DAILY PROCESSES IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

by

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, John, and our children. They have provided me with unending joy, smiles, and pride. Thank you for your patience and support.

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ABSTRACT

My goal was to examine how experiences and behaviors of individuals and their romantic partners impact relationships on a daily basis. I conducted three separate but empirically and conceptually related studies. For all three papers, the sample was both members of heterosexual romantic relationships (*N* = 164 couples, 328 individuals) who completed measures each day for seven days. The papers were informed by tenets from interdependence theory and the conservation of resources model. The main purpose of the first paper was to examine a set of relational constructs (i.e., satisfaction, commitment, closeness, conflict, ambivalence, maintenance, and love) to determine which constructs fluctuated daily. All seven relational constructs showed significant within-person variability and were thus appropriate for further daily investigation. With this information, the next step was to understand how to foster positive relationships by examining what daily experiences were associated with those fluctuations. In the second paper I examined whether daily hassles and uplifts were associated with same-day and next-day feelings about the relationship. For same-day effects, I found that hassles were associated with decreased positivity and increased negativity about relationships, whereas uplifts were largely associated with increased positivity. I also found interactions between hassles and uplifts, suggestive of "blunting" effects whereby the positive effects of uplifts were nullified by high levels of hassles. For the next-day effects, I unexpectedly found that uplifts were associated with *decreased* positive relational constructs on the next day, possibly indicating a return to homeostatic levels. In the third paper, I moved to a more explicit examination of dyadic processes by examining both actor and partner effects and

focusing on the role of relational sacrifices, or the daily changes individuals make for the sake of their romantic parnters. I expected that sacrifices would be beneficial for positive relationship quality, particularly on days characterized by low (versus high) hassles. I found support for these expectations with regards to actor, but not partner effects. Overall implications are that the everyday things that individuals experience (e.g., hassles and uplifts) and enact (e.g., sacrifices) are important considerations in fostering less negative and more positive romantic relationships.

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation, I examine the daily experiences of partners in romantic relationships. Daily diary studies of relationships are quite informative as researchers seek to understand relational changes *as they occur*. Daily diary studies have the advantage of providing information about individuals and relationships on a more micro-level than cross sectional or longer-term longitudinal studies (Laurenceau & Bolger, 2005). In this way, researchers can examine when changes occur, which potentially allows for a more accurate investigation of what situations or contexts were associated with these changes. Further, daily diaries allow for more immediate recall of feelings and discrete events and thus are less susceptible to memory bias (Laurenceau & Bolger, 2005). As an example, if relationship quality varies from day to day, it is helpful to know what might be associated with those changes in relationship quality in the interest of fostering more positive (and less negative) relationships. For instance, if daily stress experienced through the day affects how individuals feel in their relationships, diary methods can help to untangle such associations with the benefit of asking about these experiences as they occurred, rather than cross-sectional studies that might ask participants to recall stress and relationship quality over the past month, for example.

I have written three papers in which I examine the daily experiences of romantic relationship partners, with each paper building on the previous one. For all three papers, I used an existing data set, the Beliefs About Relationships (BAR) study, collected in conjunction with Principle Investigator Dr. Melissa Curran. In the study, we collected data from both members of heterosexual romantic relationships (N = 164 couples, 328 individuals). Couples could be dating, cohabiting, or married. Additional details about the sample and procedure can be found in the Methods section of each paper (see especially Paper 1). For this investigation, I used daily data in which we asked participants to complete a set of measures each day for seven days. The papers are informed primarily by two theoretical perspectives: interdependence theory (Kelley, 1979) and the conservation of resources model (CoR; Hobfoll, 1989). In the sections to follow, I give a brief explanation of each of the three papers and describe how they inform one another as well as the broader literature on relationships research.

Paper 1: Daily Variability in Relational Experiences

In the first paper of this dissertation, I examine the within-person daily variability of relational qualities, as well as the extent to which partners within a couple covary in these changes. That is, I first seek to examine the extent to which certain relational qualities actually do vary from day to day, and are thus well-poised to be studied with daily diary methods, and then I examine the extent to which romantic partners' daily feelings about the relationship are linked. For example, when one partner feels more satisfied on a particular day, does the other partner feel more satisfied as well?

It seems likely that there may be some relational qualities that are more stable and do not vary from day to day. Although daily diaries are characterized by several advantages, as reviewed above, they can be taxing for participants (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003), so it is important that researchers be parsimonious in what we ask them to report on each day (Stone, Kessler, & Haythornthwaite, 1991). The investigation for this first paper answers questions as to what relational constructs indeed vary from day to day, and which ones are more stable and need not be studied on a daily basis. This information is then used to guide what relational experiences are examined in papers 2 and 3 of the present dissertation.

In addition to this examination of within-person variability, I examine the extent to which individuals within a relationship covary in their reports about daily relational qualities. Knowledge about how partners are linked in their day to day assessments of their relationships is important in that it allows investigators and those who work with romantic couples, the ability to identify types of relational qualities in which partners are more “in tune” with each other in their day to day assessments. That is, these results provide information as to which variables may be most appropriate for *dyadic* examination of how partners may impact each others’ outcomes (e.g., which constructs are useful for practitioners in fostering positive relational outcomes through dyadic processes).

I examine seven relational qualities in this investigation: satisfaction, commitment, closeness, conflict, ambivalence, maintenance, and love. These constructs were chosen for investigation using the guidance of interdependence theory (Kelley, 1979; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) as well as Braiker & Kelley’s (1979) work on important relational constructs in the development of close relationships.

Finally, I examine each of these variabilities and covariabilities as they may differ depending on length of relationship. It has been suggested that high fluctuations in satisfaction do not bode well for relationships (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). Thus, it is informative to determine whether some types of couples (e.g., those who have been together shorter vs. longer) show high variability in their daily experiences as well as whether individuals are highly interdependent in their daily scores.

Paper 2: Impact of Daily Hassles and Uplifts on "Good" and "Bad" Outcomes

In the second paper of the dissertation, I examine how hassles and uplifts are associated on a daily basis with a variety of "good" and "bad" relational qualities, both on the same day as well as the next day. The results of Paper 1 on the variability of relational constructs indicate which relational qualities are included as outcomes in this daily investigation. Paper 2 builds on Paper 1 by examining how daily experiences individuals had as they moved throughout the day impact how they felt and interacted with their partner that day (i.e., with which relational qualities were these daily experiences associated?). Whereas in Paper 1, I focus on examining which relational constructs vary from day to day and are ripe for daily investigation, in Paper 2, I use this information to examine whether a set of negative and positive daily experiences (i.e., hassles and uplifts) are associated with daily changes in those relational constructs which do vary from day to day. For those relational constructs that fluctuate, clinicians, or individuals who work with romantic couples, can use the results from Paper 2 to decide whether it may be useful to help couples focus on reducing daily hassles or learning to cope with them, as well as whether it is important to help them recognize uplifting experiences as they move throughout their day.

The examination for paper 2 is important in that it examines how both good (uplifts) and bad (hassles) daily experiences are associated with both good (e.g., satisfaction, commitment) and bad (ambivalence, conflict) relational qualities on those days. Whereas previous studies of hassles and uplifts have primarily focused on how they are associated with negative outcomes in an individual (e.g., psychological and physiological symptoms; DeLongis, Folkman, & Lazarus, 1988), the present study goes beyond this previous research in examination of both positive *and* negative dependent variables and focuses on *relational*, as opposed to *individual*, outcomes. Additionally, in this investigation, I examine which associations might be confined to the same day and which associations might carry on to subsequent days (i.e., lagged effects). In other words, if hassles and uplifts are associated with relationship quality, do these associations last from day to day or quickly dissipate?

In Paper 2, I use the CoR model (Hobfoll, 1989) as a guide. The CoR perspective is centered around the idea of resources, characterized generally as anything that is valued by an individual (e.g., money, time, etc.). The main hypothesis of the CoR model is that having a surplus of resources is associated with well-being, but *distress* will occur when an individual is faced with the actual or threatened loss of these resources. With regard to uplifts and hassles, uplifts may be conceptualized as adding to an individual's resources and being associated with increased positive (and decreased negative) outcomes, whereas the experience of hassles would be conceptualized as situations which threaten or deplete an individual's resources and thus should be associated with increased negative (and decreased positive) outcomes. Thus, I test the role of daily hassles and daily uplifts in association with both positive and negative daily relationship quality.

Paper 3: Sacrifices Predicting Relationship Quality as Moderated by Daily Hassles

In Paper 2, I focus on daily hassles and uplifts as important in examination of how an individual's daily experiences, both positive and negative, are associated with how that individual felt and interacted with his or her partner that day and on the next day. In Paper 3, I move beyond this focus on the individual's perceptions to an investigation of how *both* partners in a relationship may impact each other's outcomes. In doing so, I use interdependence theory (Kelley, 1979) as a complement to the CoR model, which was also used as a framework in Paper 2. I use interdependence theory given its emphasis that romantic partners are interdependent, whereby one individual's feelings and experiences are likely to be impact both that individual, and the *partner* as well.

I examine how relational sacrifices done for the partner impact relational quality depending on the hassles an individual has experienced that day. Sacrifices are an important construct in interdependence theory (Kelley, 1979). Given that conflicts of interest between interdependent partners are common (e.g., Braiker & Kelley, 1979; Sillars, Canary, & Tafoya, 2003), relational sacrifices allow individuals to make a choice to transform their motives, or forego their own immediate outcomes in the interest of the partner's outcomes. In this way, relational sacrifices are thought to be advantageous such that they provide the opportunity for individuals to show they love and care about their partner. These sacrifices are often associated with positive relational outcomes, given their demonstrations of trust and commitment to the partner (see Impett & Gordon, 2008). It seems plausible, however, that the benefit of these sacrifices might depend on what else happened to an individual that day. For example, perhaps engaging in sacrifices for one's partner on days that were characterized by a lot of hassling experiences no longer bodes well for the relationship.

In light of interdependence theory's arguments to examine how individuals impact both their own and their partners' outcomes, I examine both actor and partner effects, focusing on *positive* relational outcomes (e.g., satisfaction, closeness, and commitment). Using ideas from both interdependence theory as well as the CoR model, I hypothesize that an individual's sacrifices are positively associated with relationship quality for both the self (actor effects) and the partner (partner effects). In terms the interaction between daily sacrifices and daily hassles, I hypothesize for actor effects that daily hassles influence the association between that person's daily number of sacrifices and relationship quality, such that sacrifices are only beneficial for relationship quality under conditions of low daily hassles (i.e., actor sacrifices by actor hassles). Finally, in terms of the partner interaction (i.e., one partner's sacrifices and hassles as associated with the *other* person's relationship quality), this is examined as a research question and explained more in the introduction section for Paper 3.

Summary

In summary, in this dissertation I have written three papers in which I examine daily experiences and how they are associated with individuals' feelings about their romantic relationships. By examining whether feelings about the relationship fluctuate from day to day, and if so what these fluctuations depend on (e.g., hassles, uplifts, sacrifices), researchers and practitioners who work with romantic couples can better understand how to foster healthy relationships through partners' every day experiences and interactions. In the first paper, I answer questions about relational qualities, such as whether they do or do not vary from day to day. The variables I examine (satisfaction, commitment, closeness, conflict, ambivalence, maintenance, and love) were chosen with the guidance of ideas from interdependence theorists (Braiker & Kelley, 1979; Kelley, 1979). I also assess whether partners covary in their daily changes in these relational qualities. Using this information about what relational qualities actually do vary from day to day, in the second paper, I use the CoR model to examine how these relational qualities are influenced by both positive and negative daily experiences that individuals experience during the context of the day. Finally, in the third paper, using both interdependence theory and the CoR model, I use an actor-partner approach to examine how the experiences of one partner are associated with both their own and their partner's relational outcomes. Specifically, in this paper I examine how sacrificing for one's partner is associated with positive relationship quality, as dependent upon each individual's daily hassles.

CHAPTER II. MANUSCRIPT I. DAILY VARIABILITY IN RELATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Introduction

Daily diary studies are becoming more and more common as researchers try to untangle how individuals' and couples' lives play out and how that might affect their well-being. These studies are also becoming more common as statistical techniques, such as multilevel modeling, allow researchers to examine data that includes nonindependent information.

Daily diary studies are informative but can be taxing for participants (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003), so it is important for researchers to be able to be parsimonious in the constructs and scales that we ask them to complete each day during the course of a study (e.g., Stone, Kessler, & Haythornthwaite, 1991). An important first step as researchers examine the daily lives of couples is to first understand what relational variables actually vary from day to day. For example, if a person's commitment does not vary from day to day, then there is little reason for researchers to conduct daily analyses of commitment.

If, on the other hand, certain relational variables do vary from day to day and are not static, then it is important to understand what might lead to those daily variations. For example, if commitment does vary from day to day, what events during the course of each day contributed to those changes? Was it conflict within the couple? External stressors that taxed the individual and led to decreased relational functioning? Daily analyses of changes that happen in relationships will inform the relationships literature as we work to find out what strengthens and what weakens relationships. If, for example, relationship satisfaction is found to vary from day to day, further studies examining whether these fluctuations in satisfaction could be attributed to daily hassles (e.g., see Papers 2 and 3 of this dissertation) would be quite informative and may suggest that helping individuals and couples learn to cope with their daily stress is an important step in promoting healthy relationships.

For constructs that do vary from day to day, daily analyses are better poised than cross sectional analyses to examine the proximal processes that are associated with these changes (Laurenceau & Bolger, 2005). In some cases, daily data may have unique advantages over longer term longitudinal data in that daily diaries can pick up on changes when they actually happen—changes which may otherwise be masked with longer periods of time between assessments (Laurenceau & Bolger, 2005). Before we examine these daily changes in relationships, however, it is important to first establish which relational constructs do indeed vary from day to day.

In addition to within-person variability, or the extent to which individuals fluctuate in their feelings from day to day, it would be informative to know about *within-couple covariability*—that is, the extent to which individuals in a relationship covary *with their partners* from day to day on relational variables. For example, if I report increased ambivalence about my relationship today, did my partner report increased ambivalence today as well? Such analyses would give us greater insight into how partners are linked in their day to day assessments of their relationships, and would also indicate which relational variables couples seem to be more "in tune" with each other. This information is important to know. If couples are strongly linked in satisfaction, for example, then when one partner reports declines in relationship satisfaction the other partner is likely to as well. With this information, further studies can be done to examine what dyadic processes result in this transfer of feelings, and what interventions might be done to ensure that relationship satisfaction is preserved in *both* members of the couple.

In summary, this study examines a variety of relational variables on a daily basis in order to determine first of all, whether they do indeed vary from day to day. Furthermore, I examine whether individuals within a couple covary in changes from day to day on these variables.

Relational Variables

In the following section, I briefly introduce the seven relational variables that are examined in the present study (i.e., satisfaction, commitment, closeness, conflict, ambivalence, maintenance, and love). These constructs were chosen for the present study with the framework of interdependence theory. Satisfaction and commitment were chosen as relational variables given the centrality of these concepts to interdependence theory (Kelley, 1979; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Additionally, in an empirical study of the development of relationships and interdependence, Braiker and Kelley (1979) found four properties to be especially important as relationships develop and individuals become interdependent: conflict, ambivalence, maintenance, and love. Thus, I include these relational variables in the present study as well. Finally, I also chose to include closeness because of humans' inherent need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and close, interdependent relationships being a primary source of meeting that need.

Each of these outcomes has its own extensive literature, and a full review of each is beyond the scope of this paper. Additionally, for most of the variables under study, definitions vary as do conceptualizations. Rather than review the breadth of conceptualizations for each variable, I explain how it is conceptualized for the present paper. In general, given that I am most focused on examining daily variability as opposed to differences in conceptualizations, I chose to use global conceptualizations of each variable that allowed me to use simpler measures to minimize participant fatigue (Bolger et al., 2003) as well as reduce conceptual overlap between measure items (e.g., Fincham & Bradbury, 1987). For each variable, I also give a few examples of theoretical and/or empirical work, and subsequent hypotheses about whether I expect significant variability to exist within-person from day to day.

Satisfaction. Satisfaction is perhaps the most-studied concept in the realm of relationships, and with good reason—it has been linked to both individual and family well-being (see Bradbury, Fincham, & Beach, 2000), and is often considered an overall thermometer that gauges how a relationship is functioning. It should be noted that although there are several different conceptualizations of satisfaction (see Fincham & Beach, 2006), I focus on *global* daily relationship satisfaction (i.e., satisfaction with relationship with partner that day). Much of the satisfaction research has focused on behavioral, cognitive, and emotional correlates of satisfaction, as well as longitudinal changes in satisfaction primarily in dating and married couples (for reviews see Bradbury et al., 2000; Fincham & Beach, 2006).

Satisfaction is particularly well-suited to be studied on a daily basis. From an interdependence perspective (Kelley, 1979), satisfaction results from the total of rewarding (as opposed to costly) interactions we engage in with a partner that meet or exceed our expectations. Provided the outcomes (i.e., rewards minus costs) of these interactions compare favorably to the amount of rewards and costs one expects, then one will feel satisfied. It seems reasonable to assume that some days, however, will be composed of more costly interactions than others. Thus, one would expect to see some degree of variability in satisfaction from day to day. Fincham and Beach (2006) note that relationship satisfaction is best conceptualized as a "trajectory that reflects fluctuations in satisfaction over time" (p. 588). Long-term studies have found the most support for a trajectory that involves a steep decline in the early years of marriage followed by more gradual declines (see Bradbury et al., 2000), but daily studies that can zero in on those more nuanced fluctuations from day to day may stand to inform the research on why we see declines over longer periods of time. For example, if it was found that daily hassles are linked to declines in daily satisfaction, then it might be an important next step to examine whether the amount of daily hassles (or perhaps perceptions of/reactions to daily hassles) also increase more sharply in the early years of marriage. If these overall declines are attributable to *daily* experiences, then this information would be helpful for clinicians and practitioners working with couples to know so that they can help couples deal with these daily situations.

Theoretical perspectives and empirical studies of daily relational satisfaction are increasing, and this increase in interest is particularly true in the study of stress in relationships. For example, Bodenmann's model (see Bodenmann, 2005) focuses on the role of external minor daily stressors in impacting relationships and hypothesizes that they decrease the quality of relationships by predisposing partners to handling problems in maladaptive ways. Similarly, the vulnerability-stress-adaptation (VSA) model (Karney & Bradbury, 1995), which examines how both enduring vulnerabilities and stressful circumstances influence relationships, has been used to study daily relationship satisfaction. In that vein, Neff and Karney (2009) have found that external stressors have a more consistent impact on reactivity, which is when individuals' daily reports of global satisfaction are highly related to other daily experiences, and decreased relationship satisfaction than person-level variables (i.e., enduring vulnerability characteristics such as self esteem and attachment style).

In line with the hypotheses and findings of theoretical and empirical papers on daily relationship satisfaction, I expect there to be significant variability in individuals' daily relationship satisfaction.

Commitment. The construct of commitment has been conceptualized in different ways with subtle nuances (see Rusbult, Coolsen, Kirchner, & Clarke, 2006), but a commonality is that it essentially involves the extent to which individuals wish to maintain their current relationship and/or see a future with their partner. I focus on reports of global daily commitment (i.e., how committed people felt to their relationship with their partner each day).

Studies of global levels of commitment are frequent in the literature as researchers seek to understand what differentiates those relationships characterized by instability and eventual break-up from those characterized by stability and long-term success (for a review see Rusbult et al., 2006). Although researchers have examined potential reasons for why commitment changes over the course of relationships (e.g., Surra, 1987), less is known about *daily* changes in commitment. In one daily study using lagged methods, however, it was found that the directional pathways between daily relationship maintenance and daily commitment differed depending on couples' length of relationship (Ogolsky, 2009). In this study, it was found that for couples together a shorter amount of time, more support was found for maintenance predicting commitment, whereas for couples together longer, more evidence was found for commitment predicting maintenance. The daily methodology used in this study whereby cross-lagged effects of the variables were modeled afforded increased precision in pin-pointing directions of effects (i.e., if maintenance one day was associated with changes in commitment the following day, or vice versa)—an additional example of why daily studies of relationships are important. Daily studies such as this can help researchers and clinicians better understand how to foster relationship quality, and for whom. For example, it may be especially important for newer couples to engage in more maintenance behaviors in order to build commitment between partners.

Theoretically, one might not expect to see many day to day changes in commitment. According to the investment model (Rusbult, 1980), an extension of interdependence theory, commitment is thought to be influenced by such things as investments (e.g., time, shared residence, etc.) and favorable alternatives to the present relationship—constructs that we wouldn't necessarily expect to change on a daily basis.

The paper described above (Ogolsky, 2009), however, did find daily associations using a daily measure of commitment. Given that theory does not clearly indicate whether daily variability might exist in reports of commitment, and the fact that I could only find one empirical article using a daily measure of commitment, I do not hypothesize about daily variability and instead pose the research question: *Does commitment significantly vary from day to day?*

Closeness. Closeness is also a variable that has been frequently examined in the relationships literature, often being conceptualized as the amount of emotional intimacy individuals feel with their partner. Again, I focus globally on how close individuals felt to their partners each day. It is typically believed that humans have a strong need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), and so closeness in relationships is usually viewed as a good thing provided individuals have clear boundaries with one another (e.g., are not enmeshed; Cox & Paley, 1997). Exemplifying how closeness is thought to be a positive thing, it has often been examined as a part of positive relationship quality and linked with positive outcomes (e.g., Impett, Peplau, & Gable, 2005; Totenhagen, Butler, & Ridley, in press). Closeness can also be risky, however, given that the methods involved in developing closeness with a partner, such as self-disclosure of personal information, inherently involve risks of pain and rejection (Murray, 2005).

Closeness has often been studied in the context of support and coping, and these studies have begun to give attention to daily processes in couples. In a study probing the seeming conflictual findings of supportive transactions being good for relationship closeness, but bad for individual outcomes such as negative mood, it was found that receipt of daily support from a partner was indeed associated with both increased closeness as well as negative mood (Gleason, Iida, Shrout, & Bolger, 2008). Another study examining daily closeness found that although feeling close buffered the effects of a stressful day on individuals' perception of their relationships, a different pattern emerged when examining partner effects such that when one's partner had a stressful day yet felt particularly close, the effect was actually negative for relationship quality (Totenhagen et al., in press). These studies speak to the importance of examining closeness between partners on a daily basis. Although the few studies on daily closeness are mixed in terms of patterns of associations, the findings of these studies do suggest that daily variation of closeness occurs. Thus, I hypothesize that significant variability exists in individuals' feelings of daily closeness.

Conflict. Approaches to studying conflict in couples vary widely, with some focusing on general frequency (e.g., Braiker & Kelley, 1979; Kennedy, Bolger, & Shrout, 2002), types of conflict strategies (e.g., Canary & Spitzberg, 1987; Canary & Spitzberg, 1989; Kerig, 1996), and even biological processes during conflict (e.g., Kiecolt-Glaser et al., 1997) as examples. I focus on global amounts of conflict with the partner experienced each day. From an interdependence perspective, conflict is most often seen as a cost in relational interactions with ties to negative outcomes such as ambivalence about the relationship (Braiker & Kelley, 1979) and decreased relationship quality (Kluwer & Johnson, 2007). Yet, the fact that two individuals are interdependent almost invariably means that they will at some point experience conflicts of interest (Kelley, 1979). Because some degree of conflict is almost inevitable in close relationships, yet is so often tied to negative relational outcomes, it is a vital variable of interest in relationships research.

One would expect variability in amounts of conflict in that some days will be characterized by more conflict than other days, yet it is important to understand these patterns of variability. For example, some couples may be characterized by patterns of more consistent high conflict, consistent low conflict, or extreme variability in levels of conflict from day to day. In one diary study in which information was collected on whether conflict with the partner had occurred each day (yes or no), the researchers found that over the course of 28 days, participants reported that conflicts or disagreements had occurred on average 3.29 days (Kennedy et al., 2002). Though this average number seems low, it does not account for possible between-couple variability. It seems plausible that some couples (e.g., those who are distressed) may engage in more frequent negative behaviors and conflict than other couples (for a review see Fincham & Beach, 1999). It also seems plausible that when asked if they had a disagreement or conflict with their partner, participants may underreport minor conflicts that occurred during the day focusing instead on whether they had major arguments. In the present study I ask, each day, *how much* conflict individuals had with their partner, allowing them to qualify whether there was none or just a little conflict up to very much or a lot. This operationalization of amount of conflict was chosen in order to encourage participants to think beyond just major arguments to include more minor conflictual interactions that may take place each day. I hypothesize that there will be significant variability in amounts of conflict from day to day.

Ambivalence. Feelings of ambivalence about the relationship have been conceptualized in different ways. For example, some conceptualize it as having both high positive and high negative feelings about the relationship (e.g., Fincham & Linfield, 1997) whereas others conceptualize it more as a feeling of uncertainness regarding the relationship (e.g., Braiker & Kelley, 1979; Klausli & Owen, 2009). The conceptualization I use (i.e., uncertainty about the future of the relationship) falls in line with the latter on a daily basis, but the overall theme in conceptualizations of ambivalence is that it involves mixed feelings about the relationship. These mixed feelings are associated with negative outcomes for relationships such as breakup or divorce (Felmlee, Sprecher, & Bassin, 1990; Huston, Caughlin, Houts, Smith, & George, 2001).

No daily studies of relational ambivalence were found. Some studies have found that individuals experience changes in feelings of ambivalence over longer periods of time such as the first two years as new parents (Belsky & Rovine, 1990), but changes in daily feelings of ambivalence are unknown. Given the operationalization of the construct (i.e., uncertainty), it seems plausible that significant variability in daily feelings of relational ambivalence will exist. That is, because ambivalence involves feelings of uncertainty, one may expect to find waxing and waning feelings about the relationship. Given that there is not clear theoretical guidance specific to daily variability in ambivalence, nor were any daily studies found, I instead pose as a research question *Does ambivalence significantly vary from day to day?*

Maintenance. As with many of the other constructs, relationship maintenance has been defined in several ways. For example, it can be seen as trying to keep a relationship from ending, sustain the present state, keep it satisfactory, or keep it in repair (see Dindia & Canary, 1993). Essentially, it refers to the work that individuals put into their relationships in the interest of continuing those relationships. This "work" can be conceptualized as being cognitive, affective, or behavioral and is thought to be a dynamic process (Dindia, 2000). In this study, I focus on global maintenance, or how much work in general individuals put into their relationships each day, as opposed to specific maintenance behaviors or cognitions.

Studies have linked relational maintenance to a variety of positive outcomes. For example, cross-sectionally it has been associated with increased love, liking, and satisfaction (Dainton, Stafford, & Canary, 1994) and commitment (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 1999). In longitudinal studies, it has also been associated with satisfaction (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2001). Furthermore, it has been shown to be an interdependent construct in that both actor and partner effects of satisfaction and commitment are associated with maintenance (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2008). Weigel and Ballard-Reisch (2001) argue for the use of shorter time frames such as months, weeks, or even days in supporting their longitudinal associations (i.e., over the course of a year) between maintenance and satisfaction given that other intervening factors are likely to occur over the course of a year. Little is known, however, about *daily* maintenance or whether it even varies from day to day. Although previous studies have collected data about relationship maintenance behaviors on a daily basis (e.g., Ragsdale, 1996; Ragsdale & Brandau-Brown, 2005), the extent to which amounts of maintenance actually vary from day to day is unclear. Theoretically, maintenance is thought to be a “dynamic process” (Dindia, 2000). Thus, my hypothesis is that global maintenance varies significantly from day to day.

Love. As with many of the constructs defined above, love also has varying definitions (companionate, passionate, friendship, etc.; Grote & Frieze, 1994; Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986). The present study uses interdependence theory as a guide, yet the definition of love used by Braiker and Kelley (1979) in their empirical work includes concepts that overlap with other important constructs associated with an interdependence perspective such as closeness and commitment. In order to reduce conceptual overlap, I instead use a global conceptualization of how much love individuals feel toward their partners each day.

No daily studies of changes in love were found. Over longer periods of time, the extent to which love changes is also somewhat unclear. For example, Braiker and Kelley (1979) find that love gradually increases over time as couples move through stages in their relationship, but they use retrospective reports from couples instead of a prospective longitudinal study of these couples. Sprecher (1999) found that over the course of four years individuals who were in stable relationships reported *perceived* increases in love, yet *actual* reports of love over time did not significantly increase. Unfortunately, retrospective studies miss changes as they occur and may be subject to memory bias, and even longitudinal studies may not detect important fluctuations in love that occur between assessments. The concept of love would seem to be a global abstraction of one’s summative feelings about a relationship and perhaps not be expected to vary from day to day. Given mixed empirical and theoretical evidence, however, I pose as a research question *Does love significantly vary from day to day?*

Couple Covariability

In the above sections describing each of the relational constructs under examination in this study, the focus is on expectations about within-person variability, or the extent to which individuals fluctuate in how they feel about their relationship from day to day. As mentioned earlier, however, it is also informative to know how “linked” couple members are in terms of their feelings about the relationship. From interdependence theory, individuals’ outcomes are inherently influenced by their partners—what one person does or feels in a relationship affects the other person (Kelley, 1979; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Individuals who are highly interdependent are more likely, then, to impact the other partner. This pattern means that both positive and negative daily experiences may be shared or transmitted in these couples.

If couple members are strongly linked and changes in one person’s feelings are highly likely to be associated with changes in the other person’s feelings, then it is important we uncover with which relational constructs this pattern is most associated. Such knowledge would inform which constructs need to be more closely examined in terms of dyadic processes which may explain this transmission of feelings from one partner to the other—a particularly important goal in circumstances where partners may be vulnerable to declines in feelings about relationship quality.

In the above review of relational constructs, empirical studies with information on whether the constructs were first examined for within-person variability were only occasionally reported, but this information was almost completely lacking for reports of couple covariability. Given the relational nature of all variables in the study, however, as well as the idea of interdependence within dyads (Kelley, 1979), I expect individuals within a couple to experience similar changes (i.e., covary) from day to day.

Relationship Length

In examining the daily patterns of relational variables, it is important to consider that they may differ depending on how long a couple has been together. Some have posited that high reactivity does not bode well for relationships (see Neff & Karney, 2009). For example, fluctuating levels of relationship satisfaction have been associated with decreased commitment and eventual break-up in dating couples (Arriaga, 2001). Thus, it might be expected that those couples with *higher variability* in relational variables are especially prone to negative outcomes. Examination of variability by relationship length will allow us to see whether certain relationships, such as those that are newer, are more volatile from day to day on certain variables than others.

It is unclear whether differences in variability of the seven variables will depend on relationship length. It may seem intuitive to assume that couples who are earlier in the stages of relationship formation may have more “volatile” relationships as they are getting to know their partners and adjust to their partners’ patterns. There is some reason to believe, however, that heterogeneity of daily experiences still exists even between longer-term couples. For example, in a 56-day diary study of lust in married couples, several different patterns in the waxing and waning of lust were uncovered (Ridley et al., 2006). Though I do not study lust in the present study, I find this pattern of results to possibly suggest that there may be significant variability in the relational constructs of newer *and* longer-term relationships.

Arriaga's study of newly formed relationships, in which she collected data weekly, showed that increased volatility in satisfaction was associated with decreased relational stability (2001). Studies such as this make important contributions to the literature but focus on relatively homogenous samples in terms of relationship length. The present study will add to the literature by examining whether there are differences in volatility (i.e., variability) depending on how long a couple has been together and, subsequently, whether certain relationships might be more at risk of the negative effects posed by volatility.

The above studies support the case that one would expect to find variability in different lengths of relationships (e.g., newly formed couples and married couples), but they each focus on one type of relationship and so do not indicate whether we would expect *differences* in variability for newer vs. longer term relationships. Thus, I do not pose any specific hypotheses about differences in variability of the seven variables depending on relationship length and instead pose them as research questions.

Another important consideration is *covariation* of individuals within a couple. As reviewed earlier, the idea of interdependence suggests that individuals' outcomes are linked—what one person does or feels in a relationship affects the other person (Kelley, 1979; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Individuals who are highly interdependent are more likely, then, to impact the other partner. Given that interdependence increases with long-term commitments (Braiker & Kelley, 1979), I expect that longer term couples will experience a stronger daily covariance within couples than newer couples. This expectation fits with empirical studies which have found that over time, couples become more similar in terms of their attitudes and emotions (Acitelli, Kenny, & Weiner, 2001; Anderson, Keltner, & John, 2003).

Summary of Hypotheses and Research Questions

In summary, I seek to answer three questions. *First*, is there significant variability across seven days in each relational variable (i.e., satisfaction, commitment, closeness, conflict, ambivalence, maintenance, and love)? Based on theory and/or empirical studies of each variable, I expect satisfaction, closeness, conflict, and maintenance to have significant variability from day to day. For commitment, ambivalence, and love, there was not enough evidence to hypothesize about daily variability so I instead pose these as research questions: Do commitment, ambivalence, and love significantly vary from day to day?

Second, do individuals within a couple covary in their relational variables from day to day? For example, if one partner’s satisfaction increases on a particular day, does the other partner’s satisfaction increase as well? Studies in which couple covariability is explicitly examined is lacking, but given the relational nature of all variables in the study, as well as the idea of interdependence within dyads, I expect individuals within a couple to experience similar changes (i.e., covary) from day to day.

Finally, do the above variabilities and covariabilities depend on relationship length? No hypotheses are posed for differences in variability depending on length of relationship. Rather, I examine the research question: *Does variability in each of the* *seven relational constructs differ depending on relationship length?* For covariability of variables within a couple, I expect that longer-term couples will experience a stronger daily covariance than newer relationships.

Method

Procedure and Participants

All participants in the present study were involved in heterosexual relationships and were asked to participate in a seven day diary study. In order to be included in the study, both partners in a relationship had to agree to participate. Couples who did not have at least three matching days of data completed were dropped from the present sample. The final sample included 157 couples (314 individuals).

Participants were recruited through Family Studies and Human Development and Communication classes at a large Southwestern university in the United States. Students in these classes could earn extra credit by participating in the study themselves, along with their romantic partner, or by passing a flyer on to other couples (e.g., friends, parents, etc.). Thus, not all participants in the study were students (sample described below). To qualify, both individuals in a couple had to be at least 18 years old and in a romantic relationship with their current partner for at least six weeks.

All data were collected via a secure Internet-based system, and every individual had to have their own e-mail address. Participants were e-mailed an assigned unique couple ID along with instructions on how to use it to access the study website and to complete surveys separate from their partners. The first time they logged onto the system, participants completed an initial questionnaire which gathered demographic information as well as other surveys not reported on in the present study. After completing this initial questionnaire, participants submitted the data to the database and were no longer able to access these surveys. Individuals were then asked to log onto the website at approximately the same time each day for seven consecutive days in order to complete daily questionnaires. A length of seven days was chosen given the desire to increase the chances that participants would remain in the study rather than becoming fatigued (e.g., Bolger et al., 2003) and possibly dropping out, as well as because it is relatively common to collect data over the course of approximately one-week in daily diary studies (e.g., Almeida, Wethington, & Kessler, 2002; Butler, Young, & Randall, 2010). Participants answered the same questionnaires each day and were asked to think about every item as they had experienced it within the past 24 hours.

One advantage of the use of online methods for daily diary data collection is that every submission is stamped with the time and date at which it was submitted to the database (Ogolsky, Niehuis, & Ridley, 2009). Using this information, data were cleaned such that if individuals submitted surveys several times in a single day, only the first submission on that day was retained. Furthermore, the date stamps were used to verify that couples had completed measures on the same day, while taking into account the time of day a measure had been completed (e.g., if one partner completed measures at 11pm and the other partner completed them at 1am, this was considered the same day). If an individual completed the diary on a day in which the partner did not, that day’s information was deleted. Thus, data were only kept for days in which both partners had completed data, and couples had to have at least three matching days of data to be retained in the sample.

In the final sample, individuals completed an average of 5.90 days (*SD* = 1.23), with 66.9% completing at least 6 days, and 39.2% completing all seven days or more (four people, or 1.3% completed 8 days, and 2 people, or 0.6%, completed 10 days; these additional days were included in analyses). Those who were in longer relationships completed more days (b = .02, p = .03), but the number of days completed did not differ depending on sex or how satisfied individuals were in their relationships.

Sample Demographics

Of the 314 individuals in the final sample, 61.8% were college students and 36.0% were not college students (2.2% of people did not report on this item). In terms of overall education, most participants reported they had completed some college or an Associates degree (58.6%). 0.9% had completed less than or some high school, 14.6 had graduated high school, 18.6% had a Bachelor’s degree, 1.3% had completed some graduate school, and 5.4% had completed a graduate degree (e.g., Master’s, M.D., or Ph.D.). Ethnicity was primarily Caucasian (68.2%) and Hispanic (13.4%), with 4.5% reporting Asian or Pacific Islander, 3.8% African American, 1.3% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 7.0% mixed race/ethnicity.

Ages ranged from 18 to 66 years (*M* = 25.87, *SD* = 10.57), and approximately 26.1% were married. Nonmarried individuals included heterosexual dating couples, approximately 21.9% of which were cohabiting. Approximately 21.0% of the sample had at least one child. Length of relationship ranged from 2 months to 44 years (M = 5.93 years, SD = 9.07 years).

Measures

Each of the seven relational variables were assessed via single-item measures in order to reduce participant fatigue (e.g., Bolger et al., 2003). For each question, responses rested on a 1 (*not very much or just a little*) to 7 (*very much or a lot*) point scale, with a score of 4 indicating *neutral*. Participants were asked for satisfaction, “Today, how satisfied were you with your relationship with your partner?” for commitment, “Today, how committed were you to your relationship with your partner?” for closeness, “Today, how close did you feel to your partner?” for conflict “Today, how much conflict did you have with your partner?” for ambivalence **“**Today, how ambivalent, or uncertain did you feel about the future of your relationship with your partner?” for maintenance, “Today, how much did you work on, or maintain your relationship with your partner?” and for love “Today, how much love did you feel toward your partner?”

Plan of Analysis

Within-Person Variability in Relational Constructs

In order to determine whether significant variability exists across the seven days for each of the relational variables under examination (i.e., satisfaction, commitment, closeness, conflict, ambivalence, maintenance, and love), I separated the sample and ran random intercept models for men and women separately. For this part of the investigation, I was interested in examining variability *within individuals* as opposed to couples, which is why men and women were split. Because the men and women were separated for this part of the investigation, the interdependence between partners need not be modeled.

Random intercept models with no predictors were run for both men and women using SAS PROC MIXED to deal with the nonindependence associated with multiple observations within a person. An autoregressive structure would typically be used in daily diary studies to account for the fact that observations close together would be expected to be autocorrelated. For this part of the investigation, however, an autoregressive structure was *not* used so that the overall variability within persons could be examined. Following is sample syntax used:

```
proc mixed covtest data = library.file method = ml;
class ID;
model DV = / solution;
random intercept / sub = ID;
run;
```

where ID is the individual identifier. In this model, individuals are permitted to have random intercepts, or average values, of the specified dependent variable. This specification means that an average value of the specified outcome is estimated for each individual. By using this model, SAS outputs covariance parameter estimates which indicate how much variability there is in individuals' intercepts (i.e., between-person differences in average levels of the dependent variable) as well as a residual, which is an estimate of the variance in individual scores day to day around the person's average. This residual estimate indicates whether there is significant variability in the daily dependent variable reports within-persons. Thus, it is the estimate and significance of the residual which answers the question of whether significant variability in people's daily reports of each dependent variable exists. Furthermore, I computed the intraclass correlations (ICCs) for each relational variable, which specify the amount of total variance which can be explained by scores within a person being similar. Thus, subtracting the ICC from a value of one gives the amount of total variance explained by scores within a person being *different* as a description of within-person variability.

To examine whether within-person variability depends on relationship length, I first employed tests of Level-1 heterogeneity of variance with SAS PROC MIXED as described by Hoffman (2007) to determine if there was heterogeneity of variance to be explained in each construct. This process provides a “test of the null hypothesis of no individual differences in within-person variation,” (p. 618). Essentially, an estimate is calculated that indicates whether there are significant individual differences with within-person variability, or heterogeneity of variance at Level-1 (i.e., days within the individual). If significant, then heterogeneity of variance in within-person variability exists, and there is justification to further examine what the heterogeneity of variance may be related to (e.g., relationship length). For more information, see Hoffman’s (2007) syntax available in her online appendix. The only difference in the syntax used for the present study was that I allowed Level-2 units (i.e., persons) to be included where degrees of freedom were greater than or equal to five (as opposed to ten) given that participants were asked to complete only 7 days of data.

Variables that displayed significant heterogeneity of variance were then examined using Hoffman’s (2007) methods to examine whether relationship length predicted variability in those constructs. Briefly, this method involves including relationship length as both a fixed-effect, which explains whether relationship length is a significant predictor of each outcome, as well as in the repeated statement to explain whether residual variability depends on relationship length. Sample syntax is included below:

```
proc mixed covtest data = library.file method = reml;
class ID Day;
model DV = relationship_length / solution DDFM = Satterthwaite;
random intercept / type = un sub = ID;
repeated / type = vc local = EXP(relationship_length) sub = ID;
run;
```

Couple Covariability of Relational Constructs

To examine whether individuals within a couple covary in their relational variables from day to day, I again used SAS PROC MIXED in order to deal with nonindependence in the data set. As opposed to the previous section, however, both men and women were kept in the same sample so that covariability between partners could be examined. Additionally, an autoregressive structure was now used to take into account the autocorrelation of days within a person.

The prototypical model for use with longitudinal distinguishable dyadic data is the two-intercept model (Laurenceau & Bolger, 2005). In this model, one specifies that an overall intercept not be modeled, and instead specifies that an intercept for women and an intercept for men both be computed. Breaking apart the information for men and women in this way allows examination of the variability in outcomes for both men and women, while still allowing them to be tied together as relational partners for overall covariances. The unconditional models, or models with no predictors, were run, and the daily covariability from the covariance parameter estimates was used to interpret whether significant daily covariability between partners existed. Furthermore, the covariance parameter estimates were used to estimate correlations for dyad partners' daily relational variables for ease of interpretation. Dyad members' correlations in daily scores were computed by dividing the daily covariance estimate by the square root of the women's daily variance times the square root of the men's daily variance. Sample syntax for the two-intercept unconditional model is included below:

```
proc mixed covtest data = library.file method = ml;
class CID sex day;
model sattdy = male female / solution noint ddfm = satterth;
random male female / type = un sub = CID;
repeated sex day / sub = CID type = un@ar(1);
run;
```

where CID is the couple-level identifier, and day is the variable that specifies which day (i.e., 1 through 7) it is. Male is a variable in which men are coded as 1 and women are coded as 0, which allows the program to pick up men and drop women in estimating the intercept for men, and female is a variable in which women are coded as 1 and men are coded as 0, so that the intercept for women can be computed. The intercepts for men and women are estimated in absence of the overall sample estimate, as can be seen specified in the model line as "noint".

To examine the extent to which couple members' covariability may differ depending on relationship length, I used methods similar to those used by Butner, Diamond, and Hicks (2007) whereby multilevel models estimate the extent to which men's and women's daily scores predict their *partners'* daily scores. Specifically, I again used a two-intercept model with an autoregressive structure. Each of the seven daily relational constructs was specified as a dependent variable in separate models. In the fixed effects of each model, relationship length (grand-mean centered so that interpretation is for values above or below average relationship length across the sample) and partner's daily score on that construct (person-centered so that variability separate from the individual's average score is used to predict the dependent variable) as well as their interaction are included for both men and women. For example, to examine the extent to which men's and women's daily scores in satisfaction are associated with their *partners'* daily scores in satisfaction depending on how long they have been in a relationship, a model is run whereby daily satisfaction is predicted by centered relationship length, the partner's person-centered daily score on satisfaction, as well as the interaction of relationship length by partner's daily satisfaction, and these fixed effects are estimated for both men and women. The estimate for the interaction specifies whether the covariability depends on relationship length and if so, in what direction. Finally, given that men's scores might predict women's scores better or vice versa, I included an "estimate" statement in the model which provides a test of whether the estimates for men and women are significantly different from each other.

Results

Within Person Variability in Relational Constructs

All seven relational constructs (i.e., satisfaction, commitment, closeness, conflict, ambivalence, maintenance, and love) displayed significant within-person variability, which was as expected for satisfaction, closeness, conflict, and maintenance and answers the research question (given insufficient or mixed evidence) with regard to commitment, ambivalence, and love. In Table 1, I report the residual estimates, as well as calculations of the percentage of total variance in each construct that is due to within-person variability (versus between-person differences). The proportion of variance that is within-person is close to half for all variables with the exception of conflict, which is 71.6% for men and 73.8% for women, suggesting that most of the variability in conflict is due to individuals reporting fluctuating levels of conflict from day to day, rather than some individuals being "high conflict" and others being "low conflict" overall.

Variability by relationship length. Tests of Level-1 heterogeneity of variance revealed significant heterogeneity of variance in all seven relational constructs. Results for men were as follows: daily satisfaction $H(49) = 167.08$, $p<.001$; daily commitment $H(41) = 169.0$, $p<.001$; daily closeness $H(54) = 147.26$, $p<.001$; daily conflict $H(51) = 177.22$, $p<.001$; daily ambivalence $H(39) = 147.63$, $p<.001$; daily maintenance $H(57) = 104.89$, $p<.001$; and daily love $H(47) = 174.78$, $p<.001$. The results for women were daily satisfaction $H(52) = 175.32$, $p<.001$; daily commitment $H(32) = 98.39$, $p<.001$; daily closeness $H(55) = 151.81$, $p<.001$; daily conflict $H(55) = 236.53$, $p<.001$; daily ambivalence $H(44) = 197.88$, $p<.001$; daily maintenance $H(57) = 126.02$, $p<.001$; and daily love $H(47) = 147.73$, $p<.001$.

In examining whether relationship length was a significant predictor of differences in variability, I found that as relationship length increased, variability decreased for the following (see Table 2 for full model results): women's commitment, men's closeness, women's conflict, women's ambivalence, both men's and women's maintenance, and men's love. Relationship length was not a significant predictor of variability in satisfaction for men or women. In terms of whether relationship length was a fixed effect predictor of each outcome, I found the following significant effects (see

Table 2 for full model results): for *satisfaction*, increased relationship length was associated with decreased daily satisfaction in men; for *conflict*, increased relationship length was associated with decreased daily conflict in women; for *ambivalence*, increased relationship length was associated with decreased daily ambivalence for women; and for *love*, increased relationship length was associated with decreased daily love in men.

In summary, increased relationship length was associated with decreased variability (i.e., more stability in scores from day to day) for one or both partners in all outcomes, with the exception of satisfaction. Furthermore, relationship length as a fixed effect was negatively associated with satisfaction and love for men, and negatively associated with conflict and ambivalence for women.

Couple Covariability of Relational Constructs

All seven relational constructs displayed significant daily covariability between male and female partners. Actual correlations of daily scores within couples for each construct, however, ranged from a low of .10 for commitment to .50 for conflict (all other correlations were low to moderate in strength with most ranging from .20 to .30; all covariance estimates and computed correlations are presented in Table 3). Thus, it appears that although covariability of daily scores for couple members is statistically significant for all constructs, the extent to which couple members covary ranges from construct to construct. It should be noted that although the correlation between couple members' daily commitment reports appears to be low (i.e., individuals' daily commitment scores are correlated only .10 with their partners' daily scores), this was also the construct that had the lowest within-person variability. Thus, the low daily correlation between couple members could be due in part to lower variability overall from which to estimate this correlation.

Covariability by relationship length. To further explain variations in covariability of couple members' daily scores on the seven relational constructs, I examined whether covariability increased or decreased depending on relationship length. This process involved predicting men's scores from their female partners' scores and vice versa. Examination of the interactions (i.e., partner's daily score by relationship length) for the models revealed that for both men's (b = -.01, SE = .004, p < .01) and women's (b = -.01, SE = .004, p < .01) daily *satisfaction*, covariability with their partners' daily satisfaction scores decreased as relationship length increased. For *closeness*, the extent to which women's daily scores predicted their male partner's daily scores also decreased as relationship length increased (b = -.01, SE = .004, p < .01), but the extent to which the men's scores predicted their female partners' daily scores did not significantly differ depending on relationship length. For *ambivalence*, the extent to which men's daily scores predicted their female partner's daily scores decreased as relationship length increased (b = -.01, SE = .004, p < .01), but the extent to which women's scores predicted their male partners' daily scores did not significantly differ depending on relationship length. The covariability of couple members' commitment, conflict, maintenance, and love did not significantly depend on relationship length. It should also be noted that despite differences in significance between men and women for daily closeness and ambivalence, significant gender differences in one partner's scores predicting another partner's scores depending on relationship length did not emerge.

In summary, despite expectations that covariability in partners' scores would *increase* with longer relationships, I found the opposite pattern for satisfaction, as well as men's closeness and women's ambivalence (all other effects were nonsignificant). These findings, however, likely have to do with the fact that in many of the relational constructs, overall within-person variability decreased as relationship length increased (as described earlier). Given that there is a restricted range of variability with longer relationships, this pattern could explain why negative effects were found with respect to relationship length and covariability of partners' scores. That is, if there is less variability from which to predict in longer relationships, then there is less covariability to explain.

Discussion

In the present study, I examined whether seven commonly studied relational constructs (i.e., satisfaction, commitment, closeness, conflict, ambivalence, maintenance, and love) exhibited significant within-person daily variability and are thus appropriate to be examined on a daily basis. Satisfaction, closeness, conflict, and maintenance were expected to significantly vary, whereas hypotheses were not made for commitment, ambivalence, and love given lack of consistent empirical and theoretical evidence. I found that all examined relational constructs exhibited significant within-person variability. Thus, it appears that even for constructs which could be thought to be stable over time, daily variability does exist. This information is helpful to know in advancing the relationships literature. With evidence that these constructs vary from day to day, further studies can now be done to examine what types of daily feelings or experiences are associated with these fluctuations. For example, one such area to examine further may be investigating whether hassles experienced on a particular day are associated with changes in these relational constructs, and if so, which ones. With this information, researchers and practitioners can design education and interventions on how to promote relational well-being on a daily basis.

This knowledge that all seven relational constructs do significantly vary from day to day suggests that all are ripe for further daily investigation. Still, given that there were questions as to whether some might be expected to be more stable over time (e.g., commitment, ambivalence, and love), I examined whether there was heterogeneity of variance in these constructs, or whether some individuals were likely to have more variability than others. All seven constructs did have significant heterogeneity of variance. As Hoffman (2007) asserts, however, this heterogeneity need not be considered a statistical nuisance. Given that fluctuations in relational constructs have been associated with eventual breakup (e.g., Arriaga, 2001), it is worthwhile to examine what might predict those differences in variability.

In the present study, I examined whether relationship length was associated with differences in variability. The only relational construct where neither men nor women showed differences in variability depending on relationship length was satisfaction. I did find, however, that the longer couples had been together, the less variability they had in commitment (women), closeness (men), conflict (women), ambivalence (women), maintenance (both women and men), and love (men). In other words, newer couples were more likely to experience fluctuations in how they felt about their relationships, whereas couples who had been together longer were more likely to be stable in many aspects. It seems plausible that newer couples may experience more volatility in their feelings about their relationships as they are getting to know their partner and adjust to their patterns. Additionally, some of these couples that have high fluctuations in how they feel about their relationship may eventually break up (Arriaga, 2001). Thus, longer-term couples may be more stable in terms of daily fluctuations in how they feel about their partners and their relationships not only because they have had time to develop and adjust to expectations about their partners' behaviors, but also because more volatile couples may have "selected out" by ending their relationships. Knowledge that in many respects, newer couples experience greater volatility in feelings about the relationship from day to day may imply that more attention needs to be focused on ways to help newer couples in particular (versus more long-term couples) feel more stable in terms of their evaluations of the relationship.

I also examined in the present study the extent to which couple members covary in fluctuations of relational constructs from day to day. This information is rarely explicitly reported in studies, yet it is important information to know. If couple members' outcomes are particularly linked for certain constructs, then in moving the literature forward researchers may wish to focus on examining what dyadic processes link partners' outcomes. Consistent with expectations, there was significant covariability in couple members' daily reports of all seven relational constructs. This pattern means that those in relationships are likely to experience similar fluctuations in their reports about their relationships from day to day.

I did find that couples were more strongly linked in some of these relational constructs than others. That is, although covariability was statistically significant in all seven cases, there was a range of how strongly couple members covaried. For example, couple members' daily reports of conflict were moderately correlated (.50) whereas daily reports of commitment between partners had a low correlation (.10). As noted earlier, this low correlation of dyad members' commitment scores may be due in part to the fact that commitment was also the relational construct with the lowest within-person variability. It is interesting that conflict was the construct which had the highest percentage of variance existing within-person (i.e., more variance was due to individuals reporting fluctuating daily levels of conflict with their partner than between-person differences in average levels of conflict), yet this construct was also the one in which couple members were most correlated in their daily scores. In other words, despite having higher variability in daily reports, couples still "agreed" in their reports of how much conflict they experienced that day. Perhaps daily conflict is one area in particular in which researchers and practitioners working with couples may wish to further examine ways to help couples reach lower and more stable levels of conflict.

It was hypothesized that the extent to which couple members covaried might depend on relationship length, such that couples who had been together for longer periods of time would be more strongly linked in their daily scores than newer couples. Contrary to these expectations, covariability either did not significantly depend on relationship length (e.g., commitment, conflict, maintenance, and love) or the opposite pattern emerged where being in a longer relationship was associated with *decreased* covariability in couple’s reports. As described earlier, however, it is expected that this decreased covariability for longer-term couples has to do with the fact that these were also the couples that were likely to report fewer fluctuations. That is, they are less likely to show covariance in daily fluctuations simply because they have fewer fluctuations over all.

Strengths and Limitations

The present study has some limitations. First, given the daily nature of the study and the fact that participants were being asked about a wide-range of daily feelings and experiences, it was important to minimize participant fatigue (Bolger, et al., 2003) in order to increase the chances participants would be willing to continue filling out the surveys each day. Thus, the decision to use single-item global measures for each of the seven relational constructs was made. It is possible that the use of single-item measures may attenuate observations given the smaller range of possible scores afforded than in longer measures, but the fact that significant variability was still found in all constructs is encouraging. Still, each of the constructs studied in the present investigation has a literature of its own and some have established measures that have been used in other investigations. Given that the present study found that all of the constructs fluctuated from day today, future studies that focus on one (or more) of these constructs more systematically may want to examine the use of these established measures in daily study, as well as the possibility as to whether these measures need to be revised for such daily investigation.

Another potential limitation has to do with the sample used in the present study. Participants included university students, or other couples who these university students encouraged to participate. By using this method, I was able to obtain a sample diverse in age and relationship length. Although approximately 36% of the sample was *not* students, all participants did have some ties to the university, either by being enrolled, or knowing someone who is enrolled. Additionally, the sample was highly educated, and although participants did not need to live in the town the study took place in, the ethnic make up was fairly representative of the Southwest where the study was conducted (i.e., primarily Caucasian and Hispanic). Thus, the broader generalizability of the results is not known.

Finally, the study collected data over the course of a one week period. As mentioned earlier, a one week period has also been used by other daily researchers (e.g., Almeida et al., 2002; Butler et al., 2010) and was chosen for the present study given the desire to decrease the likelihood of participant fatigue (e.g., Bolger et al., 2003) so that they would be likely to continue filling out measures during the course of the study. A one week period is a relatively short span of time, however, and the possibility exists that the particular week in which individuals participated in the study was unique in some way (e.g., more stressful that usual, characterized by more conflict than usual, etc.). Collecting daily data over a longer period of time may increase the likelihood that the data collected reflects individuals' more typical experiences.

Despite these potential limitations, the present study also has several strengths. It is an important addition to the literature in that it provides information on the daily fluctuations of several commonly studied relational constructs in newly formed as well as established relationships. Though some of these constructs have begun to be studied on a daily basis (e.g., satisfaction, closeness, commitment; Ogolsky 2009; Totenhagen et al., in press) the findings from this paper indicate that other relational constructs are ripe and appropriate for daily investigation as well. The dyadic design of the study also permitted examination of the extent to which the daily feelings and experiences of couple members are intertwined on different relational constructs, thus informing the literature on what types of relational constructs are largely shared by romantic partners, and how the feelings and experiences of one partner may impact those of the other. Finally, because the present study included participants from a wide range of relationship lengths, instead of focusing on more homogeneous sample (e.g., newly formed relationships, long-term marriages, etc.) conclusions could be drawn about how variability and covariability in relational constructs may differ depending on how long a couple has been together.

Conclusions

In the present study, it was found that a variety of relational constructs, including some that were questionable about how much they would vary (e.g., love, commitment) significantly fluctuated from day to day. Similarly, couple members covaried with their partners in these daily fluctuations. Thus, the constructs in this study (satisfaction, commitment, closeness, conflict, ambivalence, maintenance, and love) are all suitable for dyadic and daily investigations that explain these fluctuations, as well as the paths by which dyad members influence each others' outcomes. I found that newer couples, as opposed to couples who had been together longer, were generally likely to exhibit the highest degree of fluctuations.

Given these patterns, a next step for researchers might be to examine what variables are associated with daily changes in dyad members' daily experiences and feelings about their relationships. Now that daily variability has been established, further daily investigation of these constructs will allow examination of what variables are associated with these daily changes *as they occur*. For example, if individuals are experiencing high fluctuations in the extent to which they feel committed to their partners, it would be very informative to understand exactly what experiences, such as hassles or engaging in sacrifices for the partner, immediately precipitate changes in commitment, as well as whether certain types of individuals or couples (e.g., newer versus more established) are more at risk of fluctuating feelings and possible break up.

Table 1

Parameter Estimates of Residual Variability and Percentage of Variance that is Within-Person

	Men			Women		
	Residual Estimate	SE	Total Variance Within-Person	Residual Estimate	SE	Total Variance Within-Person
Satisfaction	1.01	.05	47.2%	1.18	.06	53.3%
Commitment	0.79	.04	45.7%	0.69	.03	44.7%
Closeness	1.20	.06	55.2%	1.18	.06	53.1%
Conflict	1.99	.10	71.6%	1.95	.10	73.8%
Ambivalence	1.37	.07	52.5%	1.51	.08	53.6%
Maintenance	2.18	.11	57.7%	1.88	.09	51.6%
Love	0.81	.04	48.6%	0.80	.04	44.8%

Note. All residual estimates were significant at $p < .001$. Total variance within-person is represented as percentages to show the percent of total variance in each construct that is due to within-person variability (as opposed to between person differences).

Table 2

Parameter Estimates for Multilevel Models of Relationship Length as a Fixed-Effect and Residual Variability Predictor

	Satisfaction		Commitment		Closeness	
	Est.	SE	Est.	SE	Est.	SE
Men						
Intercept	5.87***	.11	6.20***	.10	5.74***	.11
Fixed effect of relationship length	-.02*	.01	-.01	.01	-.02	.01
Random intercept variance	1.13***	.15	.96***	.12	1.00***	.14
Relationship length effect on residual variance	-.01	.01	.01	.01	-.03***	.01
Residual variance	1.03***	.06	.71***	.04	1.35***	.08
Women						
Intercept	5.75***	.11	6.27***	.10	5.76***	.11
Fixed effect of relationship length	-.00	.01	.01	.01	-.00	.01
Random intercept variance	1.04***	.15	.88***	.11	1.06***	.15
Relationship length effect on residual variance	-.00	.01	-.02**	.01	-.00	.01
Residual variance	1.27***	.08	.74***	.05	1.20***	.07

(*Table2 continues on next page…*)

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	Conflict		Ambivalence		Maintenance		Love	
	Est.	SE	Est.	SE	Est.	SE	Est.	SE
Men								
Intercept	2.13***	.10	2.09***	.12	3.67***	.14	6.11***	.09
Fixed effect of relationship length	.00	.01	.00	.01	-.01	.01	-.02**	.01
Random intercept variance	.82***	.13	1.28***	.17	1.63***	.23	.82***	.10
Relationship length effect on residual variance	.01	.01	-.00	.01	-.03***	.01	-.01*	.01
Residual variance	1.89***	.11	1.40***	.09	2.43***	.15	.86***	.05
Women								
Intercept	2.15***	.10	2.26***	.12	3.66***	.14	6.07***	.10
Fixed effect of relationship length	-.02*	.01	-.03*	.01	-.00	.01	-.00	.01
Random intercept variance	.70***	.12	1.29***	.18	1.79***	.24	1.01***	.13
Relationship length effect on residual variance	-.01*	.01	-.02***	.01	-.01*	.01	-.00	.01
Residual variance	2.12***	.13	1.72***	.11	2.00***	.13	.83***	.05

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. All estimates are rounded to the nearest hundredth.

Table 3

Variance and Covariance Parameter Estimates from the Multilevel Models for Couple Covariability

	Satisfaction			Commitment			Closeness		
	Est.	SE	Computed Daily Couple Correlation	Est.	SE	Computed Daily Couple Correlation	Est.	SE	Computed Daily Couple Correlation
Men's intercept variability	1.10***	.14		0.91***	.12		0.93***	.13	
Women's intercept variability	1.00***	.14		0.83***	.11		1.01***	.14	
Dyad members' intercept covariance	0.68***	.11		0.56***	.09		0.66***	.11	
Men's within-person daily variability	1.20***	.06	.26	0.70***	.04	.10	1.20***	.06	.33
Women's within-person daily variability	1.04***	.05		0.81***	.04		1.24***	.06	
Dyad members' daily covariance	0.29***	.04		0.07**	.03		0.40***	.05	
Within-person autoregression	0.10**	.03		0.10**	0.04		0.11**	.03	

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	Conflict			Ambivalence			Maintenance		
	Est.	SE	Computed Daily Couple Correlation	Est.	SE	Computed Daily Couple Correlation	Est.	SE	Computed Daily Couple Correlation
Men's intercept variability	0.74***	.13		1.20***	.16		1.50***	.22	
Women's intercept variability	0.64***	.12		1.26***	.17		1.68***	.23	
Dyad members' intercept covariance	0.53***	.10		0.83***	.14		0.95***	.18	
Men's within-person daily variability	1.99***	.10	.50	1.55***	.08	.33	1.95***	.10	.18
Women's within-person daily variability	2.04***	.10		1.41***	.07		2.28***	.12	
Dyad members' daily covariance	1.01***	.08		0.48***	.06		0.38***	.08	
Within-person autoregression	0.11**	.04		0.11**	.04		0.14***	.04	

(*Table 3 continues on next page…*)

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	Love		
	Est.	SE	Computed Daily Couple Correlation
Men's intercept variability	0.85***	.11	
Women's intercept variability	0.97***	.12	
Dyad members' intercept covariance	0.65***	.10	
Men's within-person daily variability	0.81***	.04	.25
Women's within-person daily variability	0.83***	.04	
Dyad members' daily covariance	0.20***	.03	
Within-person autoregression	0.05	0.04	

Note. Significance of couple members' daily covariability is indicated by the dyad members' daily covariance (*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001). Computed daily couple correlations are also provided for descriptive purposes.

CHAPTER III. MANUSCRIPT II. IMPACT OF DAILY HASSLES AND UPLIFTS ON "GOOD" AND "BAD" OUTCOMES

Introduction

Daily hassles are those stressors that are relatively minor in magnitude and are a part of living out our everyday lives (Serido, Almeida, & Wethington, 2004; Wheaton & Kaplan, 1996). Much research has focused on how these stressors impact individual health and well-being (e.g., Almeida, 2005; Wheaton & Kaplan, 1996), with some arguing that given the rarity of life events, their effects on health and well-being may not be as great as more continuous stressors such as daily hassles (e.g., Almeida, 2005). Similarly, studies of relationships have found daily stressors to be more predictive of relational outcomes than other types of stressors (e.g., life events; for a review see Bodenmann, Ledermann, & Bradbury, 2007). In the present study, I examine how both day to day positive (e.g., satisfaction, closeness) and negative relationship properties (e.g., conflict, ambivalence,) in couples are impacted by daily hassles.

Further, in the present study, I extend beyond previous research to examine how those same daily events could be conceptualized as *uplifts* (as opposed to hassles), and how that might impact relational properties as well. The reason for the focus on both hassles and uplifts is that as individuals move through their day, they are likely to experience both positive and negative events, and perhaps the same thing could even be experienced as hassling in one instance but uplifting in another. Thus, measurements should be used that allow participants to report on a variety of possible events or experiences as having been hassling, uplifting, or even both (e.g., Hassles and Uplifts Scale; DeLongis, Folkman, & Lazarus, 1988). Though more studies have examined the impacts of daily hassles on individual (DeLongis, Coyne, Dakof, Folkman, & Lazarus, 1982; Serido et al., 2004) and couple well-being (Harper, Schaalje, & Sandberg, 2000), fewer have examined *uplifting* daily events (DeLongis, et al., 1982). Researchers who have studied positive and negative daily events, such as uplifts and hassles, argue that that the examination of positive daily events as well as negative daily events may offer a more complete picture of the daily lives of individuals (Finan, Okun, Kruszewski, Davis, Zautra, & Tennen, 2010; Lazarus, 1984).

In the present study, I examine how daily occurrences may be perceived as either hassles and/or uplifts by the individual, and how these events impact daily relational qualities in couples. As noted by those who study hassles and uplifts (Lavee & Ben-Ari, 2008; Lazarus, 1984), the distinction between hassling versus uplifting events may be an important one. For example, to list “children” as a possible hassle assumes that individuals who endorse that item only experienced events specific to their children as a hassle (e.g., temper tantrum in grocery story that day) and excludes the possibility that people may also have perceived events specific to their children to be an uplift that day as well (e.g., card expressing love to parent, as made by child). In summary, I examine how both daily hassles and daily uplifts impact relationships on a day to day basis.

Conservation of Resources

The Conservation of Resources model (CoR; Hobfoll, 1989) will be used as a guiding theoretical perspective for the examination of daily hassles and uplifts. The basic guiding principle of the CoR model is that “people strive to retain, protect, and build resources and that what is threatening to them is the potential loss of these valued resources," (p. 516, Hobfoll, 1989). What is considered to be a resource is generally guided by the broader social context in which an individual lives, but typically resources refer to anything (e.g., objects, personal characteristics, etc.) that an individual values and thus have a subjective component (Hobfoll, 1989). That is, individuals within a particular social context are likely to share perceptions of what resources are, but within this more objective view of resources, individuals may also have different perceptions of resources and how they evaluate these resources.

Beyond hypothesizing that the potential or actual loss of resources is stressful for individuals and should be associated with distress and negative outcomes, the CoR model also proposes that in the *absence* of stress individuals will "strive to develop resource surpluses in order to offset the possibility of future loss," (p. 517, Hobfoll, 1989). In this way, resources may be seen as an investment in the future such that individuals will attempt to build resources for future stressful events that might result in the loss of resources. These attempts to build resource surpluses reflect the future-oriented thinking of individuals and their attempts to proactively cope with future events (Aspinwall, 2005; Schwarzer, 2001). When individuals have resource surpluses, they should experience more positive outcomes (Hobfoll, 1989).

In applying CoR to the present study, uplifting events may be thought of as resources in that they involve situations which made the person feel joyful, glad, or satisfied (DeLongis, Folkman, & Lazarus, 1988)—things which the individual values. Hassles may contribute to the depletion, or threatened depletion, of these resources. Individuals can, however, seek to guard themselves against depletion of such resources by building resource surpluses, which are expected to be associated with positive well-being. Though hassles and uplifts may not be specific to the relationship, they should still impact the relationship given empirical evidence of the likelihood that events from one domain of life spill over into other domains of life (Grzywacz, Almeida, & McDonald, 2002; Matjasko & Feldman, 2006; McDonald & Almeida, 2004; Serido et al., 2004). From a CoR perspective as well, it could reasonably be expected that decreased personal resources could affect individuals' interactions with their partners and thus their relationship quality as well. For example, if my day was particularly stressful and I felt taxed in terms of my time and energy, these feelings may spill over or affect how I interact with my partner that day and how satisfied I feel, or how much conflict we have.

According to the model, then, one would expect individuals' daily hassles to be associated with less positive and more negative feelings about their relationship that day, whereas uplifts should be associated with more positive and less negative feelings about their relationship. Furthermore, given that resources may be seen as investments that guard against future loss, it seems plausible that uplifts will buffer the association between hassles and undesirable outcomes. That is, although hassles should be associated with less positive (and more negative) feelings about the relationship, experiencing increased uplifts along with those hassles may buffer this effect given that these resources may guard against or offset further resource loss. Empirical evidence regarding the effects of hassles and uplifts are reviewed below.

Review of Empirical Work on Hassles and Uplifts

It has generally been expected and found that daily stressors are associated with more negative outcomes. As reviewed above, daily stressors may reflect events that threaten to deplete an individual's resources. In one study it was found that even after accounting for life events, hassles were significantly associated with increased somatic health symptoms (e.g., backaches, headaches, etc.; DeLongis et al., 1982). In another study, the authors also found that hassles were associated not only with decreased health, but also decreased positive mood (DeLongis et al., 1988).

Though most work on daily hassles has focused on individual well-being, as described in the previous paragraph, it is important to examine how stress can impact close relationships as well. Daily hassles have been found to be associated with decreased marital quality (Harper et al., 2000), as well as decreased relationship satisfaction in gay and lesbian couples (Totenhagen, Butler, & Ridley, in press) and pregnant cohabiting women (Totenhagen & Curran, under review). Thus, adding to the knowledge about how hassles may decrease quality of relationships would be useful in terms of understanding how to encourage couples to maintain positive relationships in the face of hassling events.

These studies about hassles and relationship quality, while informative about how daily hassles impact close relationships, have some limitations as well. For example, Harper and colleagues (2000) did not collect data about daily hassles on a daily basis, but instead asked participants to think about hassles experienced during the past month. This retrospective method may be subject to memory bias in participants (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003) in that they may not remember exactly which hassles were experienced over an entire month. Additionally, this method does not allow examination of how hassles experienced on a particular day are associated with changes in feelings about the relationship on that day. Furthermore, the studies did not examine more specific aspects of relationships than global relationship quality/satisfaction (e.g., Totenhagen & Curran, under review).

To extend what is known about daily hassles and relationship quality, I examine how hassles are associated with *specific* relational constructs (e.g., love, maintenance, ambivalence, conflict) on a daily basis. Increased specificity in the prediction of relational variables, as opposed to overall relationship quality, is desirable so that researchers and clinicians can understand exactly how these daily experiences might impact relationships. This information would afford increased precision in identifying the underlying mechanisms of the daily changes of specific relational qualities. Though it may be expected that hassles will be associated with increased negativity (conflict and ambivalence) and decreased positivity (satisfaction, commitment, closeness, maintenance, and love), given that hassles may deplete an individual's resources, the examination of these specific associations was not found to be examined in the previous studies or in a search of the literature.

Whereas hassles are conceptualized as daily events that may be irritants or annoyances, and thus deplete an individual's resources, uplifts are thought to be daily events that make a person feel joyful, glad, or satisfied (DeLongis et al., 1988), and thus add to an individual's subjective resources. From a CoR perspective, it would be important to consider not only those things that deplete an individual's resources such as hassles, but those that may *add* to them as well, such as uplifts, given that depletion of resources is expected to be associated with decreased well-being, and resource surpluses are expected to be associated with increased well-being as well as guard against future loss (Hobfoll, 1989).

It has also been argued by others that just as it is important to study positive and negative emotions, it is important to consider daily events as both hassling and uplifting (see Kanner, Coyne, Schaefer, & Lazarus, 1981). Although hassles are commonly studied in the literature and found to have generally negative associations with relationship quality, when it comes to uplifts, fewer studies have been published. Further, in those studies that have been published, mixed results were found and the focus was on individual well-being rather than relationship quality.

Even for those studies examining uplifts with respect to individual well-being, however, the actual value in using uplifts to examine individual health and well being has been limited. For example, in two studies using the same sample, it was found that associations between uplifts and psychological outcomes (Kanner et al., 1981) and uplifts and health outcomes (DeLongis et al., 1982) could actually be accounted for by shared variance with hassles. That is, after controlling for hassles, uplifts were no longer significantly associated with these outcomes. Given limited empirical support for uplifts, in his work on daily experiences, Lazarus (1984) states that despite initial expectations, the concept of uplifts has not been found to be as useful as that of hassles in terms of unique prediction of outcomes (e.g., individual health).

Currently, few studies have examined how uplifts might be associated with *relational outcomes*. One exception was a study examining the family and life satisfaction of Jews and Arabs in Israel, in which family satisfaction consisted of both family and marital satisfaction (Lavee & Ben-Ari, 2008). In this study, it was found that both hassles and uplifts, even when included in the model together, were associated with family and life satisfaction. The findings of this study are more in line with CoR expectations that increased resources (i.e., uplifts) should be associated with *positive* well-being.

One possible explanation for the mixed findings with regards to uplifts is that perhaps they do not exert a unique effect on physical or psychological *symptomatology* (e.g., headaches, depression, etc.), but that they do have uniquely significant associations with *positive* outcomes (e.g., satisfaction, closeness). When uplifts have found support in the literature, it has been in studies of uplifts and positive outcomes (i.e., family and life satisfaction) as illustrated in the study done in Israel above (Lavee & Ben-Ari, 2008). Similarly, other studies have found that uplifts were correlated with positive but not negative affect, although hassles were not controlled for in examining these correlations with affect so it is unclear if those associations may have been accounted for by hassles (Kanner et al., 1981; Maybery, Jones-Ellis, Neale, & Arentz, 2006).

In sum of the empirical literature on the effects of hassles and uplifts, negative experiences (hassles) appear to be associated with increased negative outcomes (e.g., poorer health; DeLongis et al., 1982) and decreased positive outcomes (e.g., relationship satisfaction; Harper et al., 2000). Uplifts, on the other hand, appear to be associated primarily with *positive* outcomes (e.g., positive affect and family satisfaction; Lavee & Ben-Ari, 2008; Maybery et al., 2006), though some have found that these associations may actually be accounted for by shared variance with hassles (DeLongis et al., 1982; Kanner et al., 1981). Thus, it is expected in the present study that hassles will be associated with decreased positive (e.g., satisfaction, closeness) and increased negative (e.g., conflict) relational qualities. Given the mixed findings with regards to uplifts and the limited published research examining the associations between uplifts and relational variables, however, I examine the associations between uplifts and both positive and negative relational qualities as research questions.

Although hassles and uplifts have been examined in the same analysis (e.g., Lavee & Ben-Ari, 2008), fewer researchers have tested how positive and negative events might interact with each other to influence outcomes. From the CoR perspective, one might expect uplifts to *buffer* the undesirable effects of hassles, given that resources (e.g., uplifts) may be seen as investments that would guard against future potential loss of resources, thus buffering the negative effect of stressors that threaten to deplete resources (e.g., hassles).

In one study in which the authors did examine the interaction of daily positive and negative events (Finan et al., 2010) both buffering and blunting effects were found. Specifically, the author found that although in some cases (e.g., negative affect) positive events buffered the undesirable effects of negative events, in other cases (e.g., fatigue), the desirable effects of positive events were nullified by the presence of negative events (i.e., “blunted”; Finan et al., 2010). Given a theoretical justification for buffering, but empirical evidence for both buffering and blunting, I pose as a research question: Do hassles and uplifts interact to affect outcomes according to a buffering or blunting hypothesis?

Same-day and lagged effects. Another consideration in the research on hassles, and possibly on uplifts, has to do with the idea of lagged effects. From research described above (DeLongis et al., 1982), the authors found that although hassles were associated with decreased same-day mood, the more stressful a day was, the *better* that person's mood was the *next day*. One speculation is that in comparison to the highly stressful day, the next day "feels" substantially better. These findings indicate the complexity involved with fluctuating daily experiences and support the use of daily diary techniques which permit such same-day and lagged evaluations. Studies that examine only the concurrent effects of stress would not uncover these important patterns.

Instead, consideration of concurrent and lagged effects of both hassles and uplifts as they are associated with relationship quality is important given previous research that has found complexity in the "staying power" of these variables as they are associated with individual outcomes. For example, in a daily study of spousal support and strain, it was found that strain was more strongly associated with same-day negative mood than support was (DeLongis, Capreol, Holtzman, O'Brien, & Campbell, 2004). Upon examination of the effects of support and strain on the *following* day, however, it was found that strain was no longer significant whereas support was still associated with decreased negative mood. Though this study was not one of more general daily hassles and uplifts, the findings suggest that although negative experiences may invoke a stronger initial reaction, positive experiences may have longer-lasting impacts. In another daily study (Finan et al., 2010), this one of positive and negative interpersonal events, it was found that *both* positive and negative interpersonal events were associated with undesirable effects (i.e., increased fatigue and decreased positive affect) on the following day, even though positive events were initially associated with better same-day outcomes (i.e., decreased fatigue and negative affect). These authors speculate that this association between positive events on one day and undesirable outcomes on the following day may reflect a return to "normal" levels of fatigue and positive affect (i.e., homeostatic balance). That is, initially (on the same-day) the effect may have been positive but by the next day things returned to homeostatic levels.

Given the potential complexity involving positive and negative daily events and how they might be associated with concurrent and next-day individual well-being, I examine as a research question in the present study how both hassles and uplifts are associated with both same-day and next-day relational qualities.

Summary of Hypotheses and Research Questions

In consideration of the above literature review, I pose the following hypothesis and research questions. Although a CoR perspective would argue that hassles will be "bad" for relationships whereas uplifts will be "good" for relationships, much of the empirical evidence is mixed. Given mixed findings, one hypothesis and several research questions are advanced.

H1: Daily hassles will be negatively associated with same-day positive relational qualities (i.e., satisfaction, commitment, closeness, maintenance, and love) and positively associated with same-day negative relational qualities (i.e., conflict and ambivalence).

RQ1: Are daily uplifts associated with same-day positive and negative relational qualities?

RQ2: Do hassles and uplifts interact to affect outcomes according to a buffering or blunting hypothesis?

RQ3: How are daily hassles and uplifts associated with next-day relational qualities?

Method

Procedure and Participants

The sample for the present investigation consists of 164 heterosexual couples (328 individuals) who completed at least three matching days of daily diaries with their partners. Couples were asked to log onto the study website each day for seven days to fill out daily diaries separately from their partners. Participants completed on average 5.9 days of data. Participants were primarily Caucasian (67.4%) and Hispanic (13.4%), highly educated (84.8% reported at least some college or more), and 62.7% of the sample was currently enrolled in college. Ages ranged from 18-66 years (M = 25.73, SD = 10.37) and 23.8% of the couples were married. More information about the sample and diary method may be found in Paper 1 of this dissertation.

Measures

Hassles and uplifts. In the present study, I used a shortened version of the Hassles and Uplifts scale. The original full version included 117 hassles and 135 uplifts (Kanner et al., 1981). This longer measure asked participants to recall hassles and uplifts over the past month. DeLongis (1985) shortened the measure to 53 items in which participants indicated for the same list of those 53 items, how much of a hassle or uplift each was. Although not specific to a daily diary study, it has been found that when participants anticipate a web-based survey to be long in length they are less likely to begin or finish the survey, and the quality of answers later in a survey may not be the same as those from earlier in the survey (Galesic & Bosnjak, 2009). Thus, following the recommendations of others (e.g., Bolger et al., 2003) to reduce participant fatigue and encourage participant retention given that participants were filling out this measure each day for 7 days and in the context of several other measures, I further shortened this 53 item scale as others have since done as well (Lavee & Ben-Ari, 2008).

DeLongis (1985) conducted a factor analysis on the hassles portion of the 53 item scale and found nine factors: household, finances, work, environmental and social issues, home maintenance, health, personal life, and family and friends. In shortening the measure, I examined each item on face validity and focused on collapsing like-items into more general items (e.g., “home repairs,” “yardwork,” “car maintenance,” and “housework” were collapsed to “home maintenance”) while at the same time retaining items true to each of the original nine factors. The shortened measure included 15 items: your child(ren), your relative(s), your partner, family-related obligations, your friend(s), your job, your finances, exercise, your health, your neighborhood (e.g., neighbors, setting), pets, home maintenance (e.g., housework, yardwork), amount of free time, recreation and entertainment outside the home (e.g., movies, sports, eating out, walking), and social commitments.

For the shortened measure, I used the same overall instructions as DeLongis (1985; 1988), asking participants to indicate for each of the 15 items how much of a hassle and how much of an uplift it was today on a 0 (*none*) to 3 (*a great deal*) scale. Furthermore, I added a response option that specifically asked participants to indicate if an item did not apply that day, which allowed me to differentiate missing data in the scale because a participant did not experience that item versus missing for other reasons (e.g., skipped the item). The present measure can be used to compute either a frequency score of hassles or an intensity score of hassles.

For *frequency* of hassles and uplifts, responses were coded such that 0 = did not apply or was not a hassle, and any items in which participants give a response of 1-3 on the scale were coded as 1. This method allowed me to tally up a frequency score for each day. The total number of hassles or uplifts out of a possible 15 was summed.

For *intensity* of hassles and uplifts, I used the full 0 to 3 scale to sum an overall score each day which indicates overall, how hassling or uplifting a person's day was. The possible daily range of scores for this method of summation was 0 to 45 for both hassles and uplifts.

Relational qualities. As indicated in Paper 1, all relational qualities were assessed via single items in which responses rested on a 1 (n*ot very much or just a little*) to 7 (*very much or a lot*) point scale, with a score of 4 indicating *neutral*. Possible *positive* daily relational qualities include satisfaction, commitment, closeness, maintenance, and love. Possible *negative* daily relational qualities include ambivalence and conflict. The results from paper 1 demonstrated that all seven of these relational qualities varied within-person from day to day and are suitable for daily examination. Thus, each of the seven variables were used as dependent variables for analyses in the present investigation.

Analyses and Results

Examination of Correlations

I began my examination of daily hassles and uplifts by examining overall correlations of frequency and intensity of hassles and uplifts. For the purpose of examining correlations, men and women were separated to remove shared variance due to couples. Within-person correlations, which examine the extent to which variables are correlated on a daily basis within persons, were computed using person-centered scores. Person-centered scores were created by subtracting each individual’s daily score on a variable from that person’s seven-day average score. Between-person correlations, which examine the extent to which variables are correlated across individuals rather than within a person, were computed using individuals’ mean scores.

Correlations of frequency and intensity scores. For *hassles*, within-person correlations between frequency and intensity scores were .71 for women and .75 for men, whereas between-person correlations for hassles frequency and intensity scores were .85 for women and .83 for men. For *uplifts*, within-person correlations of frequency and intensity were .65 for women and .70 for men, whereas between-person correlations were .74 for women and .83 for men. All correlations were significant at $p < .05$.

Correlations of hassles and uplifts. In examining the extent to which hassles and uplifts are correlated with each other as an indicator of shared variance, I again examined both within-person and between-person correlations. For *frequency scores,* within-person correlations of hassles and uplifts were .64 for women and .55 for men, whereas between-person correlations were .46 for women and .60 for men. For *intensity scores,* within-person correlations of hassles and uplifts were .02 for women and .11 for men, whereas between-person correlations were .17 for women and .36 for men. All of these correlations were significant at $p < .05$, with the exception of within-person correlations for women. It appeared that correlations for intensity scores were smaller than those for frequency scores, possibly indicating less shared variance for hassles and uplifts in intensity scores.

All concurrent models (described below) were run first for frequency scores and then for intensity scores of hassles and uplifts. The differences between the two models (i.e., frequency model and intensity model) for each outcome on AIC and BIC scores were consistently between 384.5 to 464.8, with lower scores favoring the intensity models (see Singer & Willet, 2003). Given this better model fit for intensity scores as well as the lower within- and between-person correlations for intensity scores, all models reported on below are for models run using the *intensity scores.* Frequency scores are not used past this point of this paper.

Table 1 includes descriptive information for the study variables included in analyses. Given the nonindependent nature of the data, these correlations are provided for descriptive purposes only as they contain associations due to multiple sources of variance (e.g., between person, between dyad, within person).

Concurrent Multilevel Models (H1, RQ1, RQ2)

To examine how hassles and uplifts are associated with relational qualities on the same day (H1, RQ1), I ran a series of multilevel models. From results found in Paper 1 of this dissertation, relationship length is included as a control in all models given that the present sample includes a variety of relationship lengths and that variability in a number of the outcomes under investigation was found to differ depending on relationship length. All predictors were person-centered such that each person's daily score on each independent variable was centered on that person's mean score for that variable across all the days of the study. Thus, interpretation of predictors is for hassles or uplifts that are above or below that person's own average. This method of centering is recommended for testing relationships between level-1 predictors (Enders & Tofighi, 2007).

Because the current dataset includes daily diary and dyadic data, the use of multilevel modeling was necessary given various forms of nonindependence. For example, days within individuals are likely to be related to each other. In addition, dyadic nonindependence may exist in that partners are likely to be related in their overall average scores (i.e., intercepts) as well as their day to day variability in scores (i.e., fluctuations in daily scores are likely to be related between partners). Given that I have distinguishable dyads (i.e., heterosexual couples), I used the two intercept model

(Laurenceau & Bolger, 2005) implemented in SAS PROC MIXED. This model estimates separate intercepts for men and women, as well as separate fixed, or regression, estimates. Sample syntax is found below:

```
proc mixed covtest data = library.file method = ml;
class CID sex day;
model DV = relationship_length
        male female male*hassles female*hassles male*uplifts female*uplifts
        male*hassles*uplifts female*hassles*uplifts
        / solution noint ddfm = satterth;
random male female / type = un sub = CID;
repeated sex day / sub = CID type = un@ar(1);
run;
```

where CID is the couple-level identifier, and day is the variable that specifies which day (e.g., 1 through 7) it is. Male and female are dummy coded variables in which for male, men are coded as 1 and women are coded as 0, with the opposite coding for female. This coding allows for the program to pick up the intercepts and fixed effects for men and women separately. In contrast to running them in separate models, this method still allows partners within a couple to be linked. Finally, the random and repeated statements in the syntax set up the error structure to deal with the nonindependent data. The random statement links individuals within a couple, and the repeated statement accounts for the autocorrelation of days within individuals.

I included both hassles and uplifts in each model simultaneously to determine whether each exerted unique effects. This is an important step given that other studies find that effects of uplifts on individual outcomes are due to shared variance with hassles (DeLongis et al., 1982; Kanner et al., 1981). Full results for the multilevel model for each dependent variable, which address H1, RQ1, and RQ2, are in Table 2.

In the sections below, I outline the significant fixed effects for each model. To indicate direction of effects, unstandardized betas are reported for significant main effects as well as simple slopes that are involved in significant interactions. All significant interactions (RQ2) were probed at plus and minus one standard deviation for high and low values of the variables of interest following the methods of Aiken and West (1991). Finally, because the two intercept model provides estimates for both men and women, I also examined whether any of the associations differed for men and women by using the "estimate" statement in SAS to compare whether the effects for men and women statistically differ from each other.

Satisfaction. For hassles and satisfaction (H1), the multilevel model revealed a significant *negative* association for both men (b = -.04, p < .01) and women (b = -.06, p < .001). For uplifts and satisfaction (RQ1), multilevel models revealed a significant *positive* association between uplifts and satisfaction for both men (b = .02, p < .05) and women (b = .03, p < .01). Men and women did not significantly differ in terms of these main effects.

The main effects for men, however, were qualified by the significant interaction between hassles and uplifts (RQ2). Probing of the interaction indicated that for men, this effect was consistent with a blunting hypothesis: Uplifts were significantly positively associated with satisfaction (b = .03, p < .01) on days with low hassles, but on days with high hassles, uplifts were no longer significantly associated with satisfaction (b = .003, p = .74; see Figure 1). Comparisons of the estimates for this interaction for men and women revealed that they were significantly different from each other (b = -.01, p < .05).

Commitment. For hassles and commitment (H1), none of the conditional main effects were significant. For uplifts and commitment (RQ1), the multilevel model revealed a significant *positive* association for women (b = .02, p < .05). No other conditional main effects were significant. Men and women did not significantly differ in terms of these main effects.

The interaction of hassles and uplifts for commitment was significant for men (RQ2). Again this effect was consistent with a blunting hypothesis. Uplifts were significantly positively associated with commitment (b = .02, p < .01) on days with low hassles, but on days with high hassles, uplifts were no longer significantly associated with commitment (b = -.01, p = .55) (see Figure 2). Although the effect was significant for men only, comparisons of the estimates for men and women revealed that they were not significantly different from each other.

Closeness. For hassles and closeness (H1), the multilevel model revealed a significant *negative* association between hassles and closeness for women (b = -.04, p < .01). For uplifts and closeness (RQ1), the multilevel model revealed significant *positive* associations for both men (b = .03, p < .001) and women (b = .04, p < .001). Men and women did not significantly differ in terms of these main effects.

The interaction of hassles and uplifts for commitment was significant for women (RQ2). Probing of this interaction indicated this effect was consistent with a buffering hypothesis: Hassles were negatively associated with closeness (b = -.07, p < .001) on days with low uplifts, but on days with high uplifts, hassles were no longer significantly associated with closeness (b = -.02, p = .42). Thus, the presence of uplifts on hassling days “buffers” the negative effects of these hassles (see Figure 3). Comparisons of the estimates for this interaction for men and women revealed that they were significantly different from each other (b = -.01, p < .01).

Conflict. For hassles and conflict (H1), the multilevel model revealed significant *positive* associations between hassles and conflict for both men (b = .06, p <.001) and women (b = .08, p < .001). For uplifts and conflict (RQ1), the multilevel model revealed a significant *negative* association for men (b = -.02, p < .05). No higher level interactions were significant (RQ2). Men and women did not significantly differ in for any effects.

Ambivalence. For hassles and ambivalence (H1), the multilevel model revealed significant *positive* associations between hassles and ambivalence for both men (b = .06, p < .001) and women (b = .08, p < .001). For uplifts and ambivalence (RQ1), no conditional main effects were significant, nor was the interaction between hassles and uplifts (RQ2). Men and women did not significantly differ in for any effects.

Maintenance. For hassles and maintenance (H1), no significant effects emerged. For uplifts and maintenance (RQ1), the multilevel model revealed a significant *positive* association for women (b = .04, p < .001). No higher level interactions were significant (RQ2). Men and women did not significantly differ in for any effects.

Love. For hassles and love (H1), the multilevel model revealed a significant *negative* association men (b = -.03, p < .05). For uplifts and love (RQ1), the multilevel model revealed significant *positive* associations between uplifts for both men (b = .02, p < .01) and women (b = .02, p < .01). Men and women did not significantly differ in terms of these main effects.

The main effects for men, however, were qualified by a significant higher level interaction between hassles and uplifts (RQ2). Probing of the interaction revealed that this effect was consistent with a blunting hypothesis. Uplifts were positively associated with love on days with low hassles ($b = 0.03$, $p < .001$) but were no longer significantly associated with love on days with high hassles ($b = 0.01$, $p = .36$; see Figure 4). Comparisons of the estimates for this interaction for men and women revealed that they were significantly different from each other ($b = -.01$, $p < .05$).

Summary of results from concurrent models. For *H1*, the findings were consistent with expectations such that hassles were negatively associated with several same-day positive relational qualities (i.e., satisfaction for both men and women, closeness for women, and love for men). Additionally, hassles were positively associated with both of the same-day negative relational qualities (i.e., conflict and ambivalence) for both men and women. Although there were some differences with regards to significance of effects, men and women did not significantly differ from each other in the main effects of hassles.

With regard to *RQ1* about uplifts and same-day positive and negative relational qualities, I found that uplifts were positively associated with several of the positive qualities (i.e., satisfaction, closeness, and love for both men and women; commitment and maintenance for women) and negatively associated with just one of the negative relational qualities (conflict) for men. Because the models also included interactions between hassles and uplifts, these main effects are for associations given average levels of everything else in the models. Again, although there were some differences with regards to significance of effects, men and women did not significantly differ from each other in the main effects of uplifts.

Finally, for *RQ2*, this question was about the interactions between hassles and uplifts in association with same-day relational qualities. I found that hassles and uplifts did significantly interact with one another, which was consistent with a *blunting* hypothesis for men's satisfaction, commitment, and love. The estimates for men and women did not significantly differ for commitment, although they did for satisfaction and love. On the other hand, hassles and uplifts significantly interacted with one another, consistent with a *buffering* hypothesis in association with women's closeness, and it was found that this effect was significantly different from men's effect. No significant interactions emerged for maintenance, conflict, or ambivalence.

Lagged Multilevel Models (RQ3)

Given questions as to whether the effects of hassles and uplifts remain or even change from day to day (e.g., DeLongis et al., 2004; DeLongis et al., 1982) I included hassles and uplifts simultaneously once again, and ran a series of lagged effects models. I used the prospective change model outlined by Larson and Almeida (1999). In this model one predicts the dependent variable today from yesterday's independent variable(s) while controlling for yesterday's dependent variable score. For example, do a person's hassles yesterday (t-1) predict how satisfied they were with their partner today (t), while controlling for how satisfied they felt yesterday? Controlling for the previous day's dependent variable score is an important component in this model, because it allows one to argue that yesterday's predictors were associated with *change* in the dependent variable from one day to the next.

As was true for the concurrent models (H1, RQ1, and RQ2), the two intercept model was used here for RQ3. Additionally, all level-1 variables were again person-centered, and relationship length was included as a control. Changes in the model specific to RQ3 included that the fixed effects were changed so that predictors were at t-1, and the DV at t-1 was added so that findings reflect changes that occurred between yesterday and today. Additionally, the repeated statement along with the autoregressive structure was no longer used. The autoregressive component of the model (ar1) is the piece that accounts for days within an individual being correlated. In this prospective change model for RQ3, the correlation between two days will already be accounted for by including the dependent variable at t-1. Sample syntax is shown below:

```
proc mixed covtest data = library.file method = ml;
class CID;
model DV_t = relationship_length
               male female male*hassles_t-1 female*hassles_t-1
               male*uplifts_t-1 female*uplifts_t-1
              male*hassles_t-1*uplifts_t-1 female*hassles_t-1*uplifts_t-1
              DV_t-1
              / solution noint ddfm = satterth;
random male female / type = un sub = CID;
run;
```

For two of the constructs (i.e., closeness and conflict), the models could not be estimated with this complicated lagged two-intercept structure. In discussing the prospective change model, Larson and Almeida (1999) note that a full day between observations may be too long in some cases given the more short-term proximal effects of some constructs. Thus, it is possible that for these two constructs, not enough variability existed from one day to the next for the models to estimate the lagged effects.

Below I report results for models in which the prospective change model, implemented with a two-intercept structure, did converge properly. These are the results for the remaining five constructs (i.e., satisfaction, commitment, ambivalence, maintenance, and love).

Full results for the lagged multilevel model for each of the five dependent variables that converged are in Table 3. In the sections below, I outline just the significant fixed effects pertaining to the research question (i.e., hassles and uplifts) for each model. Again, to indicate direction of effects, unstandardized betas are reported for significant main effects. Further, I also report the simple slopes that are involved in significant interactions. For the significant interaction found, I probed at plus and minus one standard deviation for high and low values of the variables of interest following Aiken and West (1991).

Satisfaction. The only significant effect was a negative association between women's uplifts yesterday and today's satisfaction (b = -.03, p < .05). This means that after controlling for women's satisfaction from yesterday, women's greater uplifts from yesterday predict *lower* satisfaction with her partner today.

Commitment. In the lagged multilevel model for commitment, the only significant effect found was a negative association between women's uplifts yesterday and today's commitment (b = -.03, p < .05). Thus, after controlling for women's commitment from yesterday, women's greater uplifts from yesterday predict *lower* commitment with her partner today

Ambivalence. In the multilevel model for ambivalence, the only significant effect found was the interaction of hassles by uplifts for women. Initial probes revealed that the effect was not consistent with a buffering (the undesirable effects of hassles buffered by uplifts) or blunting (the desirable effects of uplifts nullified by hassles) hypothesis. Given that the interaction was not consistent with either hypothesis, a decision had to be made about which variable (hassles or uplifts) to specify as the independent variable for interpretation. I chose to specify uplifts as the independent variable and hassles was specified as the moderator given that for the other outcomes, uplifts appeared to be the primary variable exerting effects.

The resulting graph revealed that for women, increased uplifts yesterday were associated with *increased* ambivalence today if yesterday also had high hassles (b = 0.04, p < .05). When yesterday was characterized by low hassles, there was no significant association between yesterday's uplifts to today's ambivalence (b = -0.02, p = .18) (see Figure 5). This means that when women experienced both high uplifts and high hassles yesterday, they experienced increased ambivalence today, but not when high uplifts were experienced in the context of low hassles.

Maintenance. In the lagged multilevel model for maintenance, again the only significant effect found was a negative association between women's uplifts yesterday and today's maintenance (b = -.04, p < .05). Again, this means that after controlling for women’s maintenance from yesterday, women’s greater uplifts from yesterday predict *lower* maintenance today.

Love. Similar to the pattern found for other relational constructs, the only significant effect found was a negative association between women’s uplifts yesterday and today’s feelings of love (b = -.02, p < .05). This means that after controlling for women’s love from yesterday, women’s greater uplifts from yesterday predict *lower* love for her partner today.

Summary of results from lagged models. Across all five of the relational dependent variables, all significant findings were for women. No lagged effects were significant for men. Using the “estimate” statement in SAS to compare the betas for men and women, similar to what was done for the concurrent effects, it was discovered that although effects were significant for women only, the difference in effects for men and women were not statistically different from each other except in the case of uplifts and maintenance (b = .06, p < .01).

For the four positive relational constructs (satisfaction, commitment, maintenance, and love) yesterday’s uplifts were associated with a *decline* in outcomes between yesterday and today for women. For the significant interaction of hassles and uplifts for women’s ambivalence, I found that the effect of uplifts on the next day’s feelings of ambivalence depended on hassles such that when women experienced increased uplifts in the context of high hassles, they experienced an *increase* in ambivalence on the next day. On the other hand, increased uplifts were not significantly associated with the next day's ambivalence when experienced in the context of low hassles.

Discussion

In the present study, I examined the impact of both positive and negative daily events (hassles and uplifts) in context with each other in examining *relational* constructs, instead of individual psychological/health constructs as several previous studies have done (e.g., DeLongis et al., 1982; Kanner et al., 1981). Further, I examined a variety of both positive (i.e., satisfaction, commitment, closeness, maintenance, and love) and negative constructs (i.e., conflict and ambivalence) given mixed evidence, particularly about uplifts. For example, in some studies researchers have suggested that effects can be primarily explained by hassles, and where uplifts are significant, these effects can be accounted for by their shared variance with hassles (DeLongis et al., 1982; Kanner et al., 1981). On the other hand, these studies have primarily focused on "negative" outcomes such as physical and psychological symptomatology. Studies in which authors have found significant effects for uplifts or other positive events have often found them with regard to "positive" outcomes, such as positive affect and family satisfaction (Lavee & Ben-Ari, 2008; Maybery et al., 2006).

Same-Day Effects

Given that the literature is fairly consistent with regard to findings that hassles are associated with decreased positive and increased negative outcomes, as well as theoretical justification using the CoR model (Hobfoll, 1989), this pattern was hypothesized in the present study (H1). Indeed, I found that hassles did predict increased same-day negative outcomes (conflict and ambivalence) for both men and women as well as decreased same-day positive outcomes for several constructs (satisfaction for men and women, closeness for women, and love for men). That is, on days when individuals experienced increased hassles, they were likely to report decreased positivity and increased negativity about their relationships as well. From the CoR perspective, these individuals may be feeling distress associated with the loss (or threatened loss) of resources associated in dealing with daily hassles. In terms of implications, practitioners might work with couples on how to cope with daily hassles as they occur in order to guard against declines in relationship quality. If individuals are educated on how to handle these daily hassling experiences as they occur so that they are perceived as less “intense”, and thus less likely to deplete an individual’s personal resources, then perhaps relationship quality can be preserved.

With regard to uplifts and same-day relational constructs, the CoR model would lead one to believe that uplifts should be associated with “better” outcomes such as increased positivity and decreased negativity given that they may be conceptualized as resources which the individual can “conserve” and build resource surpluses. Given mixed evidence about whether uplifts exert such positive effects (Lavee & Ben-Ari, 2008), or whether their effects may be accounted for by shared variance with hassles (DeLongis et al., 1982; Kanner et al., 1981), however, these associations were examined as a research question (RQ1). I found that uplifts did play a unique role in same-day associations with relational constructs, even when controlling for hassles. Consistent with the idea that these “positive” events may be more likely to be associated with “positive” outcomes (as opposed to negative outcomes), uplifts did seem especially relevant for increased same-day positive constructs for women (i.e., satisfaction, commitment, closeness, maintenance, and love) and for men (satisfaction, closeness, and love). The only "negative" construct uplifts were associated with on the same day was conflict for men, such that increased uplifts were associated with decreased conflict.

Thus, it appears from the present study that uplifts may play an important role in bolstering positive relational outcomes. Though it is often the case that researchers wish to understand how to help people avoid "negative" personal and interpersonal outcomes, doing so only solves half of the puzzle. To fully appreciate how to foster healthy relationships, researchers need to not only understand what is associated with negativity in these relationships, but also what might be associated with *positivity* in these relationships. The present study takes a step in this direction, finding that daily positive events that happen—even those outside of the relationship—can foster improved feelings about the relationship on that day.

In addition to these main effects, I also sought to understand how hassles and uplifts might interact (RQ2) when they occur together. CoR perspectives might argue for a "buffering" effect where the negative effect of hassles is "buffered" by the presence of uplifts. Others have found that positive and negative interpersonal events though (Finan et al., 2010) sometimes interact in a "blunting" fashion such that the *good* impact of positive events is "blunted" by the presence of negative events. I found significant interactions for several of the "positive" outcomes, but neither of the "negative" outcomes. More specifically, men showed effects consistent with a blunting hypothesis for satisfaction, commitment, and love. Women, on the other hand, showed effects consistent with a buffering effect for closeness.

Given that these interaction findings were specific to positive outcomes, it makes sense that more evidence, overall, was found for blunting than for buffering. That is, since uplifts appeared to be more salient in association with positive (versus negative) relational constructs, it makes sense that these uplifts would be conceptualized as the primary construct of interest whose impact depends on the presence of hassles. It appears from the findings that when men experience an uplifting day, these events are associated with more positivity about the relationship, but only if they experience these uplifts in combination with a day characterized by low hassles. If the day was otherwise high in hassles, then uplifts were no longer significantly associated with satisfaction, commitment, or love for men.

Women, on the other hand, did not have any significant interactions between hassles and uplifts that were consistent with a blunting hypothesis. Rather, for women's closeness, a buffering effect was found such that hassles were associated with declines in closeness on days when the women did not experience many uplifts. When women did experience more uplifts, however, this negative effect of hassles was "buffered" such that it was no longer significantly associated with closeness. In working with women to preserve their feelings of closeness with their partners on a daily basis in the face of stressful days, then, it may be important to help them recognize other positive, uplifting events they may have experienced. Additionally, it may be helpful to encourage them to reassess hassling events in a positive light. For example, perhaps there was a hassling task that they had to deal with at work today. Reshifting the focus from how hassling this experience was to the positive results of this experience (e.g., feelings of accomplishment at completion, professional benefits such as recognition for a job well-done) may help to buffer the negative effects of the hassling events that occur.

Regarding these interactions, it appeared that in statistical comparisons, men and women did significantly differ from each other with respect to satisfaction, love, and closeness (but not commitment). Thus, overall, it appears as though whereas men are more likely to exhibit blunting effects, women may be more likely to exhibit buffering effects. It should also be noted, however, that out of a possible 14 analyses (between concurrent and lagged analyses), only one significant effect was found in support of buffering. This effect may be better explained in terms of a Type 1 error. Specific to potential gender differences, however, CoR does not hypothesize differences in terms of gender, and gender has not been examined explicitly in empirical studies in which blunting and buffering have been analyzed (e.g., Finan et al., 2010). For these reasons, I suggest that potential gender differences in blunting and buffering be further examined in future studies to see if this pattern can be replicated with other samples.

Lagged Effects

The above discussion focuses on same-day effects—that is, how do people feel and act in their relationships on the same day that they experience positive and negative events? It is important to also understand, however, whether these effects carry over to the next day. In the present study lagged analyses were used to examine such effects. This examination is important because it can help to establish some arguments for direction of effects as well as untangle the complexity by which events on one day might impact how we feel later on (i.e., the next day).

As described earlier, previous studies examining lagged effects have shown much complexity in how daily events might impact individuals and couples the next day. For example, in one study, the more stressful a day was, the *better* the person’s mood was the next day (DeLongis et al., 1982). Others have found that although negativity (i.e., strain) has a stronger initial impact, positivity (i.e., support) may impact us for a longer period of time (DeLongis et al., 2004). In this study about spousal support and strain, it was found that although strain was negatively associated with same-day negative affect, these effects did not hold to the next day. For spousal *support,* however, significant associations were found for decreased negative affect on both the same day and the next day. Still others have found that both negative and positive daily events are associated decreased quality of outcomes on the following day (e.g., increased fatigue and decreased positive affect; Finan et al., 2010)

Given mixed empirical results about lagged effects, I did not pose any specific hypotheses. The pattern of results in the present study revealed that uplifts were associated with *decreased* positive relational constructs (for women) on the next day. One possibility is that uplifts saliency tends to be more proximal such that there is an initial positive impact on the same day those uplifts occurred, but by the next day things return to “normal.” That is, what appears to be a negative effect from one day to the next may actually be a reflection of those initial positive effects declining closer to original levels by the next day. Finan and colleagues (2010) had similar speculations regarding the findings in their study. They suggested that these individuals may be returning to their homeostatic balance.

Taken another way, the present findings may be thought of as analogous with findings from DeLongis and colleagues (1982) whereby the more stressful a day was, the *better* a person's mood was the next day. Though I did not find any significant main effects for hassles, it could be that if one had a really good day and felt really good about the relationship, then the next day does not feel as good in comparison. That is, in comparison to the particularly "good" day that was just experienced (i.e., higher than usual uplifts), the next day feels comparatively "worse" than usual. These explanations are speculative and should be further explored in future studies.

Finally, aside from these main effects of uplifts for women, a significant interaction of uplifts and hassles on one of the negative outcomes, ambivalence, was also found. The pattern revealed that once again, uplifts on the previous day were associated with undesirable outcomes (i.e., increased ambivalence), but here that was only the case when those uplifts occurred in the context of a day characterized by high hassles. On days with low hassles, the association between uplifts and next-day ambivalence was not significant. A potential explanation for this finding might have to do with the characteristics of feelings of ambivalence. Ambivalence has been thought of as feelings of uncertainty (e.g., Braiker & Kelley, 1979) or having both high positive and high negative feelings about the relationship (e.g., Fincham & Linfield, 1997). Perhaps experiencing both high positive and high negative *events* leads to feelings of ambivalence that spill over into the relationship as well. On the other hand, it is possible that this effect is simply a result of Type I error. Given the number of analyses conducted and the relatively large amount of data (because of data being collected over a number of days for all individuals), this significant interaction may simply be a reflection of the model picking up effects where none actually exist. Thus, I caution against over-interpreting this interaction and suggest that it be examined further in future studies of ambivalence.

For the lagged models, all of the significant associations were for women only—men did not have any significant effects. It should be noted, however, that statistical comparisons of men’s and women’s effects revealed that they were not significantly different from each other, except in the case of uplifts and maintenance. It is possible that the single-item measures used in the present study resulted in attenuated effects and that measures with more items, and thus more variability, might reveal significant differences between men and women. This would be an interesting avenue for future researchers to pursue, as it appears from this study that it is plausible that women’s positive assessments, in particular, of their relationship are enhanced on days when they experienced increased uplifts (uplifts were significantly associated with all five concurrent positive constructs for women), but that these effects may be short-lived given negative associations on the next day.

Conclusions

Limitations for this paper are similar to those described in Paper 1 of this dissertation including the use of single-item measures and generalizability issues due to sample recruitment procedures. Single-item measures were chosen to increase the chances that participants would be willing to fill out the surveys each day and not drop out (or rush through the surveys) due to participant fatigue (Bolger et al., 2003). This choice was made in balance with the recognition that such short measures may, for example, result in attenuated observations as noted above. In terms of sample limitations, although approximately 37% of the sample was *not* students, everyone recruited had some tie to the university where the study was conducted. It is a strength of the study that there are a variety of ages of participants and lengths of relationships, but true generalizability is not known.

Furthermore, the present study consisted of only 7 days of data. It is possible that the week that the participants took part in the study was unique in some way (e.g., a particularly stressful week) and not representative of their “normal” daily routines and experiences. Although more days of data would not necessarily guarantee that “normal” daily life has been captured, the chances are increased. Additionally, two of the lagged models (conflict and closeness) could not converge—a problem which may be solved with the availability of more data. Thus, although it is relatively common to collect data over the course of approximately one-week of data in daily diary studies (e.g., Almeida, Wethington, & Kessler, 2002; Butler, Young, & Randall, 2010), there may be some benefits to collecting daily data over longer periods of time.

The present study was also characterized by several strengths. First, I find that both hassles *and* uplifts are important in association with same-day relational constructs. Additionally, uplifts seemed to also be central in association with next-day relational constructs. These findings are in contrast to the findings of others suggesting that any significance with regards to uplifts were actually due to them co-occurring and sharing variance with hassles (e.g., DeLongis et al., 1982; Kanner et al., 1981). Whereas these researchers tended to focus on negative outcomes having to do with individual health and well-being, in the present study I examined both positive and negative outcomes in association with feelings about the *relationship.* The findings from the present study are consistent with ideas that uplifts may be more associated with *positive* constructs. Thus, the findings from the present study indicate not only what might be associated with worse relational outcomes, but also what might bolster relational outcomes.

Second, given the complexity of the daily effects of positive and negative events on the same day and the next day (e.g., DeLongis et al., 2004; Finan et al., 2010), it is important for researchers to continue to try to understand how such feelings and events impact couples initially as well as on following days. Untangling what influences tend to be constrained to the same-day they occur, versus those that have lasting effects, will help researchers and practitioners to focus attention on understanding those daily processes that impact relationships at a proximal level as well as those that tend to result in feelings carried over to subsequent days. Although in the present study two of the lagged models could not be examined, the results for the five constructs for which models did converge showed a consistent pattern whereby despite initial positive effects of uplifts for women (as reflected in the concurrent models) next-day effects of uplifts for these women tended to be negative. Future research can extend this work by replicating the results, for example, with other samples, over the course of more days, or perhaps with different measures.

In summary, I find that daily *hassles* are negatively associated with a variety of same-day relational constructs (e.g., lower daily satisfaction and higher daily conflict). Further, I find that daily *uplifts* are positively associated with a variety of same-day relational constructs (e.g., higher daily satisfaction and love). While the first set of findings are generally in line with previous research, they still extend beyond what has been tested, especially given the focus on daily relational constructs. Further, previous research on daily uplifts and individual well-being has largely been nonsignificant. Given the significant findings of daily uplifts and daily relational constructs found here, and particularly *positive* relational constructs, I am able to add to the literature about the importance of daily hassles *and* daily uplifts in association with relational constructs. Implications here may be that although it is important to help individuals learn how to cope with hassles (both on their own and with their partners) given their associations with increased negativity and decreased positivity, it may also be important to help individuals recognize *uplifting* events as well given that they are associated with increased positive outcomes for relationships. In this way, practitioners can help couples not only avoid negative outcomes, but also build positive feelings in their relationships.

It also bears mentioning that hassling and uplifting events were largely conceptualized as things that happened *external* to the relationship (e.g., things having to do with household chores, job, neighbors, etc.). The findings from the present study may be further contextualized by examinations of how different *types* of positive and negative events are associated with relational constructs. Such investigations may be particularly relevant in probing possible gender differences given that men are more likely to report stress related to their job whereas women are more likely to report stress related to household responsibilities (Almeida et al., 2002).

In addition to these same-day effects, daily uplifts continued to be important in lagged models as well. This was especially true when considering women's feelings about the relationship the next day, though these effects were negative. Implications with regard to these negative associations between women's uplifts and decreased relationship quality the next day may be that feelings about the relationship quickly return to homeostatic levels. In this case, these negative associations may not be a concern. If, on the other hand, these next-day effects occur because when an individual experiences an especially uplifting day and feels particularly good about the relationship, the next day feels comparatively worse (e.g., does not live up to high expectations based on yesterday's experiences), then it may be important to help couples focus on the positive things they experienced without creating unrealistic expectations for subsequent days.

Finally, hassles and uplifts were found to interact to impact same-day relational constructs in ways consistent with both blunting (men's satisfaction, commitment, and love) and buffering (women's closeness). Thus, I conclude that daily hassles and uplifts, considered separately and together, should continue to be studied by researchers. Work that contextualizes the findings from the present study by examining whether the same patterns of results are found for positive and negative *relational* (as opposed to individual) constructs, as well as whether men and women exhibit similar or different patterns, would be an important extension in the steps toward understand how daily processes within- and outside- of the relationship might have impacts on the relationship.

Table 1

Descriptive Information and Correlations

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Women											
Hassles intensity	5.10	4.29	-	.14***	-.18***	-.19***	-.17***	.24***	.29***	.10**	-.17***
Uplifts intensity	11.20	7.06	-	-	.11***	-.03	.12***	-.03	.04	.13***	.02
Satisfaction	5.76	1.49	-	-	-	.63***	.83***	-.52***	-.58***	.01	.73***
Commitment	6.31	1.24	-	-	-	-	.61***	-.34***	-.47***	.06	.72***
Closeness	5.73	1.49	-	-	-	-	-	-.45***	-.52***	.07*	.78***
Conflict	2.03	1.63	-	-	-	-	-	-	.58***	.26***	-.35***
Ambivalence	2.08	1.68	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.13***	-.47***
Maintenance	3.66	1.90	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.10**
Love	6.04	1.33	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Men											
Hassles intensity	4.69	4.62	-	.26***	-.22***	-.19***	-.14***	.24***	.18***	.12***	-.20***
Uplifts intensity	10.48	7.84	-	-	.07*	.02	.14***	.01	.07*	.18***	.04
Satisfaction	5.76	1.47	-	-	-	.68***	.80***	-.41***	-.53***	-.05	.67***
Commitment	6.11	1.32	-	-	-	-	.62***	-.29***	-.46***	.02	.65***
Closeness	5.65	1.48	-	-	-	-	-	-.34***	-.46***	.00	.73***
Conflict	2.14	1.67	-	-	-	-	-	-	.56***	.32***	-.33***
Ambivalence	2.09	1.62	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.24***	-.41***
Maintenance	3.57	1.95	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-.01
Love	5.97	1.30	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Table 2
Results for Concurrent Multilevel Models

	Satisfaction		Commitment		Closeness	
Fixed Effects	*F*(DF)	*F* Statistic	*F*(DF)	*F* Statistic	*F*(DF)	*F* Statistic
Men's intercept	(1, 176)	3239.51***	(1, 178)	4606.85***	(1, 174)	3271.86***
Women's intercept	(1, 174)	3247.09***	(1, 171)	5047.12***	(1, 175)	3221.76***
Relationship length	(1, 168)	2.53	(1, 168)	0.69	(1, 165)	2.30
Men's hassles intensity	(1, 704)	7.19**	(1, 712)	0.06	(1, 715)	0.84
Women's hassles intensity	(1, 762)	20.87***	(1, 748)	0.05	(1, 767)	9.79**
Men's uplifts intensity	(1, 700)	4.61*	(1, 710)	1.66	(1, 706)	15.77***
Women's uplifts intensity	(1, 759)	8.06**	(1, 750)	6.27*	(1, 764)	17.37***
Men's hassles X uplifts interaction	(1, 826)	6.05*	(1, 821)	8.15**	(1, 864)	2.75
Women's hassles X uplifts interaction	(1, 847)	1.40	(1, 812)	0.23	(1, 852)	5.26*
Covariance Parameter Estimates	Est.	*SE*	Est.	*SE*	Est.	*SE*
$var(U_0)$men	1.07***	.14	0.85***	.11	0.96***	.14
$var(U_0)$women	1.06***	.15	0.85***	.11	1.06***	.15
$covar(U_0)$	0.67***	.12	0.55***	.09	0.68***	.12
$var(E_{ij})$men	1.13***	.06	0.65***	.03	1.14***	.06
$var(E_{ij})$women	0.97***	.05	0.78***	.04	1.16***	.06
$covar(E_{ij})$	0.26***	.04	0.07*	.03	0.36***	.05
$ar(1)$	0.10*	.04	0.11**	.04	0.09*	.04

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	Conflict		Ambivalence		Maintenance	
Fixed Effects	*F*(DF)	*F* Statistic	*F*(DF)	*F* Statistic	*F*(DF)	*F* Statistic
Men's intercept	(1, 174)	498.76***	(1, 172)	348.20***	(1, 180)	749.84***
Women's intercept	(1, 167)	498.02***	(1, 174)	346.14***	(1, 178)	800.71***
Relationship length	(1, 165)	1.02	(1, 169)	0.50	(1, 170)	0.10
Men's hassles intensity	(1, 705)	13.01***	(1, 693)	14.37***	(1, 720)	0.49
Women's hassles intensity	(1, 760)	22.60***	(1, 760)	26.38***	(1, 759)	0.35
Men's uplifts intensity	(1, 698)	3.96*	(1, 693)	0.12	(1, 717)	0.84
Women's uplifts intensity	(1, 750)	2.87	(1, 755)	0.24	(1, 762)	11.92***
Men's hassles X uplifts interaction	(1, 942)	0.21	(1, 839)	1.07	(1, 852)	0.45
Women's hassles X uplifts interaction	(1, 925)	0.29	(1, 845)	1.82	(1, 833)	0.31
Covariance Parameter Estimates	Est.	*SE*	Est.	*SE*	Est.	*SE*
$var(U_0)$men	0.76***	.14	1.23***	.17	1.57***	.23
$var(U_0)$women	0.64***	.12	1.27***	.18	1.71***	.24
$covar(U_0)$	0.56***	.11	0.85***	.14	0.96***	.18
$var(E_{ij})$men	1.93***	.10	1.50***	.08	1.89***	.10
$var(E_{ij})$women	1.97***	.11	1.30***	.07	2.22***	.12
$covar(E_{ij})$	0.97***	.08	0.49***	.06	0.45***	.08
$ar(1)$	0.09*	.04	0.11**	.04	0.14***	.04

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	Love	
Fixed Effects	*F*(DF)	*F* Statistic
Men's intercept	(1, 169)	4702.02***
Women's intercept	(1, 176)	4086.96***
Relationship length	(1, 165)	6.02*
Men's hassles intensity	(1, 685)	5.60*
Women's hassles intensity	(1, 763)	1.17
Men's uplifts intensity	(1, 683)	8.04**
Women's uplifts intensity	(1, 752)	7.85**
Men's hassles X uplifts interaction	(1, 847)	5.92*
Women's hassles X uplifts interaction	(1, 848)	0.55
Covariance Parameter Estimates	Est.	*SE*
$var(U_0)$men	0.78***	.11
$var(U_0)$women	1.02***	.13
$covar(U_0)$	0.65***	.10
$var(E_{ij})$men	0.77***	.04
$var(E_{ij})$women	0.77***	.04
$covar(E_{ij})$	0.19***	.03
ar(1)	0.03	.04

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. $Var(U_0)$ indicates variability in individuals' intercepts, or average levels of the DV, $covar(U_0)$ indicates covariance of partners' intercepts, $var(E_{ij})$ indicates variance in within-person daily residuals of the DV, $covar(E_{ij})$ indicates covariance of partners' daily residuals, and *ar(1)* indicates the autoregressive component.

Table 3

Results for Lagged Multilevel Models

	Satisfaction		Commitment		Ambivalence	
Fixed Effects	*F*(DF)	*F* Statistic	*F*(DF)	*F* Statistic	*F*(DF)	*F* Statistic
Men's intercept	(1, 598)	543.17***	(1, 581)	518.06***	(1, 174)	196.15***
Women's intercept	(1, 602)	519.86***	(1, 585)	499.80***	(1, 182)	201.54***
Relationship length	(1, 86)	1.72	(1, 70)	0.41	(1, 95)	1.33
Men's hassles intensity $_{t-1}$	(1, 748)	0.12	(1, 675)	0.40	(1, 772)	0.80
Women's hassles intensity $_{t-1}$	(1, 728)	0.74	(1, 658)	0.00	(1, 769)	0.18
Men's uplifts intensity $_{t-1}$	(1, 739)	0.01	(1, 661)	0.05	(1, 786)	0.07
Women's uplifts intensity $_{t-1}$	(1, 743)	4.15*	(1, 697)	5.65*	(1, 809)	0.38
Men's hassles $_{t-1}$ X uplifts $_{t-1}$ interaction	(1, 903)	0.21	(1, 874)	0.90	(1, 815)	2.78
Women's hassles $_{t-1}$ X uplifts $_{t-1}$ interaction	(1, 907)	0.24	(1, 893)	1.22	(1, 863)	8.70**
DV $_{t-1}$	(1, 1004)	83.71***	(1, 836)	107.54***	(1, 1050)	62.60***
Covariance Parameter Estimates	Est.	*SE*	Est.	*SE*	Est.	*SE*
var(U_0)men	0.55***	.13	0.41***	.10	0.69***	.16
var(U_0)women	0.64***	.15	0.38***	.10	0.77***	.17
covar(U_0)	0.46***	.09	0.27***	.07	0.69***	.13
Residual	1.11***	.06	0.79***	.05	1.33***	.08

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	Maintenance		Love	
Fixed Effects	*F*(DF)	*F* Statistic	*F*(DF)	*F* Statistic
Men's intercept	(1, 260)	321.65***	(1, 600)	628.18***
Women's intercept	(1, 263)	330.68***	(1, 585)	624.57***
Relationship length	(1, 96)	0.56	(1, 76)	5.24*
Men's hassles intensity $_{t-1}$	(1, 754)	0.03	(1, 705)	0.02
Women's hassles intensity $_{t-1}$	(1, 733)	2.01	(1, 661)	0.49
Men's uplifts intensity $_{t-1}$	(1, 741)	1.76	(1, 694)	0.45
Women's uplifts intensity $_{t-1}$	(1, 781)	5.90*	(1, 692)	4.86*
Men's hassles $_{t-1}$ X uplifts $_{t-1}$ interaction	(1, 897)	0.96	(1, 893)	0.63
Women's hassles $_{t-1}$ X uplifts $_{t-1}$ interaction	(1, 919)	0.91	(1, 887)	1.23
DV $_{t-1}$	(1, 1069)	68.40***	(1, 959)	37.32***
Covariance Parameter Estimates	Est.	*SE*	Est.	*SE*
var(U_0)men	1.19***	.25	0.56***	.13
var(U_0)women	1.02***	.23	0.68***	.15
covar(U_0)	0.65***	.16	0.51***	.10
Residual	1.85***	.10	0.83***	.05

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. *Var*(U_0) indicates variability in individuals' intercepts, or average levels of the DV, *covar*(U_0) indicates covariance of partners' intercepts, and the residual indicates remaining variability.

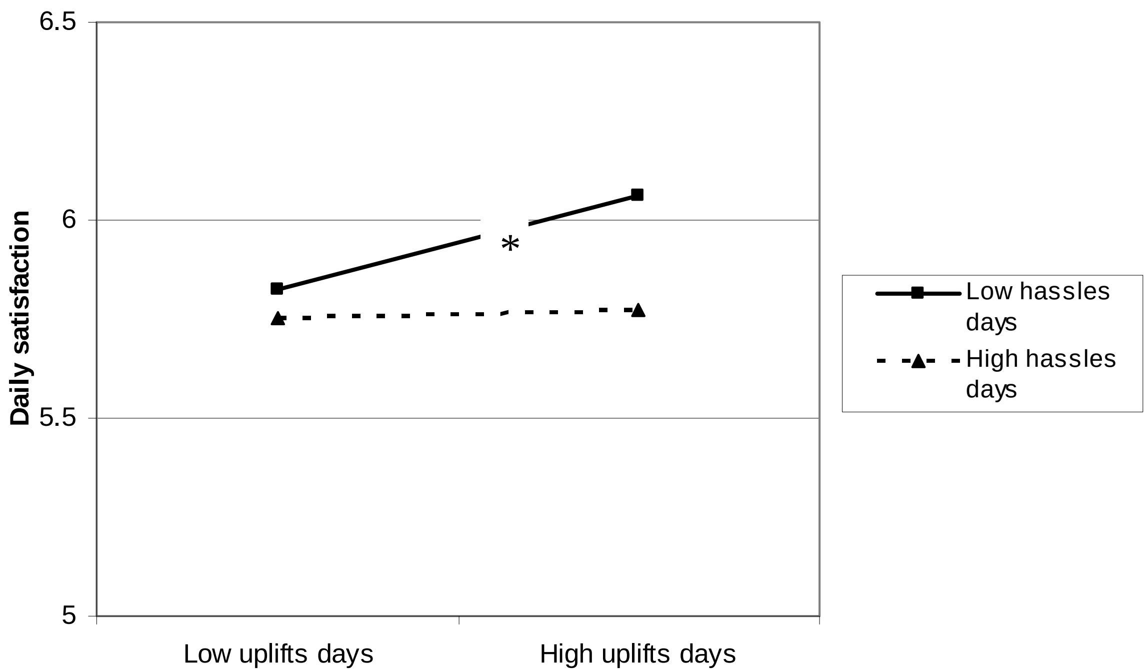

Figure 1. Blunting effect of men's uplifts and hassles on same-day feelings of satisfaction. Significant slopes denoted with *.

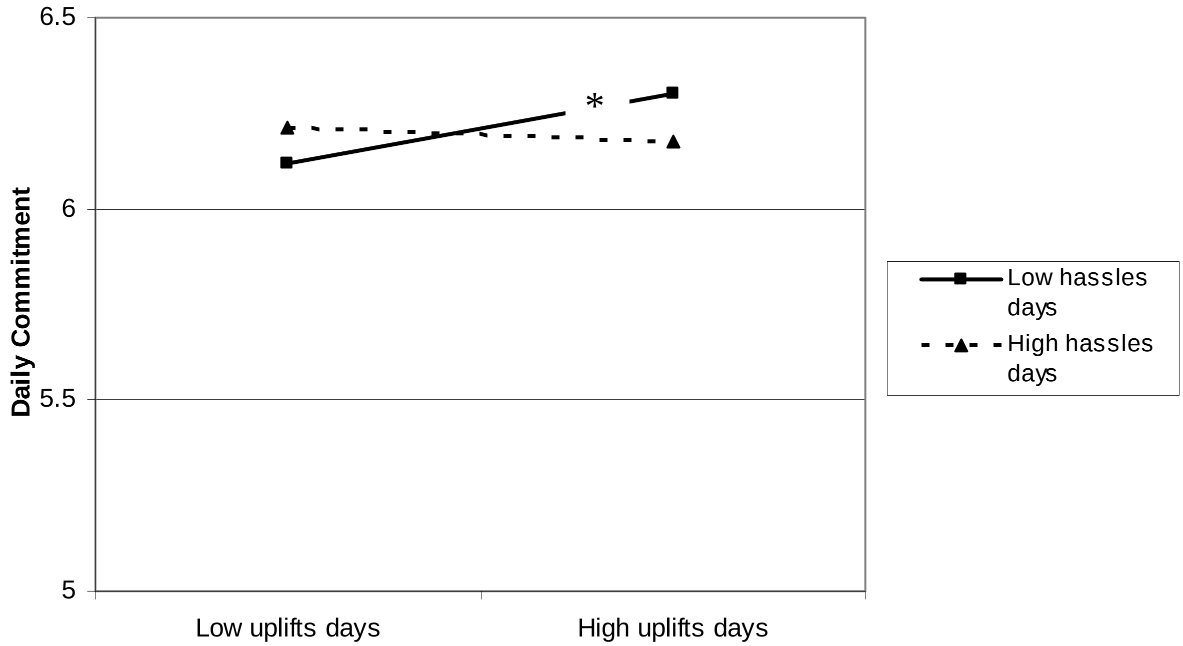

Figure 2. Blunting effect of men's uplifts and hassles on same-day feelings of commtiment. Significant slopes denoted with *.

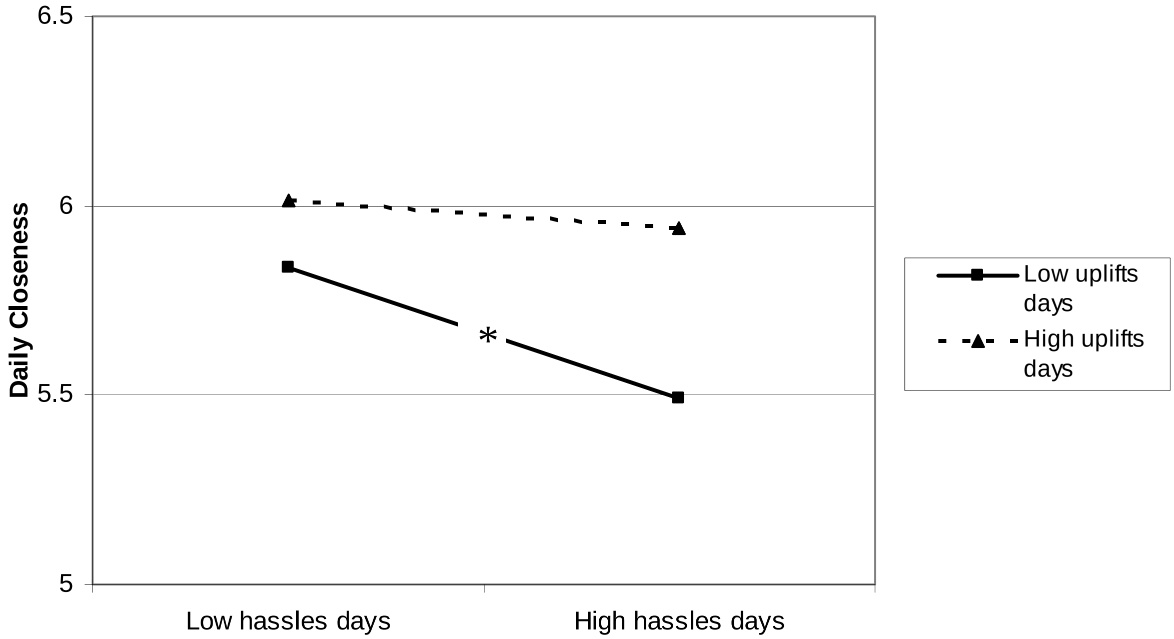

Figure 3. Buffering effect of women’s hassles and uplifts on same-day feelings of closeness. Significant slopes denoted with *.

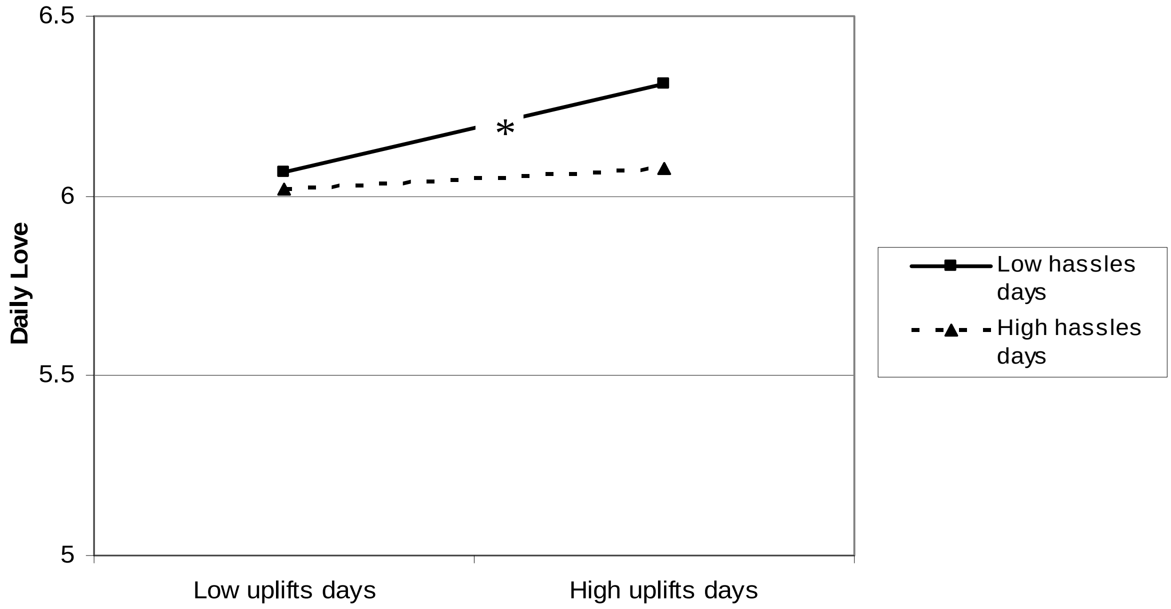

Figure 4. Blunting effect of men’s uplifts and hassles on same-day feelings of love. Significant slopes denoted with *.

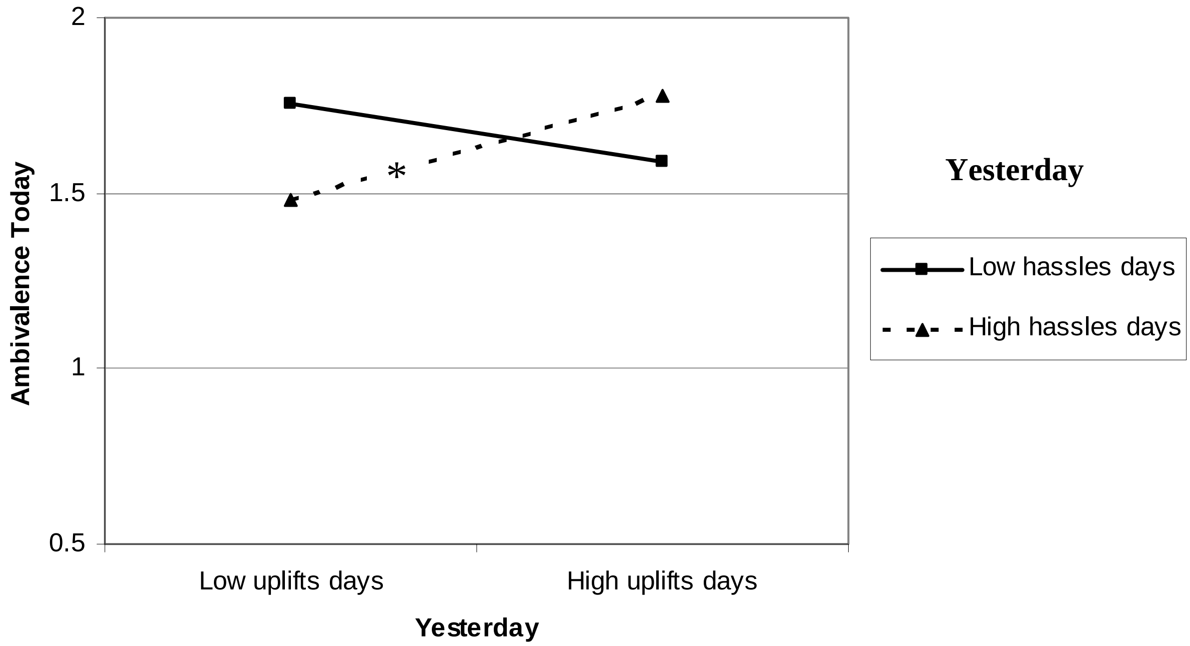

Figure 5. Exacerbating effect of yesterday's hassles on the association between yesterday's uplifts and today's ambivalence for women. Significant slopes denoted with *.

CHAPTER IV. MANUSCRIPT III. SACRIFICES PREDICTING RELATIONSHIP QUALITY AS MODERATED BY DAILY HASSLES

Introduction

In relationships, conflicts of interest are an inevitability (e.g., Canary, 2003). Though high or frequent conflict between partners is often viewed in a negative light (Braiker & Kelley, 1979), conflicts of interest between partners provide the opportunity for individuals to display love and caring by making sacrifices for their partners (Kelley, 1979). That is, when individuals have a conflict of interest, one of the partners may choose to transform their motivations of self-interest in order to honor the partner's wishes. These relational sacrifices, provided they are reciprocated over the course of a relationship, are expected to be positive for the relationship by demonstrating trust and commitment (see Impett & Gordon, 2008). The benefits of sacrifice, however, may further depend on what else happens during the context of a day. For example, if a partner has a lot of stressors on a particular day, is engaging in sacrifice still going to have positive effects on the relationship, or might engaging in sacrifices on a stressful day just add to the pile up and result in declines in relationship quality?

In this paper, I examine how daily relationship sacrifices are associated with daily relationship quality (i.e., satisfaction, commitment, and closeness) depending on daily hassles. This daily-based analysis is well-suited to the variables of interest (i.e., sacrifices and hassles) as well as the interdependence theory perspective (to be discussed below) which focuses on specific interactions within a relationship. For most individuals, it would theoretically be expected that both sacrifices and hassles should vary from day to day. On some days, partners may make more sacrifices for each other in their daily routines. The same argument could be applied in terms of hassles—inevitably some days are characterized by greater (or fewer) hassling experiences than other days. Thus, sacrifices and hassles are expected to wax and wane between partners from day to day.

It is important when studying processes that occur on a daily basis to actually assess those processes on a daily basis as well. One of the biggest strengths of assessing data on a daily basis is that this process makes retrospective biases less likely (see Laurenceau & Bolger, 2005). Additionally, it allows the examination of daily fluctuations around an individual's average value. In other words, daily data allows us to parse out differences between person-average effects (e.g. the effect of dealing with chronic high levels of stress or hassles) and within-person, or within-couple, effects (e.g. the effect of having a particularly hassling day, over and above the effect of one's average level of hassles). Thus the present study uses daily diaries to allow for the immediate recall of hassling events and sacrifices that happened during the day, thus reducing memory biases (Laurenceau & Bolger, 2005) and permitting examination of daily fluctuations in relationship quality as a function of daily sacrifices and hassles. Further, it is vital that researchers consider both members of the dyadic relationship. With increasing attention to dyadic processes through the use of such statistical techniques as the Actor Partner Interdependence Model (APIM; Cook & Kenny, 2005), it is becoming clear that both members of a relationship have the potential to impact each others' feelings and assessments of the relationship.

In explaining how daily relationship sacrifices predict relationship quality as influenced by daily hassles, I utilize ideas from two theoretical perspectives: interdependence theory (Kelley, 1979) and conservation of resources (CoR; Hobfoll, 1989). First I provide a brief overview of both theoretical perspectives in order to orient the reader to the basic tenets of these two theories. Next, I discuss in more detail specific aspects of these theories that guide the empirical model of interest and lead to the hypotheses.

Guiding Theoretical Perspectives

Interdependence theory. Interdependence theory is a theory that emerged out of the social exchange model of relationships (Kelley, 1979). Whereas social exchange focused on a rational, economic model of relationships whereby individuals rationally try to optimize their own outcomes by maximizing the rewards they receive and minimizing the costs they incur in interactions with others, interdependence theory expands upon this idea by allowing for consideration of the partner's outcomes as well. In other words, social exchange focuses primarily on a sole motivation for one's own self interest. According to interdependence theory, however, individuals can choose to take into account the outcomes of their partner as well, which may actually be adaptive in the long run even if it incurs costs in the short term. Thus, although individuals are goal-oriented and wish to secure positive outcomes for the self, the choices one makes in interactions are also shaped by broader considerations, such as the well-being of the partner (Rusbult & Arriaga, 1997). Interdependence theory, in essence, takes affectivity, cognitions, and attributions of individuals into account more so than social exchange (Kelley, 1979; Rusbult & Arriaga, 1997; Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003).

Interdependence is defined as “the manner in which—as well as the degree to which—interacting individuals act upon or influence one another’s experiences, in reference to the fact that the preferences, motives and behavior of the individual are relevant to those of the interaction partner,” (Rusbult & Arriaga, 1997, p. 221). In other words, in any particular interaction between two dyadic members, both will have an influence on each others’ outcomes through reflexive control (i.e., the extent to which I impact my own outcomes), fate control (i.e., the extent to which my partner influences my outcomes), and behavior control (i.e., how combinations of both of our actions impact our outcomes) (Kelley, 1979; Rusbult & Arriaga, 1997). What these terms suggest is that what happens to one person and what that person does inherently impacts the partner—particularly when they are highly and mutually dependent on each other. That is, in close relationships, which are characterized by interactions between the partners, each interaction can have any number of outcomes depending on how each partner thinks and behaves (Kelley, 1979). For these reasons, it is vital that we consider the effects that each partner and his or her experiences have on each other. These include both *actor* effects, or how one’s behaviors impact their own outcomes, as well as partner effects, or how one’s *partner’s* behaviors impact one’s outcomes.

When a person chooses to move beyond their own self-interested preferences and behave in ways that take into account the partner’s outcomes as well, this pattern is called a transformation of motivation (Kelley, 1979; Rusbult & Arriaga, 1997). Here, the individual is choosing to potentially sacrifice his or her own outcomes in order to ensure that the partner experiences good outcomes as well. For example, I may want to go to the movies on a date tonight but my partner wants to go out to dinner instead. Given this conflict of interest between the two of us, I may choose to transform my motivations and go out to dinner with my partner, thus sacrificing my own self-interests in this particular interaction. In doing so, I am showing my partner that I care about his wants and needs. Because these sacrifices show trust and caring in our partner, they are expected to be positively associated with relationship quality provided that one partner is not engaging in chronic self sacrifice and that these sacrifices are reciprocal (see Impett & Gordon, 2008; Kelley, 1979).

It should be noted that the above description of the concept transformation of motivation is simply one type of many possible transformations of motivation. In comparing one’s gut-level preferences (i.e., to maximize own rewards and minimize costs) with the way one actually behaves, there are several possible transformations which may occur (see Kelley, 1979; Rusbult & Arriaga, 1997). The one that most closely reflects the idea of sacrifices and which is focused on in this study is called *MaxOther*. In a MaxOther transformation, the individual acts altruistically and is guided by primary concern for the partner’s outcomes (Rusbult & Arriaga, 1997). That is, the individual sacrifices his or her own preferences and outcomes in order to maximize the outcomes that the partner receives.

In summary, interdependence theory focuses on the idea that what each partner does as they interact with each other has an influence on not only their own outcomes, but their partner's outcomes as well. Although we are motivated to maximize our own outcomes, we also must take into account the outcomes of our partner if we wish for them to continue on in the relationship with us. Thus we may choose to transform our motives (i.e., sacrifice what we want) to ensure that our partners are achieving positive outcomes as well.

Conservation of resources. Conservation of resources (CoR) is a theory of stress that focuses on the role of resources in the stress process (Hobfoll, 1989). The basic tenet of CoR is that "people strive to retain, protect, and build resources and that what is threatening to them is the potential loss of these valued resources," (p. 516, Hobfoll, 1989). According to Hobfoll, stressors inherently involve some sort of loss. Additionally, resource loss has the potential to *continue* to incur distress by inciting cycles of further loss (Hobfoll, 1992). In other words, beyond the initial risk of distress resulting from a loss of resources, having now depleted resources may set individuals and families up for further resource loss in that fewer resources are now available to deal with any additional threats.

Resources are any objects (e.g., a home), personal characteristics (e.g., self esteem), conditions (e.g., marriage), or energies which aid in the acquisition of other resources (e.g., money) that the individual values (Hobfoll, 1989). Hobfoll argues that how an individual appraises these resources and their threat of loss is largely shaped by the culture and social standards in which an individual exists (1989; 2001). That is, what resources an individual values as well as what losses are threatening to the individual, are heavily dependent on the broader social structure. Although individual differences in appraisals may exist and do play a role, they are hypothesized to play a smaller role than the shared appraisals of a culture (Hobfoll, 2001). Thus, we can expect that most individuals within a culture share conceptualizations of what are seen as resources.

When confronted with stress (i.e., the threat or actual of loss of resources), the individual is hypothesized to strive to minimize their resource loss. The model goes further to suggest that in the *absence* of stress, individuals will strive to build up a resource surplus to guard against future stressors which may deplete their resources. Additionally, individuals may actually seek to build resources by investing other resources. An example of this idea may be providing support to a loved one, such that investment of such a resource in this person helps to ensure that in the future, this individual will be able to serve as a resource upon which you may draw from as well. Psychological distress is expected to result in the face of resource loss, whereas positive well-being is expected to result when one has resource surpluses.

Present Study/Empirical Model

Positive relational outcomes. In the present study I conceptualize relationship quality as being composed of satisfaction, closeness, and commitment. These three components of relationship quality are important to study because ideally, a relationship is experienced as both fulfilling (e.g., satisfying and connected) as well as stable. Additionally, these three variables are important because although certain types of relationships (such as marriage) have been associated with personal well-being, it is not being in a relationship *per se* that affords individuals these benefits, but rather the *quality* of the relationship that seems to be important (Umberson, Williams, Powers, Liu, &

Needham, 2006). Thus, in the current study I focus on different aspects of *positive* relationship quality.

The importance of examining relationship satisfaction as an outcome has been well documented. Satisfaction plays a central role in individual and family well-being and serves as an important indicator of whether a relational intervention is effective (for a review see Bradbury, Fincham, & Beach, 2000). Although many researchers focus on happiness or satisfaction as synonymous with relationship quality (e.g., Crohan, 1996; Harper, Schaalje, & Sandberg, 2000; Otis, Rostosky, Riggle, & Hamrin, 2006) it is important to acknowledge other aspects of relationship quality as well, such as closeness and commitment. For example, closeness, or a sense of "we-ness," is hypothesized as being important in the process of how stress can erode a relationship and lead to divorce (Bodenmann, 2005). Commitment to the relationship and its continuation serves as an indicator of a relationship's stability (Rusbult, Coolsen, Kirchner, & Clarke, 2006).

The social exchange tradition of interdependence theory also helps to explain the separate assessment of satisfaction and commitment. According to this perspective, although we may expect satisfaction and commitment to be related, that is not always the case (Rusbult, 1983). For example, although I may feel very dissatisfied in my relationship, I may feel as though I have no better alternatives and be quite dependent on the relationship. If I were to leave my relationship I would lose all that I have invested. Thus, although I am not satisfied, I am committed to my relationship. Similarly, although conventional wisdom suggests that closer couples will feel more satisfied, this pattern may not be true for all individuals. That is, for someone who is not comfortable with being too close to someone else, higher levels of closeness may not be associated with higher satisfaction. In summary, it is important to consider these three components of relationship quality and to consider them as possibly distinct outcomes.

Daily sacrifices and relationship quality. To review, the empirical model for the present study is how daily number of sacrifices predicts daily relationship quality (i.e., satisfaction, closeness, and commitment) as influenced by daily hassles. The idea of sacrifices is derived directly from the interdependence theory concept of transformations of motivation. When an individual chooses to make some sort of change for her partner, this pattern involves a sacrifice in which she transforms her motives of self-interest to take into account the wants and needs of her partner. Although the direction of effects is somewhat arguable, from an interdependence perspective it is generally expected that increased sacrifices are associated with increased relationship quality (Kelley, 1979; Rusbult & Arriaga, 1997). That is, although it is possible, for example, that commitment predicts sacrifices (Rusbult & Arriaga, 1997), I conceptualize the reverse effect, which is in line with Kelley's writing of interdependence theory, that engaging in more sacrifices for each other builds commitment to the relationship. By making sacrifices for one's partner, one is showing the partner that he or she cares for them. This pattern, in turn, should foster a sense of closeness and satisfaction between the partners, as well as build commitment to the relationship.

Though theory suggests that increased frequency of sacrifice should be associated with increased relationship quality, empirical evidence is somewhat mixed with some studies suggesting positive associations (Van Lange, et al., 1997), negative associations

(Whitton, Stanley, & Markman, 2007) or no significant associations (Impett, Gable, & Peplau, 2005). These studies, however, use very different measures of frequency of sacrifice.

In one study of sacrifice, Van Lange and colleagues (1997) used a behavioral measure in which participants took steps on a stair stepper for a baseline, and steps beyond the baseline would allocate payment to the participant's partner. These additional "steps for the partner" were associated with increased commitment. Though it is a behavioral measure, it does not necessarily get at the frequency with which individuals would engage in real-life daily sacrifices for the partner.

In the Whitton and colleagues study (2007) participants recalled how often in the past month they engaged in a number of sacrifice behaviors. Here greater frequency of sacrifice was associated with lower commitment. In asking participants to recall sacrifices over the past month, however, it seems plausible that individuals who are already in unsatisfying relationships may perceive that they have engaged in more sacrifices than is actually the case.

Finally, Impett and colleagues (2005) did gather information on sacrifices each day, but rather than a frequency of possible sacrifices made each day, a percentage score for the number of days in which each person made *any* sacrifice was used. This study by Impett et al. does answer some questions about the extent to which a day including sacrifices is likely to be associated with relationship quality, but unfortunately it does not allow examination of how days characterized by higher numbers of sacrifice vs. lower numbers of sacrifice might be associated with relationship quality.

It should also be noted that in the above studies sacrifice frequency was not the *focus* of the study. Rather, the authors focused more on constructs such as willingness to sacrifice (Van Lange et al., 1997), perceived harmfulness of sacrifices (Whitton et al., 2007) and approach versus avoidance motives for sacrifice (Impett et al., 2005). The present study focuses more systematically on sacrifice frequency with a scale that measures the actual number of sacrifices engaged in each day. Measuring actual daily frequency of sacrifice, as opposed to, for example, willingness to sacrifice, is likely a more accurate representation of how often people actually make sacrifices for their partners. Although one may report that they would be willing to make a certain sacrifice, such a measure does not tap into whether they actually *would* make the sacrifice. Furthermore, the participants in the present study report each day about these sacrifices, allowing for more immediate recall.

Taken together, these few studies suggest that frequency of sacrifice, when assessed in different ways, have mixed associations in terms of positive relationship quality variables (typically satisfaction or commitment). Although these empirical studies are mixed, I follow the theoretical perspective outlined above and expect that when either the actor or the partner engages in sacrifices it will be *positive* for relationship quality. Indeed, it could be expected that this association will be stronger for partner effects. In other words, when my *partner* reports increased sacrifices, it may be even more beneficial for my feelings of relationship quality than when I report increased sacrifices because I do not incur any direct costs in this set of interactions.

In support of this aforementioned hypothesis, the CoR model can also be framed to explain why individuals and partners make sacrifices for each other, and how that would be related to outcomes like satisfaction, commitment, and closeness. On the surface, it appears that making a sacrifice for one's partner would result in a resource loss and thus be stressful. To note, however, is that when one is not under stress, the individual attempts to build a resource surplus, and one way in which this surplus can be built is by investing other resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Even though sacrificing may mean a short-term loss of resources, it may actually help individuals to build resources in the long run because they will be able to depend on that partner to return the favor when during a later time of stress.

Thus, from the CoR perspective, I would argue that in the absence of stressors, sacrificing can be positive for relationship quality because it can help individuals to build resource surpluses from which to draw upon in the future. Implied in this idea then is an orientation toward the future and thus commitment to the relationship. Once a person has invested resources into a partner, this investment should lead to an increased commitment to remaining with that partner so that resources can be drawn upon in the future. Similarly, one would expect sacrifices to be associated with other facets of relationship quality, such as increased satisfaction and closeness. When individuals build resource surpluses, they should experience increased well being (Hobfoll, 1989). In the context of a relationship, this positive effect may be manifested by more satisfying and close partnerships. Additionally, under conditions of stress, such as those that may be imposed by an unsatisfying or intimacy-lacking relationship, individuals should not be expected to risk further resource loss in the first place (Hobfoll, 1989), such as making sacrifices for a partner.

In summary, from both interdependence and CoR perspectives it would appear on the surface that engaging in sacrifices would be *negative* for individuals' well-being. Making sacrifices about your own wishes for the benefit of the partner would seem to incur costs, and interdependence theorists argue that individuals strive to minimize costs and maximize rewards. Sacrifices would also seem to result in resource loss from a CoR perspective. However, the longer-term implications of sacrifices in both of these models would actually argue that sacrificing for one's partner should be *positive* for the relationship in that it allows couples to resolve conflict and display caring for each other (interdependence theory) and represents an investment of resources from which to draw upon in the future (CoR). Thus, the hypothesis that I put forward is that sacrificing for one's partner should be *positive* for the relationship.

Daily hassles as a moderator. In the present study, daily hassles are hypothesized to influence the association between number of daily sacrifices on daily relationship quality. Empirical studies have shown that stress in general is associated with poorer relationship quality (e.g., Frederickson, 1977; Harper et al., 2000; McLaughlin, Cormier, & Cormier, 1988), and some studies are beginning to show the same effect for daily hassles more specifically (e.g., Harper et al., 2000; Totenhagen, Butler, & Ridley, in press; Totenhagen & Curran, under review).

From the CoR perespetive, Hobfoll poses that the reason hassles are stressful to individuals is because of their repetitive nature—they "pick away at individuals' resources" (Hobfoll, 1990, p. 1275). Using ideas from the CoR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), I expect that on days when the individual experiences an increase in daily hassles, then sacrifices are no longer beneficial for relationship quality. On the other hand, on days when lower hassles are experienced by the individual, the benefit of sacrifices on relationship quality should hold.

To explain this difference for the individual based on the amount of hassles on a daily basis, return to the argument from CoR that when individuals are not facing stressors they attempt to build resource surpluses. In the case where one experiences few daily hassles, this person will attempt to build resource surpluses, and one way to do so is by investing resources in one's partner.

Thus, on days when one does not experience many hassles, one will be able to invest resources in the partner, and the resulting surplus in resources should lead to well-being and increased relationship quality for this person. Conversely, on days when individuals experience more daily hassles and are thus faced with a resource loss, individuals will strive to minimize resource loss and protect the resources they have. Under these circumstances, I would expect that having to lose even more resources by sacrificing for the partner should lead to distress and decreased relationship quality. Thus, I hypothesize that one's daily sacrifices are only beneficial for that person's relationship quality under conditions of low daily hassles, and that these sacrifices are no longer beneficial with increased daily hassles.

The argument above is for individuals, or actor effects. In terms of partner effects, it seems plausible to uncover a different pattern. Given interdependence theorists' focus on maximizing rewards and minimizing costs in association with one's relationship quality (Kelley, 1979), we may find that the partner's daily hassles do *not* significantly moderate partner's daily sacrifices.

To clarify further, it may be that when one's partner makes sacrifices, it will have a positive effect on the actor's relationship quality *regardless* of the partner's hassles that day. For example, if my husband engages in sacrifices for me, from an interdependence perspective, I expect these behaviors will be positive for my relationship quality because I am experiencing increased rewards. These rewards should not change if my husband had a stressful day when he was engaging in those sacrifices. In fact, perhaps if my husband does sacrifices for me, even though he had a stressful day, I will appreciate these sacrifices even more and experience even *further* increased relationship quality. Because these ideas are speculative, I investigate this partner interaction effect (i.e., partner sacrifices by partner hassles) as a research question and do not pose specific hypotheses.

Hypotheses

In light of the above reviewed theoretical perspectives, interdependence theory and conservation of resources, as well as empirical work, the following hypotheses and research questions are posed. Although the main interest of this paper is terms of the interaction effects, as discussed in the introduction, I examine main effects of sacrifices (in H1) as a way to support or refute existing associations of sacrifices and relationship quality from the existing literature. Because of the higher level interactions (described below) present in statistical models, main effects of sacrifices are at average levels of hassles.

H1: Greater daily number of sacrifices is beneficial for relationship quality. I expect this to be true for both actor and partner effects. Given the theoretical perspectives, I speculate that this effect may be even more pronounced for partner effects because when one's partner engages in sacrifices, it does not require the individual to incur any costs or risk resource loss him or herself.

H2: For individuals, daily hassles moderate the association between that person's daily number of sacrifices and relationship quality, such that sacrifices are only beneficial for relationship quality under conditions of low daily hassles (i.e., actor sacrifices by actor hassles)

RQ1. In terms of partner effects, do partners' daily hassles moderate the association between partners' daily sacrifices and actor relationship quality?

Though some have suggested that women are more likely to sacrifice given cultural expectations about women's roles in maintaining relationships, previous work on gender differences in sacrifice has not uncovered consistent differences (see Impett & Gordon, 2008). Additionally, it is unclear whether increased frequency of sacrifices has differential effects on the relational appraisals of men versus women. That is, regardless of who sacrifices more overall, do increased sacrifices impact the relational quality of men and women differently? The present study goes beyond examining differences in frequency to examine how frequency in sacrifices might differentially impact men's and women's perceptions of their relationship.

I use the two intercept model for dyadic longitudinal data (Laurenceau & Bolger, 2005) in order to test these hypotheses and research questions for both men and women.

One of the advantages of the two intercept model is that it allows examination of all effects for both men and women. Thus, I am able to examine all actor and partner effects, as well as interactions, for women versus men. To be clear, gender is not considered as a further moderator, but instead is specified as a distinguishing variable. Thus, to test patterns of gender for the hypotheses and research question described above, I pose a final research question:

RQ2: Do men and women differ with regards to the above hypotheses and research question?

Method

Procedure and Participants

As described in the previous papers of this dissertation, the sample for the present investigation consisted of 164 heterosexual couples (328 individuals) who completed at least three matching days of daily diaries with their partners. Couples were asked to log onto the study website each day for seven days to fill out daily diaries separately from their partners. Participants were primarily Caucasian (67.4%) and Hispanic (13.4%), highly educated (84.8% reported at least some college or more), and 62.7% of the sample was currently enrolled in college. Ages ranged from 18-66 years (M = 25.73, SD = 10.37) and 23.8% of the couples were married.

Measures

Daily sacrifices. In the measure for daily sacrifices, we asked participants about 12 possible sacrifices, or changes they made for their partner in the past 24 hours. The explanation of sacrifices as "changes" was chosen in order to mitigate any possible negative connotations associated with the word “sacrifice” in the measure. Some have suggested that women may underreport sacrifices because they do not see them as sacrifices but rather tasks that are expected of them (see Impett & Gordon, 2008). The wording in the scale about changes should help with such possible underreports. Possible sacrifices were my daily schedule (work, sleep errands), household tasks, childcare, my leisure interests/activities, amount of time I spent with friends, amount of time I spent with family, communication with partner (conversations about relationship and goals), intimate behaviors (sex, affection, cuddling, holding hands), my physical appearance, my diet and exercise, my financial standing (savings, spending habits), and living arrangements. Participants were given a score of 1 if they indicated they engaged in sacrifices regarding each of those 12 possible items each day, and total daily number of sacrifices across the 12 items were summed.

Daily hassles. The measure used for daily hassles is a shortened version of the Hassles and Uplifts Scale (DeLongis, Folkman, & Lazarus, 1988) and includes 15 items (e.g., your job, your partner, home maintenance, etc.). In the present investigation, only the hassles portion of the scale was used. For each item, participants indicated how much of a hassle it was on a 0 (*none*) to 3 (*a great deal*) scale. Additional information about the scale can be found in Paper 2 of this dissertation. Given that preliminary investigations in Paper 2 led to the choice to use intensity scores (i.e., total score of how hassling one’s day was) rather than frequency scores (i.e., sum number of daily hassles experienced), the decision was made to also use intensity scores in the present investigation. Thus, I used the full 0 to 3 scale to sum an overall score each day which indicates overall, how hassling a person's day was. The possible daily range of scores for this method of summation was 0 to 45.

Relationship quality. Relationship quality variables of satisfaction, closeness, and commitment were each assessed via one-item measures in which response options rest on a 1 (n*ot very much or just a little*) to 7 (*very much or a lot*) point scale. Participants were asked today how satisfied they were with their relationship with their partner, how committed they felt to their relationship with their partner, and how close they felt to their partner.

Control variables. As done in Paper 2 of this dissertation, relationship length is included as a control in all models given that the present sample includes a variety of relationship lengths and that variability in a number of the outcomes under investigation was found to differ depending on relationship length in Paper 1 of this dissertation.

Furthermore, I include two additional controls: overall satisfaction and overall ambivalence. It may be that overall feelings about the relationship will result in differing perceptions of relational sacrifices. For example, it seems plausible that more satisfied couples who do not feel ambivalent about their relationship will view sacrifices more positively that an unhappy couple who is highly ambivalent about the relationship. Controlling for these factors will increase the likelihood that any significant effects found are explaining variance above and beyond that explained by overall feelings and quality of the relationship. Overall sacrifices and ambivalence were chosen based on other studies of sacrifice that have also controlled for the effects of relationship satisfaction (Whitton, Stanley, & Markman, 2007) as well as because both were significantly associated with all three daily positive relational outcomes in the multilevel models discussed below. At the beginning of the study, prior to completing daily measures, participants were asked overall how ambivalent or uncertain they felt about the future of the relationship with their partner, as well as overall how satisfied they are with their relationship with their partner. Responses rested on a 1 (*not very much or just a little*) to 7 (*very much or a lot*) point scale.

Plan of Analysis

As described in Papers 1 and 2, diary data from couples potentially involves several sources of nonindependence. Interdependent partners may be related in average levels of constructs (i.e., intercepts) as well as their daily fluctuations (i.e., correlated in day to day variability). Furthermore, repeated days within a person are likely to be autocorrelated over time. In order to account for these sources of nonindependence, I used SAS PROC MIXED to run analyses using the two-intercept model for longitudinal dyadic data (Laurenceau & Bolger, 2005). In this investigation, I sought to answer questions about how interdependent partners influence both their own and their partners' outcomes. Thus, in conjunction with the two-intercept model, which accounts for nonindependence of data, I used the APIM to test both actor and partner effects as predictors of individuals' outcomes (Cook & Kenny, 2005; Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006).

To test the hypotheses and research questions, the same model was run for each of the three dependent variables (i.e., daily satisfaction, closeness, and commitment). In addition to the controls discussed above, the predictors, or fixed effects, in each of the models included the actor and partner effects of sacrifices, the actor and partner effects of hassles, the interaction of actor sacrifices by actor hassles, and the interaction of partner sacrifices by partner hassles. All daily predictors were person-centered such that each person's daily score on each independent variable was centered on that person's mean score for that variable across all the days of the study. Thus, interpretation of daily predictors is for sacrifices or hassles that are above or below that person's own average. This method of centering is recommended for testing relationships between level-1 predictors (Enders & Tofighi, 2007).

The two intercept model calculates estimates of the intercepts and all fixed effect predictors for both men and women. Sample syntax is included below (for further description of the random and repeated statements, please see Paper 2):

```
proc mixed covtest data = library.file method = ml;
class CID sex day;
model DV = male female relationship_length overall_satisfaction
        overall_ambivalence
        male*actor_sacrifices female*actor_sacrifices
        male*actor_hassles female*actor_hassles
        male*partner_sacrifices female*partner_sacrifices
        male*partner_hassles female*partner_hassles
        male*actor_sacrifices*actor_hassles female*actor_sacrifices*actor_hassles
        male*partner_sacrifices*partner_hassles
        female*partner_sacrifices*partner_hassles
         /solution noint ddfm = satterth;
random male female / type = un sub = CID;
repeated sex day / sub = CID type = un@ar(1);
run;
```

For each of the three dependent variables, I examined whether the actor and partner effects of sacrifices were significantly association with relationship quality (H1), as well as whether the effect of actor sacrifices was moderated by actor hassles (H2) and whether the effect of partner sacrifices was moderated by partner hassles (RQ1). Any significant interactions were probed at one standard deviation above and below for high and low values using the methods outlined by Aiken and West (1991). Finally, because the two-intercept model provides estimates for both men and women, I also examined whether any of these associations differ for men and women (RQ2) by using the "estimate" statement in SAS to compare whether the effects for men and women statistically differ from each other.

Results

I report full results for all models in Table 1. In all three of the models, relationship length was not significantly associated with outcomes, but the other two controls were such that higher overall satisfaction was associated with increased positive relationship quality and overall ambivalence was associated with decreased positive relationship quality. In the sections below, significant effects are described for each of the three outcomes with respect to the hypotheses and research questions.

Daily Satisfaction

For daily number of sacrifices and satisfaction, neither actor nor partner effects were significant for men or women (H1). However, the main effect of *hassles* was significant in terms of both actor and partner effects, and for both men and women. Men's intensity of hassles was associated with decreased daily satisfaction for both themselves (b = -.05, p < .001) as well as their partners (b = -.04, p < .05). Similarly, women's intensity of hassles was associated with decreased daily satisfaction for both themselves (*b* = -.06, *p* < .001) as well as their partners (*b* = -.04, *p* < .05). These main effects were not qualified by significant higher level interactions (H2, RQ1).

Examination of the output from the estimate statement comparing the significant actor effects of hassles for men and women, as well as the significant partner effects of hassles for men and women, revealed that men and women did not significantly differ in either case (RQ2).

Daily Closeness

For daily number of sacrifices and closeness, neither actor nor partner effects were significant for men or women (H1). The conditional main effect of women's *hassles*, however, was significantly associated with their own decreased feelings of closeness (*b* = -.05, *p* < .01) as well as their partners' decreased feelings of closeness (*b* = -.04, *p* < .01). Men's daily hassles were not significantly associated with either their own or their partners' daily closeness in terms of main effects. There was, however, a significant interaction for men's actor sacrifices by actor hassles. As expected (H2), increased daily sacrifices were associated with increased daily feelings of closeness on days characterized by low levels of hassles (*b* = .08, *p* < .05), but were no longer significantly associated with daily closeness on days characterized by *high* levels of hassles (*b* = -.01, *p* = .76; see Figure 1). Thus, for men, engaging in increased number of sacrifices was associated with their own feelings of higher closeness, but only on days characterized by low stress. To provide further information about this interaction, I examined regions of significance using the online interaction tool described by Preacher, Curran, and Bauer (2006). Interactions were originally probed at one standard deviation

(2.42 for hassles) above and below the person-centered mean (0 given the centering). The slope of sacrifices for low hassles days, which was significant as probed at one standard deviation, reaches statistical significance ($p = .05$) at -0.89 for hassles. The slope on high stress days, however, would not become significant within the bounds of the scale for hassles. In other words, sacrifices are associated with increased daily feelings of closeness for a relatively large proportion of days below the mean of hassles but do not reach significance on high stress days within the bounds of the scale. No partner effect interactions were significant (RQ1).

Although only women's hassles were significant in association with their own and their partners' daily feelings of closeness in terms of main effects, comparisons of the betas using the estimate statement in SAS for actor effects of men's and women's hassles, as well as the betas for partner effects of men's and women's hassles, revealed that significant gender differences did not exist (RQ2). Similarly, though the interaction of actor sacrifices by actor hassles was significant only for men, comparisons with the estimate statement revealed that this effect was not significantly different from the one for women. Thus, although gender differences did emerge in terms of significance of effects, evidence does not exist to suggest that men's and women's effects were significantly *different*.

Daily Commitment

For daily number of sacrifices and commitment (H1), women's increased number of sacrifices was associated with their own feelings of increased commitment ($b = .05$, $p < .05$). No other main effects were significant.

There was, however, a significant interaction for men’s actor sacrifices by actor hassles (H2). Although visual inspection of the graph (see Figure 2) made it appear that increased number of sacrifices was *positive* for daily commitment on days with low hassles ($b = .04$, p .11) and *negative* for daily commitment on days with high hassles ($b = -.03$, $p < .31$), neither slope was significant.

I again used the online interaction tool (Preacher et al., 2006) to examine regions of significance. This tool was especially useful in describing this interaction because neither of the slopes were significant at the probed levels of one standard deviation (2.42 for hassles). For low hassles to reach a significance of .05 for the simple slope, a value of -6.11 would be required, which is near the 1st percentile of values (-6.14). High hassles, on the other hand, would not reach significance within the bounds of the scale. In summary, although the interaction for men is significant, actual slopes are significantly positive only for those days with extreme values of low hassles. The partner effects interactions were not significant for men or women (RQ1).

Although only women’s sacrifices were significantly associated with their own increased commitment, this effect was not significantly different from men’s actor effect (RQ2). Similarly, though the interaction of actor sacrifices by actor hassles was significant only for men, this effect was not significantly different from the one for women. So again, although gender differences did emerge in terms of significance of effects, evidence does not exist to suggest that men’s and women’s effects were significantly *different*.

Discussion

Though conflicts of interest in close relationships are more or less an inevitability (e.g., Canary, 2003), they are not necessarily negative to the relationship. For example, it is conflicts of interest that provide the opportunity for partners to make sacrifices for each other and demonstrate their love and caring for their partners (Kelley, 1979). Because there are certain conditions under which sacrifices may *not* be considered beneficial to the relationship (e.g., chronic self-sacrifice, nonreciprocal sacrifices), however, in the interest of promoting healthy and positive relationships it is important that we further understand when sacrifices are beneficial and when they are not. In the present study, I examined whether the effect of sacrifices on daily positive relationship quality would depend on whether that person had a hassling day.

Furthermore, I examined both actor and partner effects. The examination of effects from both members of the couple is an important piece of the investigation. From interdependence theory (e.g., Kelley, 1979), we know that partners are inherently interdependent and that one cannot fully understand an individual’s outcomes without consideration of how the partner may have contributed to those outcomes as well. With this information about daily sacrifices and hassles from the perspective of both partners, the literature will be able to further inform practitioners working with couples on when sacrifices are beneficial to make (e.g., on low- vs. high-stress days) as well as whether both partners should be encouraged to make these sacrifices for each other, and under what conditions. In the following sections I discuss the findings and implications from this investigation.

Actor Sacrifices

Given ideas from interdependence theory and the conservation of resources model, I had expected that daily number of sacrifices would be beneficial for relationship quality (H1), particularly under conditions of low stress (H2). In terms of main effects, sacrifices were indeed associated with increased commitment in women, such that when women engaged in more sacrifices, they were more likely to feel committed to their partners that day. Consistent with expectations that sacrifices would be beneficial only in the context of a day with low hassles, however, I found that for men (but not women) this pattern was true for both closeness and commitment, though for commitment sacrifices were only beneficial under extremely low conditions of hassles (i.e., approximately the 1st percentile).

That is, when men reported doing more sacrifices for their partners, they felt more close and committed, but only when they had a low-stress day. For commitment, this effect was significant only for the small proportion of days characterized by very low stress, however. Thus, the effect of increased sacrifices on commitment only becomes significantly positive when focusing on extremely low levels of stress. This finding can be explained by the fact that although commitment does significantly vary from day to day, it appears to be more stable than other relational constructs (such as satisfaction or closeness, for example; see Paper 1). Thus, for sacrifices and hassles to have a meaningful impact on how committed a man felt toward his partner that day, a more “extreme” level of change in sacrifices and hassles seems to be required. In other words, feelings of commitment may be more robust to daily changes than the other two types of relationship quality studied here (satisfaction and closeness). This is an important finding in that it provides empirical documentation to researchers that the study of commitment is appropriate to be done daily (as found in Paper 1), but that such variability needs to be contextualized given other information (here, changes in sacrifices and hassles on a daily basis).

Based on the results that sacrifices may be beneficial (for closeness and commitment) only under conditions of low stress days for men, explanations are needed. One reasonable conclusion may be that men should be encouraged to make such daily sacrifices for their partners as a way to build positive relationship quality, but only on days that are not otherwise hassling or stressful as this positive effect does not hold when men had highly hassling days.

It should be noted, however, that the main effect of sacrifices on commitment was significantly positive for women, *without* the condition that this effect depended on levels of daily hassles. On the surface, it would appear that women are likely to feel more committed to their partners when they do more sacrifices for them, regardless of how stressed they felt that day. Comparisons of the effects for men and women, however, revealed that though significance did vary, the actual effects themselves were not statistically different.

Thus, although the interaction of sacrifices and hassles for women was not significant for either closeness or commitment, it also was not significantly different from the estimates for men. Before conclusions can be drawn about whether different recommendations should be made for men and women about engaging in sacrifices for their partner depending on the context of the day (i.e., how hassling it was), further studies should be done to examine whether meaningful gender differences might exist in a different sample.

In summary of the actor effects of sacrifices, I found some support for H1 that a person's sacrifices would be beneficial for his or her own relationship quality (i.e., women's commitment). With regards to H2, this pattern was especially true when that person had low levels of hassles (i.e., men's closeness and commitment).

Partner Sacrifices

In contrast, no significant partner-effects of sacrifices (H1) or their interactions with hassles (RQ1), were found. I had speculated about the possibility that with respect to partner main effects, or whether a partner's number of sacrifices would be beneficial for the other person's feelings of relationship quality, that there would be a positive effect possibly stronger than that of the hypothesized positive actor effect. This speculation was made based on theory (Kelley, 1979) that when one's *partner* is engaging in sacrifices, then the individual need not incur any costs or risk resource loss to him or herself. Similarly, though posed as a research question, it seemed plausible that when one's partner has a stressful day yet makes sacrifices, these sacrifices may be beneficial for a person's feelings of relationship quality regardless of that stressful day because the individual is still reaping the benefits (i.e., increased rewards and resources) of having sacrifices made for them. None of these patterns were found.

Kelley (1979) does argue that with respect to attributions, individuals often overestimate how much they do in the relationship, while underestimating how much their partners do. Thus, it could be that partner effects with respect to sacrifices were not found because individuals lacked awareness that their partners had been engaging in those sacrifices. Empirical evidence supports this idea. In diary studies of couples, both men and women fail to notice approximately 25% of the positive behaviors their partners report doing (Gable, Reis, & Downey, 2003). Though this study is not specific to sacrifices, it does exemplify how individuals may not be fully aware of all of the positive behaviors their partners report doing. If one is unaware of positive behaviors or sacrifices that the partner is enacting, this could explain why they would not report increased positive relationship quality.

Studies of sacrifice that have explicitly tested partner effects are rare. In one study, Whitton et al. (2007) employed an APIM to assess associations between relationship quality (i.e., commitment) and sacrifice. In this cross-sectional study (not involving daily diaries) examining the effects of perceived harmfulness of sacrifice to the self, actor perceived harmfulness of sacrifice was significantly associated with depressive symptoms, while the effect of *partners'* perceived harmfulness of sacrifice was not statistically significant. Although this study considered a different conceptualization of sacrifices and a different outcome variable, I discuss it here to show that findings regarding partner effects pertaining to sacrifice are understudied and inconsistent. Given such inconsistency, it is important for researchers to continue to test associations between relationship quality and sacrifice, to determine the significance of partner effects given that the partner and dyad are explicitly discussed in interdependence theory (Kelley, 1979).

The implications with respect to the findings about sacrifices and partner effects are that perhaps they are only beneficial for fostering positive relationship quality if the other partner is aware that these behaviors are happening. Again, more research should be done with respect to sacrifices and partner effects. It seems reasonable to assume, however, that if we are suggesting to couples that they engage in positive behaviors for their partners, perhaps in the form of daily sacrifices, that we should also train couples to *recognize* the positive behaviors that their partners are doing.

Actor and Partner Hassles

Although specific hypotheses and research questions were not posed with respect to the *main effects* of daily hassles on positive relationship quality, several main effects that were not qualified by significant higher level interactions were found. For satisfaction, hassles seemed to be an especially important construct. Whereas sacrifices were not significantly associated with increased satisfaction under any conditions (i.e., on its own or interacting with hassles), increased daily hassles were associated with men's and women's decreased satisfaction in terms of both actor and partner effects. That is, when men and women felt more hassled on a particular day, this pattern was detrimental for both their own and their partners' reports of relationship satisfaction that day. Women's hassles were also found to be associated with both their own and their partners' decreased feelings of closeness.

From an interdependence perspective, hassles should be experienced as "costly" experiences that detract from one's outcomes and make it less likely that their expectations are met. Similarly, from a CoR perspective, dealing with hassling experiences may detract from one's resources, and this potential loss of resources would result in distress. Thus, the findings that hassles were associated with decreased actor and partner satisfaction and closeness fits with both theoretical perspectives used in the present study. Furthermore, other studies have found similar effects of hassles on relational outcomes (e.g., Paper 2; Totenhagen, Butler, & Ridley, in press; Harper et al., 2000). Given the negative effects of daily hassles, for both actors and partners, this construct seems to be potentially important in consideration of the well-being of couples. It seems as though when individuals experience a higher degree of stress on a particular day, both themselves and their partners are likely to feel less satisfied about the *relationship*, even though the stressors were not necessarily specific to the relationship. Other researchers have also found that stressors from one domain in life can spill over into other domains (Grzywacz, Almeida, & McDonald, 2002; Matjasko & Feldman, 2006; McDonald & Almeida, 2004; Serido, Almeida, & Wethington, 2004). Implications here may include that in addition to encouraging positive behaviors and recognizing sacrifices, we need to help people cope with the daily stress they are experiencing, both as individuals, given the significant actor effects, as well as dyadically (e.g., Bodenmann, 2005) given significant partner effects and the fact that these stressors spill over to affect the relationship.

Conclusions

In the present investigation, I examined the extent to which daily sacrifices are associated with daily positive relationship quality, as well as whether these associations depend on daily hassles experienced on that day. Further, I tested these associations in terms of both actor and partner effects to uncover any cross-partner associations that might have existed.

In terms of these partner effects, the sacrifices of one partner were not found to play a role in the other partner's feelings about the relationship on that day. This pattern was somewhat surprising, as theoretically (Kelley, 1979), it is expected that when a partner makes sacrifices, the other individual should benefit by having their positive outcomes promoted. Instead, such associations were not significant. Earlier, I posed that perhaps individuals were unaware of sacrifices partners are making for them. In line with this idea, in another study of sacrifices the authors speculate that for some dyadic processes, it may take *longer* than one day for significant effects to show up (Impett et al., 2005). That is, when one partner makes a sacrifice for the other partner, the other partner may not immediately recognize this sacrifice, and if they do, they may need time to process and respond to it. Thus, it is possible that examination of lagged analyses, perhaps even two to three days out, would uncover significant partner effects. Additional studies should be done to examine whether partner effects with respect to sacrifice may have a "delayed" effect on individuals' feelings of positive relationship quality.

A related limitation of the present study is that it is correlational in nature. I examined whether sacrifices and hassles on a particular day were associated with positive relationship quality on that same day. Thus, the present study does not establish temporal precedence that sacrifices occurred *before* changes in relationship quality. It is also possible that when individuals experienced changes in how they felt about the relationship, they were then inclined to do more (or fewer) sacrifices for their partners.

To help account for the fact that relationship quality may be driving sacrifices, I controlled for overall satisfaction and ambivalence about the relationship. Thus, significant daily associations are above and beyond what could be accounted for by overall feelings about the relationship. It is still plausible that in terms of *daily* changes, however, fluctuations in relationship quality may then lead to changes in the number of sacrifices done.

Still, several advantages of the concurrent daily methodology used in the present study exist. First, daily studies of sacrifice are rare (for exceptions see work by Impett and colleagues; e.g., Impett et al., 2005). A more basic understanding of how sacrifices may be associated with same-day relationship quality is warranted before moving onto more nuanced investigations of how these associations may differ from one day to the next and beyond.

Other benefits of the daily methodology used in this study include more immediate recall of sacrifices made. If, on the other hand, individuals had been asked in a cross-sectional study how often they do sacrifices for their partners, it seems likely that their reports would be influenced by their more general feelings about the relationship. For example, an individual in an unhappy relationship, when asked about *in general* how often they make sacrifices, may report doing high levels of sacrifices given the negative sentiment about the relationship. If asked on a daily basis exactly which sacrifices they made, however, it is more likely that an accurate estimate will be achieved. Further, given that the focus here is on more routine sacrifices partners may make each day (e.g., doing household chores for your partner) as opposed to more major sacrifices that may happen in a relationship (e.g., moving across the country for your partner), the daily methodology is an especially good fit.

With respect to the measurement of sacrifices, the measure used represents a set of routine (e.g., changes in daily schedule) to more singular (e.g., changes in terms of living arrangements) sacrifices individuals were expected to be mostly likely to report having done for their partner on a daily basis. In daily diary investigation it is important to use short measures that participants will be likely to come back and fill out each day of the study rather than becoming fatigued and dropping out of the study. By using a shorter (12 item) measure of sacrifices, however, it is possible that participants may have made sacrifices for their partners that were not included in the list and thus went unassessed. Additionally, I used a simple sum-count of the number of sacrifices individuals did for their partners to examine how doing more sacrifices may be associated with increased relationship quality on a daily basis. Use of such a measure, however, misses out on potentially important factors such as what sacrifices mean to individuals and why they engage in these sacrifices, which may best be assessed with other methods such as qualitative interviews.

Finally, with respect to gender differences, I found that differences did exist between men and women in terms of significance of results. For example, the interaction of men's actor sacrifices by actor hassles was significant such that men's own sacrifices were associated with increased closeness and commitment when they experienced low, but not high, hassles on that day. These interactions were not significant for women. In comparisons of whether the effects for men and women were statistically different from each other, however, no significant differences were found. Thus, although there were differences in whether men's and women's effects reached statistical significance, these effects were not found to be significantly *different*. As such, it is difficult to conclude from the present study whether meaningful gender differences may exist.

In summary, the present study consisted of a dyadic investigation of how to promote *positive* relationship quality. It is important for scientists and practitioners to understand not just what characterizes "bad" relationships, but also how to promote "good" relationships as well. By focusing on the more routine, every day things that individuals experience as they move through their days and what they do for their partners, we can begin to further understand how to promote such positive relationships. That is, practitioners working with couples can use the information to encourage couples to create positive relationships through their every day actions rather than simply focusing on transitions or more major life events. In light of the results from the present study, those working with couples to promote healthy relationships may focus on helping individuals understand when making sacrifices for their partners might build relationship quality (i.e., on days they were not particularly stressed) versus when sacrifices may not be beneficial, such as when they try to do sacrifices when they are already feeling stressed. Furthermore, to help ensure that such sacrifices are benefiting *both* partners, it may be important to help couples recognize the positive behaviors that their partners enact for them so that such positivity does not go unnoticed and unappreciated.

Table 1

Results for the Multilevel Models on Daily Satisfaction, Closeness, and Commitment

	Daily Satisfaction		Daily Closeness		Daily Commitment	
Fixed Effects	*F*(DF)	*F* Statistic	*F*(DF)	*F* Statistic	*F*(DF)	*F* Statistic
Men's intercept	(1, 288)	96.31***	(1, 274)	95.98***	(1, 301)	184.67***
Women's intercept	(1, 302)	100.99***	(1, 289)	104.35***	(1, 312)	209.96***
Controls						
Relationship length	(1, 163)	1.45	(1, 160)	0.86	(1, 170)	0.14
Overall satisfaction	(1, 296)	75.02***	(1, 280)	70.55***	(1, 306)	51.90***
Overall ambivalence	(1, 317)	15.56***	(1, 301)	8.16**	(1, 323)	18.12***
Actor Effects						
Men's sacrifices	(1, 686)	3.55	(1, 683)	1.94	(1, 679)	0.14
Women's sacrifices	(1, 711)	0.01	(1, 714)	1.94	(1, 698)	6.46*
Men's hassles intensity	(1, 698)	11.26***	(1, 699)	2.06	(1, 696)	0.57
Women's hassles intensity	(1, 703)	12.31***	(1, 706)	8.81**	(1, 691)	0.13
Men's sacrifices X hassles intensity	(1, 774)	1.12	(1, 790)	4.19*	(1, 771)	3.89*
Women's sacrifices X hassles intensity	(1, 808)	0.00	(1, 818)	0.46	(1, 790)	2.87
Partner Effects						
Men's sacrifices	(1, 690)	1.05	(1, 701)	1.25	(1, 686)	0.42
Women's sacrifices	(1, 714)	0.47	(1, 717)	2.31	(1, 712)	0.04
Men's hassles intensity	(1, 700)	6.49*	(1, 708)	3.63	(1, 690)	0.05
Women's hassles intensity	(1, 707)	6.41*	(1, 710)	6.92**	(1, 708)	2.71
Men's sacrifices X hassles intensity	(1, 783)	0.65	(1, 781)	0.00	(1, 757)	0.37
Women's sacrifices X hassles intensity	(1, 804)	1.32	(1, 812)	0.51	(1, 795)	0.44
Covariance Parameter Estimates	Est.	*SE*	Est.	*SE*	Est.	*SE*
$var(U_0)$men	0.55***	.09	0.53***	.09	0.51***	.08
$var(U_0)$women	0.60***	.07	0.69***	.11	0.49***	.07
$covar(U_0)$	0.28***	.09	0.38***	.08	0.26***	.06
$var(E_{ij})$men	1.16***	.06	1.16***	.06	0.68***	.04
$var(E_{ij})$women	0.94***	.05	1.14***	.06	0.74***	.04
$covar(E_{ij})$	0.25***	.04	0.35***	.05	0.07*	.03
$ar(1)$	0.06	.04	0.06	.04	0.09*	.04

Note. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001. Actor effects indicate men's and women's effects on their own outcomes, and partner effects indicate men's and women's effects on their partners' outcomes. *Var*(U_0) indicates variability in individuals' intercepts, or average levels of the DV, *covar*(U_0) indicates covariance of partners' intercepts, *var*(E_{ij}) indicates variance in within-person daily residuals of the DV, *covar*(E_{ij}) indicates covariance of partners' daily residuals, and *ar(1)* indicates the autoregressive component.

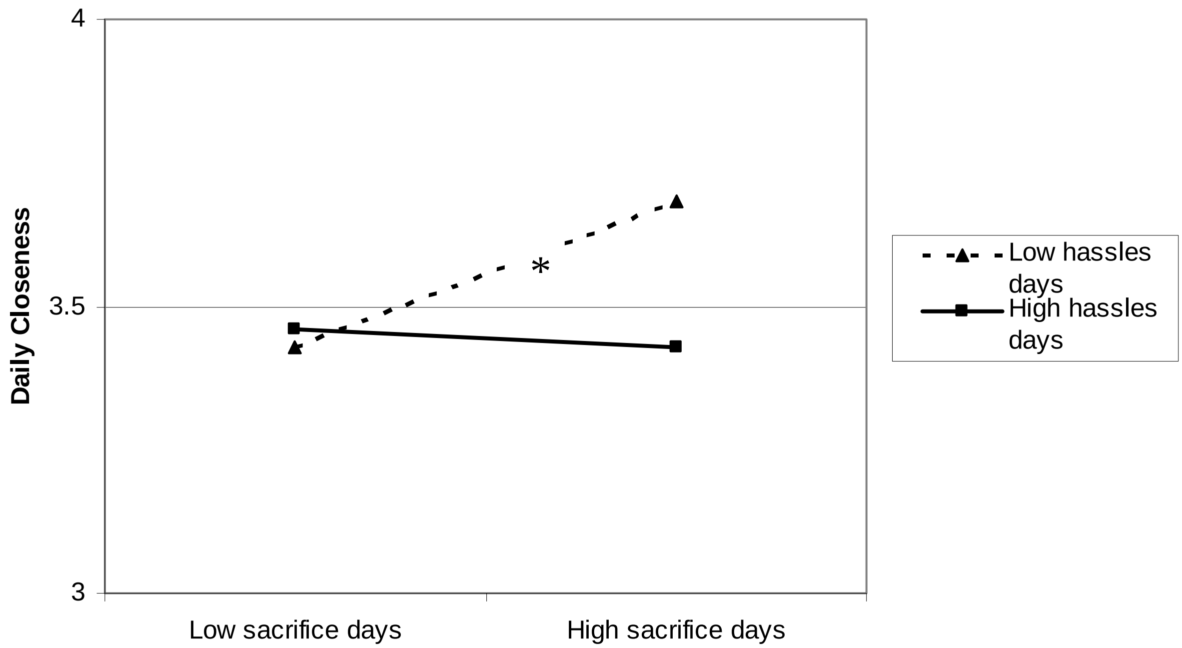

Figure 1. Daily interaction of actor sacrifices by actor hassles on closeness for men. Significant slopes denoted with *.

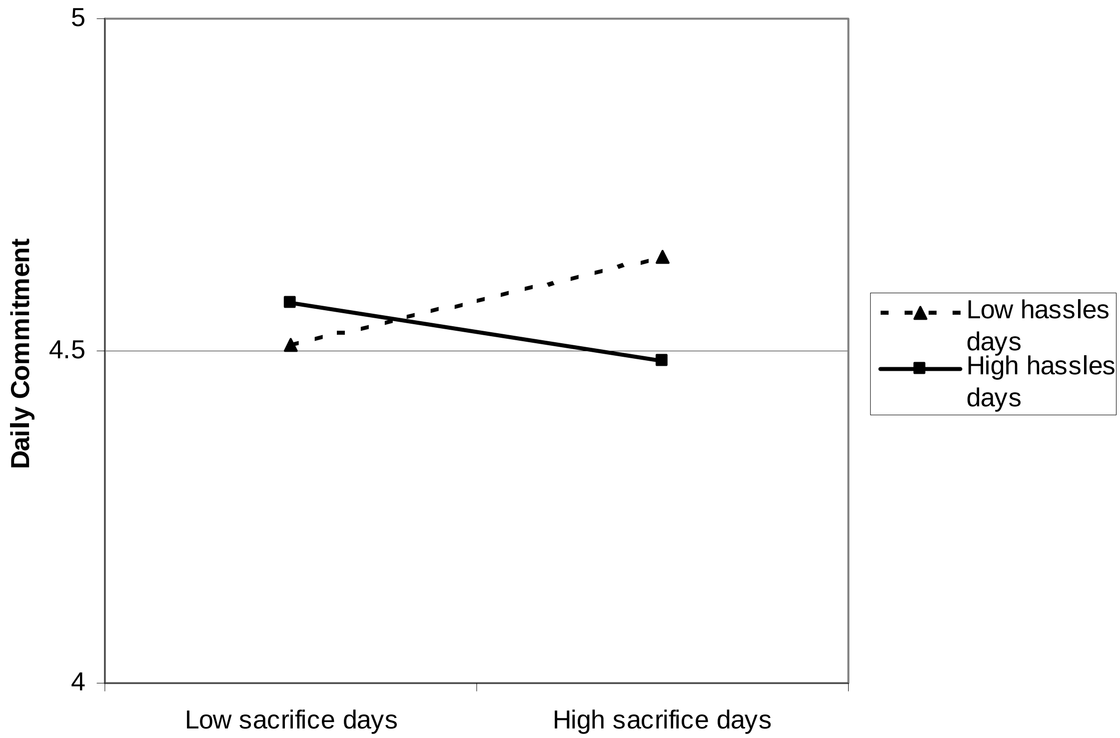

Figure 2. Daily interaction of actor sacrifices by actor hassles on commitment for men. Neither slope is significant at the probed value (1SD above and below the mean).

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS

Overview of the Three Papers

In this dissertation, I sought to understand how individuals feel about their partners and their relationships on a daily basis and what influences these feelings. Relationships were conceptualized as being composed of two interacting individuals, each bringing in their own set of experiences, thoughts, feelings, and actions each day. I conducted three conceptually and empirically related examinations, with each paper building on the previous one.

In the first paper, I examined a set of relational constructs (i.e., satisfaction, commitment, closeness, conflict, ambivalence, maintenance, and love) chosen with the guidance of theoretical and empirical work by interdependence theorists (Braiker & Kelley, 1979; Kelley, 1979). The primary purpose of this investigation was to decipher which of these relational constructs displayed significant variability and are thus appropriate for daily investigation. If I had found that any of these constructs did not significantly vary for individuals from day to day and were instead more stable, then there would be no need to include these constructs in later daily investigations. For constructs that did significantly vary from day to day, however, it is important to understand what other daily experiences or interactions might be associated with these fluctuations. Such knowledge would be useful in helping to preserve positive relationships (e.g., satisfaction, commitment, closeness, maintenance, and love) while avoiding negative outcomes (e.g., ambivalence and conflict).

Given knowledge about what relational constructs were found to significantly vary from day to day, in the second paper of this dissertation I examined whether a set of positive and negative daily experiences (i.e., uplifts and hassles) might be associated with both positive and negative relational constructs on the same-day and the next-day. Using the conservation of resources model (CoR; Hobfoll, 1989), in this investigation I focused on whether the hassles and uplifts an individual experienced on a particular day with respect to several domains (e.g., home maintenance, your job, your partner, etc.) were associated with how that individual felt about the relationship that day. Although these experiences may not have occurred within the relationship, they may be expected to impact the relationship given empirical evidence of spill-over of effects from one domain of life to another (Grzywacz, Almeida, & McDonald, 2002; Matjasko & Feldman, 2006; McDonald & Almeida, 2004; Serido, Almeida, & Wethington, 2004). A greater understanding of how these experiences are associated with both positive and negative relational constructs is useful in informing the extent to which pracitioners may need to focus on helping couples cope with hassling events as well as recognizing the uplifting experiences they encounter each day.

Finally, in the third paper I expanded upon the first two papers by focusing more explicitly on dyadic processes as influencing individuals' perceptions of their relationships, this time focusing on positive relationship quality. In doing so, I used interdependence theory (Kelley, 1979) as a compliment to the CoR model (Hobfoll, 1989) given its focus on interdependent partners interacting to influence each others' outcomes. Whereas in Paper 2 I focused on how an individual's daily experiences were associated with that person's feelings about the relationship, in the third paper I examined how an individual's hassling experiences on a particular day were associated with both that person's feelings about the relationship, as well as the *partner's* feelings about the relationship. Furthermore, I brought in the concept of relational sacrifices, which is a phenomenon derived from the interdependence theory concept of transformations of motivation whereby an individual gives up something they like, or does something they dislike, in order to promote the interests of the partner. More specifically, I examined whether engaging in increased relational sacrifices were associated with increased positive relationship quality for the self and the partner, and whether these effects held under conditions of a particularly stressful day (i.e., high hassles). With this information, practitioners or those who work with romantic couples may gain a fuller understanding of whether sacrifices are beneficial for both partners as well as whether sacrifices should be encouraged even in the context of stressful days.

Summary of Findings

In Paper 1, despite questions as to whether certain relational constructs might be stable and not fluctuate from day to day (e.g., commitment, love) all seven relational constructs under investigation were found to exhibit significant within-person variability. Thus, all relational constructs under investigation were found to be appropriate constructs for further daily examination given that they fluctuate from day to day.

Given that fluctuations in relational constructs have been associated with eventual breakup (e.g., Arriaga, 2001), it seemed worthwhile to examine whether some couples fluctuated more than others. In this paper, I examined whether variability differed depending on how long a couple had been together. It was posed that perhaps the longer a couple had been together, the more stable they would be in their daily feelings about their relationship. For all relational constructs, except for satisfaction, it was found that for either men or women (and sometimes both), newer couples were more likely to experience fluctations from day to day than couples who had been together longer. Given this finding that there was heterogeneity of variance in relational constructs that depended in many cases on relationship length, relationship length was controlled for in Papers 2 and 3.

Because all seven relational constructs under investigation were found to signficantly vary from day to day, I examined whether daily hassles and daily uplifts experienced by individuals were associated with these fluctations for all relational constructs. This examination of a variety of positive and negative relational constructs is important given that previous studies examining the impacts of both both daily hassles and uplifts have largely focused on individual psychological and physical health constructs (e.g., DeLongis et al., 1982; Kanner et al., 1981). By understanding whether individuals' daily experiences are associated with how they feel about their relationships, practitioners can use this information to foster not just individual well-being (e.g., in terms of health), but relational well-being as well. Further, by examining positive outcomes in addition to negative outcomes, we can begin to further understand not only how to avoid negative outcomes in relationships, but also how to foster positivity in relationships.

Given empirical evidence (e.g., Harper et al., 2000; Totenhagen et al., in press) and theoretical ideas from CoR (Hobfoll, 1989) it was expected and largely found that on days when individuals experience increased hassles, they were likely to report decreased positivity and increased negativity about their relationships as well. Although theoretical arguments from CoR about how uplifts might be associated with same-day relational constructs seemed to suggest they should be associated with increased positivity and decreased negativity, empirical evidence was somewhat mixed. I found that even after controlling for hassles, and thus decreasing the chances that associations are due to shared variance (e.g., DeLongis et al., 1982), uplifts were indeed associated with same-day relational constructs. It also appeared that these "positive" events were more associated with "positive" outcomes than "negative" outcomes. More specifically, uplifts seemed especially relevant for increased same-day positive constructs for women (i.e., satisfaction, commitment, closeness, maintenance, and love) and for men (satisfaction, closeness, and love). The only "negative" construct uplifts were associated with on the same day was conflict for men, such that increased uplifts were associated with decreased conflict.

In addition to these main effects, I also examined how hassles and uplifts might interact in terms of buffering (negative effects of hassles "buffered" by uplifts) or blunting (positive effects of uplifts nullified or "blunted" by hassles) effects. I found significant interactions for several of the "positive" outcomes, but neither of the "negative" outcomes. More specifically, blunting effects were largely found whereby uplifts were positively associated with men's outcomes (satisfaction, commitment, and love) on days characterized by low hassles, but these positive effects were nullified on highly hassling days. I did find one significant interaction, however, in support of buffering (women's closeness) whereby hassles were negatively associated with closeness except in the context of a day otherwise characterized as highly uplifting.

In the previous paragraphs I focus on the same-day associations, or the extent to which positive and negative events might be associated with how individuals feel about their relationships on that same day. Such information is useful, for example, in helping to better understand where to focus attention in terms of immediately mitigating the negative effects of daily events (e.g., hassles). It is also useful to understand, however, whether such associations may take longer to show up, as well as whether some effects are likely to remain from day to day. Thus, I also examined lagged effects in terms of whether hassles and uplifts on one day were associated with how individuals felt about their relationships the *next* day.

Overall, the pattern of results revealed that uplifts were associated with *decreased* positive relational constructs (for women) on the next day. Though counterintuitive on the surface, it could be argued that these negative effects simply reflect a return to these individuals' "homeostatic balance" (e.g., Finan et al., 2010), or normal levels of how they feel about the relationship, after an initial positive effect. Taken another way, in comparison to the particularly "good" day that was just experienced (i.e., higher than usual uplifts), the next day feels comparatively "worse" than usual.

Taken together, the findings from Paper 2 indicate how both negative and positive experiences impact a variety of relational constructs. In general, hassles were associated with decreased positivity and increased negativity on the same-day. Uplifts were also found to be important despite earlier studies in which they were not found to be unique predictors of outcomes separate from what could be explained by hassles (e.g., DeLongis et al., 1982). In this investigation, it seems as though experiencing daily uplifts are especially important in association with increased *positive* outcomes for relationships. It should be noted, however, that in lagged investigations it appeared as though these positive effects of uplifts did not hold from one day to the next.

In the third paper, I focused more explicitly on dyadic processes by examining partner effects as well as bringing in the concept of sacrifice, or making changes on a particular day in the interest of one's partner. That is, whereas I focused primarily in Paper 2 on within-person, or actor effects, of daily events largely experienced outside of the relationship (hassles and uplifts), in Paper 3 I examined how whether engaging in sacrifices for one's partner would be beneficial for the positive relationship quality of *both* partners and whether these effects depended on the hassling experiences each partner experienced that day. Given the potential for sacrifices to demonstrate trust and caring in the partner (Kelley, 1979) it was expected that sacrifices would be beneficial for positive relationship quality in both partners, but that this would only be true on days characterized by low levels of hassles. On days with high hassles, sacrifices may be perceived as further *depleting* an individual's resources and decreasing positive outcomes (CoR; Hobfoll, 1989) rather than an investment of resources that should be associated with increased positive outcomes.

In terms of actor effects, findings were generally consistent with expectations. More specifically, I found some support for the hypothesis that a person's sacrifices would be beneficial for his or her own relationship quality (i.e., women's commitment), but that this pattern was especially true when that person had low levels of hassles (i.e., men's closeness and commitment). In terms of partner effects, however, sacrifices were not significant on their own or in interaction with hassles. Thus, despite speculation based on interdependence theory (Kelley, 1979) that sacrifices could be particularly beneficial for the partner on the receiving end of the sacrifice, such patterns were not found. It may be that individuals did not notice that sacrifices were being made for them, which is supported by the idea that individuals underestimate how much their partners do while overestimating how much they themselves do (Kelley, 1979). Similarly, empirical evidence suggests that both men and women fail to notice approximately 25% of the positive behaviors their partners report doing (Gable, Reis, & Downey, 2003)

In the third paper, sacrifices were conceptualized as the independent variable whereas hassles were hypothesized as a moderator. Still, several main effects for hassles that were not qualified by significant higher level interactions were found. Increased daily hassles were associated with men's and women's decreased satisfaction in terms of both actor and partner effects. That is, when men and women felt more hassled on a particular day, this pattern was detrimental for both their own and their partners' reports of relationship satisfaction that day. Women's hassles were also found to be associated with both their own and their partners' decreased feelings of closeness. These findings with regards to hassles are in line with the findings of Paper 2 of this dissertation, as well as the empirical work of others (e.g., Harper et al., 2000; Totenhagen et al., in press) regarding the detrimental effects of daily stressors on individuals' feelings about relationships.

Overall Implications

The findings from this dissertation hold several important implications for practitioners and those who work with romantic couples. First, individuals' feelings about the relationship do indeed vary from day to day in a variety of domains—even for constructs for which questions existed about whether they might be more stable (e.g., commitment, love). Given that fluctuations in feelings about the relationship are expected to be detrimental in terms of the success of relationships (e.g., Arriaga, 2001), knowing that these constructs do vary means that it is important we understand *why* they vary so that recommendations can be made about how to help couples feel more stably positive about their relationships from day to day. It may be especially important to focus on these associations in newer (versus more established) couples given findings that for many of these constructs, fluctuations in daily feelings were found to decrease the longer couples had been together.

Knowing that significant variability existed in all seven relational constructs (satisfaction, commitment, closeness, conflict, ambivalence, maintenance, and love), in the second and third papers I examined positive and negative daily experiences (uplifts and hassles) as well as actions (sacrifices) as associated with these fluctuations. With respect to daily hassles, it can be surmised from these papers that it may be worthwhile for those practitioners who work with couples to help individuals effectively cope with the hassling events they experience each day since they were associated with decreased positive and increased negative relational constructs. Furthermore, given several significant partner effects, it may be fruitful to help couples find ways to cope *together* with each individual's hassling experiences. That is, given that hassling experiences, largely composed of events external to the relationship, were found to influence how both partners felt about their relationship, it may be important for couples to learn how to cope with these hassling experiences both on their own as well as with the help of their partners.

It also seems from the findings of this dissertation that it is important to consider not just how to avoid the negative effects of hassles, but also what constructs might bolster positivity in relationships. Daily uplifting events were found to be particularly relevant for increasing positive relational constructs, though the positive effects of uplifts were nullified (i.e., blunted) by the presence of high levels of daily hassles. Thus, it seems as though a reasonable recommendation would be for practitioners and those who work with romantic couples to help individuals recognize the uplifting events they experience on a particular day rather than focusing on the hassling events. Helping individuals reassess hassling events in more uplifting or positive terms may also help guard against the blunting effects of hassles. For example, maybe an individual experiences a hassling day at work. By thinking about how the numerous hassles are now dealt with and how these hassling events might have been positive in some respects (e.g., can now take the weekend off) the negative or blunting effects of these hassles on individuals' feelings about their relationships may be mitigated.

Helping couples understand when it might be helpful to make small sacrifices for their partners may also help to foster positive relationships. That is, those working with couples to promote healthy relationships may focus on helping individuals understand when making sacrifices for their partners might build relationship quality (i.e., on low-stress days) versus when sacrifices may not be beneficial (e.g., on days when stress is particularly high). Furthermore, to help ensure that such sacrifices are benefiting *both* partners, it may be important to help couples recognize the positive behaviors that their partners enact for them so that such positivity does not go unnoticed and unappreciated.

Summary

As reviewed in each of the three papers, these studies were characterized by several strengths and limitations. One limitation is that data were only collected for 7 days. Though a one-week time period is relatively common in diary studies (e.g., Almeida et al., 2002; Butler et al., 2010) and shorter studies may decrease the likelihood of participant fatigue (e.g., Bolger et al., 2003) such a short time span may not be representative of participants' typical experiences. That is, perhaps the one week captured was unique in some way (e.g., more stressful than usual). Collecting daily data over a longer period of time may increase the likelihood that more typical daily experiences are captured.

Another limitation has to do with the sample. All participants were either university students or couples who these university students encouraged to participate. Thus, all participants had some tie to the university in some way. Still, approximately 36% percent of the sample was *not* students and the sample was relatively diverse in terms of age and relationship length. As may be expected with a university-based sample, however, participants were largely highly educated and ethnic make-up was similar to that of the larger Southwestern community where the study was conducted (i.e., primarily Caucasian and Hispanic). Thus, the broader generalizability is not known.

Despite these limitations, this study was also characterized by several strengths. For example, the dyadic and daily diary methodology afforded several benefits. By collecting data from both members of a couple, a better understanding of within-person as well as across-partner effects can be reached. That is, I was able to examine how a person’s experiences impact their own feelings, as well as those of their partners. Furthermore, by examining these patterns on a daily basis, it is possible to examine changes in individuals’ feelings about their relationships as they occur. Other methodologies, such as concurrent studies or even longitudinal studies with longer time periods between assessments, may not pick up on these more proximal processes and instead mask important associations (Laurenceau & Bolger, 2005).

In summary, this dissertation provides empirically-based ideas on how to promote healthy relationships, both by preserving *positive* relationship quality as well as avoiding *negativity*. It is important for scientists and practitioners to understand not just what characterizes “bad” relationships, but also how to promote “good” relationships as well. I focused on the more routine, every day things that individuals experience (e.g., hassles and uplifts) and enact (e.g., sacrifices). In this way, we can begin to further understand how to promote such healthy relationships through every day actions.

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