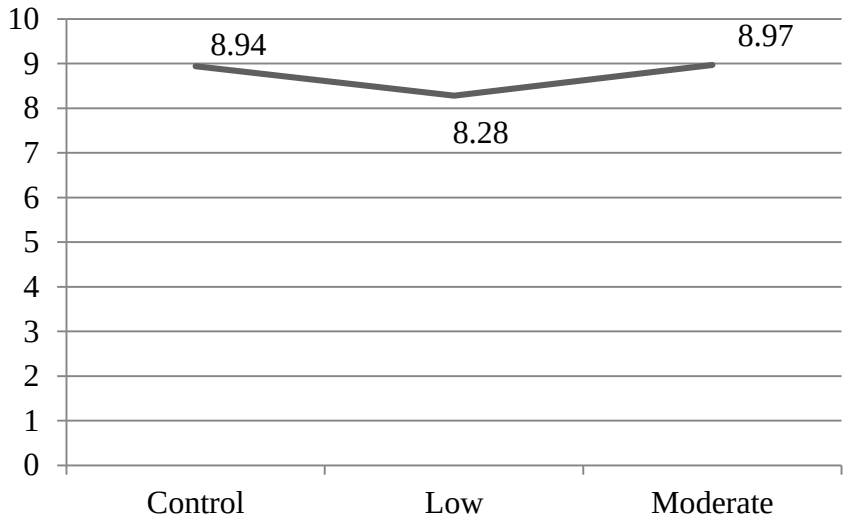


In Study 2, participants were given a list of negative traits and asked to pick the top negative trait their partner possessed. Participants then received fabricated feedback about the effect of the negative trait they selected on their own romantic relationship. Based on condition assignment, the feedback received suggested that if they picked a

particular partner flaw, then their own relationship would have either only *minor* problems (low obstacle to love), or *moderately serious* problems (moderate obstacle to love), or they were told to expect feedback later (control condition). Romantic affect towards partner was then measured. Those who received feedback suggesting minor problems showed a lower intensity of romantic affect than the moderately serious problems condition. When no feedback was received, the intensity of romantic affect was comparable to the moderately serious problems condition (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Romantic affect is deterred by severity of potential problems (Study 2; Miron, Knepfel, & Parkinson, 2009)



Study 3 (Miron et al., 2009) investigated the effect of positive partner traits on romantic anger intensity. Participants wrote about an incident when they were very angry with the romantic partners, then listed the top three positive partner traits, and, based on condition assignment, elaborated on one of the three. Anger at the partner and other

negative emotions were measured. When no elaboration occurred (control condition), the intensity of anger was high. Those who elaborated on the most important positive trait (high deterrence condition) or the third most important positive trait (low deterrence condition) showed a lower intensity of anger than those who elaborated on the second most important positive trait (moderate deterrence condition). The intensity of anger for the moderate deterrence condition was higher than the control condition.

This series of studies suggests that perceived importance of a partner trait affects romantic emotion intensity in a cubic fashion, as predicted by emotional intensity theory. In addition, these studies serve as a template in designing the proposed research. The current study will use the trait importance manipulation used in Miron et al.'s (2009) Studies 1 and 3, a list of negative traits similar to the list these researchers used in Study 2, as well as the feedback format utilized in Study 2.

Alternative Theories for the Predicted Effects on Positive Romantic Affect

Cognitive dissonance. If cognitive dissonance predicted the pattern of results in our research, we would see romantic affect and commitment increase as both perceived importance and stability of the negative traits increased. Cognitive dissonance theory suggests that, when conflicting information is at odds with each other, individuals try to change one of the two pieces of information so that they become congruent with each other. However, this only occurs when the information is viewed as important by the individual holding the conflicting beliefs (see Table 1 for the pattern of predictions for

the current study based on cognitive dissonance theory). Thus, no dissonance should be experienced in the low stability conditions regardless of their importance, because of the low stability information should inform the person that negative trait will go away after some time and therefore is of all importance.

Table 1

Predictions for romantic affect by flaw importance and stability using cognitive dissonance theory

	Moderate Importance	High Importance
No Stability Feedback	Low	Moderate
High Stability	Low/Moderate	High
Low Stability	Low	Low

One dissonance paradigm involves inducing a feeling of hypocrisy (Aronson, Fried, & Stone, 1991; Darley & Cooper, 1972; Joule & Azdia, 2003; Murray, Wood, & Lilienfeld, 2012). In the classic example of the counterattitudinal essay task, individuals are asked to write an essay supporting a position counter to their own (e.g., Darley & Cooper, 1972). When the individuals are forced to do so, their internal attitudes remain the same as there was no dissonance over why they wrote the essay (they had external justification in the form of the experimenter request to write such essay). However, when there is minimal pressure to write the counterattitudinal essay, individuals experience dissonance over why they wrote the essay and, as a result, they report more agreement with the position than before writing the essay. Similarly, when participants are asked to lie to others, more dissonance occurs when the pressure was low or the incentive small

whereas less dissonance occurs when the pressure is high or the incentive large (e.g., Murray, Wood, & Lilienfeld, 2012) . Thus, cognitive dissonance would predict a linear effect of deterrents on affect, as shown in Table 1.

However, Fuegen and Brehm (as cited in Brehm, 2004) found that as pressure to write counterattitudinal essays increases, attitude intensity did not increase in a linear fashion as expected by cognitive dissonance theory. In fact, their findings align better with the predictions made by emotional intensity theory: as pressure to write a counterattitudinal essay decreased, the support of the conflicting belief increased, then decreased, and increased again.

Punishment. Drawing from punishment and reward research, negative partner traits could be seen as punishment thus causing a decrease in a particular behavior. If this were the case, then romantic affect would decrease as both perceived importance and stability of the salient negative partner trait increased (see Table 2 for pattern of prediction for the current study based on punishment theory).

Table 2

Predictions for romantic affect by flaw importance and stability using punishment theory

	Moderate Importance	High Importance
No Stability Feedback	High	Low
High Stability	High	Low
Low Stability	High	Moderate?

There is a lack of research looking at degrees of punishment. Most studies only have two levels, such as presence and absence of punishment. For example, Gunderson and Ferrari (2008) looked at the effects of apologies for infidelity on forgiveness. They found that that apologizing helped to make people more forgiving of cheating. However, “often” cheating elicited less forgiveness than an “isolated” incident (Gunderson & Ferrari, 2008). This finding has only two levels of punishment: an "isolated" incident of infidelity and "often" infidelity;" due to this, we cannot draw out what the pattern of forgiveness would be along a continuum of infidelity frequency (i.e., different degrees of deterrents to forgiveness).

Stability of negative traits facilitates controllability of traits. Past research has shown that people like perceiving they have control over otherwise uncontrollable events (Demaris & Swinford, 1996; Dufour & Nadeau, 2001). In cases of abuse, women are less fearful when they have a sense of control over their situation (Demaris & Swinford, 1996), and resilient women see their situation as less influenced by powerful others and less due to chance than women addicted to drugs (Dufour & Nadeau, 2001). This is because individuals feel they have control over what happens to them and can prevent harm from befalling them. Romantic partners may prefer stable over unstable negative partner characteristics or behaviors because it allows them to control the situation by not performing behaviors that could trigger negative behavior in the partner. However, no research has supported the idea that these individuals prefer stable over unstable abusive characteristics. The current study assumed that stable negative partner traits have more deterrent power than unstable negative behavior, and the predictions made for the effects

of importance and stability of negative partner traits on positive affect reflect this assumption.

Overview of Current Study

The current study focused on how importance of partner flaws along with perceived stability of the partner trait influence romantic affect intensity. For practical reasons, we focused only on high and moderate importance flaws. In addition, these two deterrent levels (moderate and high importance flaws) carry the most theoretical importance in understanding why people may stay in aversive relationships. Participants were given a list of 22 negative traits and were asked to select three negative traits that their own partner possesses that are of high, moderate, and low importance to the participant. To manipulate trait importance, participants were randomly assigned to elaborate on either the high or moderate importance trait by asking them to give an example of an event that illustrated that partner trait.

Afterwards, they were randomly assigned to receive one of three kinds of stability feedback suggesting that the trait was found to be highly stable over a 5 year period (high stability condition), highly unstable over a 5 year period (low stability condition), or no stability feedback will be given (no stability feedback).

Hypothesis Set 1. It was hypothesized that when **no stability feedback** was given, the pattern predicted by emotional intensity theory would be observed: the high important flaw would reduce romantic affect compared to the moderately important flaw.

When a flaw was perceived to be **stable (high stability feedback condition),** it would function as a greater obstacle or deterrent to experiencing positive affect toward the partner than a flaw for which no stability information is provided. In contrast, a flaw perceived to be **unstable (low stability feedback condition)** would have less deterrent power than a flaw for which no stability information was provided. Therefore, romantic affect scores would shift according to the perceived stability as well as importance of the flaw (see Table 3 for all hypothesized predictions).

Hypothesis Set 2. When receiving the **high stability feedback**, the moderately important, stable deterrent would function as a high deterrent, whereas the highly important, stable deterrent would function as a high deterrent as well. This decrease in affect would be due to the increased difficulty of experiencing positive affect for the partner, which would lead to less energy being mobilized to sustain high romantic affect intensity.

Hypothesis Set 3. When receiving the **low stability feedback**, a highly important deterrent would function as a moderate deterrent, whereas the moderately important stable deterrent would function as a low deterrent. In Brehm's theory, moderate deterrents mobilize affect, whereas weak deterrents decrease affect. Thus, those who are in the high importance flaw condition would report similarly high levels of romantic affect as those in the moderately important flaw condition when no feedback is given. This is because, in both conditions, the difficulty of achieving the emotional goal would no longer be seen as too great and as a result the salient flaw would mobilize positive affect for the partner. When receiving the **low stability feedback**, those who are in the

moderate importance flaw condition would report lower levels of romantic affect in comparison to those who were in the high importance flaw condition who would receive the low stability feedback. This is due to the emotional goal being easy to achieve for those focusing on what now would be perceived as a weak deterrent (i.e., a moderate unstable flaw).

Table 3

Predictions for romantic affect by flaw importance and stability using emotional intensity theory

	Low importance	Moderate Importance	High Importance
No Stability Feedback	Low	High	Low
High Stability	High	Low	Low
Low Stability	Low	Low	High

Note. A low importance flaw condition was not be included in this study but has been included in the table above so the cubic pattern predicted by emotional intensity theory can be shown.

Pilot Study

A pilot test was conducted in Spring 2014 to collect data on frequency and type of common partner traits in undergraduate romantic relationships. Data were collected from 290 undergraduate students from two large sections of Introduction to Psychology. Participants read that if they were not involved in a romantic relationship at the time of data collection, they could complete the questionnaire by focusing on a past partner or a person with whom the participant was in love. Only data about current partners was used for analysis (N = 136).

After securing study approval from the university's IRB, participants were recruited from Introduction to Psychology courses and were offered extra credit for participation. Before being given the survey, participants read through and signed the consent form if they were interested in participating in the study. They were able to ask the researcher any questions they had before and after consenting. After the informed consent forms were collected, participants responded to a short questionnaire with open-ended items asking about the positive and negative traits their romantic partner possessed. Participants' positive affect toward their partner (α = .83) was assessed using an average score derived from five Likert scale questions ranging from 0 (*Not at All*) to 10 (*Extremely*): "When you think of this person, how warmly do you feel about him or her?," "To what extent are you in love with this person?," "How physically attractive is this person?," "How attractive is this person's personality?," and "Overall, how attractive is this person to you?" The questionairre also included items to assess relationship

commitment (on a 11 point scale ranging from 0 (*Not at All*) to 10 (*Extremely*)), relationship length, time spent together weekly, and importance of negatives (see Appendix A for the pilot study questionairre).

Intially, the negative traits were recorded and tallied. Then, responses were analyzed and grouped by themes. A list of 22 negative traits was created (see Appendix B for for the list).

The quantitative data about current partners were analyzed to provide some baseline data. Relationships ranged in length from 1 month to 231 months ($M = 26.76$), and partners spent an average of 26.37 hours per week with one another (range: 0 to 150). The relationships were 58.1% geographically close and 41.9% long-distance. There was a significant difference in how much time was spent with one another depending on whether or not the relationship was long-distance or not, $t(110) = 4.51$, $p < .001$. Commitment ranged from 3 to 10 with a mean of 9 ($SD = 1.52$), and romantic affect ranged from 5.40 to 10 ($M = 8.95$, $SD = 1.03$). There were no differences between geographically close and long distance relationships on these dependent variables. Married and engaged relationships were significantly different from dating relationships in regards to number of hours spent together, $t(110) = 2.57$, $p < .01$, and commitment, $t(124) = 7.80$, $p < .001$, with married and engaged couples scoring higher for both.

Main Study

The list of negative traits created from the pilot data were used in the main study. In the main study, participants were asked to select from this list three negative traits that their romantic partner possesses. This strategy aided in creating a more realistic cover story.

Method

Participants

The study consisted of 97 participants from a mid-sized Midwestern university. Two participants guessed the hypotheses. An additional six participants who did not elaborate on the correct trait as they had been instructed to do were excluded from data analyses. One participant completed the questionnaires about a previous partner. This left 88 participants (64.8% female). All participants were recruited from introductory courses in Psychology, which require students to participate in research for course credit. Participants needed to be currently in a relationship of at least 3 months to be included in the study. The Department of Psychology research participation website (Sona Systems) has the ability to set inclusion/exclusion criteria, such as whether participants are currently involved in an exclusive romantic relationship. This question helped to limit the study's availability to only individuals who were currently in relationships and to those who had been involved in an exclusive romantic relationship for more than 3 months.

Procedure

Our procedure drew upon the procedures used in Miron et al. (2009). Participants signed up for the study online via the university's research participation website (Sona Systems) populated with students from introductory classes required to participate in psychological research.

Participants were tested individually. Upon arriving at the lab, participants were asked to read and sign a consent form if they agreed to participate (see Appendix C for a copy of the consent form). After signing the consent document, they were given an instructions form, containing information about the study (see Appendix D). On the document, participants read that the investigators seek to replicate some of the results found from a previous 5-year longitudinal study on romantic relationships. They also were told that given that the investigators had prior data on romantic relationships, and they would provide them with some of the results of the previous research that are pertinent to the participant's relationship.

Manipulation of flaw importance. The list of negative traits created from the pilot study was presented to the participants. They were asked to select three negative traits their own partners possess: one of little importance, one of moderate importance, and the most important negative trait. They then rated the perceived importance and stability of each trait on Likert scales of 0 (Not at All) to 10 (Extremely; see Appendix E). After which, they elaborated either on the *most important flaw* (high deterrence condition) or on the *moderately important flaw* (moderate deterrent condition; see Appendix F). Upon completing this task, the researcher informed the participant that results from the previous research may be available for the trait on which they elaborated.

Manipulation of flaw stability. The researcher next gave them bogus results from the fictitious previous research, which ostensibly pertained to the partner trait they had elaborated on. To manipulate perceived flaw stability, participants were randomized to receive feedback on either the moderate or high importance trait and were randomized

to one of three stability conditions for the type of feedback (2 x 3 design; see Appendix G). The *high stability feedback* stated that the partner trait had been found to be highly stable over a 5-year period, with little change ever occurring. The *low stability feedback* stated that the partner trait had been found to be highly unstable over a 5-year period, with large changes occurring. The *no stability feedback* stated that that the partner trait data would be provided at a later point in the study.

Dependent Measures

After reading the feedback, participants filled out a questionnaire about their feelings towards their partner. Participants reported their positive affect toward their partner on 11-point Likert scale questions ranging from 0 (Not at All) to 10 (Extremely): "When you think of this person, how warmly do you feel about him or her?," "To what extent are you in love with this person?," "How physically attractive is this person?," "How attractive is this person's personality?," and "Overall, how attractive is this person to you?" We included numerous other items measuring participants feeling towards the partner, such as items asking how passionate they felt towards their partner, how much they care about the partner, and how much they valued the partner. These items are included in Appendix H, questions 1-20. Using the same Likert scale, five questions asked about the participant's commitment to their partner, such as "How committed to [your partner] do you feel?," "How committed to the relationship do you feel?," "How much do you want the relationship to be a long-term relationship?," "How likely do you

see yourself still being in this relationship in one year?," and "How likely do you see yourself still being in this relationship in five years?"

Perceived controllability of trait and frequency of occurrence of the trait were measured, as covariates (see Appendix H for the full dependent measures questionnaire).

Manipulation Checks

As a manipulation check, we used a modified version of the attribution of stability questionnaire used by Davis and Gold (four items, 2011) with one additional item using 11-point Likert scales (α = .79): "How much do you trust your partner not to repeat the negative behavior?," "How likely do you think it is that your partner will repeat the negative behavior in the future?," "How likely do you think it is that your partner will continue to engage in the negative behavior?," and "How likely do you think it is that your partner's negative behavior will change in the future?" The added item asked: "How likely do you think it is that your partner will change with regard to the negative behavior?" The importance of the elaborated trait was also rated on an 11-point Likert scale as a manipulation check of the trait importance.

Debriefing

After completing the questionnaire, participants were fully debriefed and steps were be taken to decrease the potential risks of thinking of partner's flaws (see Appendix

I). Participants were informed about how the feedback was false and how the feedback was randomly assigned to them without the researcher looking at the flaws participants selected. Participants were educated on how misinformation from a study can continue to affect people even after the misinformation has been debunked.

Results

Manipulation Checks

Trait importance. A paired-samples *t*-test was run to assess if a difference in importance ratings of their most (M = 6.25, SD = 2.77) and moderate importance (M = 5.16, SD = 2.87) traits existed within participants. The difference between importance ratings was significant, $t(87) = 7.13$, $p \leq .001$. A 2x3 ANOVA was run to test if those in the high importance condition (who were asked to elaborate on the most important trait) had selected a significantly more important trait for elaboration in comparison to the participants in the moderate importance condition (who were asked to elaborate on the moderately important trait) across the three stability feedback conditions. The groups did not differ in their ratings of the importance of the trait they were asked to elaborate on, omnibus $F(5, 82) = .42$, $p = .83$, all individual Fs < .95 and all ps > .39 (see Table 4 for means and standard deviations). The first test shows that the participants did perceived a difference between the high and moderate importance traits. However, no difference was found in elaborated traits as a product of the type of trait they were asked to elaborate on across the feedback conditions. This seems to suggest that the elaborated trait became an anchor to which the non-elaborated trait was compared to in order to rate its importance. In other words, the elaborated trait was rated midway on the scale; then using the qualitative labels, participants ranked the other traits as higher if it was chosen as most important or lower if it was chosen as moderately important. These findings also suggest that the manipulation of importance of the elaborated trait may have been unsuccessful.

Table 4

Means and standard deviations of ratings of importance of the elaborated trait

Stability Feedback	Qualitative Label Associated with the Elaborated Trait	N	Mean	SD
No Information	Moderate	15	5.27	2.89
	High	14	6.42	2.24
Stable	Moderate	12	5.83	2.79
	High	16	5.88	2.58
Unstable	Moderate	15	6.00	2.85
	High	16	5.19	3.19
Total	Moderate	42	5.69	2.80
	High	46	5.80	2.70

Trait stability. An ANOVA was used to assess whether the perceived behavioral stability of a trait was predicted by the stability feedback an individual received across the elaborated trait importance conditions. No significant difference were found, omnibus $F(5, 82) = .41$, $p = .84$, all individual Fs < .49 and all ps > .48 (see Table 5 for means and standard deviations). This lack of difference most likely occurred because people might have focused on the near future when answering these questions, as the questions assessing stability did not clarify the temporal frame for the evaluation of the stability of the partner trait. Therefore, individuals most likely thought of the future as any time after completing the survey. The feedback was about a 5-year period, thus making the potential for change a long ways off. Also, the feedback about the stability of the elaborated trait over the course of five years would not seem relevant in the short term.

Table 5

Means and standard deviations of trait stability

Importance	Stability Feedback	N	Mean	SD
Moderate	No Info	15	4.69	1.26
	Stable	12	4.72	2.19
	Unstable	15	5.12	1.79
High	No Info	14	4.73	2.30
	Stable	16	5.44	2.16
	Unstable	16	5.23	1.71
Total	No Info	29	4.71	1.80
	Stable	28	5.13	2.16
	Unstable	31	5.17	1.72

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was used to uncover the underlying groupings of the dependent variables (items 1-20 from Appendix H). Using Varimax rotation, four factors were found: 1) Passionate Love (α = .93), 2) Companionate Love (α = .86), 3) unknown (α = .83), and 4) Sexual Attraction (α = .76; see Table 6). The first two factors reflect two common distinctions of love (Berscheid & Walster, 1974; Berscheid & Meyers, 1996; Fehr, 1994). Passionate love reflects the idea of being "in love." This is when people are wrapped up in their partner emotionally and sexually. Companionate love is more in line with the idea of "love." This is a deep friendship and interdependent commitment.

Table 6

Factor analysis of dependent variable items

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
When you think of your romantic partner, how positively or negatively do you feel about him or her?			.78	
When you think of your romantic partner, how warmly do you feel about him or her?			.70	
How physically attractive is this person?				.71
How attractive is this person's personality?			.68	
Overall, how attractive is this person to you?				.84
To what extent are you in love with this person?	.68	.59		
How crazy are you about this person?	.79			
How much do you like your partner?		.62		
How much do you care about this person?		.51		
How committed to that person do you feel?	.72			
How committed to the relationship do you feel?	.58			
How much do you want the relationship to be a long-term relationship?		.81		
How likely do you see yourself still being in this relationship in one year?		.63		
How likely do you see yourself still being in this relationship in five years?		.62		
How much do you value this person?		.72		
How crazy do you feel about this person?	.81			
How passionate do you feel about this person?	.78			
How serious is your relationship?	.82			
How important is this relationship to you?		.80		
How would you rate the quality of your relationship with this person?			.76	

Note. Varimax rotation was used. The table displayed the rotated loadings matrix.

Only one item loaded on more than one factor: "To what extent are you in love with this person?" However it loaded more on passionate love and makes more conceptual sense with passionate love (i.e., "in love" or emotionally wrapped up in the partner). Therefore we included it with the passionate love factor and excluded it from the companionate love factor (adjusted α = .83). We removed the two commitment items

that loaded on passionate love as well as seriousness about the relationship as these items did not conceptually align with the other items (adjusted α = .92). We averaged the two commitment items to create a commitment variable (α = .88).

The third variable lacked theoretical coherency. Instead, two separate variables seemed to have loaded together: positive attitudes (α = .85; "When you think of your romantic partner, how positively or negatively do you feel about him or her?" and "When you think of your romantic partner, how warmly do you feel about him or her?") and relationship evaluations (α = .57; "How attractive is this person's personality?" and "How would you rate the quality of your relationship with this person?"). We computed an aggregated score for each factor by averaging the rating on each of the loaded items. The aggregate scores were used for analysis.

Planned Analyses

An ANCOVA was conducted for each of the six dependent variables derived from the factor analysis to test the influence of the stability and importance manipulations. The reported frequency of the negative trait and the perceived control one's partner had over the trait were used as covariates in each analysis.

Passionate love was not significantly affected by trait stability and trait importance, controlling for frequency of the trait and perceived control one's partner had over the trait, omnibus $F(7, 79) = 1.42$, $p = .21$; aside from frequency of the trait, individual Fs < 2.45 and ps > .12 (see Table 7 for means and standard deviations). The only individual item approaching significance in predicting passionate love was the

covariate frequency of the trait, $F(1, 85) = 3.53$, $p = .06$. As the frequency of the behavior increased, passionate love decreased.

Table 7

Passionate love means and standard deviations by condition

	Moderate Importance	High Importance
No Stability Feedback	9.38 (.69)	9.20 (.93)
High Stability	8.84 (1.05)	8.98 (1.31)
Low Stability	8.87 (1.20)	9.41 (1.27)

Note. Standard deviations in parentheses.

Companionate love was not significantly affected by trait stability and trait importance, controlling for frequency of the trait and perceived control one's partner had over the trait, omnibus $F(7, 79) = 1.29$, $p = .26$; aside from frequency of the trait, the individual Fs < 1.33 and ps > .27 (see Table 8 for means and standard deviations). The only item approaching significance in predicting companionate love was the covariate frequency of the trait, $F(1, 85) = 3.92$, $p = .051$. As the frequency of the behavior increased, companionate love decreased.

Table 8

Companionate love means and standard deviations by conditions

	Moderate Importance	High Importance
No Stability Feedback	9.04 (1.35)	9.46 (.68)
High Stability	9.37 (.56)	9.20 (1.07)
Low Stability	9.00 (1.41)	9.60 (.55)

Note. Standard deviations in parentheses.

Sexual attraction was not significantly affected by trait stability and trait importance, controlling for frequency of the trait and perceived control one's partner had over the trait, omnibus $F(7, 79) = 1.45$, $p = .26$; aside from perceived control, individual Fs < 1.22 and ps > .29 (see Table 9 for means and standard deviations). Perceived control one's partner had over the trait was a significant predictor of sexual attraction, $F(1, 85) = 5.90$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2 = .07$. As the control one perceives their partner to have over the negative trait increased, sexual attraction decreased.

Table 9

Sexual attraction means and standard deviations by condition

	Moderate Importance	High Importance
No Stability Feedback	9.00 (.85)	9.32 (1.01)
High Stability	8.92 (.63)	9.34 (.72)
Low Stability	9.17 (.84)	8.97 (1.24)

Note. Standard deviations in parentheses.

Relationship evaluation was significantly affected by trait stability and trait importance, controlling for frequency of the trait and perceived control one's partner had over the trait, omnibus $F(7, 79) = 2.68$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2 = .19$; aside from frequency of the trait, individuals Fs < 2.68 and ps > .10 (see Table 10 for means and standard deviations). Frequency of the trait was a significant predictor of relationship evaluations, $F(1, 85) = 8.42$, $p = .01$, $\eta^2 = .10$. As the frequency of the negative behavior increased, relationship evaluations were less positive.

Table 10

Relationship evaluations means and standard deviations by condition

	Moderate Importance	High Importance
No Stability Feedback	8.89 (1.21)	8.96 (1.10)
High Stability	8.92 (.73)	9.28 (.73)
Low Stability	8.60 (1.04)	9.34 (.70)

Note. Standard deviations in parentheses.

The interactive effect of trait stability and trait importance on positive attitude towards the partner was marginally significant, when controlling for frequency of the trait and perceived control one's partner had over the trait, omnibus $F(7, 79) = 1.90$, $p = .08$; aside from frequency of a trait and trait importance, individual Fs < 2.54 and ps > .11 (see Table 11 for means and standard deviations). Frequency the trait was a significant predictor of positive attitudes, $F(1, 85) = 4.13$, $p = .05$, $\eta^2 = .05$. As the frequency of the negative behavior increased, individuals had a less positive attitude towards their partner.

Trait importance was approaching significance in predicting positive attitudes, $F(1, 85) = 3.05$, $p = .09$. As the importance of the trait increased, individuals had a more positive attitude towards their partner.

Table 11

Positive attitude means and standard deviations by condition

	Moderate Importance	High Importance
No Stability Feedback	9.25 (.85)	9.46 (.69)
High Stability	9.25 (.45)	9.47 (.85)
Low Stability	8.97 (1.20)	9.63 (.62)

Note. Standard deviations in parentheses.

Trait stability and trait importance did not have a significant effect on commitment, when controlling for frequency of the trait and perceived control one's partner had over the trait, omnibus $F(7, 79) = 1.75$, $p = .11$; aside from frequency of trait, individual Fs < 2.38 and ps > .11 (see Table 12 for means and standard deviations). Frequency of the trait was a significant predictor of commitment, $F(1, 85) = 4.24$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2 = .05$. As frequency of the trait increased, commitment decreased.

Table 12

Commitment means and standard deviations by condition

	Moderate Importance	High Importance
No Stability Feedback	9.68 (.61)	9.50 (.94)
High Stability	9.04 (1.05)	9.13 (1.31)
Low Stability	9.30 (1.29)	9.66 (.47)

Note. Standard deviations in parentheses.

Internal Analyses

As the manipulation checks failed, we decided to use the manipulation check scales in lieu of the experimental manipulations to explore whether participants' self-reported importance and stability of traits significantly predicted our dependent variables. Hierarchical regressions were utilized as both manipulation check scales were continuous variables. A regression was conducted for each of the six dependent variables looking at the relationship of trait stability and importance (as indicated by the participants on the manipulations checks) as well as their interaction, while controlling for frequency of the trait and perceived control one's partner had over the trait. If the interaction was significant, a simple slopes analysis was conducted to understand the relationship.

The participant's self-reported importance and stability of their elaborated trait were centered for use in the regressions.

Passionate love. The predictors marginally significantly accounted for 12% of the variance in passionate love, $F(5, 81) = 2.10$, $p = .07$; however, none of the individual betas achieved statistical significance (see Table 13). Perceived control one's partner has

over the trait tended to predict passionate love, but not significantly so, $t(80) = -1.71$, $p = .09$. The more control an individual believed their partner had over the negative trait, the less passionate love the individual reported feeling towards their partner.

Table 13

Regression for passionate love

Variable	Beta	*t*-test	*R*	R^2
Model			.34	.12
ControlBx	-.08	-1.71^{+}		
FrequencyBx	-.08	-1.40		
CStability	-.10	-1.50		
CImportance	.01	.23		
CImportanceStability	.02	.91		

Note. $^{+}p < .10$.

Companionate love. The predictors significantly accounted for 14% of the variance in companionate love, $F(5, 81) = 2.63$, $p = .03$. The individual beta for stability of the trait was significant, $t(80) = -2.62$, $p = .01$ (see Table 14). As the perceived stability of a trait increased, participants reported lower levels of companionate love. This finding suggests that stability of a negative trait has a negative effect on companionate love. Perceived control one's partner has over the trait was approaching significance, $t(80) = -1.68$, $p = .097$. The more control an individual believed their partner had over the negative trait, the less companionate love the individual reported feeling towards their partner.

Table 14

Regression for companionate love

Variable	Beta	*t*-test	*R*	R^2
Model			.37	.14
ControlBx	-.07	-1.68^{+}		
FrequencyBx	-.03	-.69		
CStability	-.16	-2.62*		
CImportance	.00	.00		
CImportanceStability	.02	.78		

Note. $^{+}p < .10$. $*p < .05$.

Sexual attraction. The predictors did not account for a significant proportion of the variance in sexual attraction, $F(5, 81) = 1.43$, $p = .22$; however, perceived control one's partner has over the trait was a significant predictor of sexual attraction, $t(80) = -2.29$, $p = .03$ (see Table 15). The more control an individual believed their partner had over the negative trait, the less sexually attracted the individual reported being towards their partner.

Table 15

Regression for sexual attraction

Variable	Beta	*t*-test	*R*	R^2
Model			.29	.08
ControlBx	-.09	-2.29*		
FrequencyBx	.01	.05		
CStability	-.07	-1.15		
CImportance	-.01	-.36		
CImportanceStability	-.01	-.65		

Note. $*p < .05$.

Positive attitude towards the partner. The predictors significantly accounted for 13% of the variance in positive attitude, $F(5, 81) = 2.38$, $p = .05$, $R^2 = .13$. However, none of the individual betas were significant (see Table 16)

Table 16

Regression for positive attitude

Variable	Beta	*t*-test	*R*	R^2
Model			.36	.13
ControlBx	-.05	-1.58		
FrequencyBx	-.06	-1.38		
CStability	-.07	-1.32		
CImportance	-.03	-.95		
CImportanceStability	-.01	-.58		

Commitment. The predictors significantly accounted for 16% of the variance in commitment, $F(5, 81) = 3.15$, $p = .01$, $R^2 = .16$. However, none of the individual betas were significant (see Table 17). Several variables marginally predicted commitment: perceived control one's partner has over the trait ($t(80) = -1.89$, $p = .06$), trait stability ($t(80) = -1.78$, $p = .08$), and the interaction between trait stability and importance ($t(80) = 1.96$, $p = .053$). The more control an individual believed their partner had over the negative trait, the less committed the individual reported being to their partner. The more stable a trait is perceive to be, the less committed individuals reported being to their partner.

Table 17

Regression for commitment

Variable	Beta	*t*-test	*R*	R^2
Model			.40	.16
ControlBx	-.08	-1.89^{+}		
FrequencyBx	-.08	-1.53		
CStability	-.11	-1.78^{+}		
CImportance	.04	.87		
CImportanceStability	.04	1.96^{+}		

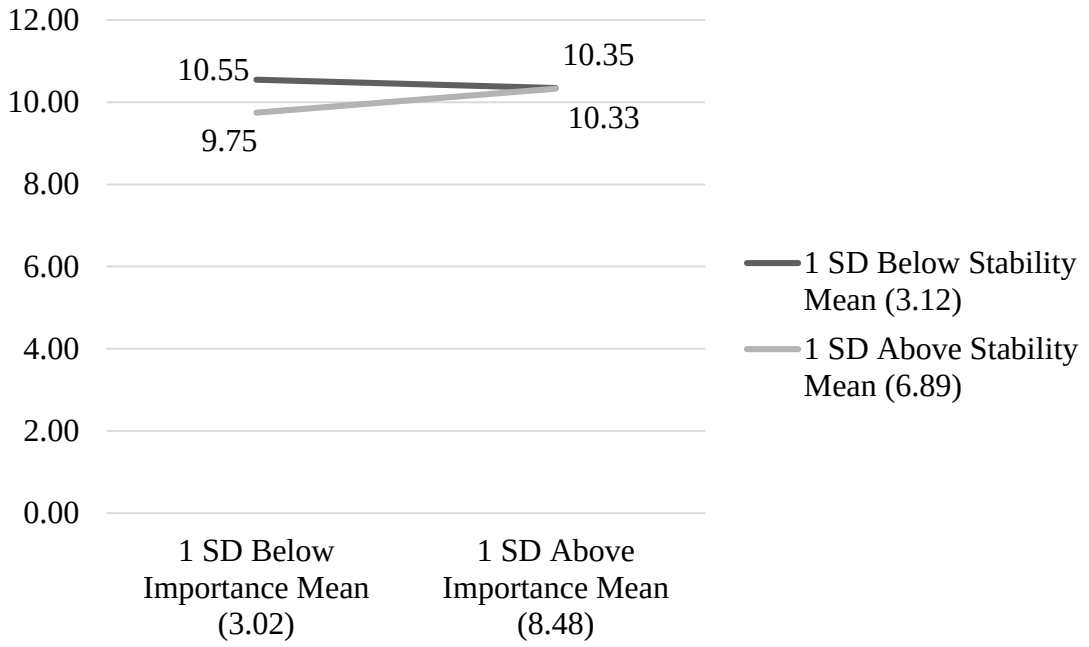
Note. $^{+}p < .10$.

As the stability and importance interaction variable was approaching significance in predicting commitment, the simple slopes were analyzed. First, the mean and standard deviation were calculated for both trait stability ($M = 5.01$, $SD = 1.89$) and importance ($M = 5.75$, $SD = 2.73$). When the negative partner trait the participant elaborated on was seen as unstable (1 SD below the mean of stability), commitment did not significantly differ as a product of trait importance, $t(80) = -.74$, $p = .46$. When the negative partner trait was seen as stable (1 SD above the mean of stability), more commitment was reported when the negative trait was rated as relatively more important (1 SD above the mean of importance) than when it was rated as relatively less important (1 SD below the mean of importance), $t(80) = 2.17$, $p = .03$, $B = .11$, $SE = .05$. Looking at it conversely, when a trait was of greater importance (1 SD above the mean of importance), the stability of the trait did not influence commitment, $t(80) = .03$, $p = .97$. For negative traits of lesser importance traits (1 SD below the mean of importance), unstable traits (1 SD below the mean of stability) produced greater commitment compared to more stable traits, $t(80) =$

2.43, p = .02, B = -.21, SE = .09. In Figure 6, commitment is plotted on the Y-axis, importance on the X-axis, and stability as separate slopes.

Figure 6

Commitment simple slopes plot of the interaction of trait stability and importance



Relationship evaluation. The predictors significantly accounted for 27% of the variance in relationship evaluation, $F(5,81) = 5.90$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .27$. The individual betas for importance of the trait and the interaction between trait importance and trait stability were both significant, $t(80) = -2.61$, $p = .01$ and $t(80) = -2.10$, $p = .04$, respectively (see Table 18). As the perceived importance of a trait increased, the evaluations of the relationship became less positive. The frequency of the trait was approaching significance, $t(80) = -1.89$, $p = .06$. As a trait was displayed more frequently, the evaluations of the relationship became less positive

Table 18

Regression for relationship evaluation

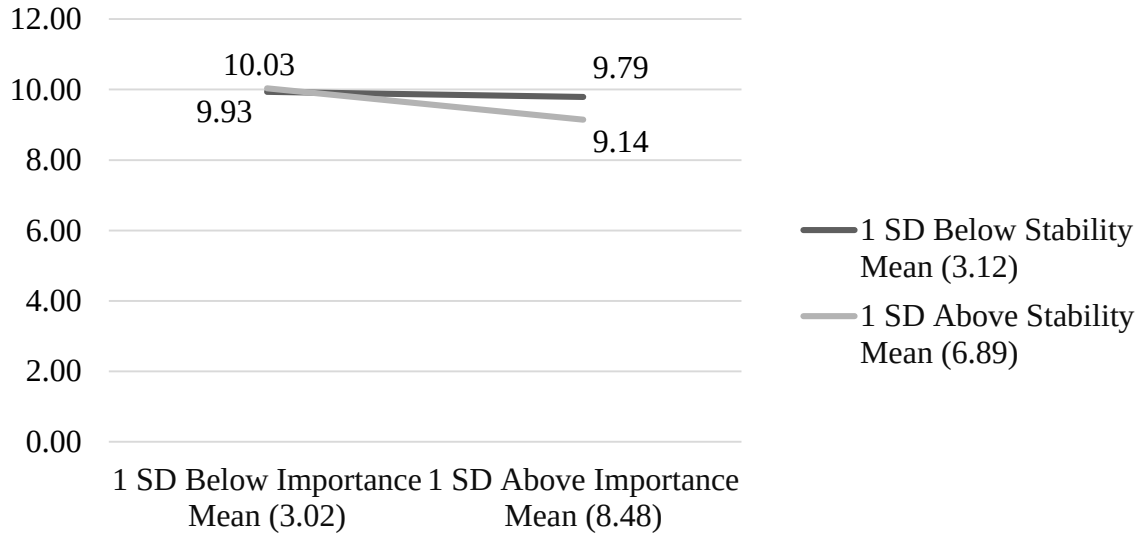
Variable	Beta	*t*-test	*R*	R^2
Model			.52	.27
ControlBx	-.05	-1.39		
FrequencyBx	-.08	-1.89^{+}		
CStability	-.07	-1.34		
CImportance	-.09	-2.62*		
CImportanceStability	-.04	-2.10*		

Note. $^{+}p < .10$. $*p < .05$.

The simple slopes were analyzed as the interaction term was significant. When the partner trait was seen as unstable (1 SD below the mean of stability), relationship evaluation did not significantly differ as a product of trait importance, $t(80) = -.35$, $p = .73$. When the negative partner trait was seen as stable (1 SD above the mean of stability), a high importance trait (1 SD above the mean of importance) predicted lower positive relationship evaluation than less important traits (1 SD below the mean of importance); this finding was trending towards significance, $t(80) = -1.67$, $p = .10$, $B = -.16$, $SE = .10$. Looking at it conversely, when a negative trait was of greater importance (1 SD above the mean of importance), a stable trait (1 SD above the mean of stability) predicted lower positive relationship evaluation than an unstable trait (1 SD below the mean of stability), $t(80) = -6.65$, $p < .001$, $B = -.17$, $SE = .03$. For a trait of lesser importance (1 SD below the mean of importance), the stability of the trait did not influence relationship evaluations, $t(80) = .44$, $p = .66$. In Figure 7, relationship evaluation is plotted on the Y-axis, importance on the X-axis, and stability as separate slopes.

Figure 7

Relationship evaluation simple slopes plot of the interaction of trait stability and importance



Discussion

Planned Analyses

Our manipulations of importance and stability did not achieve significance in our planned analyses. The ANCOVAs run on our six dependent variables revealed that frequency of the trait was a highly influential factor. The frequency of the trait was a significant predictor or approaching significance for all variables except for sexual attraction and, consistently, had an inverse relationship with each. Perceived control one's partner has over the trait was a significant predictor for sexual attraction and had an inverse relationship with this variable.

Due to the experimental manipulations not working as intended, it is no surprise that the planned analyses also failed to uncover any meaningful results in regards to the dimensions of interest – trait importance and trait stability. However, this drastically limits our ability to conclude whether our non-significant findings are purely due to our manipulations failing or if we were outside of the boundary conditions for the phenomenon. Because this study was a conceptual replication of Miron et al. (2009), we tapped into the construction of trait importance in a slightly different way as well as limited our participant population to only relationships of 3 months or longer. These difference could have contributed to the non-significant findings but with the manipulations failing our manipulation checks we cannot draw any theoretical conclusions. An additional issue resides in the difficulty of drawing conclusions about the impact of deterrents as manipulated in this study: it is difficult to ascertain whether the

conjunction of high stability and high importance of the negative trait constitutes a high deterrent or a moderate deterrent. In fact, this may be one of the reasons for the failure of the experimental manipulations in the study: participants might have downplayed both the importance and the stability of the partner's most negative partner trait, making the high deterrent condition indistinguishable in impact from the moderate deterrent condition.

Internal Analyses

The manipulation check scales tap into the same concepts of interest first proposed (i.e., perceived importance of the elaborated negative partner trait and perceived stability of the elaborated negative partner trait), however they lack the experimental control of randomization into conditions. Because of that, the manipulation checks were used as proxy for the variables of interest and internal analyses were conducted using them as predictors of relationship dependent variables.

Perceived control one's partner has over the trait was significant or approaching significance for most of the dependent variables: passionate love, companionate love, sexual attraction, and commitment. It was inversely related to each of these variables. If a person sees their partner in control of their negative traits, it adversely affects how that individuals feels towards their partner. Most likely, this is due to seeing it as something the partner could choose not to do but continues to engage in or display the negative trait.

These post-hoc analyses also revealed that in the case of stable traits, commitment increases as the negative trait increases in importance. This pattern supports the idea of cognitive dissonance. People feel dissonance over staying with a partner who has an important negative characteristic that does not go away. To deal with this dissonance, people come to see themselves as extremely committed to their partner as the reason to why they stay in the relationship. For relationship evaluations (another predicted outcome), we found the opposite pattern for stable traits; as the perceived importance of the stable negative trait increased, people evaluated their relationship less positively. This pattern suggests that while romantic partners may be aware of the negative effects that stable negative traits have on their relationship, these stable negative traits still have motivational impact over their desire to remain in the relationship.

In line with this pattern, there is the finding that people may feel guilt over acknowledging that their relationship is less than ideal. Flynn and Schaumberg (2012) found that when people felt more guilt they were more committed and attached to the institution for which they were working. People may also feel dissonance over choosing a flawed partner so they may explain it as being highly committed to that person. Cooper (1971) found that when individuals are willing chose to work with a partner despite knowing their flaws, they reported liking these individuals more than when they did not get to choose and/or did not know the person's flaws. Knowingly staying with a partner with stable important flaws may be seen as making a sacrifice. Van Lange et al. (1997) found that willingness to make sacrifices was positively correlated with commitment, and

found that willingness to make sacrifices mediated commitment's effect on numerous relationship dimensions.

However, the interaction between trait stability and importance did not significantly account for the variance in the other dependent variables: passionate love, companionate love, sexual attraction, and positive attitude towards partner. Previous research suggests they too should have been affected. The relationships between these variables and trait stability and importance could be mediated by our covariates and thus the direct effect of stability and importance is cancelled out. Frequency of the negative trait was significant predictor for most of the dependent measures in our planned analyses. The frequency of the trait is inherently tied to the stability that trait and may indirectly influence the importance of the trait. Newsom, Rook, Nishishba, Sorkin, and Mahan (2005) found that more frequent negative social interactions are related to greater distress and decreased psychological well-being. Frequent negative encounters with a partner would most likely be attributed to a partner trait. This frequent trait would be seen as stable as it occurs often and would be seen as important as it need to be dealt with on a regular basis. These frequent negative traits could be seen as highly important and highly stable. The frequency of the negative trait is what fuels the relationship between the various relationship affect dimensions and trait stability and importance, thus the direct effect of stability and importance may be canceled out when including frequency of the trait in analyses.

These results may suggest that people can objectively evaluate their situation as less than ideal but feel the need to explain why they stay in the relationship. This pattern

of increased commitment and less positive relationship evaluations may occur in cases of abuse. The victim of abuse can realize they are in a negative situation but may see themselves as loyal to their partner and continue to persevere through abuse.

These post-hoc findings are counter to the predictions we anticipated using emotional intensity theory. There are three possible reasons for this discrepancy: our study falls outside the boundary conditions for emotional intensity theory; this study was flawed and unable to capture the phenomenon; or the theory is flawed. Further testing is needed in order to discovery why our findings do not fall in line with the previous findings of Miron et al. (2009).

Limitations and Future Directions

This experiment had several important limitations. First of all, the experimental manipulations did not seem to be strong enough to create differential conditions of high versus moderate deterrence and stable versus unstable partner characteristics. This eliminated the experimental aspect of the research, making it difficult to investigate the predicted experimental effects. We attempted to parse out the deterrent levels by asking participants to select high, moderate, and low importance traits rather than to list the three most important traits of their partner as previous research by Miron et al. (2009) has done. Although we chose to focus on relationships of three months or longer, this limited our results to more established relationships. This research was conducted with prominently unmarried individuals (91%) and almost half of our sample was in a long

distance relationship (49%). Although the pilot testing found only minor initial difference on these dimensions, further investigation is needed to test the extent of these differences.

Further research should test the boundary conditions of emotional intensity theory, especially in the relationship literature. Perhaps the effect is more intense earlier on in relationships. Additionally, the point at which a deterrent, due to its importance, becomes too great and we see a drop in emotional intensity should be tested. Although only covariates in our research, frequency of a negative trait was a significant predictor of relationship outcomes in most of our planned analyses, and perceived control one's partner has over the trait was a significant predictor in four of our six internal analyses. It is worth exploring the individual roles these variables play in relationships. Also these variable should be tested in the future to see if they are mediating the relationship between trait stability and various measures of commitment, relationship satisfaction, and romantic affect.

Participants' perception of trait stability should also be further tested, as very little attention has been given to this concept in romantic relationship literature and our results seem to suggest that the perceived stability of partner traits has a role to play in romantic relationships. Future research should prime participants to think more about the future than the current research was able to do, such as having participants write about where they see themselves in five years before giving them the stability. This could help to make stability manipulations more salient and potent. Also it would be beneficial to ask participants questions that parse out stability perceptions, such as trait stability in the next few months (a short-term focus) and over the next few years (a long-term focus). The

results from the current study suggest that stability of negative traits has an important role in the dynamics of relationships. This relationship should be explored further.

If future work replicates the post-hoc results we uncovered in the internal analyses, interventions could be created to help individuals more easily exit an unhealthy relationship. By recognizing the dual effects (less positive relationship evaluations and greater commitment) of trait stability and importance, we can work on separating these effects and decrease commitment as the relationship is viewed more negatively. Possible mediators, such as willingness to make sacrifices and guilt, should be explored as ways to change the outcomes on commitment.

In less severe cases, interventions could be implemented to increase positivity in relationship evaluations when couples are struggling with a transient negative issue that is viewed as extremely important (e.g., a particularly difficult work task/stressor, a temporary shift change, job loss, family emergencies). By reminding couples of the temporary nature of the issue, couples may become more understanding of their partner's situations and view their relationship more positively. We found that lower importance negative traits predicted more positive relationship evaluations regardless of degree of perceived stability (see Figure 7), so by making negative issues or traits seem less important, couples would view their relationship more positively. Lower stability traits also predicted greater commitment regardless of the degree of importance of negative traits (see Figure 6), so by making the issues or traits be perceived as less stable, couples would be more committed to their relationship and partner. Future work should further test these effects and implications.

APPENDIX A

Pilot Study Questionnaire

Survey of romantic relationships

In order to better understand social relationships among people, and especially very close and meaningful relationships, we are initiating an exploratory survey to look at the qualitative experiences that people have in their romantic relationships.

If you have a "significant other", a very special boyfriend or girlfriend, please think of that person in responding to the following questions. If you don't have a boyfriend or girlfriend at this time, please complete the questionnaire with regard to a past boyfriend or girlfriend or someone you are interested in but not currently in a relationship with. **DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME OR OTHER PEOPLE'S NAMES ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. Please try to answer every single question.**

1. Please name and elaborate by giving a concrete example for each of the three most important *POSITIVE* characteristics of your significant other:

a. Most important characteristic _____

_____

_____

_____

b. Second most important characteristic _____

_____

_____

_____

c. Third most important _____

_____

_____

_____

2. Please name and elaborate by giving a concrete example for each of the three most important *NEGATIVE* characteristics of your significant other:

a. Most important characteristic _____

_____

_____

_____

b. Second most important characteristic _____

_____

_____

_____

c. Third most important _____

_____

_____

_____

3. The person I described is:

- Current partner
- Past Partner
- Someone I'm in love with but not in a relationship with

4. How long have you been in a relationship with this person? Write the number of years/months: _____/_____

5. How many hours per week do you spend with this person? _____

6. Are you in a long distance relationship with this person? Yes ___ No ___

7. How committed to that person do you feel? (circle a number)

Not at all Completely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. Are you engaged to be married or already married? (check one) Yes ___ No ___

9. How physically attractive is this person? (circle a number)

Not at all Extremely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. How attractive is this person's personality?

Not at all Extremely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11. How attractive is this person to you?

Not at all Extremely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

12. When you think of this person, how warmly do you feel about him or her?

Not at all Extremely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

13. To what extent are you in love with this person?

Not at all Completely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

14. How important to you are this person's negative characteristics that you mentioned above?

Not at all Extremely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. THANK YOU!

APPENDIX B

Pilot Study Negative Partner Trait List

Pilot Study Negative Partner Trait List

Negative Trait Categories (Frequency)

(N = 22)

Angry/Aggressive (17)

Anxiety (10)

Bad habits (35)

Childish/Needy/Clingy (28)

Close-minded/Judgmental (9)

Communication issues (35)

Controlling/Abusive (11)

Differing relationship expectations (11)

Disloyal/Untrustworthy (13)

Doesn't know how to take risks/have fun (9)

Forgetful/Unreliable (4)

Full of themselves/Self-centered (31)

Impulsivity/Poor decisions (8)

Jealousy/Trust issues (14)

Moody (9)

Negative Affect (22)

Poor self-care (16)

Shy/Slow to warm up to others (7)

Stubborn (14)

Time management issues (17)

Unkind/Inconsiderate (32)

Unmotivated/Indecisive (13)

APPENDIX C

Consent Form

CONSENT DOCUMENT

Professor Anca Miron and graduate student Emily Vogels of the Department of Psychology at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh are conducting a study that looks at the dynamics of undergraduate romantic relationships. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

As part of the study, you will be asked to answer some questions about your relationship with a significant other. You should be aware that some questions could cause strong emotional responses. Although participation will not directly benefit you, we believe that the information will be useful in understanding some aspects of human behavior. Participation should take about 30 minutes.

We do not anticipate that the study will present any risk of physical injury or harm to your health associated with this study, other than some discomfort that you might feel answering some of the questions. Some discomfort may occur from reading the feedback you may receive.

The information that you give us in the questionnaire will be recorded in anonymous form. Be assured that your name will not be associated with the research findings in any way. The information will be identified only by a code number.

Your participation is strictly voluntary. If you want to withdraw from the study at any time, you may do so without penalty. You will receive your research participation credit even if you decline to volunteer. The information collected from you up to that point would be destroyed if you so desire.

Once the study is completed, we would be glad to give the results to you. Do not hesitate to ask any questions about the study before, during, or after the research is complete. If you would like additional information concerning this study before or after it is complete, please feel free to contact us by phone, mail, or email:

Dr. Anca Miron
UW Oshkosh - Department of Psychology
Oshkosh, WI 54901
920-424-2328
mirona@uwosh.edu

Emily A. Vogels
UW Oshkosh - Department of Psychology
Oshkosh, WI 54901
vogele16@uwosh.edu

If you have any complaints about your treatment as a participant in this study, please call or write:

Kelly Schill
Institutional Review Board Administrator
For Protection of Human Participants
c/o Grants Office
UW Oshkosh
920-424-1415

I have received an explanation of the study and agree to participate. I understand that my participation in this study is strictly voluntary.

_____

PRINTED NAME SIGNATURE DATE

This research project has been approved by the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh IRB for Protection of Human Participants for a 1-year period, valid until _____.

APPENDIX D

Instructions

Instructions

Today you will be participating in research on the dynamics and characteristics of romantic relationships. You will be filling out 2 questionnaire packets about your partner and your relationship. We are partially replicating past research so we will be able to provide you with results of the former study that are relevant to your responses about your current relationships on the first questionnaire packet. There is a second research assistant down the hall who will review your answers and provide you with the relevant results. They will not see you and the researcher in the room with you will not see your responses or the information you receive. This allows your answers to remain confidential. If you have any questions today, do not be afraid to ask. If you have questions after we are done today there is contact information for Dr. Miron and Emily Vogels on the informed consent sheet.

Carefully read all the instructions for each packet and answer to the best of your ability. After you are finished with a packet, please put all the materials back into the proper envelope.

APPENDIX E

Cover Story and Trait Selection

Survey of Romantic Relationships

Thank you for participating in our survey. This study is an ongoing intensive investigation that was started five years ago. This study investigated various dimensions of romantic relationships and how they affect the quality and life of the relationship. For this project, data have been collected over a five-year interval from 363 students at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, and statistical analyses and follow-up interviews have revealed a number of diagnostic factors.

For the current project, we are interested to learn whether college students enrolled this semester behave similarly in their romantic relationships compared to students surveyed in 2009.

If you have a “significant other,” a very special boyfriend or girlfriend for whom you would do most anything, please think of that person in responding to the following questions. If you do not have a “significant other” at this time, then please think about a person you have been involved with or wanted to be involved with, and answer the questions regarding that person. **DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME OR ANY OTHER NAME ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.**

Below are listed the most frequent negative characteristics that students mentioned in 2009 with regard to their romantic partners.

1. My partner sometimes acts in an immature way; can be overly needy or clingy.
2. My partner is sometimes short-tempered and can get easily frustrated, impatient, or aggressive.
3. My partner sometimes doesn't manage their time well; doesn't spend as much time with me or give me as much attention as I would like.
4. My partner doesn't communicate well; has problems expressing or listening to me.
5. My partner is sometimes controlling or abusive.
6. My partner sometimes tends to be stubborn.
7. My partner has low self-esteem and tends to be reclusive and in a negative mood.
8. My partner is sometimes unreliable: I can't depend on him/her.
9. My partner is sometimes dishonest and is difficult to trust.
10. My partner has a habit that sometimes is annoying.
11. My partner sometimes becomes anxious and over thinks things.
12. My partner sometimes is close-minded or judgmental.
13. My partner has sometimes different relationship expectations than myself.
14. My partner sometimes has difficulties lightening up, having fun, and taking risks.
15. My partner sometimes thinks only of themselves; can be self-centered.
16. My partner is sometimes impulsive and can make poor decisions.
17. My partner sometimes has troubles trusting me; can become jealous.
18. My partner can be overdramatic or moody sometimes.
19. My partner doesn't take good care of themselves sometimes.
20. My partner is sometimes shy and can be slow to warm up to others.
21. My partner can be inconsiderate or unkind sometimes.
22. My partner is sometimes unmotivated or indecisive.

Please choose a trait from the list above that your partner possesses that is the **MOST IMPORTANT** to you. Write the number and the trait as written above in the space given.

_____

Please choose a trait from the list above that your partner possesses that is **MODERATELY IMPORTANT** to you. Write the number and the trait in the space given.

_____

Please choose a trait from the list above that your partner possesses that is **NOT VERY IMPORTANT** to you. Write the number and the trait in the space given.

_____

APPENDIX F

Importance Manipulation

High Importance Condition

Please write a brief description of an event that illustrates your particular selection of the MOST IMPORTANT negative trait your partner possesses.

After writing your brief description, please place this form in the envelope and notify the Research Assistant that you are done by opening the door. *The Research Assistant in charge of this study will not see your answer as another assistant will look at this form and provide you with relevant information about the 2009 survey.*

Moderate Importance Condition

Please write a brief description of an event that illustrates your particular selection of the MODERATELY IMPORTANT negative trait your partner possesses.

After writing your brief description, please place this form in the envelope and notify the Research Assistant that you are done by opening the door. *The Research Assistant in charge of this study will not see your answer as another assistant will look at this form and provide you with relevant information about the 2009 survey.*

APPENDIX G

Stability Manipulation

High Stability Condition

Follow-up in-depth interviews 5 years after the 2009 survey made clear that if someone had checked "*My partner sometimes tends to be stubborn,"* as one of their partner's negative characteristic, *it was reported that the behavior had persisted across the years, showing very little change.*

Low Stability Condition

Follow-up in-depth interviews 5 years after the 2009 survey made clear that if someone had checked "*My partner sometimes tends to be stubborn,"* as one of their partner's negative characteristic, *it was reported that the behavior was inconsistent across the years, showing great change.*

No Stability Feedback Condition

Follow-up in-depth interviews 5 years after the 2009 survey made clear that how stable various negative traits were across time depended on the type of trait a partner has. Before we give you more information about the results, you will be asked to complete a survey questionnaire.

APPENDIX H

Dependent Measures

Survey of romantic relationships

1. When you think of your romantic partner, how positively or negatively do you feel about him or her?

Very negatively				Neither positively nor negatively						Very positively
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5

2. When you think of your romantic partner, how warmly do you feel about him or her?

Not at all										Extremely
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3. How physically attractive is this person?

Not at all										Extremely
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4. How attractive is this person's personality?

Not at all										Extremely
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

5. Overall, how attractive is this person to you?

Not at all										Extremely
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

6. To what extent are you in love with this person?

Not at all										Completely
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7. How crazy are you about this person?

Not at all Extremely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. How much do you like your partner?

Not at all Extremely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. How much do you care about this person?

Not at all Extremely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

10. How committed to that person do you feel?

Not at all Completely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

11. How committed to the relationship do you feel?

Not at all Completely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

12. How much do you want the relationship to be a long-term relationship?

Not at all Very much

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

13. How likely do you see yourself still being in this relationship in one year?

Not at all Very much

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

14. How likely do you see yourself still being in this relationship in five years?

Not at all										Very much
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

15. How much do you value this person?

Not at all										Very much
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

16. How crazy do you feel about this person?

Not at all										Very much
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

17. How passionate do you feel about this person?

Not at all										Very much
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

18. How serious is your relationship?

Not at all										Very much
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

19. How important is this relationship to you?

Not at all										Very much
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

20. How would you rate the quality of your relationship with this person?

Very negatively					Neither positively nor negatively					Very positively
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5

21. How would you rate the quality of your dates with this person?

Very negatively				Neither positively nor negatively						Very positively
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5

22. How important to you is the negative characteristic of your romantic partner that you selected as <u>most important</u>?

Not at all										Extremely
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

23. How important to you is the negative characteristic of your romantic partner that you selected as <u>moderately important</u>?

Not at all										Extremely
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

24. How important to you is the negative characteristic of your romantic partner that you selected as of <u>a little importance</u>?

Not at all										Extremely
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

25. How much do you trust your partner not to repeat the negative behavior on which you elaborated?

Not at all										Extremely
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

26. How likely do you think it is that your partner will repeat in the future the negative behavior on which you elaborated?

Not at all										Extremely
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

27. How likely do you think it is that your partner will continue to engage in the negative behavior on which you elaborated?

Not at all Extremely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

28. How likely do you think it is that your partner's negative behavior will change in the future on which you elaborated?

Not at all Extremely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

29. If your relationship is ongoing now, how likely do you think it is that your romantic partner will change with regard to the negative characteristic on which you elaborated?

Not likely Very likely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

30. How much control do you believe your partner has over the negative characteristic on which you elaborated?

Not at all Completely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

31. How frequently does your partner display the negative behavior on which you elaborated?

Extremely Rarely All the time

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

32. The person I'm thinking about is: (Check one)

Current partner____ Past partner____ Neither____

33. How long have you been in a relationship with this person?

Write the number of years/months: _____/_____

34. How many hours per day do you interact with this person over the phone or by text messaging, email, Facebook, etc.?

Write the number of hours: _____

35. How many hours per day do you see this person *face-to-face*?

Write the number of hours: _____

36. Are you in a long-distance relationship with this person? (Check one)

Yes _____ No _____

37. If you are in a long-distance relationship with this person, please answer the following questions. <u>If you are *not* in a long-distance relationship, skip to question 38.</u>

A. Since your relationship started, for how long have you been living in different places?

Write the number of years/months: ____/____

B. On average, how many days per month you see your partner face-to-face?

Write the average number of days _____

C. Write the average number of days per month in between face-to-face visits: _____

D. How long will you and your partner be living in different places?

Write the number of years/months, or "Don't know": ____/____

E. If you are in a long-distance relationship with this person, are you the one in the relationship who typically travels to see the other? (Check one)

Yes _____ No _____

F. Please estimate the distance between you and your partner.

Write the number of miles: _____

G. Please estimate the driving time between you and your partner.

Write the number of hours/minutes: ____/____

38. In general, do you prefer a short-term or a long-term relationship? (Check one)

Short-term _____ Long-term _____ No preference _____

39. Are you engaged to be married or already married? (Check one)

Yes _____ No _____

40. What is your gender? (Check one)

Female _____ Male _____

DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, AND WHEN YOU HAVE COMPLETED IT, PUT IT BACK IN THE ENVELOPE SO THE RESEARCH ASSISTANT WILL NOT SEE IT AND NOTIFY THE RESEARCH ASSISTANT THAT YOU ARE DONE BY OPENING THE DOOR.

APPENDIX I

Debriefing

Survey of Romantic Relationships/Fall 2014

Debriefing procedure

Before we go on, do you have any questions?

Have you participated before in other psychology studies? (Yes/ No) What kind of studies?

So, you may be aware that participants are not always told the whole truth about a study until it is over. Do you think that may be true about this study? That there is something more to it than you have been told?

IF they say YES: Why do you say that?

What do you think this study is all about?

In this study, you were asked to look over some negative characteristics that participants in another study frequently mentioned about their significant other and picked characteristics that were applicable to your own significant other.

Did you find characteristics that were applicable to your significant other? YES NO

After that, you were given some information about the characteristic on which you elaborated from a survey study that was done in 2009. What did you think about that information?

Do you want more information about that partner characteristic you were given some feedback about?

Do you have any questions about the feedback?

OK. Let me tell you a few things about this study. In this study, we are looking at the factors that affect the intensity of one's positive feelings for their significant other.

People are asked to pick from a list three negative characteristics that are relevant to their significant other. They were asked to elaborate on either the most important or the moderately important trait.

Which of characteristic did you elaborate on? (Circle one) High Moderate

Then they were given some information about that characteristic. Some people are told that that characteristic is highly stable over time (will not change) and others that it is a highly unstable over time (will likely change). People in a third group are not given any information (control condition).

In which of these 3 groups were you? (Circle one) No info Stable Unstable

We think that a person's momentary positive affect for their significant other may increase or decrease as a function of the perceived importance and stability of their partner's negative characteristic.
The perceived importance of the partner trait can affect the intensity of positive affect for the partner in this fashion: the more important the characteristic, the more positively the person should feel about their partner, up to a point. That is when the partner flaw is extremely important, momentary positive affect for the partner decreases.
BUT in addition, perceived stability of the partner flaw should affect how importance of the flaw affects positive feelings for the partner. Flaws that are perceived as being stable over time will be considered more important than flaws that are perceived as changing over time.

Does this make sense?

Now, the feedback that we gave you was made-up/fabricated for the purpose of the study. In spring 2014 we conducted a study in which people were asked to list positive and negative aspects of their significant other and the list that you got is a list of the negative characteristics that those participants mentioned most frequently.

What was inaccurate was the feedback that you received about how stable the negative characteristic that you had elaborated on was. We have no way of knowing which characteristics are highly stable or unstable. Thus, what we did in this study was to give participants feedback at random about the negative trait they had selected.

There is a phenomenon known as the **perseverance effect**. This is when people continue to believe information even though it has been shown to be untrue. Please acknowledge this and keep it in mind if you are tempted to believe the fabricated feedback. **Do you understand thus that the feedback was inaccurate –and that you should not believe it? (Wait for answer)**

Finally, there was no other research assistant. I looked at your questionnaire and gave you the feedback. Did you suspect that? YES NO

This study has important implications in regards to understanding why some people stay in adverse relationships. For example, unstable abusive traits may increase positive affect towards the partner. By knowing if this the case, more effective interventions can be used in helping abuse victims leave the abusive partner.

Also, this study aids in theory building. The stability of an obstacle to feeling an emotion may alter how powerful or important that obstacle is to an individual.

Do you have any questions about any of this?

Any comments that can help us do the study better?

I apologize for not telling you everything about this study right from the beginning. In order for us to investigate people's responses to certain situations, we try to keep you from knowing what we are really interested in. It is important that people who come to this study don't know about what we are actually doing. We hope you will be careful not to tell anyone what we are doing, for if people know before they come in, it is a waste of their time and ours. **Can you help us out that way—by not telling anyone about this study?** Again, I thank you very much for your help. Do you have any questions?

****

Study ### RA: Emily Vogels /Fall 2014

Participant #: _____

Gender: Female Male

Date_____

Deterrent (importance of negative traits): Moderate High

Deterrent (stability of negative traits): No info Stable Unstable

Suspicion: none low moderate high

****

RA's COMMENTS:

References

Aronson, E., Fried, C., & Stone, J. (1991). Overcoming denial and increasing the intention to use condoms through the induction of hypocrisy. *American Journal of Public Health, 81,* 1636-1638.

Blackwell, L. S., Trzesniewski, K. H., & Dweck, C. S. (2007). Implicit theories of intelligence predict achievement across adolescent transition: A longitudinal study and intervention. *Child Development, 78,* 246-263.

Brehm, J. W. (1999). The intensity of emotion. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 3,* 2-22.

Brehm, J. W. (2004). Observations from Mount Oread. In R. A. Wright, J. Greenberg, & S. S. Brehm (Eds.), *Motivational analyses of social behavior* (pp. 247-256). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Brehm, J. W., & Brummett, B. H. (1998). The emotional control of behavior. In M. Kofta, G. Weary, G. Sedek (Eds.) *Personal control in action: Cognitive and motivational mechanisms* (pp. 133-154). New York: Plenum Press.

Brehm, J. W., Brummett, B. H., & Harvey, L. (1999). Paradoxical sadness. *Motivation and Emotion, 23,* 31-44.

Brehm, J. W., Miron, A. M., & Miller, K. (2008). Affect as a motivational state. *Cognition & Emotion, 23,* 1069-1089.

Brehm, J. W., Wright, R. A., Solomon, S., Silka, L., & Greenberg, J. (1983). Perceived difficulty, energization, and the magnitude of goal valence. *Journal of Experimental and Social Psychology, 19,* 21-48.

Cooper, J. (1971). Personal responsibility and dissonance: The role of foreseen consequences. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 18,* 354-363.

Darley, S. A., & Cooper, J. (1972). Cognitive consequences of forced noncompliance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 24*, 321-326.

Davis, J. R., & Gold, G. J. (2011). An examination of emotional empathy, attributions of stability, and the link between perceived remorse and forgiveness. *Personality and Individual Differences, 50,* 392-397.

DeMaris, A., & Swinford, S. (1996). Female victims of spousal violence: Factors influencing their level of fearfulness. *Family Relations, 45*, 98-106.

Dufour, M. H., & Nadeau, L. (2001). Sexual abuse: A comparison between resilient victims and drug-addicted victims. *Violence and Victims, 16,* 655-672.

Flury, J., & Ickles, W. (2006). Emotional intelligence and empathic accuracy in friendships and dating relationships. In J. Ciarrochi, J. P. Forgas, & J. D. Mayer (Eds.), *Emotional intelligence in everyday life* (2nd ed., pp. 140-169). New York, NY: Psychology Press.

Flynn, F. J., & Schaumberg, R. L. (2012). When feeling bad leads to feeling good: Guilt-proneness and affective organizational commitment. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 97,* 124-133.

Gunderson, P. R., & Ferrari, J. R. (2008). Forgiveness of sexual cheating in romantic relationships: Effects of discovery method, frequency of offense, and presence of apology. *North American Journal of Psychology*, *10*, 1-14.

Holmes, J. G., & Murray, S. L. (1997). A leap of faith? Positive illusions in romantic relationships. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *23*, 586-604.

Joule, R., & Azdia, T. (2003). Cognitive dissonance, double forced compliance, and commitment. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 33*, 565-571.

Miron, A. M., Knepfel, D., & Parkinson, S. K. (2009). The surprising effect of partner flaws and qualities on romantic affect. *Motivation and Emotion, 33*, 261-276.

Murray, S. L., Holmes, J. G., & Griffin, D. W. (1996a). The benefits of positive illusions: Idealization and the construction of satisfaction in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *70*, 79-98.

Murray, S. L., Holmes, J. G., & Griffin, D. W. (1996b). The self-fulfilling nature of positive illusions in romantic relationships: Love is not blind, but prescient. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 71*, 1155-1180.

Murray, S. L., Rose, P., Holmes, J. G., Derrick, J., Podchaski, E. J., Bellavia, G., & Griffin, D. W. (2005). Putting the partner within reach: A dyadic perspective on felt security in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 88*, 327-347.

Murray, A. A., Wood, J. M., & Lilienfeld, S. O. (2012). Psychopathic personality traits and cognitive dissonance: Individual differences in attitude change. *Journal of Research in Psychology, 46*, 525-236.

Newsom, J. T., Rook, K. S., Nishishba, M., Sorkin, D. H., & Mahan T. L. (2005). Understanding the relative importance of positive and negative social exchanges: Examining specific domains and appraisals. *Journal of Gerontology: Psychological Sciences*, *60B*, P304-P312.

Rattan, A., Savani, K., Naidu, N. V. R., & Dweck, C. S. (2012). Can everyone become highly intelligent? Cultural differences in and societal consequences of beliefs about the universal potential for intelligence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *103*, 787-803.

Robins, R. W., Caspi, A., & Moffitt, T. E. (2000). Two personalities, one relationship: Both partners' personality traits shape the quality of their relationship. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 79*, 251-259.

Rusbult, C. E. (1983). A longitudinal test of the investment model: The development (and deterioration) of satisfaction and commitment in heterosexual involvements. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 45*, 101-117

Sprecher, S. (1998). Social exchange theories and sexuality. *The Journal of Sex Research*, *35*, 32-43.

Sprecher, S. (2001). Equity and social exchange in dating couples: Associations with satisfaction, commitment, and stability. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 63*, 599-613.

Van Lange, P. M., Rusbult, C. E., Drigotas, S. M., Arriaga, X. B., Witcher, B. S., & Cox, C. L. (1997). Willingness to sacrifice in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 72*, 1373-1395.