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Seeking interdependence: Commitment desirability and the initiation and maintenance of close relationships

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Seeking Interdependence: Commitment Desirability and the Initiation and Maintenance of Close Relationships

For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Date

SEEKING INTERDEPENDENCE: COMMITMENT DESIRABILITY AND THE
INITIATION AND MAINTENANCE OF CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty

of

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by

Yu-Yang Kenneth Tan

In Partial Fulfillment of the

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ABSTRACT

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People vary in the extent to which they believe that a committed relationship is desirable for them. The current research offers and examines the concept of commitment desirability, defined as the subjective desire to be involved in a committed romantic relationship. In six studies, the present research developed and tested a measure of commitment desirability and explored how it influences relationship initiation among those not currently involved in a relationship, and maintenance and dissolution decisions among those who are involved in a relationship. Study 1 and 2a developed and validated a reliable measure of commitment desirability. Study 2b examined the concurrent association of commitment desirability with dependence and dissolution consideration among people currently involved in a romance and provided evidence for its predictive validity via measures of breakup assessed approximately 4 months later. Using samples of people not currently involved in a romance, Study 3 provided initial evidence that an antecedent for commitment desirability lies in perceptions of past romantic relationship satisfaction, while Study 4 provided experimental evidence demonstrating that individuals higher in own commitment desirability express greatest romantic interest in targets who themselves are particularly

interested in a committed relationship. Study 5 replicated the matching effect of commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment for individuals currently involved in relationships, showing that commitment desirability was associated with greater expectations of relationship stability and certainty, especially when partners were perceived to be high in commitment. Study 6 was an experiment exploring relationship maintenance behaviors concerning partner goal support for people currently involved in a romance. Individuals high in commitment desirability were more willing to support their partner's own individual goals especially if they perceived their partner to be highly committed to the relationship. Taken together, the present research suggests that commitment desirability is a meaningful predictor of relationship attitudes and behaviors. Implications and future directions are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

*“Life is surely empty when you wake in the morning with nobody
in mind to love for the day.”*

-- Terry Mark

As reflected in the above quotation, romantic relationships are considered to be a particularly important social relationship (Day, Kay, Holmes, & Napier, 2011, DePaulo & Morris, 2005; DePaulo & Morris, 2006). A committed partnership, one that is enduring, dependable and romantic in nature, is assumed to provide fulfillment in and meaning to people's lives (Day et al., 2011; Day, 2016). Indeed, it is considered natural for humans to harbor deep intrinsic motivation to seek social connection, with one route to achieving such a connection being involvement with a primary relationship partner (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). However, desire for a committed partnership is not universal, despite evidence that people may be fearful of the consequences of remaining single (Spielmann, MacDonald, Maxwell, Joel, Peragine, Muise, et al., 2013). In some modern societies, there is evidence of an aversion to marriage, intimacy and even being in close relationships (e.g., Descutner & Thelen, 1991; Li, Lim, Tsai, & O, 2015). Relational arrangements such as “hooking up” or “friends with benefits,” which are characterized by an absence of exclusivity or commitment, are becoming more common in recent years (Owen & Fincham, 2012;

Vanderdrift, Lehmiller, & Kelly, 2012). This increase is not limited to younger adults, as there have been changes in norms of partnering in older adults as well (Manning & Brown, 2011), including notable increases in desire for autonomy in their relationships (de Jong Gierveld, 2002). Furthermore, it is clear that single individuals can be just as well-adjusted and happy as people involved in a romantic relationship (Girme, Overall, Faingataa, & Sibley, 2015).

The foundation of stable romantic relationships ultimately rests in partners' commitment to one another. Much research has shown how commitment to a partner reliably predicts critical outcomes such as relationship stability and maintenance behaviors (see Agnew & VanderDrift, in press; Le & Agnew, 2003, Le, Dove, Agnew, Korn, & Mutso, 2010). However, committed relationships also feature times of negativity, conflict, and distress. There are numerous examples in the literature of declines in marital satisfaction (see Karney & Bradbury, 1997) and of individuals remaining involved in abusive romantic relationships (Arriaga, Capezza, Goodfriend, Rayl, & Sands, 2013; Rusbult & Martz, 1995). Such experiences might influence one's beliefs about the desirability of romantic commitment. Importantly, past research has not adequately addressed personal attitudes towards commitment in relationships. Consequently, the extent to which individuals desire or seek commitment in their relationships, and the associations thereof, is largely unknown.

The present research explores how commitment desirability can be a useful construct for understanding decision-making processes in romantic relationships, including initiation, maintenance and dissolution (see review by Joel, MacDonald, & Plaks, 2014). *Commitment desirability* is defined as the subjective desire to be involved

in a committed romantic relationship. Although the concept is an important component of lay understanding of relationship dynamics, efforts to understand both the extent and role of commitment desirability in relationship processes and dynamics has been hampered by the absence of past theoretical and empirical work on the topic. Because no reliable and valid measure of commitment desirability is currently available, the first goal of the current research was to establish such a measure.

Relationship Commitment

Commitment drives relationship maintenance behaviors and is a strong predictor of relationship stability across a range of romantic relationship types, including nonexclusive dating, exclusive dating, and married samples (Le & Agnew, 2003). The theoretical foundation of the current research is situated in interdependence theory (Kelley, Holmes, Kerr, Reis, Rusbult, & Van Lange, 2003; Kelley and Thibaut, 1978). Interdependence theory lays out the ways in which relationship dynamics and processes occur within dyads, with the concept of dependence being a key component of the theory. Individuals are more dependent on their current relationship to the extent that the relationship fulfills important needs that cannot be fulfilled elsewhere (Agnew, Van Lange, Rusbult, & Langston, 1998; Drigotas & Rusbult, 1992). The Investment Model of Commitment Processes (Rusbult, 1983; Rusbult, Agnew, & Arriaga, 2012) extends interdependence theory and focuses on the construct of commitment, a central process in close relationships theory and research. Commitment is the subjective, internal experience derived from dependence on a relationship (Agnew et al., 1998; Drigotas & Rusbult, 1992), and is characterized by intent to remain in a relationship,

psychological attachment to a partner, and a long-term orientation toward the partnership (Arriaga & Agnew, 2001).

Extant research has focused on examining level of commitment to a given relationship and often on the extent to which high or low commitment influence relationship dynamics and processes (Agnew & VanderDrift, in press). Importantly, constructs within the Investment Model and interdependence theory do not measure the extent to which individuals' actually desire and seek committed relationships. Moreover, assessing mean level of one's commitment to a given partner does not assess one's overall subjective sense that commitment is a particularly desirable relationship goal for an individual at a given time. One can imagine a relationship in which a given person feels committed to a particular partner, but is not highly enamored with commitment in general. For example, even if one is committed to a romantic partner, they might not desire commitment in general because they are not in a love-based relationship or their commitment desirability might be based on existing social norms with which they do not agree. Furthermore, commitment level can only be assessed for individuals who are currently in romantic relationships, whereas commitment desirability can be assessed for individuals both in and out of romantic relationships. In this way, commitment desirability may add to our understanding of concepts associated with important relational stages, including initiation, maintenance, and stability.

Commitment Desirability

A good starting point for understanding commitment desirability is to build on work looking at normative desires for relationships. From an evolutionary perspective,

desiring romantic partners, having sex and reproducing are adaptive for survival, placing higher value on being in a committed relationship compared to remaining single (Pillsworth & Haselton, 2005), with social connection via relationships especially important to survival and reproduction (Caporeal, 2001; Foley, 1995). This is further supported by the need to belong, which posits that meaningful associations between individuals are important for physical and psychological well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The lack of such meaningful social connections is associated with a host of deleterious consequences, such as impaired self-regulation (Baumeister, DeWall, Ciarocco, & Twenge, 2005), negative emotions (Blackhart, Nelson, Knowles, & Baumeister, 2009), and negative health outcomes (House, Landis, & Umberson, 1988). However, we argue that commitment desirability goes beyond simply focusing on broad social needs and desire for social connection, relationships and intimacy.

An interdependence perspective is particularly relevant in our theorizing concerning commitment desirability, as it is foundational in the conceptualization of commitment and provides a clear understanding as to why individuals rely on romantic relationships to attain desired outcomes. Interdependence theory conceptualizes the ways in which outcomes for the self and others are evaluated, with broader considerations that accompany and complement the pursuit of immediate self-interest (Rusbult & Van Lange, 1996). People can recognize and be concerned about the nature of their interdependence with others, which impacts their behavioral choices and can translate to transformative pro-relationship behaviors and relationship persistence as a result of such construals (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998).

Consequently, interdependence theory posits that because individuals are cognizant of the outcomes that arise from mutual dependence, uncertainty and concerns about mutual dependence and the state of commitment can arise in response to negative consequences and outcomes. In line with such principles, commitment can be a double-edged sword such that it brings with itself vulnerability on top of the ability to achieve need fulfillment.

Extending the interdependence perspective, we turn to the risk regulation literature to consider concerns that can develop about being involved in a committed relationship (Murray, Holmes, & Collins, 2006). The risk regulation model posits that there is an interdependence dilemma in close relationships. People need to risk dependence in order to establish high quality relationships that can fulfill their need to belong (Leary & Baumeister, 2000), but risking greater closeness to another leaves individuals more vulnerable to hurt and pain when faced with rejection, both in the short-term and, ultimately, in the long-term if the relationship ends. The psychological costs associated with rejection increases as interdependence and closeness grows. Thus, individuals may be motivated to minimize dependence on romantic partners and consequently reduce the likelihood of being hurt. Indeed, low self-esteem individuals engage in self-protection motives and decrease dependence in order to feel safe (Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 2000).

The risk regulation model assumes that the nature of situations that involve the conflict between connection and rejection are focused on one's interaction with a *specific* romantic partner. At the heart of the interdependence dilemma concerning commitment desirability, however, is that it represents a *chronic* concern about

dependence within romantic relationships *in general*. Thus, unlike the risk regulation model that posits how individuals navigate the risks between rejection and connection within a given partnership (as well as concerns with perceived partner regard), commitment desirability involves how individuals are motivated to seek or avoid long-term psychological attachment with others, including intending to persist in such relationships. The development of one's sense of commitment desirability is consistent with research that has shown how transformational tendencies (cf. Kelley et al., 2003) can be developed and shaped by past experiences and patterns of social interactions that are conditioned by others (Van Lange, Otten, De Bruin, & Joireman, 1997). Hence, experiences in previous relationships with romantic partners can influence current desires concerning involvement in a committed relationship (Carlson, Sroufe, & Egeland, 2004; Simpson, Collins, & Salvatore, 2011; Sroufe, Egeland, & Kreutzer, 1990). For example, numerous painful breakup experiences can influence the development of a mental model regarding commitments and how prospective relationships should now be approached, impacting both one's comparison levels and comparison levels for alternatives (Drigotas, & Rusbult, 1992; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Rusbult, 1983). People can protect themselves from experiencing the psychological costs of rejection by making a particular goal or state more aversive, and in the present case, perceiving commitment to be less desirable (Epstein, 1982). As such, commitment desirability can be functional and may be viewed as a way of managing the psychological costs that accompany current or anticipated rejection especially in the face of establishing dependence in a relationship.

The attachment literature also addresses concerns about intimacy as well as insecurity in romantic relationships (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Attachment orientations are derived from working models that have been distilled from experiences with past attachment figures, which shape mental representations about the self and others (Collins & Read, 1990). Romantic attachment orientations are thought to differ along two dimensions, anxiety and avoidance (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998; Bowlby, 1982). Attachment anxiety, driven partly by a negative mental model of the self, is manifested as the degree to which individuals worry about being rejected or abandoned by their partners combined with doubts about one's self-worth. Attachment avoidance, driven partly by a negative mental model of others, is manifested as the degree to which individuals are self-reliant and uncomfortable with closeness and intimacy. One can conceive of low commitment desirability as consistent with high attachment avoidance, whereby individuals who do not desire commitment might want independence in their relationships and to not be psychologically attached to a partner. Thus, attachment avoidance and commitment desirability might share similarities in terms of theory and manifestations of thoughts as well as relationship behaviors, but a key difference may lie in the specificity in desiring or not desiring commitment rather than just intimacy or dependence. Someone with low commitment desirability does not want a romantic partner to which they are psychologically attached, have a long-term orientation towards, and intend to persist for need fulfillment (Arriaga & Agnew, 2001). However, it is also possible that even though one does not desire commitment in a current romance, one is still comfortable in being intimate with a partner. In contrast, individuals who are avoidantly attached might not be comfortable with being

psychologically attached to their partner, but are comfortable with having a long-term orientation and an intention to persist. Where relevant, in the studies presented below we control for attachment avoidance to demonstrate that any obtained effects are independent of this construct.

Perceived Partner Commitment and Own Commitment Desirability

Navigating interdependence dilemmas are inherent in the maintenance of close relationships, but in the process of solving such dilemmas, individuals are also motivated to achieve their own ideal levels of commitment desirability. Given extant research from an interdependence theory perspective suggesting that, ideally, close partners should make themselves fully and mutually dependent on one another (Drigotas, Rusbult, & Verette, 1999), individuals are generally motivated to form a strong sense of conviction that their current or prospective partner can be trusted (Murray, 1999). It is likely that in the quest for such conviction, perceived partner commitment plays a role in alleviating doubts about one's partner being able to provide one with one's own desired level of commitment (Arriaga, Reed, Goodfriend, & Agnew, 2006). Thus, when an individual has a high level of commitment desirability, one should prefer prospective or current partners who also desire commitment and/or are highly committed as they are more likely to trust in those partners as well as have more positive emotional experiences due to the mutuality between both partners. Consequently, choosing or having partners that are perceived to have higher commitment should result in a higher probability of achieving a successful committed relationship. How, then, do individuals who vary in commitment desirability think and act while in a close romantic relationship or in anticipation of being in one?

The Present Research

The primary goal of the present research was to examine commitment desirability and how it may impact relationship attitudes, behaviors and decision-making. We first developed and validated a measure of commitment desirability and then explored the effects of commitment desirability on relationship processes. To this end, the present research examined how commitment desirability was related to cognitions and behaviors about relationship initiation (for those not currently involved in a romantic relationship), and to maintenance and dissolution (for those currently involved).

Study 1 focused on the creation of the Commitment Desirability Scale. Study 2a refined and further validated the scale through factor analyses and invariance testing. Study 2b examined a subsample of Study 2a participants who were currently involved in a relationship, focusing on their dependence on and dissolution consideration concerning their current partner. We hypothesized that individuals higher in commitment desirability would be more dependent on, and less willing to consider dissolving, their current relationship, especially if they perceived their partner to be highly committed to the relationship. Study 2b also examined whether commitment desirability was associated with relationship stability four months later. With a sample of currently single people, Study 3 explored a hypothesized antecedent of commitment desirability, examining how past romantic relationship experiences predict commitment desirability through expectations of relationship satisfaction in a future romance. Study 4 examined experimentally relationship initiation and attraction in the context of online dating among currently single individuals. Using an online dating

paradigm, participants evaluated their romantic interest in and anticipated romantic success with targets who were described as interested in either a short or long-term relationship. We hypothesized that individuals who were higher in commitment desirability would express greatest interest in targets who were themselves most interested in committed relationships. With a sample of currently involved people, Study 5 examined the interaction between commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment on pro-relationship cognitions, with a focus on future expectations of relationship stability and certainty. We hypothesized that individuals who were higher in commitment desirability would be more certain about the future of their relationship, especially if they perceived their partners to be high in commitment. Finally, Study 6 examined relationship maintenance behaviors among currently involved individuals, specifically partner goal support. We hypothesized that individuals who were higher in commitment desirability would be less willing to support their partner's personal goals if those goals were perceived as detrimental to the relationship. This effect would be especially strong if they perceived their current partner to be highly committed to their relationship.

STUDY 1

The first study involved the creation of a reliable and valid measure of commitment desirability. We relied on the Investment Model as a theoretical guide in developing items assessing commitment desirability. Extant research has posited that commitment is a multifaceted construct that has three distinct components: psychological attachment, which refers to the strong emotional bonds that exist between partners (affective component); long-term orientation, which refers to the assumption that the relationship carries on into the distant future (cognitive component); and intention to persist, which refers to the motivation to continue the relationship beyond the present (conative component; e.g., Arriaga & Agnew, 2001; Rusbult et al., 1998). We developed items to tap desire regarding these three components as they relate to romantic relationships. In addition, as society endorses and defends the ideology of committed relationships as essential to having a meaningful life and personal maturity (Day et al., 2011; Day, 2016; DePaulo & Morris, 2005), we also included items that tapped into committed relationship ideology, which focuses on beliefs that committed romantic relationships are ideal and the most important social relationships. We argue that desire for commitment is related to, but distinct from committed relationship ideology. This is because a committed relationship ideology is based on general beliefs concerning the benefits that come with

being in a committed relationship compared to being single, but it does not touch on the motivation to seek or desire committed relationships in one's own personal life. Thus, as an ancillary aim of the first study, we sought to demonstrate that commitment desirability was not simply an artifact of social norms regarding the general belief that committed romantic relationships are more desirable than being single.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Four hundred and twenty-two undergraduates (268 females) took part in the study in partial fulfillment of course credit in an introductory psychology course. Involvement in a current romantic relationship was not required, as we wish to obtain data from people both currently involved and not involved in a romance. Forty-two percent of participants were involved in a romantic relationship at the time of their participation, providing good variability in current relational experience. Participants completed items created to assess commitment desirability and committed relationship ideology. They also completed demographic questions (e.g., gender, age, relationship exclusivity among those who were currently involved).

Measures

Commitment desirability. 14 Items assessing commitment desirability were written by the author based on the theoretical exposition of commitment desirability covered in the introduction. Various sources were consulted during item generation. In particular, the commitment subscale from the Investment Model Scale (Rusbult et al., 1998), as well as items tapping the bases of commitment (Arriaga & Agnew, 2001), were used as a basis for creation of the initial item set (see Table 1). Participants

responded to each item using a scale from 0 (*do not agree at all*) to 8 (*agree completely*), following instructions which read as follows: “The statements below concern how people feel about committed relationships. We are interested in your general beliefs, not just how you might feel about a current relationship in which you may be involved.”

Committed relationship ideology. Participants answered a 12-item measure designed to tap the extent to which participants agreed that committed relationships are the most important adult relationship and that most people want to marry or seriously couple (Day et al., 2011), on a 9-point scale, from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include statements such as “Most of my single friends would be better off in a committed relationship”, “Becoming involved in a committed relationship is the right thing to do”, and “The concept of a committed relationship is the ultimate answer” ($\alpha = .74$).

Results and Discussion

Refinement of Commitment Desirability Scale

To evaluate the dimensionality and internal reliability of the items administered to assess commitment desirability, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) on the 14 items using a maximum likelihood estimate and promax rotation. This revealed two factors with eigenvalues that exceeded 1. Scree plot analysis and parallel analysis also revealed two factors underlying the items, explaining 51.16% of the variance (see Table 1). Closer inspection of the factor loadings and corresponding factors in the pattern matrix revealed that Factor 1 (Eigenvalue = 6.79) contained items more clearly related to the concept of commitment desirability and Factor 2

(Eigenvalue = 1.31) contained items tapping ease of maintaining relationships. We retained items that loaded highly ($>.50$) on the commitment desirability factor and deleted items that had low factor scores or cross-loaded with Factor 2. This resulted in the retention of five items to form the measure of commitment desirability.

We also performed a second factor analysis including the five commitment desirability items and the 12 items tapping committed relationship ideology. Results for this EFA revealed two factors with Eigenvalues exceeding 1 (Eigenvalues = 6.18 and 2.75), explaining 46.96% of the variance. The correlation between the factors was moderate ($r = .39, p < .01$). Inspection of the factor loadings revealed that the all 5 items intended to assess commitment desirability loaded highly ($>.50$) on Factor 1, and remaining 12 items intended to assess committed relationship ideology loaded on Factor 2. One committed relationship ideology scale also loaded highly (and negatively) on Factor 1 (“Committed relationships are overrated”). Thus, results provide initial evidence of discriminant validity. The new 5-item Commitment Desirability Scale measures personal beliefs about desiring relationship commitment. It does not appear to simply be measuring general beliefs about the intrinsic advantages and special benefits of being in a committed romantic relationship nor the devaluation of single life.

STUDY 2A

To further assess the reliability and validity of the Commitment Desirability Scale, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the 5 items selected based on findings from Study 1. We collected data from a new sample of participants who completed the new measure along with a number of scales assessing various individual- and relationship-level constructs, and again assessed dimensionality and internal reliability. We wanted to compare our refined scale to established measures in the literature that should be distinct but related to commitment desirability, such as those tapping relationship insecurity and social connection. We also wanted to compare our scale to some notable individual difference measures, as some personality traits should be associated with commitment desirability. For example, the pro-social trait of agreeableness would be reasonably expected to covary with commitment desirability. It is also possible that conscientiousness would be associated with commitment desirability because it measures an inclination toward planned long-term behaviors rather than impulsive short-term behaviors.

More specifically, given that commitment desirability should reflect fulfillment of interpersonal needs, we expected that it would be associated significantly with attachment avoidance, loneliness, need to belong, relationship approach/avoidance goals and rejection sensitivity. With respect to divergent validity, because commitment

desirability is a relationship-related construct but should not be tapping relationship-related anxiety, we expected that it would not be associated significantly with attachment anxiety nor should it be significantly associated with individual-difference measures tapping the Big 5 personality dimension of neuroticism, self-esteem, or need for cognition. Furthermore, we posited that commitment desirability should be higher among individuals currently involved in a romantic relationship compared to those who were not, nor between female and male participants.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 599 undergraduates who took part in the study in partial fulfillment of course credit for their introductory psychology course, of which 275 participants (45.9%) were currently involved in a romantic relationship. Participants ranged in age from 17 to 30 years old ($M = 19.04$, $SD = 1.40$). They completed the items detailed below via an online questionnaire.

Measures

Commitment desirability. Participants responded to the 5 commitment desirability items selected from Study 1, using a scale from 0 (*do not agree at all*) to 8 (*agree completely*). The internal reliability of the scale was high ($\alpha = .87$; $M = 6.00$, $SD = 1.68$)

Attachment. Participants completed the Experiences in Close Relationships – Relationships Structures measure (ECR-RS; Fraley, Heffernan, Vicary, & Brumbaugh, 2011) to assess their general attachment style. This is a 9-item scale, scaled from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), including items such as, “It helps to turn to

people in times of need”, and “I’m afraid that other people may abandon me.” The scale yields two scores, one assessing attachment anxiety and the other assessing attachment avoidance (Anxiety: $\alpha = .88$, Avoidance: $\alpha = .85$).

Personality. Participants completed the Five-Factor Model Rating Form, which is a brief instrument for assessing ratings of personality as proposed by the five-factor model (Mullins-Sweatt, Jamerson, Samuel, Olson, & Widiger, 2006). The measure is comprised of 30 items, with 6 items designed to measure each of the five personality dimensions of neuroticism, extraversion, openness, conscientiousness, and agreeableness, using a 5-point response scale ranging from 1 (*extremely low*) to 5 (*extremely high*). The internal reliabilities of the subscales ranged from .52 to .75.

Self-esteem. Participants completed the 10-item Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965; Sample item: “On the whole, I am satisfied with myself”), using a 4-point response scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*); $\alpha = .86$.

Need for cognition. Participants completed the 18-item version of the Need for Cognition Scale, which assesses the tendency for the respondent to enjoy thinking (Cacioppo, Petty, & Kao, 1984; Sample item: “Thinking is not my idea of fun”, reverse-coded), using a 5-point response scale ranging from 1 (*extremely uncharacteristic*) to 5 (*extremely characteristic*); $\alpha = .86$.

Rejection sensitivity. Participants completed the Rejection Sensitivity Scale (Downey & Feldman, 1996) to assess expectancy and anxiety about rejection regarding nine hypothetical scenarios. Scores were computed by multiplying expectancy and

anxiety scores for each scenario and averaging across the scenarios for a total rejection sensitivity score; $\alpha = .70$.

Loneliness. Participants completed the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Russell, 1996) to assess subjective feelings of loneliness and social isolation. The scale contains 20 questions, rated on a 4-point Likert scale, from 0 (*never feel this way*) to 3 (*often feel this way*); $\alpha = .93$.

Relationship motivations. Participants completed an adapted version of the Friendship Goals Questionnaire (Elliot, Gable, & Mapes, 2006) used to assess approach and avoidance motivations in close relationships. There were 4-items in both the approach motivation and avoidance motivation subscales. Sample items include: “I am trying to enhance the bonding and intimacy of my close relationships” (approach), and “I am trying to make sure nothing bad happens to my close relationships” (avoidance). These scales were rated on a 7-point Likert scale, from 1 (*not at all true of me*) to 7 (*very true of me*); Approach $\alpha = .91$, Avoid $\alpha = .79$.

Need to belong. Participants completed the 10-item Need to Belong Scale (Leary, Kelly, Cottrell, & Schreindorfer, 2013) to assess general feelings of belonging and social connection (sample item: “I need to feel that there are people I can turn to in times of need”), responding on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*; $\alpha = .79$).

Results and Discussion

Validation of Commitment Desirability Scale

We conducted a CFA to confirm the factor structure suggested by Study 1. Following guidelines provided by Hu and Bentler (1999), acceptable model fit should

meet the following criteria: Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) > 0.95, and Root-Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) < 0.06. Consistent with these conventions, a single-factor, 5-item Commitment Desirability Scale showed good model fit, $\chi^2(3) = 6.27, p = .09, CFI = 1.00, TLI = .99, RMSEA = .04$.

Testing Invariance of the Scale Across Participant Sex and Relationship Status

Next, we wanted to confirm that the factor structure of our commitment desirability scale did not differ significantly for men and women as well between those who were in romantic relationships and were single. We conducted a series of multigroup CFA models to measure invariance across these grouping variables. Table 2 summarizes the fit statistics of increasingly stricter invariance tests of the models for sex. As shown in Table 2, constraining factor loadings and intercepts to be equal across sex did not significantly change model fit. Thus, the factor structure of commitment desirability is comparable across sexes. Table 3 summarizes the fit statistics of increasingly stricter invariance test of the models for relationship status. As shown in Table 3, constraining the factor structure and factor loadings of the commitment desirability scale to be equal across status did not significantly alter model fit, but constraining intercepts to be equal significantly altered model fit (as should be the case given higher mean value for those currently involved in a relationship). However, model fit in terms of scalar invariance was still excellent.

Convergent and Discriminant Validity

Next, we assessed the convergent and discriminant validity of the scale, by computing zero-order correlations between the Commitment Desirability Scale and the

other scales assessed in the study. Table 4 displays the zero-order correlations as well as multiple regressions predicting commitment desirability. As expected, attachment avoidance but not attachment anxiety was negatively associated with commitment desirability. Moreover, commitment desirability was positively associated with relationship approach and avoidance goals, as well as with need to belong. It was negatively associated with rejection sensitivity and loneliness. Discriminant validity was shown by nonsignificant associations with neuroticism, extraversion, openness, and need for cognition as well as small but significant associations with conscientiousness, agreeableness and self-esteem.

Finally, we conducted an independent samples t-test to examine differences in mean levels of commitment desirability amongst those who were currently in a romantic relationship and those who were not. Consistent with hypotheses, individuals who were currently in a romantic relationship expressed greater commitment desirability compared to those who were not in a romantic relationship, $M_{\text{diff}} = 1.05$, $SE = 1.30$, $t(596) = 8.06$, $p < .001$. In summary, results strongly suggest that we produced a reliable and psychometrically valid measure of commitment desirability. Importantly, the factor structure of the scale did not differ between sexes or between individuals who were either in a relationship or not.

STUDY 2B

How might commitment desirability influence individuals who are currently involved in a relationship? In Study 2b, we focused on associations between commitment desirability and (a) relationship dependence, (b) dissolution consideration, and (c) actual dissolution in ongoing relationships over time.

Dependence is the extent to which one's needs are fulfilled by a current relationship (Drigotas & Rusbult, 1992), whereas dissolution consideration is the extent to which individuals find salient the prospect of relationship termination (Vanderdrift, Agnew, & Wilson, 2009). Both dependence and dissolution consideration have been shown to be particularly strong predictors of relationship stability (Le et al., 2010; Vanderdrift et al., 2009). Hence, we hypothesized that individuals who are higher in commitment desirability will be more dependent and consider dissolving their current relationship less compared to those who are lower in commitment desirability, especially when they perceive that their partners are also highly committed to the relationship. More specifically, we hypothesized that there will be a significant interaction between commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment on own relationship dependence and dissolution consideration.

We were also interested in whether commitment desirability predicts relationship stability. We hypothesized that commitment desirability would be

associated with the odds of remaining in a romance over time. However, a breakup can be initiated by either couple member and it is possible that one's partner rather than one's self leads the breakup. Therefore, we focused on both being in a relationship that had ended and on final breakup initiation decision-making by the participant, hypothesizing that higher commitment desirability at Time 1 would be associated with a lower likelihood of both breakup measures as assessed at Time 2.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were the subsample of the participants in Study 2a who were currently involved in a romantic relationship ($N = 275$). In addition to the measures listed in Study 1, the following additional measures were administered only to those who reported being in a romantic relationship. This study used a two-wave longitudinal design. Approximately 4 months after participation at Time 1, participants were contacted and asked to complete a follow-up questionnaire regarding their relationship status. Seventy-three participants completed the follow-up Time 2 questionnaire, with 17 of those participants reporting that they had broken up with their Time 1 romantic partner.

Time 1 Measures

Commitment desirability. Participants completed the Commitment Desirability Scale as described in Study 2a ($\alpha = .84$).

Dependence. Participants completed a 5-item scale assessing how dependent they are on their current relationship (Murray, Holmes, MacDonald, & Ellsworth,

1998; Sample item: “I feel that I need my partner a great deal”), with response options ranging from 1 (*not at all true*) to 9 (*completely true*); $\alpha = .90$.

Dissolution consideration. Participants completed a 5-item scale assessing the extent to which a respondent has salient thoughts about breaking up with their current romantic partner (Vanderdrift et al., 2009; Sample item: “I have been thinking about ending our romantic relationship”). The response scale ranges from 0 (*do not agree at all*) to 8 (*agree completely*); $\alpha = .95$.

Perceived partner commitment. Participants completed a modified version of the 7-item commitment subscale from the Investment Model Scale (Rusbult et al., 1998), with response options ranging from 0 (*do not agree at all*) to 8 (*agree completely*), that tapped participants’ perceptions of their partner’s commitment level (Arriaga et al., 2006; $\alpha = .91$).

Attachment avoidance. As a control variable, we used the measure of attachment avoidance that participants completed earlier in Study 2a, $\alpha = .86$.

Time 2 Measures

Breakup. Participants at Time 2 were asked to complete items from the Assessment of Relationship Changes scale (Agnew, Arriaga, & Goodfriend, 2006), which measures stay/leave behavior as well as breakup initiation. Participants were first asked if they were still in a romantic relationship with the same person as at Time 1; this yes/no response (i.e. coded as 1 and 0 respectively) served as a measure of breakup status. Next, among those who reported breaking up, participants answered a question concerning who made the decision to leave the relationship: “In the end, who made the final decision to end your romantic relationship?” coded as 1 = “you” and 0 =

“your partner.” As in previous research, participants who reported that their relationship was still ongoing at Time 2 were assigned a 0 on this measure as no action by the participant toward dissolution was taken (Vanderdrift et al., 2009).

Commitment desirability. Participants also completed the measure of commitment desirability to examine test-retest reliability ($\alpha = .91$).

Results and Discussion

Relationship dependence was analyzed using hierarchical regression, with commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment used as continuous predictors. Both predictors were centered and entered in the first step of the regression analysis and their product was entered in the second step to test for their interaction (Aiken & West, 1991). There was a significant main effect of commitment desirability on dependence [$b = .47, t(272) = 6.40, p < .001$] and a significant main effect for perceived partner commitment on dependence [$b = .55, t(272) = 7.71, p < .001$]. Consistent with hypotheses, there was also a significant interaction between commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment on dependence [$b = .11, t(272) = 2.62, p = .009$; see Figure 1]. These associations did not change when controlling for attachment avoidance. Specifically, at lower levels of commitment desirability, individuals reported more dependence when they perceived their partners to be higher in commitment compared to when they perceived their partners to be lower in commitment [$b = .39, t(272) = 4.88, p < .001$]. At higher levels of commitment desirability, individuals also reported more dependence when they perceived their partners to be higher in commitment compared to when they perceived

their partners to be lower in commitment [$b = .72, t(272) = 6.50, p < .001$], and it was a significantly stronger effect.

Dissolution consideration was also analyzed using hierarchical regression, with commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment used as continuous predictors. Both predictors were centered and entered in the first step of the regression analysis and their product was entered in the second step to test for their interaction (Aiken & West, 1991). There was a significant main effect of commitment desirability on dissolution consideration [$b = -.48, t(272) = -6.67, p < .001$] and a significant main effect for perceived partner commitment on dissolution consideration [$b = -.52, t(272) = -7.41, p < .001$]. Consistent with hypotheses, there was also a significant interaction between commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment on dissolution consideration [$b = -.15, t(272) = -3.54, p < .001$; see Figure 2]. These associations did not change when controlling for attachment avoidance. Specifically, at lower levels of commitment desirability, individuals reported less dissolution consideration when they perceived their partners having higher commitment compared to perceiving their partners having lower commitment [$b = -.31, t(272) = -4.75, p = .001$]. Moreover, at higher levels of commitment desirability, individuals reported less dissolution consideration when they perceived their partners having higher commitment compared to perceiving their partners having lower commitment [$b = -.74, t(272) = -9.25, p < .001$], and it was a significantly stronger effect.

Time 2 Follow-Up

We tested our hypothesis examining whether commitment desirability predicted breakup initiation 4 months later. To test this, we analyzed two logistic regression

models, one for each breakup measure. In the first logistic regression model, the traditional dichotomous dissolution measure of breakup status was used as the criterion variable (e.g. Rusbult et al., 1998). There was no significant association between commitment desirability at T1 and being in a relationship that had ended by Time 2 [$b = .20, p = .32$]. In the second logistic regression model, we used the measure of breakup initiation as the criterion variable. Commitment desirability at T1 was not significantly associated with own breakup initiation [$b = -.14, p = .56$]. In addition, the test-retest reliability for commitment desirability was $r = .62 (p < .001)$.

STUDY 3

Study 2b was an initial exploration of how commitment desirability would matter for individuals in romantic relationships in terms of relationship stability, both with respect to thinking about relationship dissolution as well as actual dissolution status. However, we also wished to examine what gives rise to commitment desirability. Understanding antecedents of commitment desirability begins to shed light on why people do or do not desire commitment. This is especially important for individuals not currently involved in a romantic relationship as it could influence enacted behaviors in trying to initiate a romance.

As laid out in the introduction, one antecedent of commitment desirability might be the influence of past relationship experiences. For example, research on the intergenerational transmission of marital satisfaction show that individuals in distressed marriages are more likely to have parents who report a distressed marriage, showing a potent link between parent's marital satisfaction and adult children's marital satisfaction. Consequently, mental representations of the self and relationship partners borne from these prior experiences can guide expectations and interaction patterns in later relationships (Jarnecke & South, 2013; Roisman, Collins, Sroufe, & Egeland, 2005). Furthermore, we expected that commitment desirability would be mediated by expectations of future satisfaction in romantic relationships (Lemay, 2016). This is

based on extant research showing that future expectations are associated with decision-making and goal pursuit (e.g. Carver & Scheier, 1992; Gilbert & Wilson, 2007; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Specifically, individuals in romantic relationships project their current satisfaction level onto their future expectations, which in turn influences their current level of commitment (Lemay, 2016). Drawing from these findings, we tested the hypothesis that satisfying past relationship experiences would be positively associated with commitment desirability, and that this effect should be mediated by expectations that future romantic relationships would be satisfying as well.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 100 Amazon Mechanical Turk workers (57.7% female) who were not involved in a romantic relationship at the time of their participation. Three participants reported never having been in a romantic relationship, and were removed from the sample, leaving 97 participants. Due to a computer error, 42 participants did not report their age and were coded as missing for age ($M_{\text{age}} = 30.76$; $SD = 10.07$). They completed the Commitment Desirability Scale as well as measures of past relationship satisfaction and expectations of future relationship satisfaction with a hypothetical partner. They also answered demographic questions before being debriefed about the study.

Measures

Commitment desirability. Participants completed the Commitment Desirability Scale as described above. The internal reliability of the scale was high ($\alpha = .96$).

Past relationship satisfaction. To prepare participants to answer a general measure of past relationship satisfaction, we began by including items that measured satisfaction experienced in specific past relationships. These specific relationship items asked participants to list up to 5 past romantic partners ($M = 2.13$, $SD = 1.82$), and for each partner, to rate the extent to which they had positive evaluations about their relationship with that specific former partner: “Even though we are no longer a couple, overall I would evaluate my romantic relationship with [former partner’s name] relatively positively” on a 9-point scale from 0 (*completely disagree*) to 8 (*completely agree*). They then answered a 7-item measure of general past relationship satisfaction using the same 9-point scale (Sample items: “In general, I have had positive experiences in my previous committed relationships”, “In general, my previous committed relationships have been good experiences”, and “In general, my previous committed relationships have been stressful” (reverse coded). The internal reliability of the general scale was high ($\alpha = .90$). Specific experiences of past relationship satisfaction were significantly associated with general past relationship satisfaction ($r = .64$), and we used the measure of general past relationship satisfaction in analyses.

Future expectations of relationship satisfaction. Participants indicated their future expectations of relationship satisfaction for their next committed relationship on

a 9-point scale from 0 (*completely disagree*) to 8 (*completely agree*). Example items include: “I expect my relationship to be a good experience”, “I don’t expect to find much happiness in my relationship”, and “I feel sure that things will go well in my relationship.” The internal reliability of the measure was high ($\alpha = .93$).

Results and Discussion

Correlations and descriptive statistics for study variables are presented in Table 5. Consistent with hypotheses, a simple regression analysis revealed that future expectations of relationship satisfaction were predicted by past relationship satisfaction [$b = .42$, $t(95) = 4.94$, $p < .001$]. Subsequent analyses tested the mediation model stated above using PROCESS (Hayes, 2013) and bootstrapping results based on 1000 resamples. There was a significant indirect effect of future expectations of relationship satisfaction that fully mediated the association between past satisfaction and commitment desirability, with a CI ranging from .04 to .39 ($b = .21$). Furthermore, the direct effect between past satisfaction and commitment desirability was not significant, with a CI ranging from -.08 to .53 ($b = .23$). Thus, these results show encouraging initial evidence of an antecedent of current commitment desirability.

However, an alternative model could be that commitment desirability and future expectations of relationship satisfaction are essentially interchangeable, and that commitment desirability could be the mediator between past relationship satisfaction and future expectations of relationship satisfaction. A simple regression analysis showed that commitment desirability was predicted by past relationship satisfaction [$b = .44$, $t(95) = 3.09$, $p = .003$] and subsequent analyses tested the alternative mediation model. There was a significant indirect effect of commitment desirability that only

partially mediated the association between past satisfaction and future expectations of relationship satisfaction, with a CI ranging from .01 to .23 ($b = .08$). Furthermore, the direct effect between past satisfaction and commitment desirability remained significant, with a CI ranging from .17 to .52 ($b = .35$). Hence, full mediation was supported only in the predicted direction, not in an alternative model where commitment desirability and future expectations of relationship satisfaction were switched.

STUDY 4

In Study 3, we examined how future expectations of relationship satisfaction mediated the effects of past relationship satisfaction on commitment desirability for individuals who were currently not in romantic relationships, positing that these future expectations of relationship satisfaction could be a mechanism in which one might be motivated to seek being in a committed romantic relationship for single individuals. In trying to capture a holistic understanding of the effects of commitment desirability, we also examined how commitment desirability was related to relationship interest and initiation among people not currently involved in a romantic relationship. In a 2-factor (partner prefers short-term vs. long-term relationship) between-subjects experiment, participants were asked to indicate their interest in dating a moderately responsive target who was or was not interested in a committed relationship.

How would commitment desirability extend to selecting a new partner? On the one hand, there might be an effect of commitment desirability that leads one to maximize their chances of being in a relationship such that they are willing to compromise their standards when it comes to choosing a romantic partner. In their desire to be in a committed relationship, they might be romantically interested in individuals that are deemed less than ideal. On the other hand, following from our theorizing as well as our earlier results that individuals are strategic and use

perceptions of partner's commitment as a gauge to enable successful relationships, we posit that with respect to romantic attraction and initiation, that they would use perceptions of the target's own desire for commitment as a gauge in determining their selection. Accordingly, we hypothesized that individuals who were higher in own commitment desirability would express more interest in targets who themselves express interest in a committed relationship compared to those who do not. In contrast, individuals who are lower in commitment desirability would not express differences in romantic interest for targets who expressed interest in either a committed or non-committed relationship. To account for the motivated perception that the match in own commitment desirability and perceived target commitment desirability fuels relationship success, we also tested whether this effect of romantic interest was mediated by the extent to which individuals think that a long-term committed relationships with the romantic target can be successful or not.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 87 White single heterosexual undergraduates ($M_{\text{age}} = 19.24$; $SD = 1.23$; 47 females and 40 males) who took part in the study in partial fulfillment of course credit in their introductory psychology course. They first completed the Commitment Desirability Scale. Next, they were directed to assess targets taken from an ostensibly real Internet dating website, under the cover story that the study was on personality and evaluations of online dating profiles. These profiles included a photograph of either a White male or female, and were pre-tested to be equal in terms of moderate physical

attractiveness that was rated on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 10 (*extremely*), [$M_{\text{difference}} = .58$; $SE = .35$; $t(23) = 1.69$, $p = .11$]. Male participants were presented with a profile containing the female photograph whereas female participants were presented with a profile containing the male photograph. Each of the photos was also accompanied by a short written biography that depicted the targets as moderate in responsiveness to partners' needs and whether they were interested or not interested in a committed relationship, as described below. The biography depicted the romantic target as moderately responsive as we did not want to have ceiling or floor effects of responsiveness on romantic interest. The biography also indicated whether the target was interested in either a short-term or long-term romantic relationship. Hence, participants were provided with the following information about the target: "I like to have my own space when I am dating someone. That means I need someone who respects that and willing to take the back seat when necessary, and who does not need me to constantly care for them. I am interested in a short-term (or long-term) relationship."

Participants were asked to evaluate the target on various outcome measures, including romantic interest and anticipated success of a relationship with the target before completing demographics and being debriefed at the end of the study.

Measures

Commitment desirability. Participants completed the 5-item Commitment Desirability Scale ($\alpha = .92$; $M = 5.37$; $SD = 1.91$) to assess their own level of desiring a committed relationship.

Perceived partner commitment desirability. As a manipulation check, participants rated target interest in a long- vs. short-term relationship, with a 3-item measure: “To what extent is this individual interested in a long-term romantic relationship?,” “To what extent does this individual want a relationship that will last a long time?,” and “To what extent does this individual want to find a long-term relationship partner?,” responding on a scale from 0 (*not at all*) to 8 (*very much*; $\alpha = .98$).

Romantic interest in target. Participants rated the extent to which they were romantically interested in the target on an 8-item, 9-point scale (e.g., “I would be interested in going on a date with this person.” 1 = *strongly disagree*; 9 = *strongly agree*; modified from Eastwick & Finkel, 2008; Eastwick, Richeson, Son, & Finkel, 2009; $\alpha = .90$).

Anticipated romantic success. Participants rated the extent to which they felt that they could form a successful romantic relationship with the target, responding to three items: “To what extent do you think you and this individual could form a successful relationship where they could fulfill your needs?,” “How successfully do you think you and this individual could form a lasting relationship,” and “I believe that if we get together, that it will last for a long time” on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*extremely*; $\alpha = .87$).

Attachment avoidance. Participants completed the ECR-RS to measure attachment avoidance, scaled from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*; $\alpha = .84$).

Results and Discussion

Manipulation Check

As expected, participants rated that targets in the long-term relationship condition as more interested in long-term relationships than targets in the short-term relationship condition [$M_{\text{difference}} = -4.53$; $SE = .33$; $t(85) = -13.62$, $p < .001$].

Romantic Interest

Romantic interest towards the target was analyzed using hierarchical regression, with participants' own commitment desirability used as a continuous predictor, and manipulation of perceived target commitment desirability dummy-coded, with 0 = short-term relationship and 1 = long-term relationship. Commitment desirability was centered and entered with the dummy-coded manipulation in the first step of the regression analysis, with the two-way interaction of these terms entered in the second step to test for the predicted interaction (Aiken & West, 1991). There was a main effect of commitment desirability on romantic interest [$b = -.26$, $t(84) = -3.12$, $p = .003$] and a main effect of perceived partner commitment desirability on romantic interest [$b = .77$, $t(84) = 3.24$, $p = .002$]. Importantly, there was a significant two-way interaction between commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment desirability [$b = .31$, $t(84) = 2.51$, $p = .01$]. Specifically, results showed that at lower levels of own commitment desirability, individuals showed no significant difference in romantic interest at lower or higher levels of perceived partner commitment desirability [$b = .18$, $t(84) = .53$, $p = .60$]. However, at higher levels of own commitment desirability, individuals showed more romantic interest in the target with higher levels of perceived partner commitment desirability compared to targets with lower levels of perceived

partner commitment desirability [$b = 1.36, t(84) = 4.05, p < .001$; see Figure 3]. These associations did not change when controlling for attachment avoidance.

Romantic Success

Anticipated romantic success with the target was also analyzed using hierarchical regression, with participants' own commitment desirability used as a continuous predictor, and manipulation of perceived target commitment desirability dummy-coded, with 0 = short-term relationship and 1 = long-term relationship. Again, commitment desirability was centered and entered with the dummy-coded manipulation in the first step of the regression analysis, and the two-way interaction entered in the second step to test for the predicted interaction (Aiken & West, 1991). There was a main effect of commitment desirability on romantic success [$b = -.26, t(84) = -2.24, p = .03$] and a main effect of perceived partner commitment desirability on romantic success [$b = .95, t(84) = 3.34, p = .001$]. Importantly, there was a significant two-way interaction between commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment desirability [$b = .29, t(84) = 1.96, p = .05$]. Specifically, results showed that at lower levels of own commitment desirability, individuals showed no significant difference in anticipated romantic success at lower or higher levels of perceived partner commitment desirability [$b = .40, t(84) = 1.00, p = .32$]. However, at higher levels of own commitment desirability, individuals showed more romantic anticipated romantic success in the target that had higher levels of perceived partner commitment desirability compared to targets that had lower levels of perceived partner commitment desirability [$b = 1.51, t(84) = 3.72, p < .001$; see Figure 4]. These associations did not change when controlling for attachment avoidance.

We also tested the hypothesized mediation of romantic interest by anticipated romantic success through a moderated mediation analysis. The analysis (95% CI approach) was conducted using PROCESS (Hayes, 2013) and bootstrapping results based on 1000 resamples indicated that the total (direct) effect of the commitment desirability by perceived partner commitment desirability on romantic interest became nonsignificant when including anticipated romantic success ($b = .15, p > .05$). Furthermore, it showed a CI ranging from .01 to .36 for a significant indirect effect ($b = .16$). Specifically, the conditional indirect effect was .21 [-.36, .68] and not significant for individuals lower in commitment desirability. The conditional indirect effect was .82 [.45, 1.48] and significant for individuals higher in commitment desirability. Given that zero falls outside of the CIs, we can conclude that anticipated romantic success played a mediating role on romantic interest, especially when individuals are higher in commitment desirability.

STUDY 5

As shown in Study 3, expectations of future relationship satisfaction mediated the effects of past relationship experiences on commitment desirability. Furthermore, Study 4 showed that anticipated romantic success was a mediating mechanism in which the matching of own commitment desirability to perceived partner commitment desirability was instrumental in romantic interest towards the target. Thus, there are pro-relationship cognitions associated with commitment desirability among currently single individual. We were also interested in whether commitment desirability would be associated with future expectations of relationship relationship stability for those currently involved in a romantic relationship (Arriaga et al., 2006; Tan & Agnew, 2016). As described in the introduction, we posit that perceived partner commitment is used as a gauge for relationship certainty and stability.

In line with our previous findings, we expected that commitment desirability would be positively associated with expectations for relationship certainty and stability. Furthermore, we expected a matching effect whereby higher commitment desirability would predict higher expectations of relationship stability especially when one perceives a partner to be highly committed. In contrast, we did not expect low commitment desirability to predict higher expectations of relationship stability.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 197 Amazon Mechanical Turk workers (63% female) who were involved in romantic relationships at the time of their participation ($M_{\text{months}} = 96.17$; $SD = 99.60$). Due to a computer error, 122 participants did not report their age and were coded as missing for age ($M_{\text{age}} = 41.47$; $SD = 9.78$). They completed the Commitment Desirability Scale as well as a measure of perceived partner commitment. Among other scales, they were asked to complete a measure of expectations concerning the stability of their current romantic relationship. They also answered demographic questions before being debriefed about the study.

Measures

Commitment desirability. Participants completed the Commitment Desirability Scale as described above. The internal reliability of the scale was high ($\alpha = .89$).

Perceived partner commitment. Participants completed a modified version of the commitment subscale from the Investment Model Scale (Rusbult et al., 1998) as described above ($\alpha = .92$).

Expectations of relationship stability. Participants indicated their expectations concerning the stability of their relationship, partner and the self on a 7-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Example items include: “The quality of my relationship will be stable over time,” “My partner’s feelings for me are likely to go up and down a lot,” and “My love and care for my partner will

remain stable over time.” The internal reliability of the composite measure was high ($\alpha = .86$).

Attachment avoidance. Participants completed the ECR-RS to measure attachment avoidance as described above ($\alpha = .88$).

Results and Discussion

We used multiple regression analyses to test for the predicted two-way interaction between commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment as predictors of expectations for relationship stability. There was a significant main effect of commitment desirability on expectations for stability [$b = .30, t(194) = 5.06, p < .001$] and a significant main effect of perceived partner commitment on expectations for stability [$b = .35, t(194) = 8.16, p < .001$]. Importantly and consistent with hypothesis, there was also a significant two-way interaction between commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment [$b = .08, t(194) = 2.66, p = .008$]. Specifically, at lower levels of commitment desirability, individuals showed more expectations for relationship stability when they perceived their partners to have higher commitment compared to when they perceived their partners to have lower commitment [$b = .26, t(194) = 7.19, p < .001$]. At higher levels of commitment desirability, individuals also showed greater expectations for relationship stability when they perceived their partners to have higher commitment compared to when they perceived their partners to have lower commitment, and this was a significantly stronger effect [$b = .45, t(194) = 5.81, p < .001$; see Figure 5]. These associations did not change when controlling for attachment avoidance. Thus, commitment desirability had an influence on relationship expectations such that individuals who had higher

commitment desirability had greater expectations for relationship stability, especially when they perceived their partners to be highly committed. In contrast, individuals with lower commitment desirability also had higher expectations for relationship stability based on perceived partner commitment, but it was a significantly weaker effect. It would appear, then, that commitment desirability is associated with such pro-relationship cognitions as future relationship certainty, which this might serve to motivate subsequent relationship maintenance behaviors.

STUDY 6

As demonstrated in Study 2b, individuals who were higher in commitment desirability and perceived that their partners were highly committed were more dependent and less likely to consider dissolving their relationships. As demonstrated in Study 5, they were also more certain about their future expectations concerning the stability of the relationship. This allowed us to examine whether commitment desirability was associated with pro-relationship cognitions. We extended this analysis in Study 6 to examine whether individuals currently involved in a relationship who were higher in commitment desirability would engage in pro-relationship behaviors as well. We focused on support for partner's goals as a relationship maintenance behavior.

In line with our previous findings, we expected that commitment desirability would be positively associated with support for partner's personal goals. Furthermore, because perceived partner commitment is used as a gauge for relationship certainty and stability, we expected there to be a matching effect whereby higher commitment desirability would predict higher goal support, especially when a person perceives their partner to be highly committed. However, previous research has shown that highly committed people show less support for their partner's goals when these goals pose a severe, existential threat to the relationship (Hui, Finkel, Fitzsimons, Kumashiro, & Hofmann, 2014). Hence, a distinction can be made between pro-partner and

pro-relationship behaviors, such that one might withhold goal support when the goals threatens the relationship, even if it does not benefit the partner. Thus, relationship threat could serve to moderate the association between commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment on support for partner's goals. Because perceived partner commitment is used as a gauge for relationship stability, we expected that there would be no change in our hypothesized interaction between commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment on goal support in the low threat condition. However, high perceived partner commitment might suggest confidence in partner regard in the face of high threat, and thus we hypothesized that individuals who were higher in commitment desirability would be less willing to support their partner's personal goals if those goals were presented as detrimental to the relationship.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 233 undergraduate students ($M_{\text{age}} = 19.50$; $SD = 1.63$; 61% female) who took part in the study in partial fulfillment of course credit in their introductory psychology course. All participants were required to be in romantic relationships at the time of their participation ($M_{\text{months}} = 31.32$; $SD = 19.61$). They completed the Commitment Desirability Scale as well as a measure of perceived partner commitment. They were then randomly assigned to one of two decision-making tasks that differed in terms of the level of threat to their relationship (i.e., discrepancy between the relationship's interests and partner's personal goals). This decision-making task was adapted from previous studies on willingness to sacrifice in relationships (Van Lange, Rusbult, Drigotas, Arriaga, Witcher, & Cox, 1997) and

previously used by Hui and colleagues (2014). Specifically, participants were asked to list the three most important personal activities that their partner engaged in, other than the current romantic relationship. Next, participants in the low threat condition read the following information:

“Now, imagine that if your partner continued to engage in each of these activities, it would create some conflicts to the relationship’s interests. However, these conflicts related to their pursuits would put your relationship at very low risk of breaking up. To what extent would you encourage your partner to engage in their favored activities if conflicts related to these pursuits by your partner would put your relationship at a very low risk of breaking up?”

Participants in the high threat condition read:

“Now, imagine that if your partner continued to engage in each of these activities, it would create some conflicts to the relationship’s interests. However, these conflicts related to their pursuits would put your relationship at very high risk of breaking up. To what extent would you encourage your partner to engage in their favored activities if conflicts related to these pursuits by your partner would put your relationship at a very high risk of breaking up?”

Participants then completed measures indicating their support for their partner's goals and also completed demographic questions before being debriefed about the study.

Measures

Commitment desirability. Participants completed the Commitment Desirability Scale as described in earlier studies ($\alpha = .86$).

Perceived partner commitment. Participants completed a modified version of the commitment subscale from the Investment Model scale (Rusbult et al., 1998) as described in earlier studies ($\alpha = .87$).

Manipulation check. Participants completed three manipulation check questions to determine if they considered the manipulation as a threat to the stability of the relationship: "How much do you think the relationship will have a lot of problems if your partner pursues these activities?" (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *extremely*); "What is the probability that your relationship will end if your partner pursues these activities?" (1 = *very low* to 5 = *very high*); and "How much do you think the relationship will end if your partner pursues these activities?" (1 = *not at all* to 5 = *extremely*). We used the composite of these three questions in analyses ($\alpha = .91$).

Support provision. Participants indicated their support for their partner's goals by reporting the degree that they would encourage their partner to pursue each of the three activities on a 7-point scale from 1 (*definitely would not encourage him or her to engage in the activity*) to 7 (*definitely would not encourage him or her to engage in the activity*). We used the composite of these three items tapping support provision in subsequent analyses, ($\alpha = .73$).

Attachment avoidance. As a control, participants completed the ECR-RS to measure attachment avoidance as described in earlier studies ($\alpha = .86$).

Results and Discussion

A t-test on the manipulation check showed that participants did not perceive a difference between the low threat and high threat conditions [$M_{\text{difference}} = .07$; $SE = .11$; $t(231) = .72$, $p = .47$]. Accordingly, we did not include threat as a factor in subsequent analyses. Instead, support for partner's goals was analyzed using hierarchical regression analysis, with commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment used as continuous predictors.

We conducted multiple regression analyses including the main effects and the two-way interaction between commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment as predictors of support for partner's goals. There was no main effect of commitment desirability on support for partner's goals [$b = .07$, $t(230) = 1.37$, $p = .17$]. However, there was a main effect of perceived partner commitment on support for partner's goals [$b = .20$, $t(230) = 3.87$, $p = .001$]. More importantly however, there was a significant two-way interaction between commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment [$b = -.06$, $t(230) = -2.02$, $p = .04$.] Specifically, results showed that at lower levels of commitment desirability, individuals showed more support for partner goals when they perceived their partners to be higher in commitment compared to when they perceived their partners to be lower in commitment [$b = .29$, $t(230) = 4.42$, $p < .001$]. However, at higher levels of commitment desirability, there was no significant difference in goal support when perceiving their partners as having lower or higher commitment [$b = .11$, $t(230) = 1.39$, $p = .17$; see Figure 6]. These results suggest

that commitment desirability is associated with relationship maintenance such that individuals who reported higher commitment desirability were generally supportive of their partner's goals. Furthermore, they also suggest that individuals who report lower commitment desirability were unsupportive of their partner's goals, especially when they perceived that their partner's were lower in commitment. Interestingly, they were just as supportive of their partner's goals as individuals who were higher in commitment desirability when they perceived that their partners were high in commitment. These associations did not change when controlling for attachment avoidance.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

People vary in the extent to which they believe that a committed relationship is desirable for them. The current research offers and examines the concept of commitment desirability. We developed a measure of commitment desirability and provided initial evidence for its reliability and validity (Studies 1 and 2a). We examined how commitment desirability affected relationship cognitions and behaviors for individuals in romantic relationships, showing that commitment desirability was associated with cognitions about staying in the relationship and relationship certainty (Study 2b and 5) as well as support for partner goals (Study 6). We also demonstrated that, for single individuals who might be looking to enter a new relationship, one antecedent for commitment desirability is past relationship experiences (Study 3). Moreover, single individuals who desired commitment were more interested in targets who displayed similar level of commitment desirability as well as believed in the potential for these relationships to be more successful (Study 4). However, in Study 6, our proposed manipulation of relationship threat did not work as intended. In hindsight, perhaps answering questions concerning commitment desirability initially might have influenced participants to be reminded of their desire to want a committed relationship, and subsequently, led them to construe the threat manipulation as an aberration. Nonetheless, most of our hypotheses were supported and taken together, the evidence

supports the utility of considering commitment desirability, defined as the subjective desire to be involved in a committed relationship, as an emerging construct that can be used to understand relationship decision-making and behaviors.

Attesting to the robustness of the construct, effects emerged across different contexts of relationships, both in terms of relationship initiation/attraction as well as relationship maintenance/dissolution as well as a combination of correlational and experimental methods. The effects reported also remained controlling for the effects of attachment avoidance, which we posited to be theoretically similar to but distinct from commitment desirability. Even though commitment desirability and attachment avoidance are both concerned with issues of independence and autonomy, why does commitment desirability have unique predictive power beyond attachment avoidance? We believe that the key difference lies in the notion of desiring commitment instead of merely dependence and intimacy. Even secure individuals who are low in attachment avoidance might not particularly desire commitment. Thus, the construct of commitment desirability might be more predictive of relationship thoughts and behaviors that are focused on examining long-term relationship stability and maintenance behaviors as opposed to examining thoughts and behaviors that are focused on examining regulation of insecurity in the moment.

By introducing the concept of commitment desirability, we aimed to provide novel and important insights into the literature on commitment, as well as to integrate our work in the larger theoretical framework of interdependence theory. In addition, the current research clarifies from a psychological perspective the reflection in modern society that report declining trends in marriage and being in a committed partnership

(Gallup, 2015; Pew, 2014). As noted in the introduction, interdependence analysis has focused on examining mean levels of commitment and largely neglected consideration of whether an individual desires commitment or not. However, irrespective of the degree to which one is committed to a given relationship, different individuals have different levels of needs and interest in high interdependence with a romantic partner, as captured by the construct of commitment desirability (Eidelson, 1983; Hazan & Shaver 1987; Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). That is, some individuals appear to desire relative higher or lower levels of independence and autonomy than do others.

It is important to ask then, how is commitment desirability different compared to mean commitment levels? First, we consider commitment desirability as a more general disposition with respect to relationship involvement, whereas commitment level represents a relationship-specific variable that indexes perceptions with respect to a specific involvement. From a longitudinal standpoint, it might, then be expected that there would be more fluctuations in one's own commitment level regarding a specific partner than in one's desire to be in a committed relationship in general. Thus, commitment desirability may be considered a more distal variable in predicting relationship behavior in that it guides how one approaches relationships in general, whereas commitment level is more proximal in its influence. Considered in this way, if commitment desirability and commitment level are aligned, we would expect commitment levels to trump the effects of commitment desirability on variables such as relationship maintenance. However, what happens when an individual has high commitment desirability and low commitment to a given partner, or low commitment desirability and high commitment, and which variable will have precedence in the

prediction of relational functioning? This question awaits future examination.

However, we would surmise that when one places self-interests over relational interests, then commitment desirability might have more predictive power, whereas when one places relational interests over self-interests, commitment level may be particularly predictive.

However, on top of such desire, individuals seek assurance that their own relationships will be successful and stable over time. As such, in their efforts to have long-lasting relationships, individuals who desire commitment use perceived partner commitment as a gauge to behave and think in ways that facilitate and promote relationship success and they should be particularly interested in and affected by perceived partner commitment so as to protect themselves against too getting close to a partner who is not also interested in commitment. Consequently, the match between one's own commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment might alleviate uncertainty that one has about the potential success and stability of a relationship (Owen, Rhoades, Shuck, Fincham, Stanley, Markman, & Knopp, 2014). The certainty and assurance that this provides might help couples form a long-term vision and make future plans for the relationship (Goodfriend & Agnew, 2008; Tan & Agnew, 2016).

One issue that is important to consider is whether using perceived partner commitment to match one's own level of commitment desirability is, in fact, an adaptive strategy to take in terms of making relational decisions and judgments. For instance, when partners' desire for commitment differs, how is this navigated? Should one individual give up his/her desire for a particular level of commitment or would the person try to regulate their partner's level of commitment to match their own level

of desired commitment? First, one can consider one's own commitment level as a driving force for trying to regulate a partner's commitment level. Commitment drives people to engage in a variety of relationship maintenance behaviors, such as resisting the allure of attractive alternatives (e.g., Johnson & Rusbult, 1989), minimizing inflammatory conflict (e.g., Finkel & Campbell, 2001), and making sacrifices for significant others (e.g., Van Lange et al., 1997). Hence, it is possible that when one is faced with a mismatch between one's high level of commitment desirability and low levels of perceived partner commitment, that those who are more committed might try to upregulate their partner's level of commitment. However, if they are less committed, it is unlikely that such individuals will be motivated to regulate their partner's level of commitment even if they are faced with a mismatch as they are not fully invested in the well-being of the relationship and are less likely to try and maintain the relationship.

Second, one can consider power dynamics when trying to understand partner regulation of commitment in the face of mismatches. Relational power can be defined as the ability of an individual to change their romantic partner's thoughts, feelings and behaviors as well as the capacity to resist influence attempts imposed by the partner (Simpson, Farrel, Orina, & Rothman, 2015). As such, it is possible that in the face of a mismatch between own commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment that the partner who holds more relational power would try to regulate their partner's level of commitment to align with their own desires and/or be more resistant to attempts from their partners' to align their own commitment level to their partner's desires. Future research could fruitfully examine how individual's respond to their perception of their partner's commitment desirability. These interdependent processes

can have both immediate (e.g., conflict and displeasure) and long-term (e.g., breakup) effects and help illuminate the ways in which partners adopt approaches that prioritize the escalation or de-escalation of commitment, reach decisions on whether to try and maintain their current relationship, or to seek relationship dissolution. Thus, future research should consider dyadic designs in examining the effects of commitment desirability.

Another similar question that arises is whether high commitment desirability is always good or adaptive, even in the face of data in the studies presented here that show that there are mostly positive consequences to high commitment desirability. If taken to the extreme, however, would high commitment desirability mean getting into a relationship with an individual that would provide security and need fulfillment in the long-term, in spite of knowing that such a relationship with this particular individual would not be particularly satisfying? Thus, with respect to mate preferences, high commitment desirability might be associated with a lowering of standards and treating these characteristics as unnecessary luxuries, but importantly, deem commitment from the partner as a necessity for any chance of relationship formation (Li, Bailey, Kenrick, & Linsenmeier, 2002). We tested our hypotheses concerning relationship attraction and initiation using an online dating paradigm in Study 4, but future research might make use of speed-dating paradigms to capture ecologically valid actual dating behaviors as well (Finkel & Eastwick, 2008). On the one hand, from a relational standpoint and following from the idea that partners' can respond to one's own level of commitment desirability, individuals who display exceedingly high levels of commitment desirability might drive away their relational partners as this might project a tendency

to become too dependent on a partner. On the other hand, they might have exceedingly high standards for their relationship partners with respect to commitment and they might be unwilling to settle for anything but the most committed partner. Therefore, relational status might be a moderator such that, for single people, there might be a lowering of standards, but for coupled individuals, a heightening of standards, especially when these individuals have high levels of commitment desirability.

Another issue to consider is the antecedents of commitment desirability. Even though we tested and provided some evidence in support of past relationship experiences as an antecedent of commitment desirability in Study 3, the present research was not focused on exploring the roots of commitment desirability. Perhaps good experiences with prolonged singlehood or solitude seeking (Ren, Wesselmann, & Williams, 2015) might lead individuals to have lower desire for commitment. Similarly, one's personal goals might be in direct conflict with having a committed relationship, and thus, a lower desire for commitment. For example, one might only be in a given geographical location for a short period of time, and the prospect of a committed relationship might not be particularly appealing at that point in time. Finally from an investment model perspective, subjective norms and social networks might have an influence on one's own commitment desirability (Etcheverry & Agnew, 2004). The extent to which family and friends think that committed relationships are important or are needed might increase your own level of commitment desirability. Therefore, further examining theoretical and practical antecedents of commitment desirability in depth would allow for exploring methods to increase or decrease commitment desirability in the future.

Our longitudinal study showed that there was high test-retest reliability for commitment desirability, suggesting that commitment desirability can be construed as relatively stable (at least across approximately 4 months). The longitudinal results of Study 2b also shed some light on the potential long-term consequences of commitment desirability on relationship stability, but the present research was limited by follow-up sample size of breakups ($n = 17$). Thus, we could not examine with any degree of power whether Time 1 commitment desirability was able to predict breakup status or breakup initiation. Follow-up, repeated-measures ANOVA analysis indicated that there was a significant interaction between Time and Breakup status on commitment desirability, [$F(1, 68) = 4.28, p = .04$]. Specifically, among those who broke up, there was a significant (albeit under-powered) decrease in their levels of commitment desirability from Time 1 ($M = 6.48, SD = 1.29$) to Time 2 ($M = 5.80, SD = 2.24$). There was no mean difference for those who remained in a relationship. Thus, an interesting follow-up question would be, what would predict a return to pre-breakup levels of commitment desirability? For example, it is possible that securely attached individuals might be able to recover faster from breakup and consequently desire more commitment again sooner. Future research can also examine if commitment desirability can predict breakup or breakup initiation over and above mean levels of commitment. Similarly, future research should also examine additional long-term effects of commitment desirability. It would be interesting to examine if individuals can reach or transition to higher levels of interdependence or commitment with their partners faster when they are higher in commitment desirability compared to when they are lower in it. For example, an individual might have sex earlier or say “I love you” to

their partner earlier as declarations of interdependence when they have higher levels of commitment desirability compared to when they have lower levels (Ackerman, Griskevicius, & Li, 2011). Thus, commitment desirability might have an influence on the developmental trajectories of relationships. It would be interesting to examine if commitment desirability after breakup subsequently predicts the time taken for initiating a new romantic relationship, such that higher commitment desirability post-breakup might predict less time in getting into a new relationship. Commitment desirability after breakup might also predict getting back together with ex-partners or remaining close to ex-partners, as individuals are motivated to not lose the commitment and investments that they had with their ex-partners (Spielmann, Joel, MacDonald, & Kogan, 2012; Tan, Agnew, VanderDrift, & Harvey, 2015).

One limitation of the construct of commitment desirability is that it is exclusively focused on approach-based motivations based on the potential rewards of committed relationships (e.g., Spielmann, MacDonald, & Tackett, 2012). For example, in the current studies, we had high mean levels of commitment desirability; even those who were comparatively low in levels of commitment desirability were close to the midpoint of the scale, perhaps highlighting the commonality of desire for commitment in the general population. However, the current research did not address perceptions of threat associated with committed relationships, nor how individuals are sometimes motivated to avoid the pitfalls of being in a committed relationship. For example, long-term committed relationships might be construed as painful or unfulfilling. There is indirect evidence that individuals might have prevailing concerns or experience distress regarding commitment or being in committed relationships, and anecdotal evidence

and stereotypes exist about anxieties concerning relational commitment (Curtis & Susman, 1994). For example, researchers have examined the fear of intimacy, which is the extent to which individuals are inhibited in exchanging thoughts or feelings of personal significance with valued others due to anxiety (Descutner & Thelen, 1991). Hence, future research might explore the “fear of commitment,” which might be particularly adept at capturing individuals who actively do not desire commitment and avoid committed relationships due to threats such as perceived lack of independence. Achieving invulnerability to harm could, ironically, be based in trying to de-escalate dependence and connectedness with romantic partners. This is especially so in response to perceiving that partners are becoming increasingly dependent and committed to a relationship. Other strategies that might achieve the same goals involve a more active approach in down-regulating a partner’s level of commitment or purposefully engaging in actions that might threaten the stability of the relationship. The ultimate strategy might be to dissolve a relationship with a partner who is perceived to be highly committed. It is also possible that these individuals might prefer to remain single or be motivated to just pursue short-term relationships instead.

In conclusion, the extent to which one desires commitment appears to have important consequences and implications in terms of relational cognitions, behaviors as well as decision-making, both in current romantic relationships and for romantic initiation and attraction. Those who are high in desire for commitment are especially motivated to engage in relationship initiation or maintenance when they perceive that their partners’ commitment match their own levels of desire. The current research is the first attempt at empirically investigating the motivation to seek committed relationships

and findings suggest that it can be an important construct to consider in future relationship research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Table 1

Factor Loadings for Items Administered to Assess Commitment Desirability, Study 1

Items	Loadings Factor 1	Loadings Factor 2
1. The idea of a long-term committed romantic relationship appeals to me.	.97	-.15
2. I want to be in a committed romantic relationship.	.96	-.08
3. Maintaining a committed romantic relationship is important to me.	.85	-.01
4. I prefer to be involved in committed romantic relationship that lasts a long time.	.62	.02
5. I prefer not to be in a committed romantic relationship.	-.55	-.24
6. I am ready to form a joint life with a romantic partner.	.48	.10
7. Once I begin a romance, I am usually inclined to stick with it.	.44	.24
8. I find it easy to maintain a committed romantic relationship.	-.06	.82
9. It's easy for me to maintain a commitment with a romantic partner.	.07	.78
10. I feel somewhat anxious and insecure when in a committed relationship.	.13	-.13
11. I am afraid of feeling too attached to a romantic partner.	-.13	-.47
12. I am comfortable being closely attached to a romantic partner.	.37	.44
13. The thought of committing to a specific romantic partner makes me feel uneasy.	-.36	-.37
14. It would bother me if I got attached to a specific romantic partner too much.	-.27	-.33

Note. Items **in bold** were retained for final measure.

Table 2

Summary of Models Testing Invariance of Commitment Desirability Scale Across Sex, Study 2A

Model	χ^2 (df)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)	<i>p</i>	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Configural	13.27 (6)			1.00	.99	.06
Metric	17.17 (10)	4.47 (4)	.35	1.00	.99	.05
Scalar	22.98 (14)	9.71 (8)	.29	.99	.99	.05

Table 3

Summary of Models Testing Invariance of Commitment Desirability Scale Across Relationship Status, Study 2A

Model	χ^2 (df)	$\Delta\chi^2$ (df)	<i>p</i>	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
Configural	7.68 (6)			1.00	1.00	.03
Metric	10.83 (10)	3.15 (4)	.53	1.00	1.00	.02
Scalar	28.07 (14)	20.39 (8)	.01	.99	.99	.06

Table 4

Correlations and Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Commitment Desirability, Study 2A

	Simple Correlation	<u>Multiple Regression</u>	
		Beta	R ²
Attachment Style			
Anxious Attachment	-.08	-.06	.04
Avoidant Attachment	-.18**	-.17**	
Personality			
Neuroticism	-.06	.12	.16
Extraversion	-.10	-.08	
Conscientiousness	.22**	.11	
Openness	.01	-.02	
Agreeableness	.21**	.20**	
Self-Esteem	.29**	.33**	
Need for Cognition	.08	.06	
Interpersonal Needs			
Approach Goals	.36**		
Avoidance Goals	.23**		
Need to Belong	.22**		
Rejection Sensitivity	-.16**		
Loneliness	-.22**		

Note. ** $p < .01$

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for and Correlations Between Commitment Desirability, Specific and General Past Relationship Satisfaction, and Future Expectations of Relationship Satisfaction, Study 3

	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD
1. Commitment Desirability	1				5.14	2.49
2. Specific Past Satisfaction	.17	1			4.59	1.75
3. General Past Satisfaction	.30**	.64**	1		4.56	1.72
4. Future Satisfaction	.40**	.20	.45**	1	6.00	1.62

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Appendix B

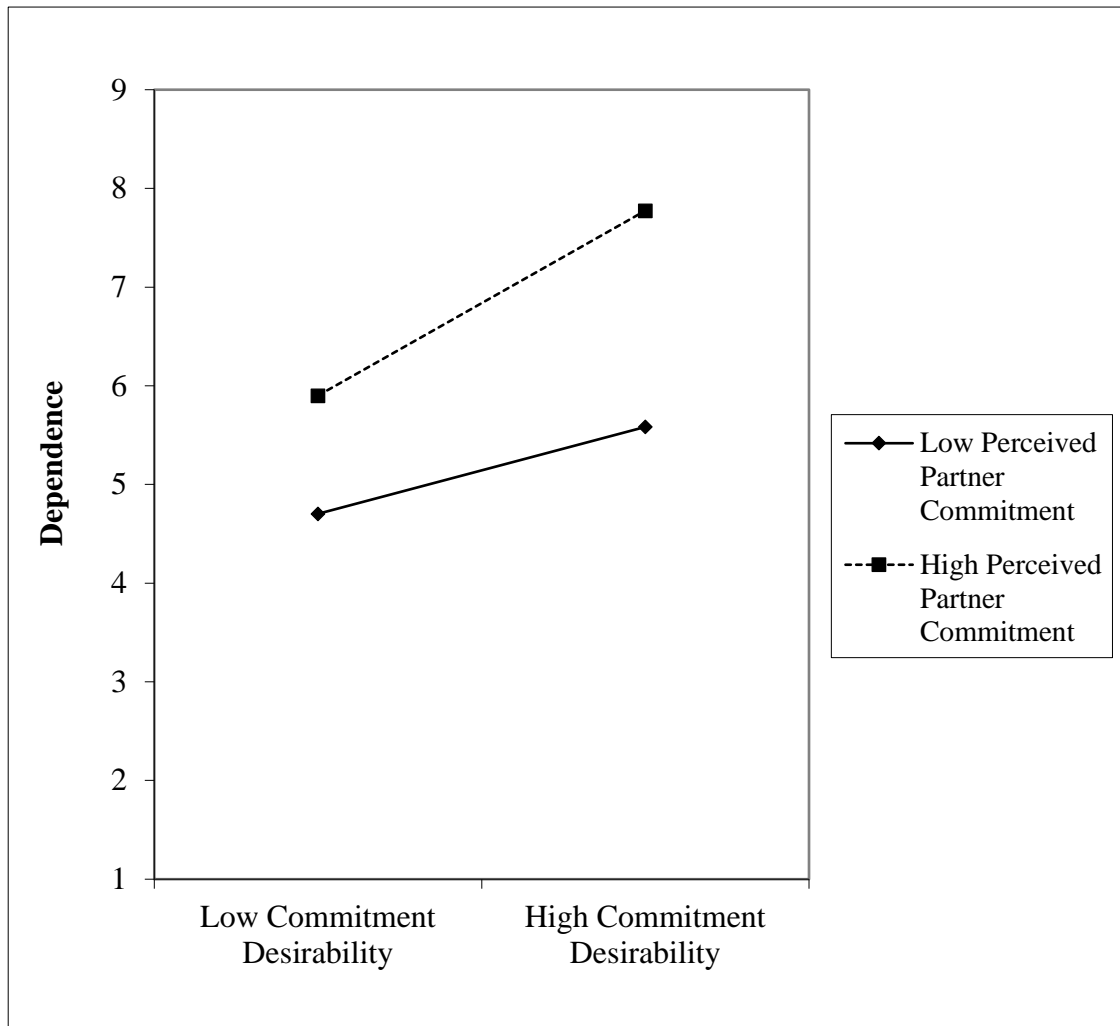


Figure 1. Dependence on the relationship as a function of commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment, Study 2b.

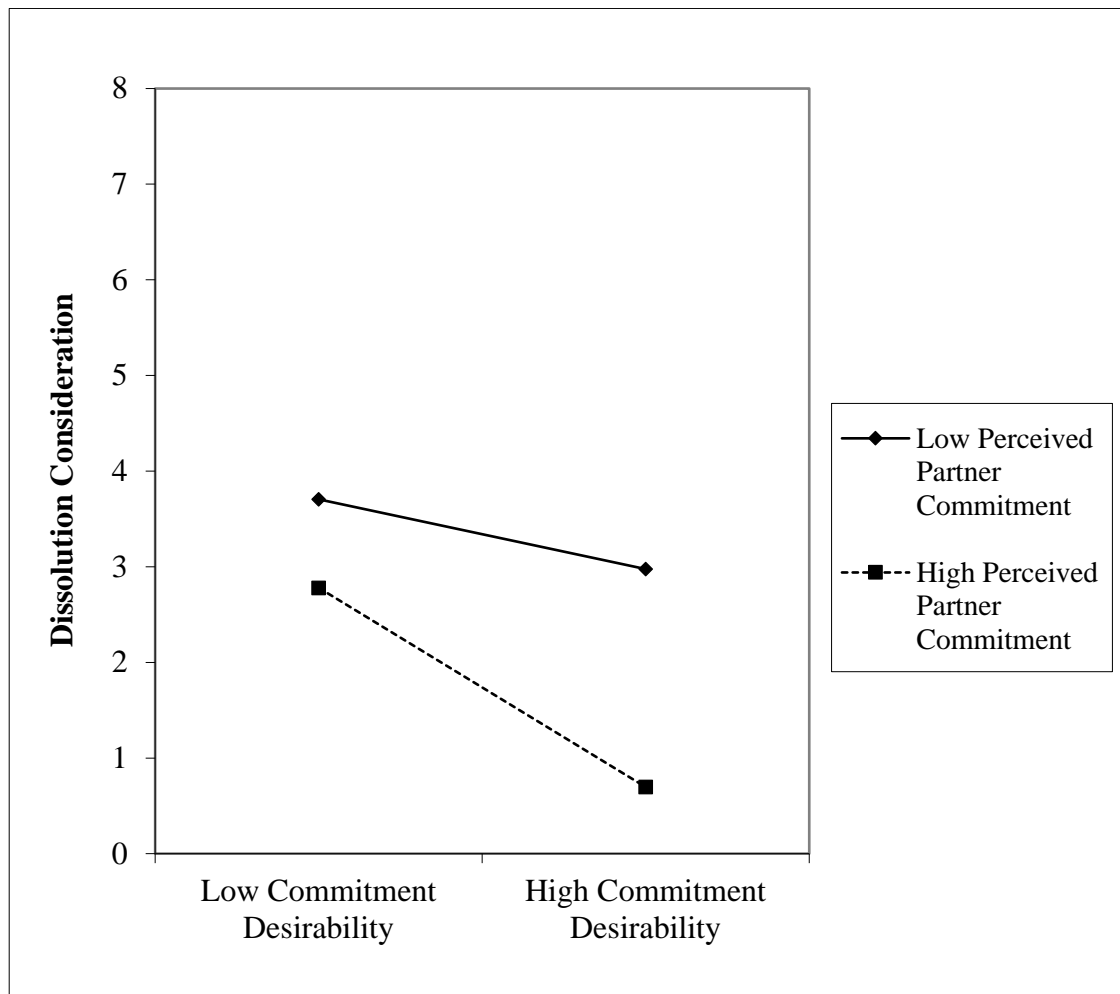
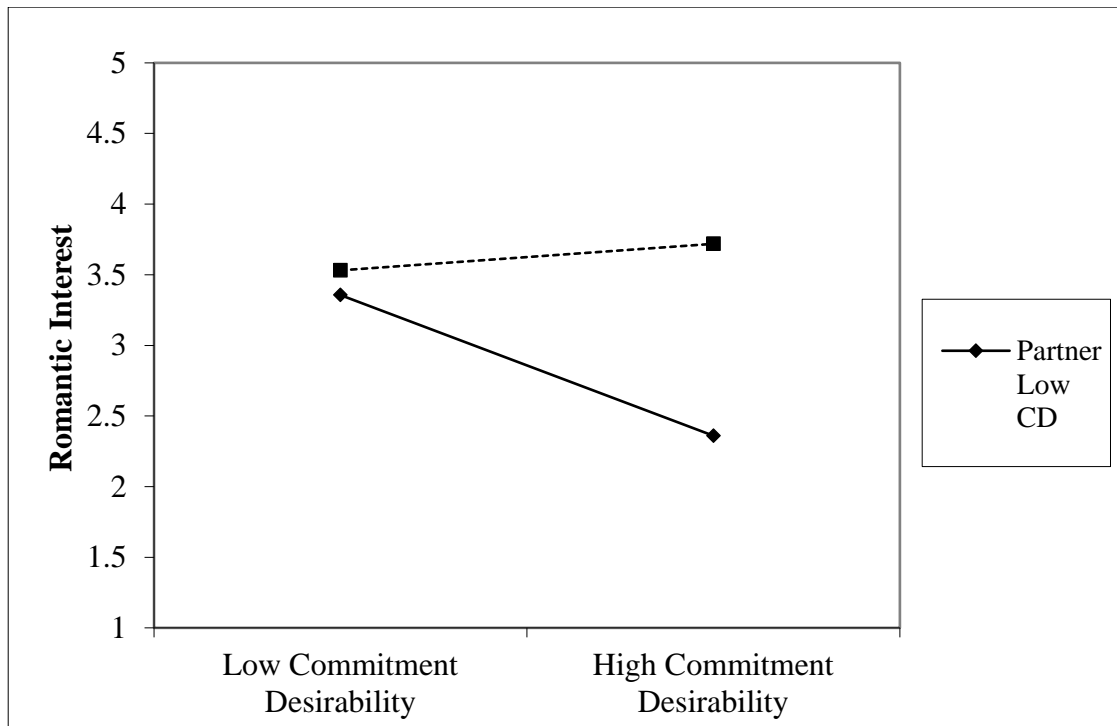
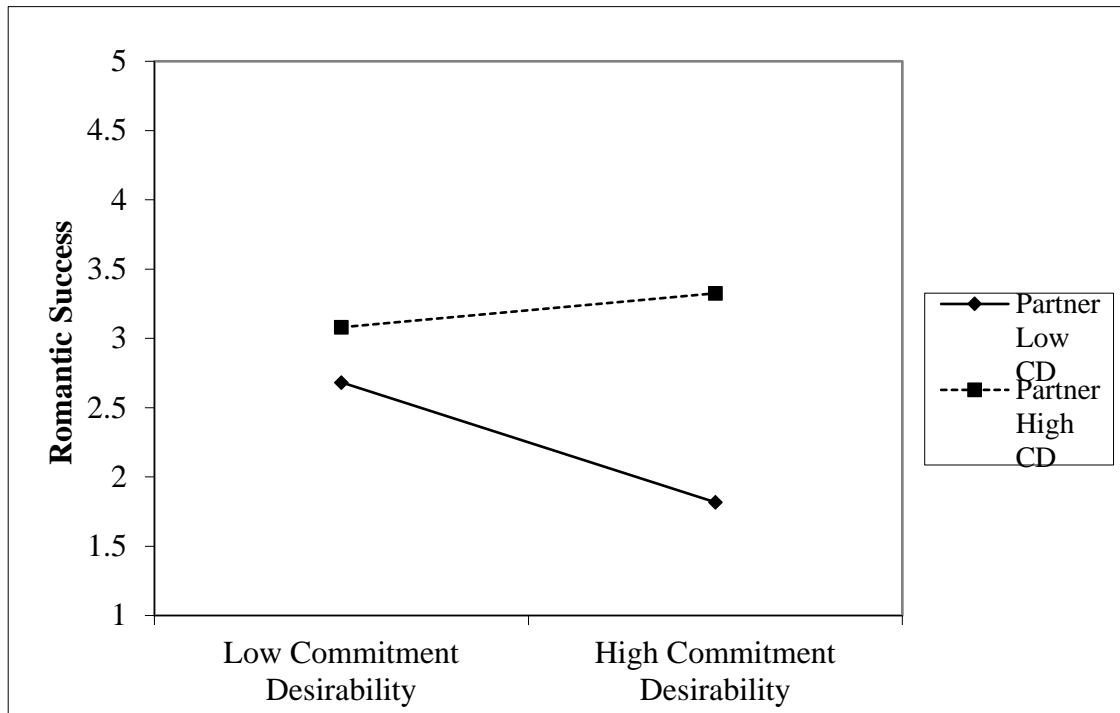


Figure 2. Dissolution consideration as a function of commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment, Study 2b.



Note. CD = commitment desirability

Figure 3. Romantic interest in dating target as a function of commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment desirability, Study 4.



Note. CD = Commitment Desirability

Figure 4. Anticipated romantic success with target as a function of commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment desirability, Study 4.

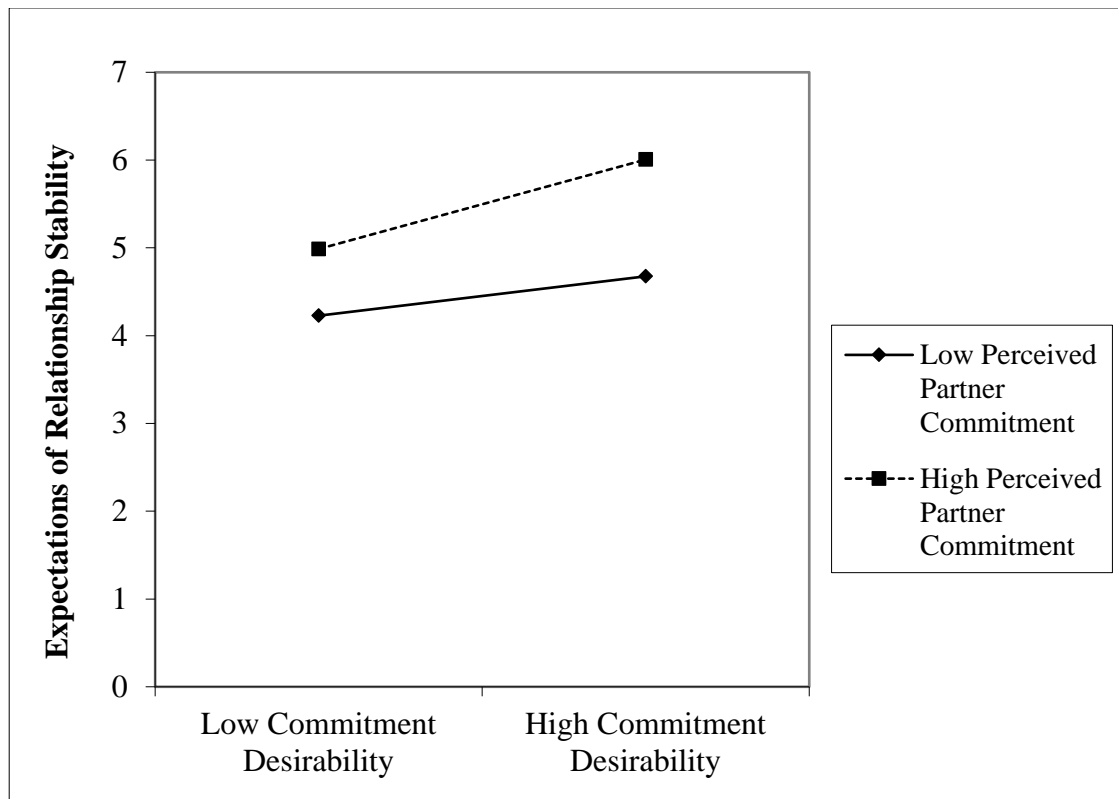


Figure 5. Expectations for relationship stability as a function of commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment, Study 5.

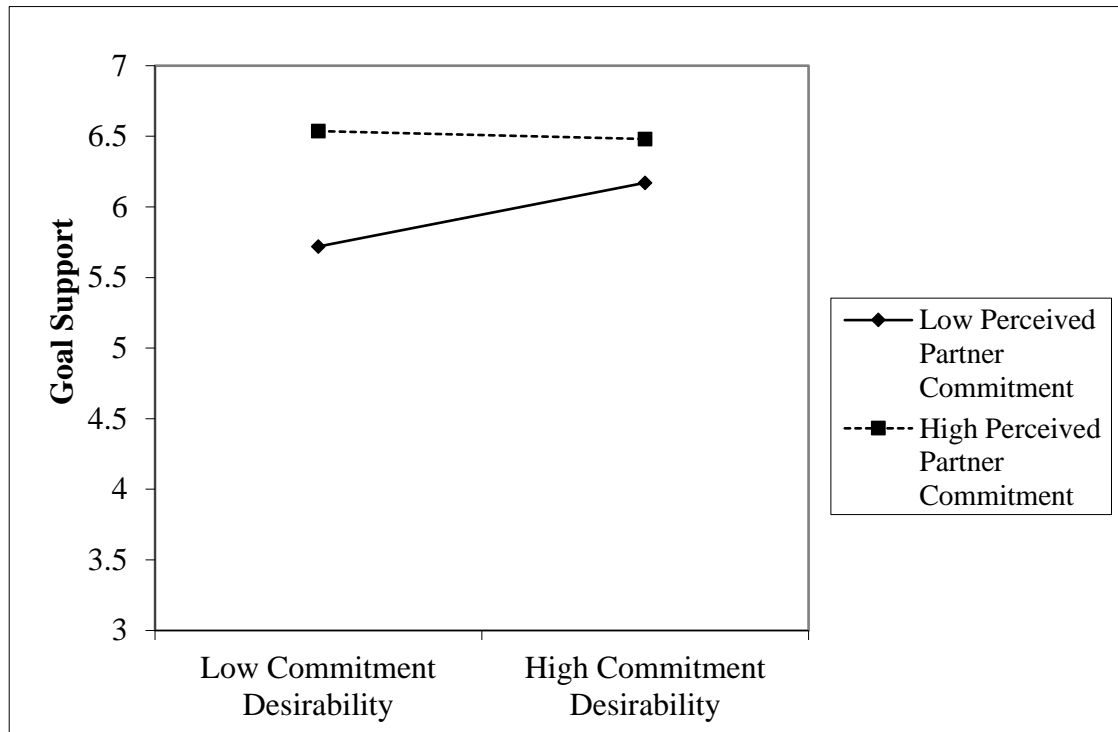


Figure 6. Support for partners goals as a function of commitment desirability and perceived partner commitment, Study 6.

VITA

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 Education

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B.Soc. Sci. (June, 2009)	National University of Singapore Department of Psychology Major: Psychology

Awards and Honors

Purdue University

- C. Eugene Walker Outstanding Graduate Student Award (2016).
- Society for Personality and Social Psychology Graduate Student Travel Award (2015).
- Society for Personality and Social Psychology Diversity Travel Award (2015).
- College of Health and Human Sciences Compton Graduate Research Travel Award (2014).
- Purdue University Department Awards for Graduate Research Innovation (2014). Awarded \$800.
- International Association for Relationship Research Student Scholarship (2014).
- Purdue Graduate Student Government Travel Award (2013). Awarded \$1000.
- Attended (and selected from a large competitive pool of applicants) the Summer Institute in Social and Personality Psychology (2013).
- Purdue University Department Awards for Graduate Research Innovation (2012). Awarded \$1000.

National University of Singapore

- National University of Singapore Research Scholarship (2009-2011).
- National University of Singapore Psychology Department Consultancy Levy Fund (2010). Awarded \$1000.
- National University of Singapore Travel Grant (2007). Awarded \$2000.

- University Scholars Programme: Selected into University Scholar's Programme, a multi-disciplinary academic programme that only admits 3% of each undergraduate cohort.

Publications – Peer Reviewed Empirical Articles

Tan, K., Jarnecke, A. M., & South, S. C. (in press). Impulsivity, communication and marital satisfaction in newlywed couples. *Personal Relationships*.

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Publications – Book Chapters

Agnew, C. R., Besikci, E., & **Tan, K.** (in press). The Investment Model Scale. In Zeigler-Hill and Shackelford (Eds.) *Encyclopedia of personality and human development*. New York, NY: Springer

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Manuscripts in Preparation

Tan, K., Arriaga, X. B., & Agnew, C. R. (2nd revise and resubmit). Running on empty: Measuring psychological dependence in close relationships.

Tan, K., Jarnecke, A. M., & South, S. C. (under review). Self-control similarity and its effects on marital relationship functioning.

Tan, K., & Tsai, F. (in preparation). A longitudinal examination of implicit romantic relationship beliefs and prolonged physical separation in romantic relationships.

Hales, A. H., Burns, M. D., & **Tan, K.** (in preparation). Basking in reflected tragedy.

Tsai, F., & **Tan, K.** (in preparation). Going the distance: A longitudinal study examining attachment and prolonged physical separation in romantic relationships.

Research in Progress

Tan, K., & Agnew, C. R. (in progress). Commitment desirability.

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Tan, K., & Williams, K. D. (in progress). “Ghosting” in romantic relationships and its effect on subjective well-being.

Tan, K., VanderDrift, L. E., & C. R. Agnew (in progress). Perceived dissolution consideration in romantic relationships.

Tan, K., & South, S. C. (in progress). Personality disorders and relationship dissolution processes.

Agnew, C. R., **Tan, K.**, Besikci, E. (in progress). Partner commitment regulation.

Besikci, E., Dvir, M., Agnew, C. R., & **Tan, K.** (in progress). Idealization in marginalized relationships.

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Conference Presentations

Tan, K., & Agnew, C. R. (2016). *Commitment Desirability*. Oral presentation at the 2016 International Association of Relationship Research Conference, Toronto, Canada.

Tan, K., See, Y. H. M., & Agnew, C. A. (2016). *Partner's understanding of affective-cognitive meta-bases predicts relationship quality*. Oral presentation at the 88th Meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL, USA.

Dvir, M., Daly, C. A., **Tan, K.,** & Williams, K. D. (2016). *A simple "hello" can go a long way*. Oral presentation at the 88th Meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL, USA.

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South, S. C., **Tan, K.,** Jarnecke, A. M., Kruger, R. F., Iacono, W. G., & McGue, M. (2015). *Individual differences in self-control and romantic relationships: Evidence from phenotypic and genotypic investigations*. Oral presentation at the 2015 International Association for Relationship Research Mini-Conference, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Tan, K., Jarnecke, A. M., & South, S. C. (2015). *The effects of impulsivity on marital relationship functioning*. Oral presentation at the 87th Meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL, USA.

Tan, K., & Agnew, C. R. (2015). *Partner commitment regulation: The role of perceived partner dissolution consideration*. Poster presented at the 16th Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Long Beach, CA, USA.

Tan, K., & Agnew, C. R. (2014). *Ease of retrieval of future plans in romantic relationships on relationship commitment*. Oral presentation at the 2014 International Association of Relationship Research Conference, Melbourne, Australia.

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Ren, D., **Tan, K.,** Arriaga, X. B., & Chan, K. Q. (2014). *Sweet taste influences initial romantic perceptions*. Oral presentation at the 86th Meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL, USA.

Ren, D., Herman, M. A., Williams, K. D., Chan, K. Q., Arriaga, X. B., & **Tan, K.** (2014). *Sweet taste experiences facilitate recovery from ostracism*. Oral presentation at the 86th Meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL, USA.

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