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If We're "Over," Is It Really Over?: How Past Romantic Relationships Impact Subsequent Relationships

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**IF WE'RE "OVER," IS IT REALLY OVER?: HOW PAST ROMANTIC
RELATIONSHIPS IMPACT SUBSEQUENT RELATIONSHIPS**

A Dissertation

Submitted to Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Communication Studies

by

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ABSTRACT

This project focused on understanding how past romantic relationships influence subsequent romantic relationships. Participants ($n = 147$) completed a survey containing repeated measures focusing on a previous romantic relationship and a current romantic relationship. Through the application of Relational Turbulence Model (RTM; Solomon & Knobloch, 2004) as a framework, the evaluation of relational uncertainty and interference in previous romantic relationships and subsequent romantic relationships was determined. The usage of RTM highlights how past experiences of relational uncertainty and interference influence the following romantic relationship and partner. Additionally, an evaluation of how relational uncertainty influences different types of talk in both previous and subsequent relationships was considered. Finally, the Investment Model (Rusbult, 1990) was utilized to evaluate overall commitment experienced by a relational partner in a previous and subsequent relationship, as well as how commitment influences was influenced by relational uncertainty, interference, and different types of talk in previous and subsequent romantic relationships.

Results indicated the experience of past relational uncertainty and interference in a previous romantic relationship increase the experience of current relational uncertainty and interference in a subsequent relationship. The most common types of talk that occur between past relational partners were small talk, joking around, catching up, recapping the day, and conflict, which resembles “everyday relating” (Goldsmith & Baxter, 1996). Additionally, talk about an ex-partner with a new, current partner was found to increase relational uncertainty. This study also found that increased talk about an ex-partner in subsequent romantic relationships is positively associated with appraisals of threat and avoidance of relationship talk, as mediated by current relational uncertainty. Finally, other important findings produced by this

study were that relational uncertainty and inference were negatively associated with overall commitment in the current romantic relationship.

Overall, this study exposed how past romantic relationships do not simply dissolve and disappear, but continue to live within relational partners and ultimately impact the following romantic relationships. The components of RTM, different types of talk, and commitment are major contributors to romantic relationships, therefore the application of these frameworks allowed for a closer analysis of the question “if we’re over, are we really “over”?”

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The formation of close romantic relationships helps fulfill the fundamental human need of loving and belonging (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Maslow, 1943). Although, ideally, productive relationships will last and hold significance, the fact is that the dissolution of romantic relationships occurs rather frequently (Battaglia, Richard, Dateri, & Lord, 1998). Research suggests that romantic relationship dissolution is profoundly distressing, leading to bouts of anxiety, anger, depression, and loneliness (Simpson, 1987; Sprecher, Felmlee, Metts, Fehr, & Vanni, 1998). Because of the expectations associated with romantic relationships in particular, when they dissolve both parties are faced with convoluted and complex challenges including how to deal with the loss and concomitant emotions as well as how to recover and move on.

Research highlighting the nuances of romantic dissolutions, as well as the recovery process and initiation of subsequent relationships, appear to be contradictory and may be more complicated than expected. Some studies focus a great deal of attention on the event's negative implications (Frazier & Cook, 1993; Gray & Silver, 1990), rather than uncovering its positive outcomes. Another point of contention lies within the actions individuals take following a relational dissolution. Both lay and scholarly literature recognize numerous strategies employed to cope with relational breakups, which may include moving into a subsequent relationship shortly after a breakup (Spielmann, Macdonald, & Wilson, 2009), or the need for a "recovery" period before moving on. For instance, previous findings by Weber (1998) provide that individuals need closure and understanding of the previous romantic dissolution before they can move past the event effectively. Conversely, so-called "rebound relationships" have been found to provide useful benefits. In particular, people who rebound have higher self-esteem, more respect for the new relational partner, and a heightened sense of well-being due to receiving

multiple sources of social support, from the new and ex-partner (Brumbaugh & Fraley, 2015). That being said, the nature and dynamics of rebound relationships, as well as the impact previous relationships have on subsequent relationships are vastly understudied.

In a recent study by Shimek and Bello (2013), emotional attachment to an ex-partner was found to be strongly predictive of subsequent rebound tendencies. More specifically, the researchers questioned which of two paths individuals with high emotional attachment to an ex-partner would follow: would they be more inclined to replace the emotional attachment through pursuit of a rebound relationship, or would they be more likely to be consumed by this attachment and continue to dwell on the ex-partner? That study found that higher levels of emotional attachment to an ex-partner would push an individual in the direction of pursuing a rebound relationship, or entering into a rebound phase. Another result from Shimek and Bello's (2014) work provided that emotional attachment mediated the relationship between gender and rebound tendencies, finding that men are more likely to enter into the rebound phase due to experiencing emotional attachment to an ex-partner. The primary purpose of the abovementioned study was to identify the driving force for the initiation of a rebound, as well as gender differences. With these findings in mind, the aim of the current study broadens the scope of relational focus to include aspects of the previous romantic relationship and how they influence a subsequent romantic relationship, which could be a rebound relationship.

Studies have provided that communication, as well as the relationship itself between ex-partners, does not necessarily end at the breakup (Lannutti & Cameron, 2002; Metts, Cupach & Bejlovec, 1989), suggesting individuals may be entering new relationships with ties to the ex-partners. Ex-partners have been found to experience feelings of remorse, guilt, freedom, longing, and happiness within the post dissolution relationship with the previous significant

other, as well as varying communication processes (Kellas, 2006). This remaining connection to the ex-partner can influence and contribute to the dynamics of rebounds and the perceptions of uncertainty, talk, and commitment within this subsequent relationship.

Previous research on rebound relationships is limited and rather underdeveloped possibly due to difficulty in capturing rebounds as they occur and without retrospective recall issues. Therefore, broadening the scope of this study to focus on subsequent romantic relationships will provide a more in-depth review of literature to allow for assumptions to be formed concerning the relationship between past and subsequent romantic relationships. Partners' behavior and communication are greatly influenced by not only each other, but the overall nature of the relationship as well as the previous breakup experience. Therefore, as individuals enter into a subsequent romantic relationship, what aspects of the previous relationships are being carried over? Ultimately, how is a subsequent romantic relationship impacted by the previous romantic relationship?

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to address this question by applying the Relational Turbulence Model (RTM; Solomon & Knobloch, 2004) as a framework to evaluate the level of relational uncertainty and interference present in participant's previous romantic relationship and subsequent relationship, extending the model's contextual application boundaries. Because RTM highlights various times of transition in relationships (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004), it may help explain the presence of uncertainty during the transition into a new subsequent romantic relationship. In addition, an evaluation of communication between ex-partners, as well as communication concerning both previous and subsequent relationships is evaluated. The communicative behaviors addressed in this study will be analyzed through the RTM lens, such

that the influence of relational uncertainty on these areas of communication is considered. When communication exists between ex-partners, or focused on an ex-partner within a transitioning subsequent relationship, uncertainty is likely to develop and impact the individual's commitment level. Which introduces the final variable of interest, the investment model (Rusbult, 1980). The investment model will be utilized to evaluate the overall commitment partners had in both a previous and subsequent romantic relationship. Just as communication in previous and subsequent relationships will be evaluated through the RTM lens, so too will commitment in both relationships. If present in either relationship, relational uncertainty and interference are likely to significantly impact the level of commitment assessed in either relationship. Finally, the communicative perspective addressed in this study may also impact commitment in previous and subsequent relationships, therefore this relationship will be analyzed as well.

CHAPTER 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Cohen (2015), “our past relationships, and the feelings we had for a significant other, can transfer to a subsequent relationship, and ultimately have a profound effect on the new romantic relationship” (p. 1). This influence of past relationships on subsequent romantic relationships displays a significant interaction to which researchers should pay more attention, especially considering most individuals have various relationships across one’s lifespan. Overall, this interaction between previous and subsequent relationships is the focus of this study. More specifically, a thorough overview of the relational turbulence model, various forms of relational talk, and the investment model will contribute to the aim of this study, such that these variables are considered across participants’ previous and subsequent romantic relationships.

Relational Turbulence Model

Before explaining the origination and application of the Relational Turbulence Model, one must note that this dissertation started before the transition from model to theory. Relational Turbulence Theory has since been established by Solomon, Knobloch, Theiss, and McLaren (2016), which illustrates the continued work to expand the boundaries of relational turbulence. Therefore, it is possible that recent discoveries and application of relational turbulence could change the scope of this particular study and reshaped everything from application, approach, and findings.

The original application of the Relational Turbulence Model (RTM) focused on the transition from casual to serious dating among college students (Solomon & Knobloch, 2001). RTM explains that turbulence is a function of two primary underlying mechanisms, relational uncertainty and interference (Theiss & Knobloch, 2014). Relational uncertainty refers to “how sure or unsure individuals are about the nature of their relationship” (Theiss & Knobloch, 2014,

p. 29) and comes from three primary sources: 1) *self uncertainty*, or the uncertainty individuals have about their own participation in the relationship; 2) *partner uncertainty*, or the uncertainty revolving around a partner's participation in the relationship; and 3) *relationship uncertainty*, or uncertainty pertaining to the actual relationship itself. According to Nagy and Theiss (2013), "interference from partners refers to the degree to which an individual perceives a partner is undermining personal goals, actions, and routines" (p. 284). As romantic partners become more involved and dependent upon each other, or interdependent, they can interfere with and disrupt one another's daily routines (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004). The evaluation of dating and married partners showed that interference manifests in the form of disruptions of daily routines, daily schedules, leisure time, and goals pertaining to diet, entertainment, and exercise (Knobloch, 2008; Theiss & Knobloch, 2009).

Due to the course of the model's development, it now offers an explanation for why several types of transitions that occur in romantic relationships are often tumultuous (Knobloch & Thesis, 2010; Solomon & Knobloch, 2004; Solomon & Theiss, 2008). RTM has been applied to test the perceived threat of sexual communication (Theiss & Estlein, 2014), to the post-deployment transition (Theiss & Knobloch, 2014), reintegration following military service (Theiss & Knobloch, 2013), the empty-nest transition (Nagy & Theiss, 2013), transitioning new parents (Theiss, Estlein, & Weber, 2013), cross-cultural application (Theiss & Nagy, 2012), experiences of hurt in romantic relationships (Theiss, Knobloch, Checton, & Magsamen-Conrad, 2009), and experiences of jealousy in romantic relationships (Theiss & Solomon, 2006a). Therefore, research shows that romantic relationships experience many different types of transitions, and also establishes RTM's applicability across various times of uncertainty in romantic relationships. Ultimately, what these extensions suggest is that no matter the level of

commitment in a romantic relationship, times of transition can result in turmoil, tumult, and upheaval for both partners (Knobloch & Theiss, 2011a; Steuber & Solomon, 2008; Theiss et al., 2013; Theiss & Nagy, 2010; Weber & Solomon, 2008). Furthermore, some researchers believe that relational uncertainty is ever-present in romantic relationships (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996; Honeycutt, 1993), regardless of stage of development, and can happen at any given point throughout the relationship (Planalp & Honeycutt, 1985; Planalp, Rutherford, & Honeycutt, 1988).

Relational uncertainty and subsequent relationships

When specifically focusing on relational uncertainty and interference in romantic relationships, Solomon and Knobloch (2004) found that “people experiencing relational uncertainty and interference from partners view irritations as more serious and more threatening to their relationships” (p. 811). Additional empirical research supports Solomon and Knobloch’s (2004) abovementioned finding, such that relational uncertainty and negative valence outcomes often happen together within romantic relationships (Afifi & Reichert, 1996; Knobloch & Solomon, 2002b, 2003). Therefore, Solomon and Knobloch (2004) conclude that relational uncertainty surrounding “interpersonal associations intensify reactions to negative relationship events” (p. 812). In a diary study conducted by Young, Curran, and Totenhagen (2012), they found that days with higher appearances of relational uncertainty negatively influenced the benefits individuals received when working to change the relationship as compared to days with lower relational uncertainty. The presence of relational uncertainty in romantic relationships can cause partners to negatively evaluate relational events, and contribute to the unwillingness and ineffectiveness of relational work. Allowing thoughts of and communication concerning a previous romantic relationship and ex-partner to infiltrate a subsequent romantic relationship can

create negative relational events, and contribute to the presence of or increase in relational uncertainty. Therefore, the next section focuses on explicating relational uncertainty and subsequent romantic relationships, and proposing hypotheses associated with connection of these two variables.

Because uncertainty can derive from many different relational events, when considering the context of previous romantic relationships, partners in a new relationship may be unsure of their own commitment to the new relationship, how committed their partner is to the new relationship, and uncertain about the current relationship status, especially if a partner still communicates with his or her previous partner. If a previous relationship and ex-partner are still present when an individual enters a subsequent relationship then he or she may be uncertain of participation towards both the current and the past relationship, their partner's participation in the relationship, and the status of the relationship.

Additionally, relational turbulence is influenced by relational uncertainty due to the partner's limited ability to make sense of their relationship during times of transitions (Knobloch, 2007a; Knobloch & Theiss, 2010), which elicits questions pertaining to the current and future relationship status (Solomon & Knobloch, 2001, 2004). Although the relational turbulence model focuses on transitions in established romantic relationships, individuals may also experience transitions while between relationships. As an individual moves on from one relationship and into another, or a subsequent relationship, he or she may experience relational uncertainty. Duck's (1982) model of relationship dissolution pinpoints this period ex-partners encounter after a romantic relationship has ended. He has coined this timeframe as the grave-dressing process (Duck, 1982) and the resurrection process (Rollie & Duck, 2006). The grave-dressing process allows relational partners to focus on the breakup account, the reformulation of

that account, and the sharing of that account with others (Duck, 1982; Rollie & Duck, 2006). Individuals also enact behaviors that help them to “get over” the relationship (Vangelisti, 2011) in a socially acceptable way that hopefully present themselves as desirable future partners (Rollie, & Duck, 2006). The resurrection process follows grave-dressing and incorporates how relational partners begin to prepare themselves for the future and future relationships, especially considering that a breakup is not the end to all social existence (Rollie & Duck, 2006). More specifically, this process holds that individuals try to rebuild and recast a new persona (Dragon & Duck, 2005) by altering or rewriting aspects of the previous relationship that display their negative characteristics (Rollie & Duck, 2006). Therefore, if an individual is still transitioning, reworking, and reforecasting themselves from the previous relationship while moving into a subsequent relationship, the individual may have feelings of uncertainty pertaining to the subsequent relationship’s future. More specifically, if the individual is still consumed or even communicating with or about his or her ex-partner, past relationship, and/or the breakup, the presence of relational uncertainty may increase in the subsequent relationship due to the negativity associated with such events. This creation of turbulence can lead both partners to question the state of the subsequent relationship and increase uncertainty about the relationship’s future as well. The frequency of communication with an ex-partner will be determined to evaluate the presence of an ex-partner and previous relationship in participant’s subsequent relationship. Therefore, the following is considered:

H1: Relational uncertainty in a subsequent relationship is positively associated with increased communication with an ex-partner.

Moreover, the roles individuals take on during the breakup process may contribute to levels of uncertainty individuals feel in regards to his or her previous romantic relationship. To

begin the process of dissolving a relationship, either one partner or both have to decide that the relationship is over (Hill, Rubin, & Peplau, 1976; Sprecher, 1994). Hill, Rubin, and Peplau (1976) found that most breakups, around 85%, are initiated and determined by one partner. Therefore, the majority of breakups are not mutual, which would leave one partner with greater feelings of vulnerability, hurt, depression, or anger (Donald, Dower, Correa-Velez, & Jones, 2006; Sbarra, 2006). The breakup recipient is likely left surrounded by more negative emotions and more overall distress (Sprecher, 1994; Sprecher et al., 1998). Overall, the following is considered:

H2: Former breakup recipients will experience more relational uncertainty in subsequent romantic relationships than former breakup initiators.

Furthermore, the role one played in the previous breakup may influence the relationship between past and current relational uncertainty. More specifically, when considering the role played in the breakup, these negative feelings can contribute to the breakup recipient's perception of relational uncertainty concerning the previous relationship. If one assumes the role of breakup recipient, then his or her past relational uncertainty could heighten relational uncertainty in the subsequent relationship due to previously mentioned face threatening issues. However, if one was the breakup initiator or the breakup was mutual, then the relational uncertainty that played into the cause of the breakup may carry over into the subsequent relationship. Furthermore, Weber (1998) asserted that individuals need closure or understanding of a breakup in order to move on effectively. Therefore, if an individual is still consumed with the previous relationship or not quite "done" with it, then his or her subsequent relationship will likely contain relational uncertainty due to previous relationship distraction. Focusing on the relationship between these variables, the following is developed:

H3a: Relational uncertainty in the previous romantic relationship will increase relational uncertainty in the subsequent romantic relationship.

H3b: Relational uncertainty in the previous romantic relationship will increase relational uncertainty in the subsequent romantic relationship, as moderated by the role assumed in the previous breakup.

Overall, relational uncertainty is an important component to relational turbulence and is likely to be experienced to varying degrees in subsequent romantic relationships.

Interference from ex-partners and subsequent relationships

As previously mentioned, interference within romantic relationships concerns how partners perceive the other as “undermining personal goals, actions, and routines” (Nagy & Theiss, 2013, p. 284). Solomon and Knobloch (2001) based the interference perspective on the establishment of interdependence as a developmental necessity within romantic relationships. Interdependence concerns the negotiation of behavioral systems between partners, which benefits each, increases as the relationship develops (Perlman & Fehr, 1987), and may allow for disruptions or interference to appear (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004). Additionally, Solomon and Knobloch (2004) refer to Berscheid’s (1983) interpretation of interdependence as a process of integration that is often disrupted, involving errors or missteps that partners have to work through and overcome. Therefore, as partners negotiate interdependence and increase intimacy within a relationship, the initial interferences or disruptions are negotiated and overcome, eventually replaced by facilitative forms of interdependence (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004). Overall, interferences can be interpreted as byproducts of relationship development that may contribute to relational turbulence (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004).

Interferences in subsequent romantic relationships, or those relationships following a previous breakup, may differ due to the influence of the previous relationship. Partners involved in a subsequent romantic relationship may be more or less sensitive to interferences due to prevalence of the previous romantic relationship dissolution. Previous studies have found that individuals with an insecure attachment type enter new relationships more quickly after a breakup (Brumbaugh & Fraley, 2015), which may be due to his or her desire for more interference from a new partner to emulate the interdependence established in the previous relationship. Therefore, the perception of interferences by those involved in a subsequent relationship could be positively influenced by perceived interferences in the previous romantic relationship. Additionally, an increase in interference in the subsequent relationship may be due to the perception that the relationship is a “normal” relationship in which he or she is pursuing the partner to further develop the relationship. Accordingly, the development of a hypothesis to determine the connection of interferences between a previous romantic relationship and a subsequent romantic relationship is necessary:

H4: Perceived interference (i.e., interdependence) in subsequent romantic relationships is positively influenced by interference (i.e., interdependence) in the previous romantic relationship.

Overall, the study of interferences coordinates with the development of interdependence in transitioning romantic relationships. As relationships move from casually dating to a more serious stature, partners negotiate through interferences and become more interdependent. Therefore, considering how interdependence from previous romantic relationships contributes to the perception of interferences and interdependence in subsequent relationships broadens the

understanding and importance of interference in romantic relationships as a developmental by-product.

Relational Uncertainty and Talk in Subsequent Relationships

When considering talk that occurs in subsequent romantic relationships there are multiple scenarios that can elicit various levels of relational uncertainty. For the purpose of this study, two primary types of talk will be of focus because of their unique contribution to romantic relationships. Since rebounds and subsequent relationships are characteristically associated and influenced by the previous romantic termination, the first type of talk is *ex-partner talk*, which involves communication with or about an ex-partner. Ex-partner talk can be internal or external, such that internal talk is between partners in a subsequent romantic relationship where the primary topic is the ex-partner; whereas external talk is talk between the individual and the ex-partner. The final type of interest is *relationship talk*, which is comprised of appraisals of threat, avoidance of relationship talk, and enacted relationship talk within the current relationship (Knobloch & Theiss 2011b).

Ex-partner talk

Even though a relationship has ended or broken up, former partners can and do still maintain varying levels of communication (Kellas, 2006; Lannutti & Cameron, 2002; Metts et al., 1989), therefore exhibiting external talk or talk between ex-partners. Previous research focusing on friendships between ex-partners provide many explanations for the continued relationship, such as continuation of resources (Busboom, Collins, Givertz, & Levin, 2002), the breakup was male-initiated or mutual (Hill, et al., 1976), partners were friends before the romantic relationship, a positive tone approach was taken by the breakup initiator (Metts et al., 1989), and if an ex-partner is viewed as more desirable (Banks, Altendorf, Greene, & Cody,

1987). In one particular study, it was found that post-dissolution communication can include various types of talk, such as positive communication, occasional communication, circumstantial communication, rare and/or awkward communication, negative communication, and absence of communication (Kellas, 2006). Based on these findings, the type and frequency of post dissolution communication can influence variance in levels of relational uncertainty in subsequent romantic relationships. Therefore, the following research question is posited:

RQ5: What are the most frequent types of external ex-partner talk?

RQ6: Do the most frequent types of external ex-partner talk influence relational uncertainty in subsequent romantic relationships?

Another possibility of ex-partner talk that occurs in subsequent relationships centers on internal ex-partner talk, or talk about the ex-partner with the new partner. Because rebounds are known to begin quickly after a relational termination (Shimek & Bello, 2014; Brumbaugh & Fraley, 2015), it seems likely that conversations regarding the ex-partner will arise more so than if a greater amount of time has passed between the breakup and new relationship. This type of talk relies on turning to the new partner for supportive communication and/or to verbally express one's story of relational loss. Oftentimes the person that individuals rely on most for support is his or her significant other. After a breakup, however, the ex-partner becomes the one person that cannot be turned to (Kellas, Bean, Cunningham & Cheng, 2008), therefore causing the individuals to turn to new partners instead for this type of support.

Previous research has also shown that prior romantic relationships continue on through an individual's mind and stories that are shared with others (Weber, Harvey & Stanley, 1987), which is emulated through Duck's (1982, 2005) grave dressing phase within the model of relationship dissolution. This communicative process of sharing information about the previous

relationship has been found to help individuals cope with and move on past the breakup (Kellas & Manusov, 2003; Weber et al., 1987). The consequences of turning to the new partner for support are unknown, but it is likely to influence the levels of partner and relationship uncertainty for both partners because the ex-partner and past relationship are heavily present within the subsequent relationship. As previously mentioned, aspects and feelings from previous romantic relationships can transfer to subsequent relationships (Cohen, 2015); insinuating previous romantic relationships can have a significant impact in subsequent relationships without considering the addition of ex-partner talk. This unknown speculation allows for the addition of the following:

H7: Internal ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships increases relational uncertainty.

Further evaluation of internal ex-partner talk continues below, which pushes the examination and implications of internal ex-partner talk as it is associated with other variables.

Relationship talk

The final aspect of talk to be evaluated within subsequent romantic relationships is relationship talk that concerns the use of content messages when discussing the nature, status, and/or future of the current relationship (Acitelli, 1988, 2008; Knobloch, Solomon & Theiss, 2006). According to Acitelli (2001), the negotiation and maintenance of relationships is the primary purpose for relationship talk. There are three components of relationship talk: 1) *appraisals of threat*, or one's perception of how risky the engagement of relationship talk is (Knobloch & Carpenter-Theune, 2004); 2) *avoidance of relationship talk*, or purposely withholding talk about the relationship with the partner (Afifi & Burgoon, 1998; Afifi & Guerrero, 2000); and 3) *enacted relationship talk*, or actually discussing the relationship with

one's partner (Acitelli & Badr, 2005; Guerrero & Chavez, 2005). Researchers Knobloch and Theiss (2011b) concluded that "individuals experiencing relational uncertainty may forgo relationship talk rather than risk negative outcomes" (p. 9), illustrating that under certain circumstances individuals may not seek out information, but rather avoid it because of uncertainty. Knobloch and Theiss (2011b) also mention that other theories, such as predicted outcome value theory (Sunnafank, 1986, 1990), uncertainty management theory (Brashers, 2001, 2007), and the theory of motive information management (Afifi, 2010; Afifi & Weiner, 2004), suggest that individuals are likely to avoid seeking out information due to the possible unfavorable risk and negative consequences involved. According to Knobloch (2010), individuals may avoid relationship talk in preference of saving one's own face, as well as their partner's image, and not wanting to threaten the relationship.

Another possible explanation to consider when evaluating the relational uncertainty and talk in subsequent romantic relationships is how face threatening, a component of Goffman's politeness theory, talk can be for either or both partners. The projection of one's identity during interaction with others is known as face, and can be distinguished as either positive face or negative face (Goffman, 1959). Positive face refers to one's desire to be liked, appreciated, and admired; thus, messages that address positive face underline approval. Negative face encapsulates autonomy and freedom from imposition, and messages attuned to negative face emphasize lack of obligation (Goffman, 1959).

According to Knobloch and Theiss (2011b), "people's desires to protect face may supersede their desire to gain information when they are unsure about the status of their relationship" (p. 21). Therefore, in order to protect oneself and one's partner, the avoidance of relationship talk during times of uncertainty may occur. Knobloch, Satterlee, and DiDomenico

(2010) found that relational uncertainty strongly predicted the extent of threat to one's positive face, and least strongly predicted the extent of threat to partner's negative face. Additionally, they provided that uncertain partners want to avoid appearing too forward or needy, are cautious when perceiving face threats, and that uncertainty may protect partners from making extreme assumptions (Knobloch et al., 2010; Knobloch, 2007b). Therefore, face threats associated with relationship talk can cause individuals to withstand relational uncertainty rather than seek information that may have negative consequences or implications for themselves and the relationship. Ultimately, relationship talk can become more risky than enduring uncertainty.

When focusing on the relationship between relational uncertainty and relationship talk, Knobloch and Theiss (2011b) found that relational uncertainty allowed for relationship talk to be perceived as more threatening to the individual, as well as the relationship. The longitudinal findings portrayed that individuals with high relational uncertainty who avoided relationship talk during one week would then experience more relational uncertainty the following week. Additional research found that conversations pertaining to prominent, in-depth, negatively valenced relationship talk hold more consequences to dating relationships (Knobloch et al., 2006), illustrating how perceptions of negative relationship talk can strain romantic relationships.

Therefore, the evaluation of relational uncertainty, external ex-partner talk, and relationship talk within the context of subsequent romantic relationships may provide interesting findings concerning how partners engage in relationship talk while communication continues with an ex-partner. As previously mentioned, the residue from a previous romantic relationship and ex-partner can likely find its way into and have a tremendous effect on a subsequent relationship (Cohen, 2015). Additionally, research provides that the dissolution of a romantic relationship does not mean the relationship is truly over in most cases (Lannutti & Cameron,

2002; Metts et al., 1989), but that communication between ex-partners is likely to continue (Kellas et al., 2008). Therefore, the influence external ex-partner talk, or communication with an ex-partner, has on relationship talk, or appraisal of threat, enacted relationship talk, and avoided relationship talk, may be facilitated by current relational uncertainty. Relational uncertainty already impacts views of relationship talk, therefore it may also impact the relationship between external ex-partner talk and relationship talk. More specifically, increased communication with an ex-partner may increase the appraisal of threat in a current relationship, which is heightened by the presence of relational uncertainty pertaining to the current relationship. If an ex-partner is still present or communicated with while in another romantic relationship, then individuals in the subsequent relationship may avoid relationship talks focused on the subsequent relationship due to perceived negative consequences that enacted relationship talk could have. This may occur because relationship talk is likely negatively perceived and thought to have negative consequences for the current relationship. Partners in both situations may experience uncertainty given the apparent focus on the ex-partner and previous relationship, which resembles the welcoming of a third party into the current relationship.

Overall, the relationship between external ex-partner talk and relationship talk, and how it is influenced by relational uncertainty within subsequent romantic relationships is unknown, therefore the following research question and hypothesis can be posited:

H8a: Increased external ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships is positively associated with appraisals of threat, as mediated by current relational uncertainty.

H8b: Increased external ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships is positively associated with avoidance of relationship talk, as mediated by current relational uncertainty.

H8c: Increased external ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships is negatively associated with enacted relationship talk, as mediated by current relational uncertainty.

Just as continued communication with an ex-partner may seriously impact relationship talk in a subsequent romantic relationship, so can internal ex-partner talk, or communication about the ex-partner and past relationship with a current partner. As previously hypothesized, it is believed that internal ex-partner talk will increase relationship uncertainty. This relationship provides the foundation to question how internal ex-partner talk will influence appraisal of threat, enacted relationship talk, and avoided relationship talk. Furthermore, the presence of this relationship is thought to occur because of relational uncertainty. Talking about an ex-partner with your current partner may contribute to an increase in appraisal of threat, or how risky it would be to talk about the current relationship, as caused by relational uncertainty. Furthermore, talking about an ex-partner is likely to increase avoided relationship talk and decrease enacted relationship talk about the current relationship, which is once again caused by relational uncertainty. Overall, the following is proposed:

H9a: Increased internal ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships is positively associated with appraisals of threat, as mediated by current relational uncertainty.

H9b: Increased internal ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships is positively associated with avoidance of relationship talk, as mediated by current relational uncertainty.

H9c: Increased internal ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships is negatively associated with enacted relationship talk, as mediated by current relational uncertainty.

The Investment Model: Quality of Alternatives, Relational Satisfaction, and Investment Size

The investment model was born from interdependence theory (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978), and asserts that individuals attempt to maximize rewards in relationships while minimizing costs (Rusbult, 1980). Caryl Rusbult (1980) states that “according to the investment model, attraction to and satisfaction with a relationship is a function of a comparison of the relationship outcome value (both rewards and costs) to the individual’s expectations, or comparison level” (p. 172). Thus, this model is used to predict satisfaction with and commitment to ongoing relationships (Rusbult, 1980). The investment model works to “distinguish between predictors of satisfaction or positive affect experienced in the relationship and commitment, or the intent to maintain and feel psychologically attached to the relationship” (Sprecher, 2001, p. 600). According to the Investment Model (IM), commitment is representative of the solidarity of a relationship. *Commitment* is based on the individual’s intent to maintain the relationship, how psychologically attached they feel to the relationship, staying on a long-term course, and is inversely linked to thoughts of leaving the relationship (Ferrara & Levine, 2009).

Commitment, which determines the stability of the relationship (Sprecher, 2001), is based on three concepts that are evaluated by those in a romantic relationship: the quality of alternatives, investment size, and relational satisfaction. *Quality of alternatives* is the first essential component of commitment, defined as the evaluation of one’s options that are beyond their present relationships. When considering *investment*, Rusbult (1980) provided that it concerns the resources involved in the relationship that would diminish in value or completely if the relationship ended. Finally, *relational satisfaction* is comprised of three factors: rewards, costs, and comparison level. Ferrara and Levine (2009) state that, “the level of satisfaction is

determined by the rewards obtained relative to expectations – that is, satisfaction is a function of the desirability of outcomes (average of rewards minus costs) experienced in relation to the generalized expectations regarding the quality of the relationship, or CL” (p. 192). Additionally, relational commitment, or commitment to the relationship, is said to be positively affected by satisfaction and investments, and negatively by higher quality of alternatives (Sprecher, 2001). Overall, analysis of the IM provides factors that are determined for overall commitment felt towards a partner.

For the interest of this study, the investment model provides a framework for evaluating individuals’ level of commitment within a subsequent romantic relationship given the likely presence of relational uncertainty, interferences, and different types of talk. In previous research, relational uncertainty was found to be negatively associated with relational satisfaction (Dainton, 2003; Knobloch, 2008). In general, those partners who encounter relational uncertainty experience harsh reactions and negative perceptions concerning various common relational aspects, such as thinking the relationship lacks familial support (Knobloch & Donovan-Kicken, 2006), being more annoyed by the partner’s behaviors (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004; Theiss & Solomon, 2006b), and experiencing negative reactions to unplanned or unexpected events (Knobloch & Solomon, 2002b). These examples provide evidence that commitment to a relationship and partner can easily be impacted by relational uncertainty in one or both partners.

This study aims to examine the relationship between relational uncertainty, interference, and commitment level in the subsequent relationship. More specifically, increased levels of relational uncertainty and interferences will result in lower levels of commitment. In addition to evaluating relational uncertainty and commitment, this study also considers how talking to an ex-partner impacts commitment in a subsequent relationship. As ex-partner talk increases in a

subsequent relationship, overall commitment level in the subsequent relationship is likely to be effected. Basically, if a partner is talking to his or her ex, then the overall commitment to the subsequent relationship may be impacted. This impact may be due to the mere existence of appraisals of threat or risk of relationship talk, enacted and avoided relationship talk. If a partner is having issues discussing the current relationship, then external ex-partner talk may significantly impact the commitment level in the subsequent relationship. By taking a closer look at the different types of talk, as well as the frequency with which they occur, within the context of subsequent romantic relationships, and levels of commitment may vary. Therefore:

H10: In subsequent romantic relationships, as individuals' level of relational uncertainty and interferences increase, his or her commitment level to the current subsequent relationship and partner will decrease.

H11a: An increased frequency of ex-partner talk will be associated with a decrease in the level of commitment in subsequent romantic relationships.

H11b: An increased frequency of ex-partner talk will be associated with a decrease in the level of commitment in subsequent romantic relationship, as mediated by relationship talk (appraisal of threat, avoided and enacted relationship talk).

Summary

Overall, the use of RTM, IM, and types of talk to analyze previous and subsequent romantic relationships will deepen our knowledge and understanding of both relationships. This analysis should expand our knowledge of and reveal the overlooked complexities of romantic relationships, as well as how they continue to influence and impact subsequent romantic relationships. Although, RTM has recently been broadened to address different transitional periods within romantic relationships, the model has yet to isolate transition between or into new

relationships. Gaining an understanding of the nuances of this transitional period may further support the notion that past relationships continue to impact ex-partners and critical aspects of future relationships, such as commitment and communication.

Table 1. Hypotheses and Research Questions

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| H1: Relational uncertainty in a subsequent relationship is positively associated with increased communication with an ex-partner. |
| H2: Former breakup recipients will experience more relational uncertainty in subsequent romantic relationships than former breakup initiators. |
| H3a: Relational uncertainty in the previous romantic relationship will increase relational uncertainty in the subsequent romantic relationship. |
| H3b: Relational uncertainty in the previous romantic relationship will increase relational uncertainty in the subsequent romantic relationship, as moderated by the role assumed in the previous breakup. |
| H4: Perceived interference (i.e., interdependence) in subsequent romantic relationships is positively influenced by interference (i.e., interdependence) in the previous romantic relationship. |
| RQ5: What are the most frequent types of external ex-partner talk? |
| RQ6: Do the most frequent types of external ex-partner talk influence relational uncertainty in subsequent romantic relationships? |
| H7: Internal ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships increases relational uncertainty. |
| H8a: Increased external ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships is positively associated with appraisals of threat, as mediated by current relational uncertainty. |
| H8b: Increased external ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships is positively associated with avoidance of relationship talk, as mediated by current relational uncertainty. (table cont'd) |
| H8c: Increased external ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships is negatively associated with enacted relationship talk, as mediated by current relational uncertainty. |
| H9a: Increased internal ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships is positively associated with appraisals of threat, as mediated by current relational uncertainty. |
| H9b: Increased internal ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships is positively associated with avoidance of relationship talk, as mediated by current relational uncertainty. |
| H9c: Increased internal ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships is negatively associated with enacted relationship talk, as mediated by current relational uncertainty. |
| H10: In subsequent romantic relationships, as individuals' level of relational uncertainty and interferences increase, his or her commitment level to the current subsequent relationship and partner will decrease. |

H11a: An increased frequency of ex-partner talk will be associated with a decrease in the level of commitment in subsequent romantic relationships.

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CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

In order to address the posited hypotheses and research questions, survey data was collected from individuals who had been in at least one romantic relationship. That being said, in order to participate in the study participants must have experienced a romantic relationship prior to or during survey completion.

Participants and Procedure

According to Green's (1991) rule of thumb for medium effect size $50 + 8k$, with k representing the number of predictor variables, this study needs a minimum sample of 146 participants. Additionally, *a priori* power analysis was performed using the power of 0.80, an alpha level of 0.05 for a two-tailed model, and an anticipated effect size of $f^2 = .3$ for medium effect size. With the inclusion of the predictor variables, it was determined that a sample of 127 was needed. Statistical power is "a gauge of the sensitivity of a statistical test; that is, its ability to detect effect of a specific size, given the particular variance and sample size of a study" (Vogt, 1999, p. 277). Therefore, power analysis is utilized to determine the likelihood of rejecting the null hypothesis, and to figure the appropriate sample size needed in order to have a chance at rejecting the null hypothesis (Wright, 1997).

Participants consisted of 268 Louisiana State University undergraduates who were enrolled in various communication studies courses. The participants received one credit applied towards the research participation requirement for communication courses as a percentage of their course grade. Participants signed up for designated time spots to take the survey in the department's computer lab. Upon arrival to the computer lab, participants signed in and began the survey. Once they completed the survey participants were free to leave. There was one participant who did not provide his or her sex or age, but completed the rest of the survey. Overall, 68.8%, or $n=183$ of the participants were female and 31.2%, or $n=83$ were male. The

average age for the original sample of 266 is 19.9, with a minimum age of 18 and maximum age of 50. Additionally, there were 49 freshman, 129 sophomores, 58 juniors, 28 seniors, 1 graduate student, and 1 non-degree seeking student. Participants also provided ethnicity, therefore 23.3% (n=62) of participants are African American, 63.5% (n=169) are Caucasian, 2.3% (n=6) Asian, 5.3% (n=14) Hispanic, 1.5% (n=4) Latino/a, 1.1% (n=3) Native American, and 3% (n=8) other.

The original sample of 266 was modified to focus on only those participants that had previously been in a romantic relationship and are currently in a subsequent romantic relationship, therefore producing a sample of 147 participants. The mean age of these participants is 20.2 with a minimum age of 18 and maximum age of 50. Of these participants, 5.4% (n=8) are single, 40.8% (n=60) are dating, 49.7% (n=73) are seriously dating, 4% (n=6) are engaged or married. When considering the student classification of this subsample, 17% (n=25) are freshmen, 44.9% (n=66) are sophomores, 25.2% (n=37) are juniors, 11.6% (n=17) are seniors, .68% (n=1) are graduate students, and .68% (n=1) are non-degree seeking. The classification of graduate student and non-degree seeking were combined to create the category of “other.” Finally, the participants from the new sample consisted of 19.1% (n=28) African Americans, 68.7% (n=101) Caucasian, 1.4% (n=2) Asian, 4.8% (n=7) Hispanic, 2% (n=3) Latino/a, .68% (n=1) Native American, and 3.4% (n=5) other. Finally, of the participants 24.5% (n = 36) were male and 75.5% (n = 111) were female. Table 1 contains basic demographic information about the study’s participants. IRB procedures and consent were followed.

This study focused on the individual or one partner from dyads, rather than both partners participating. Therefore, partner-actor data was not collected and findings from this study only apply to the individual. Partner-actor data collection is common with relationship studies, however this study was limited due to researcher knowledge, experience, and abilities. The

survey collected participants' demographic and relationship characteristics concerning a past and subsequent romantic relationships (see Appendix). More specifically, participants were asked to report the narrative of his or her most recent break-up, the role he or she played in the break-up, length of the relationship, current status of that relationship, frequency of communication with the ex-partner, etc. Additionally, participants' experiences with relational uncertainty, interferences, relationship talk, and overall commitment were assessed for the most recent past romantic relationship. Participants were then asked whether or not they were currently in a new romantic relationship. If they responded yes, they were to continue on with the survey. If they responded no, the survey was complete. A total of 147 participants currently in a new romantic relationship were asked questions about the characteristics of the relationship, such as "In months, approximately how long have you been in this new relationship?" and "In weeks, how soon after the previous breakup did this relationship begin?" Finally, repeated-measures were used to report on relational uncertainty, interferences, and relationship talk, with variation in presentation to direct attention to current relationship instead of the previous one. The measure for overall commitment was expanded upon, therefore including more items focusing on participants' current romantic relationship.

Because this study focused on how past romantic relationships impact current or subsequent relationships, a within subject design allows for the evaluation of those 147 cases that included both a previous and subsequent relationship. Therefore, the final sample of 147 participants allows for the comparison of previous and present romantic relationships.

Instrumentation

Relational uncertainty

A modified version of Knobloch and Solomon's (1999) measures of self, partner, and relational uncertainty were utilized to operationalize relational uncertainty. In order to address relational uncertainty, participants responded to a series of statements that were prefaced by a stem stating "How certain are you about...?" Additionally, participants were guided to either respond while considering his or her most recent past romantic relationship or his or her current romantic relationship. This allowed for the collection of relational uncertainty pertaining to two separate relationships. The participants rated their certainty of each statement using 6-point scaling (1 = *completely or almost completely uncertain*, 6 = *completely or almost completely certain*). The responses to all items are reverse-scored in order to calculate measures of relational uncertainty.

Self-uncertainty. The measure of self-uncertainty in a previous romantic relationship consisted of four items. The reliability, mean, and standard deviation for self-uncertainty are as follows for the most recent past relationship ($M = 1.79$, $SD = 1.28$, $\alpha = .92$) and current relationship ($M = .83$, $SD = 1.12$, $\alpha = .95$). The survey included items such as "whether or not you want[ed] the relationship to last," and "whether or not you are [were] ready to commit to your partner." Previous research by Knobloch and Theiss (2011a) found the items for self-uncertainty reliable across multiples waves or applications in their study with reliability ranging from $\alpha = .91$ to $\alpha = .97$.

Partner-uncertainty. The measure for partner uncertainty includes four items, such as "how committed your partner is[was] to the relationship," and "whether or not your partner wants[wanted] the relationship to work out in the long run." Once again, the items were found

to be reliable for past romantic relationships ($M = 1.82$, $SD = 1.25$, $\alpha = .86$) and current romantic relationships ($M = .78$, $SD = 1.02$, $\alpha = .92$). According to Knobloch and Theiss's (2011a) findings, partner-uncertainty upheld reliability throughout the course of the study ($\alpha = .90$ to $\alpha = .97$).

Relationship uncertainty. The final dimension of relationship uncertainty was measured using four items. Per this study, the reliability of these items as they pertain the participants' most recent past relationships reached a respectable level of $\alpha = .80$ ($M = 2.28$, $SD = 1.13$). The relationship uncertainty responses for the current relationship were found to be reliable as well with $\alpha = .91$ ($M = 1.06$, $SD = 1.11$), therefore all four items remained. The following are examples of the items measuring relationship uncertainty: "whether or not you and your partner will[would've] stay[ed] together," and "whether or not the relationship will[would've] work[ed] out in the long run." Additionally, researchers Knobloch and Theiss (2011a), used this measure of relationship uncertainty and found it to be reliable ($\alpha = .85$ and $\alpha = .93$).

The combination of all three sources of relational uncertainty, or overall uncertainty, produces an acceptable level of reliability for past romantic relationships ($M = 1.96$, $SD = .97$, $\alpha = .69$) and current romantic relationships ($M = .89$, $SD = .99$, $\alpha = .90$). For additional information on current overall uncertainty or other independent or dependent variables, refer to Table 2.

Interference

In order to measure interference from an ex-partner in a previous romantic relationship, this study asked participants to report the degree to which their ex-partner interfered with everyday activities (Solomon & Knobloch, 2001). Therefore, interference ($\alpha = .85$) was measured by prompting participants to consider his or her most recent past romantic relationship, using 6-point scaling in response to the following four items: (a) my partner interfered with the

plans I'd made, (b) my partner interfered with my plans to attend parties or other social events, (c) my partner interfered with the amount of time I spent with my friends, and (d) my partner interfered with the things I needed to do each day. Participants also responded to the same questions while considering his or her current romantic relationship and current partner ($\alpha = .90$). Previous research by Solomon and Knobloch (2004) utilized these items measuring partner inference ($\alpha = .88$) to establish a model of relational turbulence.

Talk in previous and subsequent relationships

Everyday talk. In order to operationalize the type and frequency of everyday talk with an ex-partner, as well as talk with a new partner, Goldsmith and Baxter's (1996) Revised Taxonomy of Interpersonal Speech Events was utilized. The 29-event taxonomy they created provides a "comprehensive and recognizable catalog of the events experienced in social and personal interpersonal relationships" (Goldsmith & Baxter, 1996, p. 102).

Following the procedure utilized by Shrodt, Braithwaite, Soliz, Tye-Williams, Miller, Normand, and Harrigan (2007), participants were asked to report the frequency of everyday talk with their previous partner ($\alpha = .97$) and current partner ($\alpha = .91$). The following directions were provided to all participants, which asked them to indicate:

How often do you and your [ex-partner; current partner] engage in each of the following kinds of talk with your ex-partner and current partner.

Directions were modified for the second section of the survey to address the current relational partner rather than the ex-partner, which was the focus in the first section of the survey.

Responses were reported using a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*Never*) to 5 (*Regularly*). Table 3 provides information for each facet of everyday talk participants provided for a past romantic

relationship. More specifically, the average for each facet of everyday talk is determined, and the top five are then considered.

Relationship talk. Additionally, the second type of talk, relationship talk, was addressed using items developed by Knobloch and Carpenter-Theune (2004) to operationalize how threatening participants perceive talk about their relationship to be.

Appraisals of threat. To assess level of threatening relationship talk, or appraisal of threat, with an ex-partner about the shared past relationship participants were provided the following stem, “Having a conversation with the ex-partner about the nature of the past relationship would...” addressing *self-threat* ($\alpha = .74$) and *relationship threat* ($\alpha = .91$) using 6-point scaling (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*). According to Knobloch and Theiss (2011), there are 3 unidimensional items for *self-threat*: (1) be embarrassing for me, (2) make me feel vulnerable, and (3) damage my image. The items for *relationship threat* include: (1) threaten the relationship, (2) have a negative effect on the relationship, and (3) damage the relationship. The combination of *self* and *relationship threat* produces *appraisals of threat* ($\alpha = .83$). Appraisals of threat were also measured in participants’ current romantic relationship. Therefore the following stem, “Having a conversation with my current partner about the nature of the current relationship would...” was provided in order for participants to report on *self-threat* ($\alpha = .64$) and *relationship threat* ($\alpha = .93$). Once again, both types of threat are combined to create *appraisals of threat* ($M = 1.85$, $SD = 1.11$, $\alpha = .87$).

Appraisals of threat when talking about an ex-partner. In addition to capturing appraisals of threat when discussing the nature of the relationship with a current partner, this study also looked at appraisals of threat when talking about an ex-partner and past relationship with one’s current romantic partner. Participants were prompted to preface the abovementioned

statements with: “Having a conversation with the current partner about the nature of the most recent past relationship and ex-partner would...” and indicated how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the provided statements. The dimensions measuring *self-threat* ($\alpha = .87$) and *relationship threat* ($\alpha = .96$) were once again combined to create *appraisals of threat* ($\alpha = .89$). Table 2 reports additional information pertaining to these measures.

Avoided relationship talk. To address the second dimension of relationship talk, *avoided relationship talk*, Guerrero and Afifi’s (1995) measure was utilized. Participants were asked to report how much they avoided talking about the nature of their relationship with both their ex-partner ($\alpha = .95$) and current partner ($\alpha = .91$) by using a 7-point scale (1 = “never,” 7 = “always”). The following items were provided to address avoided talk: (1) the state of your relationship, (2) norms and expectations for your relationship, and (3) behaviors that put a strain on your relationship. According to Solomon and Theiss’s (2011) study, the application of this measure was reliable across time assessed throughout their study ($\alpha = .75$ to $\alpha = .89$). Additional statistical information pertaining to *avoided relationship talk* can be found in Table 2.

Enacted relationship talk. The final dimension of relationship talk operationalized was *enacted relationship talk*. The items developed by Knobloch and Theiss (2011b) were utilized to measure how actively participants avoided or discussed relationship talk with the most recent ex-partner and current partner. The participants were given statements beginning with the following stem “we have actively avoided or actively discussed...” (1 = “actively avoided”, 6 = “actively discussed”) to address enacted relationship talk with the ex-partner ($\alpha = .89$) and current partner ($\alpha = .86$): (1) our view of this relationship, (2) our feelings for each other, and (3) the future of the relationship.

The investment model

The level of commitment for both the previous and current relationship was measured through components of the investment model. In addressing overall commitment in the previous relationship participants were asked four questions specifically addressing relational satisfaction, quality of alternatives, investment, and commitment. These four questions were selected to highlight each component of the IM. To prevent participant fatigue and avoidance of unreliable responses, it was decided to reduce the number of items to one per measure. More specifically, to measure for commitment participants responded to the following statement, “I was committed to maintaining my relationship with my ex-partner” ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 1.53$). To assess satisfaction, “I felt satisfied in my previous romantic relationship” was given ($M = 2.87$, $SD = 1.48$). Additionally, to measure for quality of alternatives, the statement “The people other than my ex-partner with whom I might have become involved were very appealing” was assessed ($M = 2.17$, $SD = 1.46$). Lastly, to measure for investment participants were to consider the following statement “I had invested a great deal in my previous romantic relationship” ($M = 3.40$, $SD = 1.47$). Participants responded using a 9-point scale ranging from 0 = *do not agree at all*, 4 = *somewhat agree*, and 8 = *agree completely*. When the measures were combined for overall commitment it reaches a slightly above average level of reliability ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 1.07$, $\alpha = .68$).

To measure the constructs of the IM in current romantic relationships, Rusbult, Martz, and Agnew’s (1998) Investment Model Scale was used, which included facet and global items. The facet items for each construct were included to prepare participants for the global items by defining, illustrating, and improving comprehensibility of the construct, therefore potentially increasing the reliability and validity of the global items (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998).

There are five global items for satisfaction ($M = 6.48$, $SD = 1.89$, $\alpha = .95$), quality of alternatives ($M = 5.20$, $SD = 1.92$, $\alpha = .85$), and investment ($M = 5.63$, $SD = 2.07$, $\alpha = .86$), whereas commitment has seven items ($M = 6.60$, $SD = 1.71$, $\alpha = .89$). All items for the quality of alternatives were reversed coded, therefore the higher values are representative of lower alternatives. Participants used a 9-point Likert scale ranging from 0 = *do not agree at all*, 4 = *somewhat agree*, and 8 = *agree completely*. Sample items for satisfaction included “I feel satisfied with our relationship” and “My relationship is close to ideal.” For quality of alternatives, sample items included “The people other than my partner with whom I might become involved are very appealing” and “My alternatives are attractive to me (dating another, spending time with friends or on my own, etc.).” For investment, sample items included “I have put a great deal into our relationship that I would lose if the relationship were to end” and “I feel very involved in our relationship-like I have put a great deal into it.” For commitment, sample items included “I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner” and “I want our relationship to last forever.” Overall commitment ($\alpha = .89$) is the equivalent to all four measures averaged together (refer to Table 2 for more information). Additionally, a previous study by Rusbult et al.’s (1998) noted the reliability and validity of this instrument as demonstrated in three different studies.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Variables

| Variable | Alpha | Means (Standard Deviations) | Asymmetry Index | Type of Transformation | Skewness after Transformation |
|--------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Role | - | 0.74 (0.80) | 0.38 | - | |
| Frequency of Ex Talk | - | 1.90 (1.93) | 0.51 | - | |
| Overall Ex Uncertainty | 0.89 | 2.04 (0.94) | 0.40 | - | |
| Overall Current Uncertainty | 0.96 | 0.88 (0.99) | 1.54 | $\text{Log}_{10}(x)$ | 0.57 |

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|------|-------------|-------|----------------------|-------|
| Ex Partner Interference | 0.87 | 1.95 (1.25) | 0.46 | - | |
| Current Interference | 0.90 | 1.56 (1.35) | 0.55 | - | |
| Current Appraisals of Threat | 0.87 | 0.68 (0.85) | 1.29 | $\text{Log}_{10}(x)$ | 0.61 |
| Current Avoided Talk | 0.91 | 1.44 (1.47) | 1.09 | $\text{Log}_{10}(x)$ | 0.21 |
| Current Enacted Talk | 0.86 | 4.18 (1.17) | -1.61 | $x^{5.2}$ | -0.40 |
| Current Appraisals of Threat of Ex | 0.89 | 1.51 (1.27) | 0.67 | - | |
| Overall Current Commitment | 0.89 | 5.98 (1.48) | -1.26 | $x^{2.3}$ | -.39 |

Statistical Analysis

To assess the provided research questions and hypotheses a collection of univariate, bivariate and multivariate statistical tests were performed using Stata. Listed below are the tests conducted and the corresponding research questions and hypotheses, which includes correlation analysis, one-way ANOVA and its non-parametric equivalent, t-test and its non-parametric equivalent, linear multiple regression, and structural equation modeling (SEM). Due to issues with distribution, variables found as skewed, or not normally distributed were analyzed using non-parametric equivalent tests. The Mann-Whitney test was used as the non-parametric equivalent to independent samples t-test (Bruning & Klintz, 1968), whereas the Kruskal-Wallis was employed to analyze the differences between three or more groups as the non-parametric equivalent to ANOVA (Frey, Botan, & Kreps, 2000). More specifically, the following variables were strongly skewed and did not meet the normality assumption: current relational uncertainty, current interference, current appraisals of threat, current enacted relationship talk, and current avoided relationship talk.

Correlation and t-tests

As a preliminary analysis, correlations were computed to gain a better understanding of the bivariate associations between the variables (See Table 3). Additionally, an evaluation of all

measures for differences in sex was conducted using independent samples t-tests and the non-parametric equivalent, the Mann-Whitney test.

ANOVA

To test for differences in the previously mentioned dependent variables across the groups within ethnicity, student classification, relationship status, the role played in previous breakup, and ethnicity, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and its non-parametric equivalent, the Kruskal-Wallis test, were used.

Multiple linear regression

In this dissertation, multiple linear regressions were calculated to analyze H1, or the relationship between relational uncertainty in a current romantic relationship and communication with an ex-partner, as well as H2, which focused on differences in current relational uncertainty and the role played in a previous romantic dissolution. H4 also utilized linear regression to determine the influence of past interference on current interference. Moreover, linear regression was further employed for H5, which considers the influence of internal ex-partner talk, or talk about the ex-partner with the current partner, on relational uncertainty. In order to determine the most frequent types of talk occurring with an ex-partner and their influence on relationship uncertainty in the current or subsequent relationship (RQ5 & RQ6), a combination of descriptive statistics, such as means and frequencies, and linear regression were utilized. Another linear regression model was conducted with current relational uncertainty as the dependent variable and current internal ex-partner talk, or talk about an ex-partner in a subsequent relationship, as the main predictor, which addresses H7. For H10, this study used a linear multiple regression model with commitment as the dependent variable and relational uncertainty and current interference as independent variables. The distribution of commitment was found to have a strong negative

asymmetry with the index of skewness as -1.259, which is above the cut off defined as 2 times the standard error of skewness (SES) for our study sample (.404). A power transformation was conducted and a power of 2.3 was found to lower the asymmetry just below the cut-off of .404 (skewness = -.387). All models included the following covariates: gender, age, race, class, and relationship status.

Moderation analysis using hierarchical linear regression

In order to test H3a and H3b, or whether role moderates the relationship between uncertainty in previous relationship and current uncertainty, a hierarchical regression model was created: Model 1 focused on the relationship between current relational uncertainty and previous relational uncertainty and role played in the breakup, and model 2 included the interaction term between previous relational uncertainty and role. For moderation to occur, both previous relational uncertainty and role should be significant in model 1, and the interaction term should be significant in model 2. Both models used the log-transformed version of current relational uncertainty as the dependent variable, and they were adjusted for age, gender, ethnicity, class, and relationship status. A log-transformation of current relational uncertainty was conducted to normalize the distribution, which showed a strong positive asymmetry.

Mediation analysis using structural equation modeling

Hypothesis eight includes a mediating variable, therefore Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to analyze mediation. More specifically, H8 focuses on the influence of ex-partner talk on the three types of relationship talk. Separate models were conducted for each dependent variable (appraisals of threat/ enacted talk/avoided appraisals of threat, enacted and avoided talk) and the indirect effect of ex-partner talk on the dependent variable through relational uncertainty will be computed for each model. A statistically significant indirect effect

will indicate that mediation occurs. All models were adjusted for age, gender, ethnicity, class, and relationship status. Before running SEM, the distribution of the three dependent variables was analyzed. The null hypothesis of normality are rejected for all three dependent variables, additionally their skewness values were very large (absolute value greater than 1). The log transformation was used for appraisals of threat and avoided talk, which is recommended for positive asymmetry and a power transformation was used for enacted talk, which is recommended for negative asymmetry. In order to find the power transformation that would lower the asymmetry for enacted talk below two times the standard error of skewness (SES) for skewness (.404) a simulation was performed. A power of 5.2 was found to drop the skewness just below that number. One of the requirements in mediation analysis is that there is a significant, causal relationship between predictor (X) and dependent variable (Y) as well as between predictor (X) and mediator (M) (Baron and Kenny, 1986). Therefore, a linear regression was conducted for each transformed dependent variable to determine significance. Results that showed significant relationships between variables allowed for SEM testing to continue.

Along with H8, H9 and H11 also account for the presence of mediation. More specifically, H9 looks at the influence internal ex-partner talk has on each of the previous dependent variables, or types of relationship talk, as mediated by relational uncertainty. As done for H8, the transformed versions of the three dependent variables were used. H11 proposes the relationship between frequency of ex-partner talk and current commitment is mediated by the types of relationship talk. Once again, all models were adjusted for age, gender, ethnicity, class, and relationship status. Both H9 and H11 conduct linear regression models to determine whether

relationships exist between the predictor variables and the dependent and mediating variables before SEM is created.

Table 3. Statistical Tests for Hypotheses and Research Questions

| | |
|---|---|
| H1: Relational uncertainty in a subsequent relationship is positively associated with increased communication with an ex-partner. | Linear Regression |
| H2: Former breakup recipients will experience more relational uncertainty in subsequent romantic relationships than former breakup initiators. | Oneway ANOVA and independent samples T-test |
| H3a: Relational uncertainty in the previous romantic relationship will increase relational uncertainty in the subsequent romantic relationship. | Linear Regression Moderation analysis |
| H3b: Relational uncertainty in the previous romantic relationship will increase relational uncertainty in the subsequent romantic relationship, as moderated by the role assumed in the previous breakup. | |
| H4: Perceived interference (i.e., interdependence) in subsequent romantic relationships is positively influenced by interference (i.e., interdependence) in the previous romantic relationship. | Linear regression |
| RQ5: What are the most frequent types of external ex-partner talk? | Descriptive - means |
| RQ6: Do the most frequent types of external ex-partner talk influence relational uncertainty in subsequent romantic relationships? (table cont'd) | Descriptive – average top 5 and linear regression |
| H7: Internal ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships increases relational uncertainty. | Linear regression |
| H8a: Increased external ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships is positively associated with appraisals of threat, as mediated by current relational uncertainty. | SEM |
| H8b: Increased external ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships is positively associated with avoidance of relationship talk, as mediated by current relational uncertainty. | |
| H8c: Increased external ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships is negatively associated with enacted relationship talk, as mediated by current relational uncertainty. | |

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| <p>H9a: Increased internal ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships is positively associated with appraisals of threat, as mediated by current relational uncertainty.</p> <p>H9b: Increased internal ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships is positively associated with avoidance of relationship talk, as mediated by current relational uncertainty.</p> <p>H9c: Increased internal ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships is negatively associated with enacted relationship talk, as mediated by current relational uncertainty.</p> | SEM |
| <p>H10: In subsequent romantic relationships, as individuals' level of relational uncertainty and interferences increase, his or her commitment level to the current subsequent relationship and partner will decrease</p> | Linear multiple regression |
| <p>H11a: An increased frequency of ex-partner talk will be associated with a decrease in the level of commitment in subsequent romantic relationship.</p> <p>H11b: An increased frequency of ex-partner talk will be associated with a decrease in the level of commitment in subsequent romantic relationship, as mediated by relationship talk (appraisals of threat, avoided and enacted relationship talk).</p> | SEM |

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

An evaluation of each hypothesis and research question is to be given offering an explanation of results provided by the above mentioned data. All significant findings are compiled into a path diagram illustrating the relationships between variables (see Figure 10).

Hypothesis 1

The first question and hypothesis focused on the relationship between relational uncertainty in a subsequent relationship and communication with an ex-partner. It predicted that increased communication with an ex-partner would be positively associated with relational uncertainty in the subsequent relationship. In order to test for this relationship, a linear regression was conducted with overall relational uncertainty in a subsequent relationship as the dependent variable and frequency of communication with an ex-partner as the main predictor. The model was adjusted for age, gender, ethnicity, student's classification and relationship status. Additionally, reference categories were male, Caucasian, freshman, and single. As evident by Table 3, the omnibus test indicates that at least one of the independent variables is significantly related to relational uncertainty ($F = 3.09, p < .001$). When looking at the model coefficients, the frequency of talk with an ex-partner does not significantly predict relational uncertainty ($B = .006, p = .475$). Therefore, hypothesis 1 is not supported. The only significant predictor in the model was relationship status. In particular, those seriously dating score on average .211 points lower compared to those who reported as single ($B = -.211, p = .004$), and those who reported engaged or married had on average .4 points less uncertainty compared to those who reported as single ($B = -.382, p = .001$).

Table 4. Regression Results for Predictors of Overall Current Relational Uncertainty

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|--|----------|----------|---------|
| Constant | 0.292 | 1.93 | -- |
| Frequency of Ex Talk (table cont'd) | 0.006 | 0.72 | 0.061 |

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Age | 0.004 | 0.68 | 0.066 |
| Female | -0.012 | -0.33 | -0.027 |
| Ethnicity | | | |
| African American/Black | 0.040 | 1.01 | 0.079 |
| Asian | -0.125 | -0.84 | -0.073 |
| Hispanic | 0.051 | 0.07 | 0.055 |
| Latino/a | -0.058 | -0.54 | -0.042 |
| Native American | -0.013 | -0.68 | -0.054 |
| Other | -0.074 | -0.87 | -0.068 |
| Education Classification | | | |
| Sophomore | -0.024 | -0.54 | -0.061 |
| Junior | 0.082 | 1.61 | 0.181 |
| Senior | -0.004 | -0.06 | -0.007 |
| Other | 0.093 | 0.60 | 0.054 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | -0.080 | -1.13 | -0.198 |
| Seriously Dating | -0.211 | -2.95** | -0.533 |
| Engaged/Married | -0.382 | -3.41** | -0.382 |

N 147

*R*² 0.275

Adjusted *R*² 0.190

Note. ** prob < .05. *CI* = confidence interval.

In summary, a multiple regression was conducted to predict overall current relational uncertainty from frequency of talk with an ex-partner, gender, age, ethnicity, educational classification and relationship status. A couple of these variables statistically significantly predicted overall current relational uncertainty, $F(16, 130) = 3.09, p < .001, R^2 = .577$. Therefore, 57.7% of the variability in overall current relational uncertainty is explained by the predictor variables.

Hypothesis 2

H2 predicted that the role played in previous breakup would influence relational uncertainty in the subsequent romantic relationship. More specifically, those who are breakup recipients are thought to experience more relational uncertainty than breakup initiators. Once again, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used to establish whether there were differences in relational

uncertainty across the three types of roles (initiator, recipient, and mutual). Following this test, pairwise comparisons between initiator versus recipient and initiator versus mutual were conducted.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Role played in Breakup

| Role | <i>N</i> | <i>M (SD)</i> | 95% <i>CI</i> |
|-----------|----------|---------------|---------------|
| Initiator | 71 | 0.740 | [0.53, 0.94] |
| Recipient | 44 | 0.920 | [0.67, 1.17] |
| Mutual | 32 | 1.180 | [0.72, 1.64] |

$X^2(2) = 3.63, p = .163$

Note. *CI* = confidence interval.

As seen above in Table 4, descriptive statistics showed the former breakup initiator as the group with the lowest relational uncertainty ($M = .737, SD = .103$), followed by former breakup recipients ($M = .920, SD = .128$). Finally, those with a mutual role in the previous breakup show the highest relational uncertainty ($M = 1.18, SD = .234$). The Kruskal Wallis test showed no statistically significant differences ($\chi^2 = 3.63, p = .163$) in overall current relational uncertainty across the roles assumed in the previous breakup, initiator, recipient, or mutual. However, according to the Independent Samples t-test, used to analyze the difference in overall current relational uncertainty and the role assumed in the breakup, there are significant differences between initiators and those with a mutual role ($t = -2.01, t = .047$) as seen in Table 5. This finding is not supported by the Mann-Whitney, which is a more conservative test ($z = -1.62, p = .104$). Finally, no significant differences were found between former breakup initiators and recipients ($t = -1.108, t = .270$) as portrayed in Table 6. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is not supported.

Table 6. Results of t-test and Descriptive Statistics for Overall Current Uncertainty by Role in Breakup

| | Role | | | | | | 95% CI for Mean Difference | t | df |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-------------------------------|-------|-----|
| | Initiator | | | Mutual | | | | | |
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>N</i> | | | |
| Overall Current Uncertainty | 0.737 | 0.870 | 71 | 0.920 | 0.850 | 44 | [-0.51, 0.14] | -1.11 | 101 |

Table 7. Results of t-test and Descriptive Statistics for Overall Current Uncertainty by Role in Breakup

| | Role | | | | | | 95% CI for Mean Difference | t | df |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-------------------------------|--------|-----|
| | Initiator | | | Recipient | | | | | |
| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>N</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>N</i> | | | |
| Overall Current Uncertainty | 0.737 | 0.870 | 71 | 1.180 | 1.321 | 32 | [-0.88, -0.01] | -2.01* | 113 |

Note. * $p < .05$.

Hypothesis 3

The focus of this question and set of hypotheses pertains to relational uncertainty in the previous and subsequent relationship and the role assumed during the breakup. H3a predicted that relational uncertainty in a previous relationship will increase relational uncertainty in a subsequent relationship. Followed by H3b, which predicted this previously mentioned relationship between past and subsequent relational uncertainty as moderated by the role played during the previous breakup.

In order to test both hypotheses, a series of regression models were run. The first model will include overall current relational uncertainty as the dependent variable and past relational uncertainty as the predictor variable. Both models are adjusted for age, gender, ethnicity,

academic classification, and relationship status. Based on the results of the first regression model in Table 7, there are variables that statistically significantly predicted overall current relational uncertainty, $F(18, 128) = 3.22, p < .001, R^2 = .312$. Therefore, 31.2% of the variability in overall current relational uncertainty is explained by the predictor variables. Previous relational uncertainty is a significant predictor of current relational uncertainty ($B = .037, p = .026$). More specifically, a unit increase in the ex-partner relational uncertainty is associated with a .037 unit increase in current or subsequent relational uncertainty (the log-transformed variable), or the equivalent to a .09 increase after undoing the log transformation. This finding is consistent with the hypothesis that relational uncertainty in the previous relationship will increase relational uncertainty in the subsequent relationship, therefore H3a is supported.

Table 8. Regression Results for Relationship between Past and Current Relational Certainty

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Constant | 0.244 | 0.10 | -- |
| Past Relational Uncertainty | 0.037 | 2.26* | 0.174 |
| Age | 0.003 | 0.55 | 0.054 |
| Female | -0.021 | -0.56 | -0.045 |
| Ethnicity | | | |
| African American/Black | 0.044 | 1.11 | 0.086 |
| Asian | -0.100 | -0.68 | -0.058 |
| Hispanic | 0.048 | 0.65 | 0.052 |
| Latino/a | -0.087 | -0.81 | -0.062 |
| Native American | -0.144 | -0.78 | -0.060 |
| Other | -0.051 | -0.60 | -0.046 |
| Education Classification | | | |
| Sophomore | -0.018 | -0.42 | -0.046 |
| Junior | 0.088 | 1.75* | 0.192 |
| Senior | -0.004 | -0.07 | -0.007 |
| Other | 0.139 | 0.91 | 0.081 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | -0.093 | -1.34 | -0.232 |
| Seriously Dating | -0.225 | -3.25** | -0.568 |
| Engaged/Married | -0.392 | -3.62*** | -0.391 |
| <i>N</i> | 147 | | |
| R^2 | 0.319 | | |
| Adjusted R^2 | 0.211 | | |

Note. * prob $< .10$, ** prob $< .05$, *** prob $< .001$. *CI* = confidence interval.

However, when testing H3b by using a second regression model ($F(20, 126) = 2.96, p < .001, R^2 = .319$) only 31.9% of variability is explained by the proposed model. The model results show that role is not a significant predictor ($F(2, 128) = 1.35, p = .262$). Additionally, model 2 showed the interaction term, which measures the moderation effect, as not significantly different from zero ($F(2, 126) = .71, p = .496$). Overall, H3b is not supported. Table 8 displays the results of the second model.

Table 9. Regression Results for Role as Moderating the Relationship between Past and Current Uncertainty

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|---|----------|----------|---------|
| Constant | 0.220 | 1.40 | -- |
| Past Relational Uncertainty | 0.042 | 1.42 | 0.200 |
| Role | | | |
| Recipient | 0.086 | 0.91 | 0.200 |
| Mutual | 0.035 | 0.38 | 0.073 |
| Interaction: Role and Past Relational Uncertainty | | | |
| Recipient | -0.031 | -0.73 | -0.172 |
| Mutual | 0.017 | 0.41 | 0.080 |
| Age | 0.003 | 0.53 | 0.052 |
| Female | -0.014 | -0.36 | -0.030 |
| Ethnicity | | | |
| African American/Black | 0.046 | 1.16 | 0.091 |
| Asian | -0.109 | -0.74 | -0.064 |
| Hispanic | 0.063 | 0.83 | 0.068 |
| Latino/a | -0.073 | -0.68 | -0.052 |
| Native American | -0.149 | -0.78 | -0.062 |
| Other | -0.042 | -0.49 | -0.039 |
| Education Classification | | | |
| Sophomore | -0.010 | -0.23 | -0.026 |
| Junior | 0.097 | 1.90* | 0.213 |
| Senior | -0.010 | 0.14 | 0.016 |
| Other | 0.155 | 1.00 | 0.090 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | -0.101 | -1.43 | -0.251 |
| Seriously Dating | -0.231 | -3.31*** | -0.584 |
| Engaged/Married | -0.397 | -3.66*** | -0.397 |
| <i>N</i> | 147 | | |
| <i>R</i> ² | 0.319 | | |
| Adjusted <i>R</i> ² | 0.211 | | |

Note. * prob < .10, ** prob < .05, *** prob < .001.

Despite moderation is not supported, Figure 1 plots the slope for each role which depicts how the relationship between previous uncertainty and current uncertainty may vary according to the different role assumed during the previous breakup. Again, because results are not significant, the differences seen in Figure 1 may be due to chance.

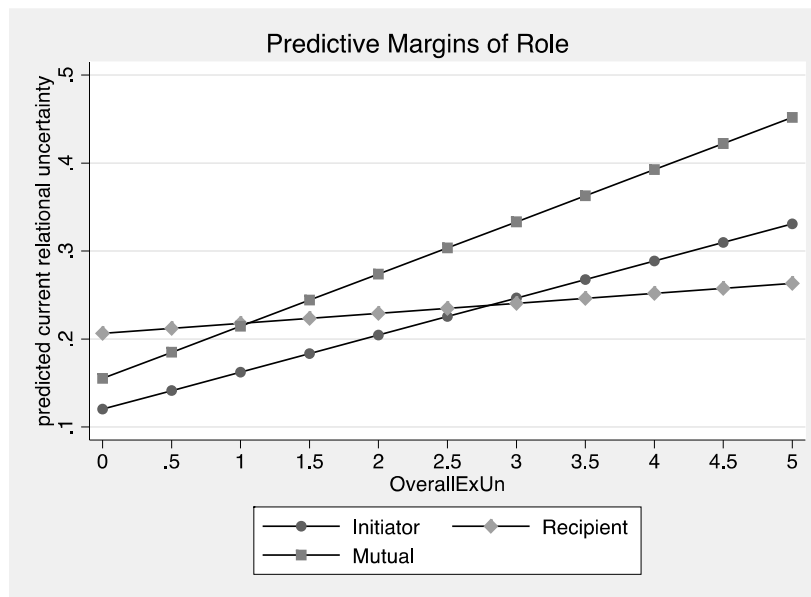


Figure 1. Relationship between Past and Current Relational Uncertainty based on Role

Hypothesis 4

Interference is the primary focus for the fourth hypothesis. H4 predicted that interference experienced in a previous romantic relationship influences interference experienced in a subsequent relationship. A linear regression model with the log-transformed variable of overall current interference as dependent variable and overall past interference as the independent variable. The model is adjusted for age, gender, ethnicity, academic class and relationship status. According to Table 9, results of the linear regression model provide 14.6% of variability as explained by the proposed model ($F(16, 130) = 1.39, p = .159, R^2 = .146$). However, interference in a previous romantic relationship was positively associated with interference in a subsequent romantic relationship ($B = .042, p = .012$). The interpretation of this coefficient is that one unit increase in

previous interference is associated with a .042 unit increase in current interference (the log transformation of this variable), or the equivalent to a .1 unit increase after undoing the transformation. Therefore, H4 is supported.

Table 10. Regression Results for Relationship between Past and Current Interference

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Constant | -0.206 | -1.02 | -- |
| Past Interference | 0.042 | 2.55** | 0.216 |
| Age | 0.018 | 2.13** | 0.226 |
| Female | 0.032 | 0.64 | 0.057 |
| Ethnicity | | | |
| African American/Black | 0.050 | 0.94 | 0.081 |
| Asian | -0.281 | -1.41 | -0.133 |
| Hispanic | 0.102 | 1.01 | 0.089 |
| Latino/a | -0.272 | -1.89* | -0.158 |
| Native American | -0.400 | -1.60 | -0.134 |
| Other | 0.146 | 1.28 | 0.108 |
| Education Classification | | | |
| Sophomore | -0.018 | -0.30 | -0.037 |
| Junior | 0.019 | 0.28 | 0.033 |
| Senior | -0.074 | -0.80 | -0.093 |
| Other | 0.063 | 0.31 | 0.030 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | 0.074 | 0.79 | 0.149 |
| Seriously Dating | 0.066 | 0.71 | 0.135 |
| Engaged/Married | -0.088 | -0.60 | -0.071 |
| <i>N</i> | 147 | | |
| <i>R</i> ² | 0.146 | | |
| Adjusted <i>R</i> ² | 0.041 | | |

Note. * prob < .10, ** prob < .05

Additionally, age was also a significant predictor of interference in current relationship, such that older participants reported greater interference ($B = .018, p = .035$). This was an unanticipated finding that was not proposed within the study.

Research Questions 5 and 6

RQ5 addressed the types of talk that occur most frequently with an ex-partner, therefore the mean of each type of talk was considered. Table 10 provides the descriptive statistics for all types of talk. Based on descriptive statistics, the most frequent type of talk with an ex-partner is

“catching up” with a mean of 1.67 ($SD = 1.49$), followed by “joking around” ($M = 1.56$, $SD = 1.41$) and “recapping the day’s event” ($M = 1.43$, $SD = 1.53$). The fourth most frequent type of talk is “conflict” ($M = 1.31$, $SD = 1.28$), followed by the fifth most frequent or “small talk” ($M = 1.29$, $SD = 1.18$). Figure 2 illustrates the most frequent types of talk as established by overall means.

Table 11. Descriptions of Everyday Talk with Past Romantic Partners

| Type of Talk | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|---|----------|-----------|
| 1. Small Talk How often do you talk about current events to pass time and/or to avoid being rude? | 1.29 | 1.18 |
| 2. Gossip | 1.28 | 1.17 |
| 3. Joking Around: How often do you engage in playful talk to have fun or release tension? | 1.57 | 1.41 |
| 4. Catching up: How often do you “catch up” by talking about events that have occurred since you last spoke? | 1.67 | 1.49 |
| 5. Recapping the day’s events: How often do you talk about what’s up and about what happened to you during the day? | 1.43 | 1.53 |
| 6. Reminiscing | 1.25 | 1.27 |
| 7. Making up | 0.96 | 1.23 |
| 8. Love Talk | 0.90 | 1.19 |
| 9. Relationship Talk | 0.69 | 1.01 |
| 10. Conflict: How often do you disagree? | 1.31 | 1.28 |
| 11. Serious Conversation | 1.06 | 1.23 |
| 12. Talking about problems | 1.21 | 1.32 |
| 13. Complaining | 1.18 | 1.31 |
| 14. Persuading conversation | 0.92 | 1.06 |
| 15. Decision-making | 0.85 | 1.08 |
| 16. Giving and getting instructions | 0.87 | 1.05 |
| 17. Lecture | 0.57 | 0.93 |
| 18. Interrogation | 0.52 | 0.86 |
| 19. Making plans | 0.92 | 1.29 |
| 20. Asking a favor | 0.90 | 1.00 |
| 21. Sports talk | 0.87 | 1.12 |
| 22. Asking out | 0.52 | 0.92 |
| 23. Breaking bad news | 0.78 | 0.91 |
| 24. Getting to know | 1.01 | 1.21 |
| 25. Group discussion | 0.66 | 0.99 |
| 26. Class information | 0.73 | 1.14 |
| (table cont’d) | | |

| Type of Talk | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--------------------|----------|-----------|
| 27. Morning talk | 0.69 | 1.16 |
| 28. Bedtime talk | 0.86 | 1.30 |
| 29. Current events | 0.83 | 1.12 |

Note. * = Top 5 types of talk participants had with an ex-partner. Frequency values are as follows: 0 = Never, 1 = Rarely, 2 = Occasionally, 3 = Frequently, 4 = Regularly.

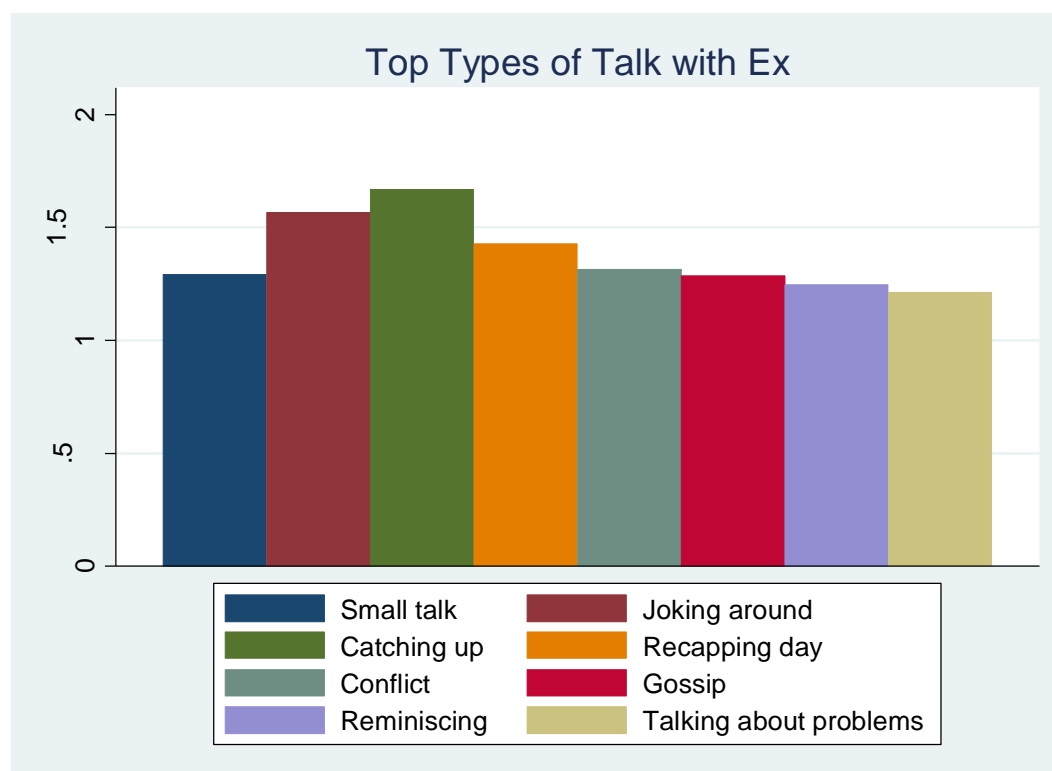


Figure 2. Top 8 Types of Talk with an Ex-partner. Frequency values are as follows: 0 = Never, 1 = Rarely, 2 = Occasionally, 3 = Frequently, 4 = Regularly.

Once the most frequent types of talk were determined, RQ6 asked how each type of talk influences relational uncertainty in a subsequent romantic relationship. A linear regression was conducted with current relational uncertainty as the dependent variable and each of the most frequent types of talk as predictors. Separate models were used because there were correlations greater than .7 among the types of talk variables, therefore adding them together in one model would most likely lead to multicollinearity. First, a total score with the top five types of talk variables was created. Additionally, separate regression models with each type of ex-partner talk as the main predictor were run.

According to Table 11, the score representing the top five types of talk with an ex-partner was not a significant predictor of current relational uncertainty ($B = -.014, p = .301$). There are variables that statistically significantly predicted overall current relational uncertainty, $F(16, 130) = 3.14, p < .001, R^2 = .279$, however the top five types of talk is not one of them. Therefore, 27.9% of the variability in overall current relational uncertainty is explained by the predictor variables.

Table 12. Regression Results for Relationship between Current Relational Uncertainty and Top 5 Types of Ex-Partner Talk

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Constant | 0.336 | 2.27 | -- |
| Top 5 Ex-Partner Talk | -0.014 | -1.04 | -0.080 |
| Age | 0.004 | 0.60 | 0.058 |
| Female | -0.010 | -0.25 | -0.021 |
| Ethnicity | | | |
| African American/Black | 0.038 | 0.95 | 0.075 |
| Asian | -0.125 | -0.84 | -0.073 |
| Hispanic | 0.060 | 0.79 | 0.064 |
| Latino/a | -0.067 | -0.63 | -0.048 |
| Native American | -0.068 | -0.36 | -0.028 |
| Other | 0.066 | -0.77 | -0.060 |
| Education Classification | | | |
| Sophomore | -0.030 | -0.67 | -0.074 |
| Junior | 0.074 | 1.47 | 0.163 |
| Senior | -0.013 | -0.19 | -0.021 |
| Other | 0.103 | 0.67 | 0.060 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | -0.078 | -1.10 | -0.193 |
| Seriously Dating | -0.216 | -3.11** | -0.546 |
| Engaged/Married | -0.393 | -3.61*** | -0.392 |
| <i>N</i> | 147 | | |
| R^2 | 0.279 | | |
| Adjusted R^2 | 0.190 | | |

Note. * prob < .10, ** prob < .05, *** prob < .001

The following types of talk with an ex-partner were not significant predictors of relational uncertainty in a subsequent romantic relationship: “catching up” ($B = -.005, p = .628$), “recapping the day’s events” ($B = -.002, p = .826$), and “conflict” ($B = -.002, p = .826$). Table 12

displays the regression results for “catching up,” table 13 for “recapping the day’s events,” and table 14 for “conflict.”

Table 13. Regression Results for Relationship between Current Relational Uncertainty and “Catching up”

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|---------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Constant | 0.328 | 2.20 | -- |
| Catching up | -0.005 | -0.49 | -0.038 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | -0.083 | -1.18 | -0.207 |
| Seriously Dating | -0.221 | -3.17** | -0.557 |
| Engaged/Married | -0.400 | -3.67*** | -0.399 |

N 147

*R*² 0.274

Adjusted *R*² 0.190

Note. * prob < .10, ** prob < .05, *** prob < .001

Table 14. Regression Results for Relationship between Current Relational Uncertainty and “Recapping the Day’s Events”

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|---------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Constant | 0.320 | 2.16* | -- |
| Recapping | -0.002 | -0.22 | -0.017 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | -0.086 | -1.21 | -0.213 |
| Seriously Dating | -0.223 | -3.22** | -0.563 |
| Engaged/Married | -0.402 | -3.69*** | -0.401 |

N 147

*R*² 0.273

Adjusted *R*² 0.1984

Note. * prob < .10, ** prob < .05, *** prob < .001

Table 15. Regression Results for Relationship between Current Relational Uncertainty and “Conflict”

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|---------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Constant | 0.320 | 2.17* | -- |
| Conflict | -0.003 | -0.21 | -0.016 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | -0.087 | -1.24 | -0.217 |
| Seriously Dating | -0.224 | -3.23** | -0.566 |
| Engaged/Married | -0.402 | -3.69*** | -0.401 |

N 147

*R*² 0.273

Adjusted *R*² 0.184

Note. * prob < .10, ** prob < .05, *** prob < .001

The coefficient for “joking around” was significant but only at a 10% significance level, as seen in Table 15. Additionally, there are variables that statistically significantly predicted overall current relational uncertainty, $F(16, 130) = 3.34, p < .001, R^2 = .291$. Therefore, 29.1% of the variability in overall current relational uncertainty is explained by the predictor variables.

Table 16. Regression Results for Relationship between Current Relational Uncertainty “Joking around”

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|---------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Constant | 0.350 | 2.37* | -- |
| Joking around | -0.020 | -1.85* | -0.141 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | -0.071 | -1.02 | -0.177 |
| Seriously Dating | -0.207 | -3.00** | -0.522 |
| Engaged/Married | -0.380 | -3.49*** | -0.377 |
| <i>N</i> | 147 | | |
| R^2 | 0.291 | | |
| Adjusted R^2 | 0.204 | | |

Note. * prob < .10, ** prob < .05, *** prob < .001

An additional model was run adding “joking around” as a dummy variable. After creating the dummy variable with 0=Never or Rarely and 1=Occasionally, Frequently or Regularly, there was a significant coefficient ($B = -.072, p = .018$), as seen in Table 16. More specifically, there are variables that statistically significantly predicted overall current relational uncertainty, $F(16, 130) = 3.54, p < .001, R^2 = .303$. Therefore, 30.3% of the variability in overall current relational uncertainty is explained by the predictor variables.

Table 17. Regression Results for Relationship between Current Relational Uncertainty and Dummy Variable for “Joking around”

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|---------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Constant | 0.350 | 2.41* | -- |
| Dummy Joking around | -0.723 | -2.39* | -0.182 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | -0.064 | -0.91 | -0.156 |
| Seriously Dating | -0.200 | -2.91** | -0.503 |
| Engaged/Married | -0.371 | -3.46*** | -0.371 |

N 147

(table cont'd)

R^2 0.303

Adjusted R^2 0.218

Note. * prob < .10, ** prob < .05, *** prob = .001

Finally, the variable for “small talk” was originally continuous and not significant according to the linear regression model (see Table 17), however the p-value was close to the 10% significance level ($B = -.02$, $p = .103$).

Table 18. Regression Results for Relationship between Current Relational Uncertainty and “Small talk”

| Variable | B | t | β |
|---------------------|--------|----------|---------|
| Constant | 0.340 | 2.32* | -- |
| Small Talk | -0.021 | -1.64 | -0.127 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | -0.066 | -0.93 | -0.164 |
| Seriously Dating | -0.202 | -2.88** | -0.508 |
| Engaged/Married | -0.373 | -3.41*** | -0.372 |

N 147

R^2 0.288

Adjusted R^2 0.200

Note. * prob < .10, ** prob < .05, *** prob = .001

Because this variable approached significance, a closer look was taken. The variable was included as categorical in a linear regression instead to determine whether there was significant differences when comparing categories of answers. According to Table 18, those that engaged in “small talk” frequently with an ex-partner were found to have lower current relational uncertainty compared to those that never engaged in “small talk” with an ex ($B = -.10$, $p = .038$). However, this significant difference was lost once the categories were collapsed into a dummy variable ($B = -.05$, $p = .125$) as shown in Table 19.

Table 19. Regression Results for Relationship between Current Relational Uncertainty and Categories of “Small talk”

| Variable | B | t | β |
|--------------------------|--------|-------|---------|
| Constant | 0.344 | 2.34* | -- |
| Small Talk | | | |
| Rarely (table cont'd) | -0.320 | -0.73 | -0.063 |

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Occasionally | -0.045 | -1.10 | -0.101 |
| Frequently | -0.100 | -2.10** | -0.179 |
| Regularly | 0.029 | 0.31 | 0.024 |
| Dating | -0.061 | -0.85 | -0.151 |
| Seriously Dating | -0.194 | -2.73** | -0.489 |
| Engaged/Married | -0.366 | -3.34*** | -0.366 |

N 147

*R*² 0.301

Adjusted *R*² 0.196

Note. * prob < .10, ** prob < .05, *** prob = .001

Table 20. Regression Results for Relationship between Current Relational Uncertainty and Dummy Variable of “Small talk”

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|---------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Constant | 0.341 | 2.32* | -- |
| Dummy Small Talk | -0.048 | -1.54 | -0.121 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | -0.073 | -1.04 | -0.182 |
| Seriously Dating | -0.211 | -3.05** | -0.532 |
| Engaged/Married | -0.374 | -3.41*** | -0.373 |

N 147

*R*² 0.286

Adjusted *R*² 0.198

Note. * prob < .10, ** prob < .05, *** prob = .001

Hypothesis 7

H7 predicted that internal ex-partner talk, or talk about an ex-partner in the subsequent relationship would increase relational uncertainty. According to Table 20, the linear regression results provided a significant positive association between internal ex-partner talk and current relational uncertainty ($B = .031, p = .010$). More specifically, a one unit increase in internal ex-partner talk was associated with a .031 unit increase in current relational uncertainty (the log-transformed variable), or equivalently a .074 units increase after undoing the transformation. Overall, 30.9% of the variability in overall current relational uncertainty is explained by the

predictor variables included in the model ($F(16, 130) = 3.63, p = .000, R^2 = .309$). Therefore, H7 is supported.

Additionally, those seriously dating ($B = -.235, p = .001$) and those engaged or married ($B = -.403, p < .001$) have less relational uncertainty than single participants. People that are seriously dating on average have .235 less uncertainty than those who single, and those who are engaged or married have .403 less uncertainty than those who are single.

Table 21. Regression Results for Relationship between Current Relational Uncertainty and Internal Ex-Partner Talk

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Constant | 0.257 | 1.77* | -- |
| Internal Ex-Partner Talk | 0.031 | 2.61** | 0.197 |
| Age | 0.006 | 0.91 | 0.087 |
| Female | -0.012 | -0.32 | -0.026 |
| Ethnicity | | | |
| African American/Black | 0.034 | 0.88 | 0.068 |
| Asian | -0.070 | -0.48 | -0.041 |
| Hispanic | 0.044 | 0.59 | 0.047 |
| Latino/a | -0.047 | -0.45 | -0.034 |
| Native American | -0.043 | -0.23 | -0.018 |
| Other | -0.068 | -0.83 | -0.063 |
| Education Classification | | | |
| Sophomore | -0.029 | -0.67 | -0.073 |
| Junior | 0.069 | 1.37 | 0.150 |
| Senior | -0.018 | -0.27 | -0.028 |
| Other | 0.066 | 0.44 | 0.039 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | -0.100 | -1.44 | -0.246 |
| Seriously Dating | -0.235 | -3.46*** | -0.592 |
| Engaged/Married | -0.403 | -3.80*** | -0.402 |

N 147

R^2 0.309

Adjusted R^2 0.224

Note. * prob < .10, ** prob < .05, *** prob < .001

Hypothesis 8

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was utilized to assess the influence ex-partner talk, or communication with an ex-partner, had on appraisals of threat, enacted and avoided

relationship talk in subsequent romantic relationships. More specifically, this study predicted that increased talk with an ex-partner while in a subsequent relationship was positively associated with appraisals of threat and avoidance of relationship talk, and negatively associated with enacted relationship talk, as mediated by relational uncertainty in the subsequent relationship (see Figure 3). Appraisals of threat, avoided relationship talk, and enacted relationship talk were analyzed separately as dependent variables and external ex-partner talk as the independent variable.

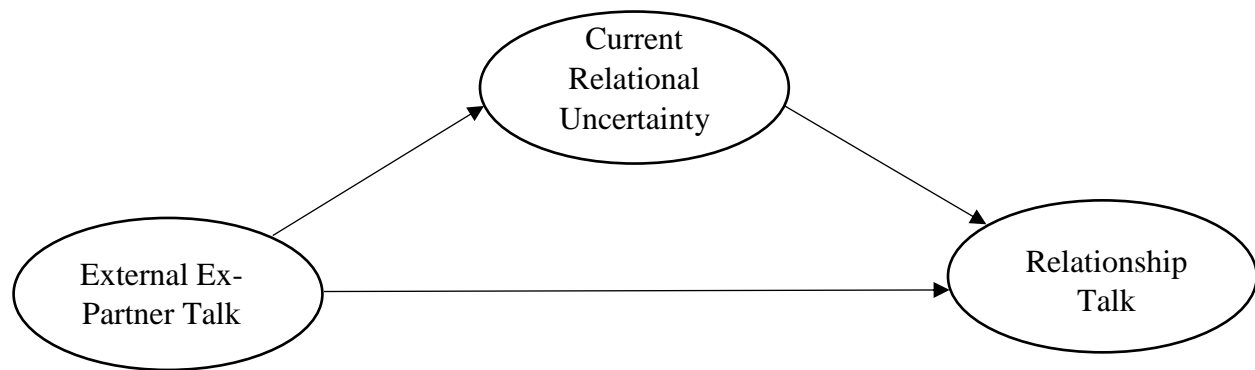


Figure 3. Path Diagram of Relationship between Relationship Talk and External Ex-Partner Talk, as Mediated by Current Relational Uncertainty

As shown in Table 21, external ex-partner talk was not found as a significant predictor of appraisal of threat ($B = -.000$, $p = .994$), therefore part I of H8a is not supported. However, those seriously dating ($B = -.215$, $p = .005$) and engaged or married ($B = -.309$, $p = .010$) were found to be negatively associated with appraisal of threat compared to those single participants. Overall, the model only accounted for 15.7% variability in current appraisals of threat ($F(16, 130) = 1.51$, $p = .104$, $R^2 = .157$).

Table 22. Regression Results for Relationship between Current Appraisal of Threat and External Ex-Partner Talk

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|--|----------|----------|---------|
| Constant | 0.222 | 1.38 | -- |
| External Ex-Partner Talk (table cont'd) | -0.000 | -0.01 | -0.001 |

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Age | 0.005 | 0.72 | 0.076 |
| Female | -0.003 | -0.07 | -0.007 |
| Ethnicity | | | |
| African American/Black | 0.057 | 1.36 | 0.115 |
| Asian | -0.037 | -0.23 | -0.022 |
| Hispanic | 0.042 | 0.52 | 0.046 |
| Latino/a | -0.110 | -0.96 | -0.080 |
| Native American | -0.163 | -0.79 | -0.069 |
| Other | -0.028 | -0.31 | -0.026 |
| Education Classification | | | |
| Sophomore | 0.016 | 0.35 | 0.042 |
| Junior | 0.061 | 1.12 | 0.136 |
| Senior | 0.007 | 0.10 | 0.011 |
| Other | 0.183 | 1.13 | 0.109 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | -0.113 | -1.50 | -0.286 |
| Seriously Dating | -0.215 | -2.84** | -0.553 |
| Engaged/Married | -0.309 | -2.60** | -0.314 |

N 147

*R*² 0.157

Adjusted *R*² 0.053

Note. * prob < .10, ** prob < .05, *** prob < .001

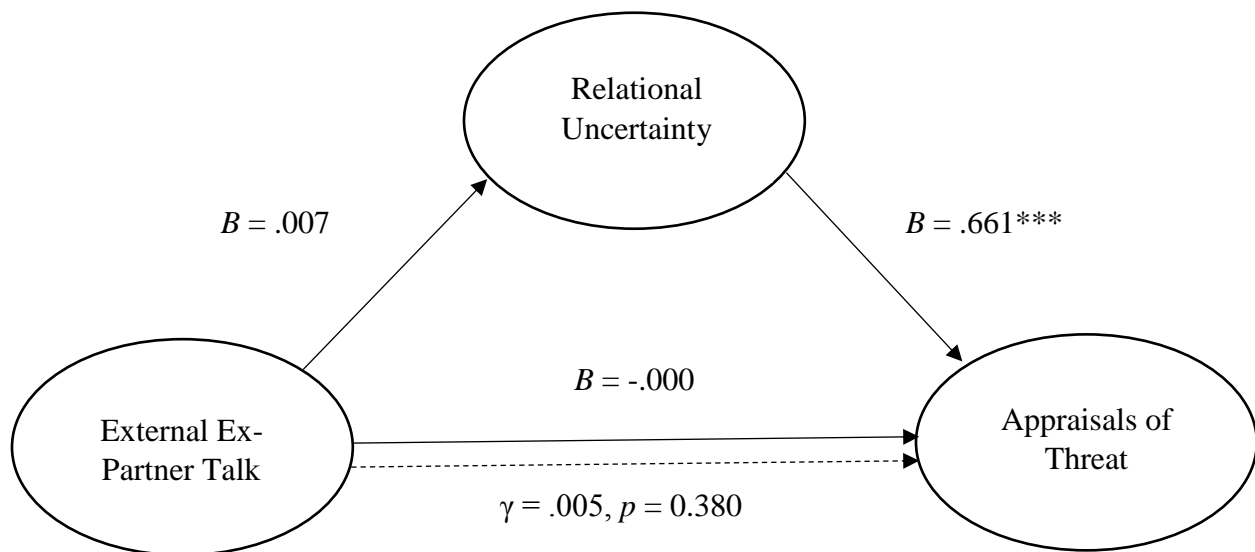


Figure 4. SEM Results on Relationship between External Ex-Partner Talk and Appraisals of Threat as Mediated by Relational Uncertainty

Note. *N* = 147. **p* < .05; ***p* < .01; ****p* < .001. The dashed lines represent indirect effects, while solid lines represent direct effects.

The path diagram above (Figure 4) illustrates the results of SEM testing. The first equation focused on appraisals of threat with relational uncertainty and external ex-partner talk as independent variables. In the second equation relational uncertainty was the dependent variable and external ex-partner talk was the main predictor. The coefficient for relational uncertainty under the equation for appraisals of threat indicated that increased relational uncertainty was positively associated with appraisals of threat ($b = .661, p = <.001$). However, as indicated by the non-significant indirect effect of .005 ($z = .88, p = .380$), the relationship between external ex-partner talk and appraisals of threat was not mediated by relational uncertainty. Mediation is not supported. For mediation to occur, there has to be a significant relationship between the predictor (X) and the dependent variable (Y), as well as between predictor (X) and mediator (M). In this particular case, the relationship between ex-partner talk and appraisals of threat was not significant, nor was there a significant relationship between ex-partner and relational uncertainty (H1, which was not supported). Therefore, mediation testing was not completely necessary.

When considering the second component of relationship talk, avoidance of relationship talk, the coefficient for external ex-partner talk was not a significant predictor ($B = .003, p = .784$) within the linear regression model. Table 22 provides details about this model, ($F(16, 130) = 1.80, p = .037, R^2 = .182$). This indicated that there is no significant association between external ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships and avoidance of relationship talk. Therefore, part 1 of H8b is not supported. On the other hand, those seriously dating ($B = -.281, p = .004$) was found to be negatively associated with appraisal of threat compared to being single.

Table 23. Regression Results for Relationship between Current Avoidance of Relationship Talk and External Ex-Partner Talk

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Constant | 0.400 | 1.94 | -- |
| External Ex-Partner Talk | -0.003 | 0.27* | 0.025 |
| Age | 0.007 | 0.89 | 0.092 |
| Female | 0.002 | 0.04 | 0.004 |
| Ethnicity | | | |
| African American/Black | -0.043 | -0.79 | -0.066 |
| (table cont'd) | | | |
| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
| Asian | -0.170 | -0.85 | -0.078 |
| Hispanic | -0.057 | -0.55 | -0.048 |
| Latino/a | -0.340 | -2.34 | -0.191 |
| Native American | -0.348 | -1.34 | -0.114 |
| Other | -0.001 | -0.01 | -0.001 |
| Education Classification | | | |
| Sophomore | -0.038 | -0.63 | -0.075 |
| Junior | 0.051 | 0.74 | 0.089 |
| Senior | 0.057 | 0.63 | 0.072 |
| Other | 0.089 | 0.43 | 0.041 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | -0.182 | -1.90* | -0.356 |
| Seriously Dating | -0.281 | -2.92** | -0.559 |
| Engaged/Married | -0.247 | -1.64 | -0.195 |
| <i>N</i> | 147 | | |
| <i>R</i> ² | 0.182 | | |
| Adjusted <i>R</i> ² | 0.081 | | |

Note. * prob < .10, ** prob < .05, *** prob < .001

In the first equation, relational uncertainty was positively associated with avoidance of talk ($b = .686, p < .001$). The non-significant indirect effect of .005 ($z = .86, p = .389$) indicates that the relationship between ex-partner talk and avoidance of talk is not mediated by relational uncertainty. Results are shown in Figure 5.

Finally, there was no significant association between external ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships and enacted relationship talk ($B = -.785, p = .295$) found in the linear regression model ($F(16, 130) = 3.88, p < .001, R^2 = .323$, see Table 23). Therefore, part 1 of H8c is not supported. Otherwise, those dating ($B = .1632, p = .008$), seriously dating ($B =$

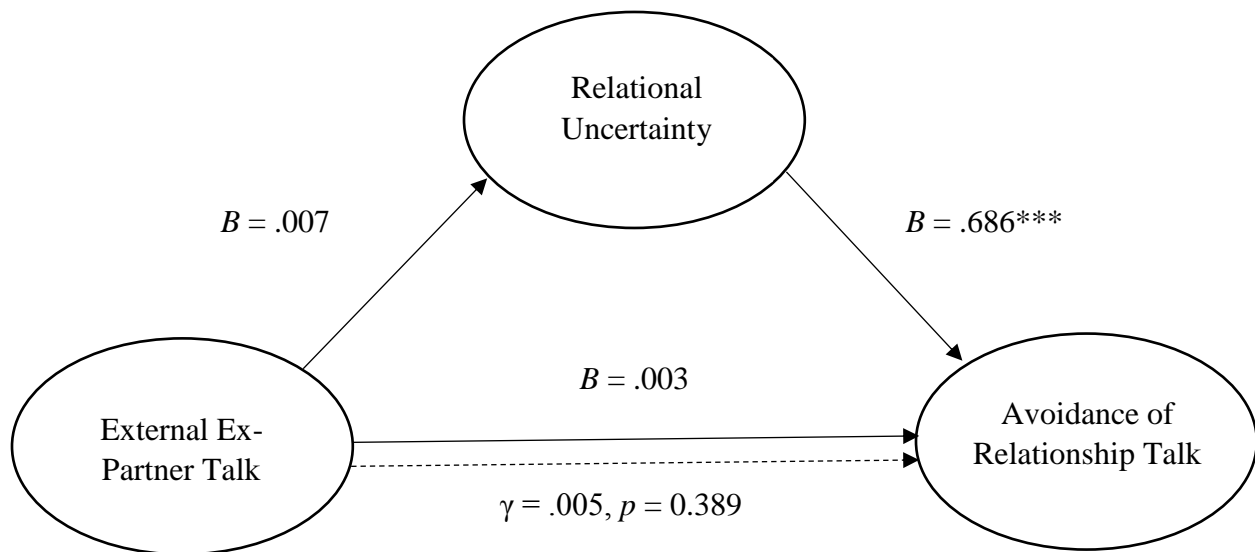


Figure 5. SEM Results on Relationship between External Ex-Partner Talk and Avoidance of Relationship Talk as Mediated by Relational Uncertainty

Note. $N = 147$. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$. The dashed lines represent indirect effects, while solid lines represent direct effects.

2894, $p < .001$) and those engaged or married ($B = 3126$, $p = .001$) have greater enacted relationship talk compared to those single. There was a negative association between relational uncertainty and enacted relationship talk ($B = -4125$, $p < .001$). The indirect effect was not significantly different from zero, therefore there was no mediation as shown in Figure 6.

Table 24. Regression Results for Relationship between Current Enacted Relationship Talk and External Ex-Partner Talk

| Variable | B | t | β |
|--------------------------|--------|-------|---------|
| Constant | 330.3 | 0.26 | -- |
| External Ex-Partner Talk | -78.47 | -1.05 | -0.087 |
| Age | -38.74 | -0.74 | -0.070 |
| Female | 641.3 | 2.02 | 0.158 |
| Ethnicity | | | |
| African American/Black | 7.367 | 0.02 | 0.002 |
| Asian | -381.7 | -0.30 | -0.025 |
| Hispanic | 63.68 | 0.10 | 0.008 |
| Latino/a | 663.9 | 0.72 | 0.054 |
| Native American | 2192 | 1.34 | 0.104 |
| Other | 336.4 | 0.47 | 0.035 |
| Education Classification | | | |
| (table cont'd) | | | |

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|---------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Sophomore | 37.91 | 0.10 | 0.011 |
| Junior | -383.0 | -0.88 | -0.096 |
| Senior | 88.91 | 0.16 | 0.016 |
| Other | -184.4 | -0.14 | -0.012 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | 1632 | 2.70** | 0.461 |
| Seriously Dating | 2894 | 4.77*** | 0.831 |
| Engaged/Married | 3126 | 3.28** | 0.355 |

N 147

*R*² 0.323

Adjusted *R*² 0.240

Note. * prob < .10, ** prob < .05, *** prob < .001

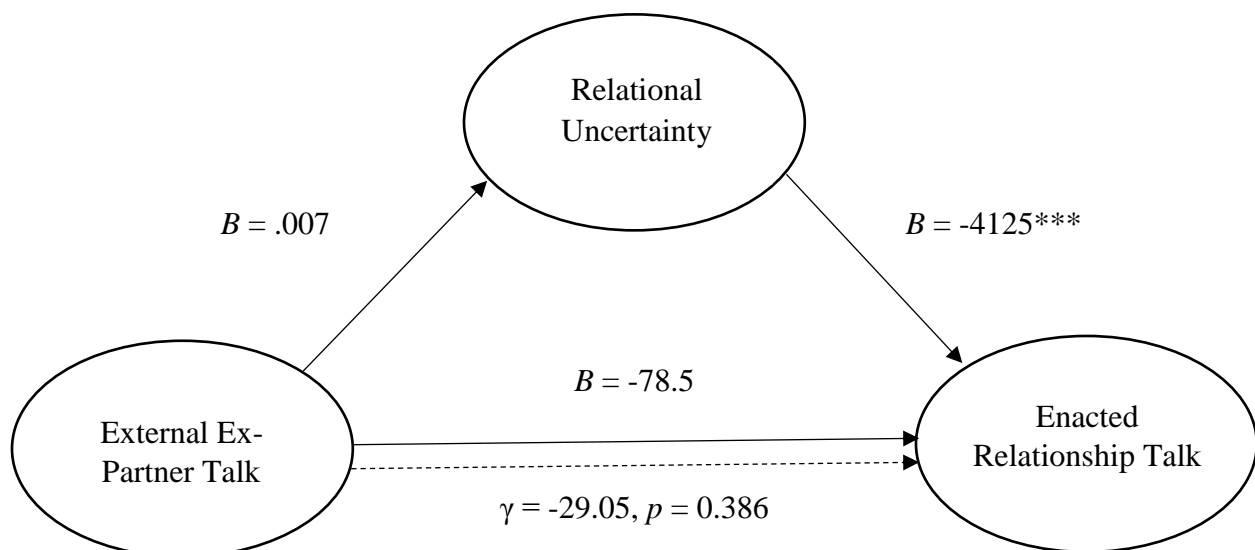


Figure 6. SEM Results on Relationship between External Ex-Partner Talk and Enacted Relationship Talk as Mediated by Relational Uncertainty

Note. *N* = 147. **p* < .05; ***p* < .01; ****p* < .001. The dashed lines represent indirect effects, while solid lines represent direct effects.

Hypothesis 9

Once again, SEM was required to analyze whether or not increased internal ex-partner talk, or talk about an ex-partner in a subsequent romantic relationship was positively associated with appraisals of threat as mediated by current relational uncertainty.

First, a linear regression was conducted with the log of appraisal of threat as the dependent variable and internal ex-partner talk as the independent variable. Internal ex-partner

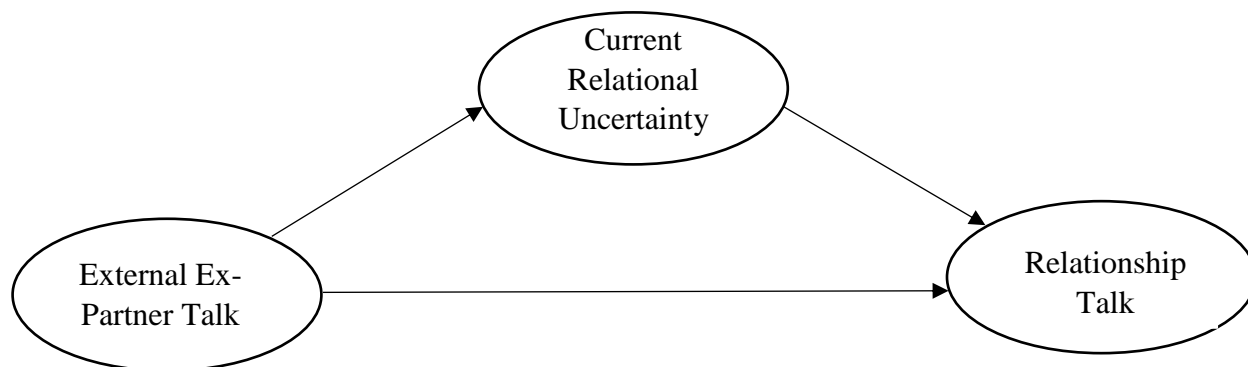


Figure 7. Path Diagram of Relationship between Relationship Talk and External Ex-Partner Talk, as Mediated by Current Relational Uncertainty

talk was found to be significantly associated with appraisal of threat ($B = .021, p = .093$),

although only at a 10% significance level. Therefore, H9a, part I is marginally supported.

Additionally, those seriously dating ($B = -.223, p = .003$) and those engaged or married ($B = -.309, p = .008$) have on average lower appraisal of threat compared to those who are single.

Table 24 provides additional information about the linear regression model. Overall, the model only accounted for 17.5% variability in current appraisals of threat ($F(16, 130) = 1.73, p = .049, R^2 = .175$).

Table 25. Regression Results for Relationship between Current Appraisals of Threat and Internal Ex-Partner Talk

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Constant | 0.179 | 1.15 | -- |
| Internal Ex-Partner Talk | 0.022 | 1.69* | 0.140 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | -0.121 | -1.65 | -0.307 |
| Seriously Dating | -0.223 | -3.06** | -0.572 |
| Engaged/Married | -0.309 | -2.71** | -0.314 |

N 147

R^2 0.175

Adjusted R^2 0.074

Note. * prob < .10, ** prob < .05, *** prob = .001

Since the relationship between the causal variable and the outcome variable has been established, the next step to establish mediation was to show the relationship between mediator

and the causal variable as significant. More specifically, the next step was to establish that internal ex-partner talk predicts relational uncertainty, which was previously established in H7. The first equation predicted appraisals of threat and has relational uncertainty and internal talk as the independent variables. The second equation provided relational uncertainty as the endogenous variable and internal ex-partner talk as the main predictor. The second equation predicted relational uncertainty with internal ex-partner talk as main predictors. In this equation there was a positive relationship between internal ex-partner talk and relational uncertainty ($B = .032, p = .004$). In the first equation, when the mediator, relational uncertainty was included in the model, internal ex-partner talk no longer predicts appraisals of threat while relational uncertainty is significant ($B = .652, p < .001$). This scenario suggests full mediation and is confirmed by having a significant indirect effect ($\gamma = .021, p = .007$). Therefore, mediation is supported as shown in Figure 8.

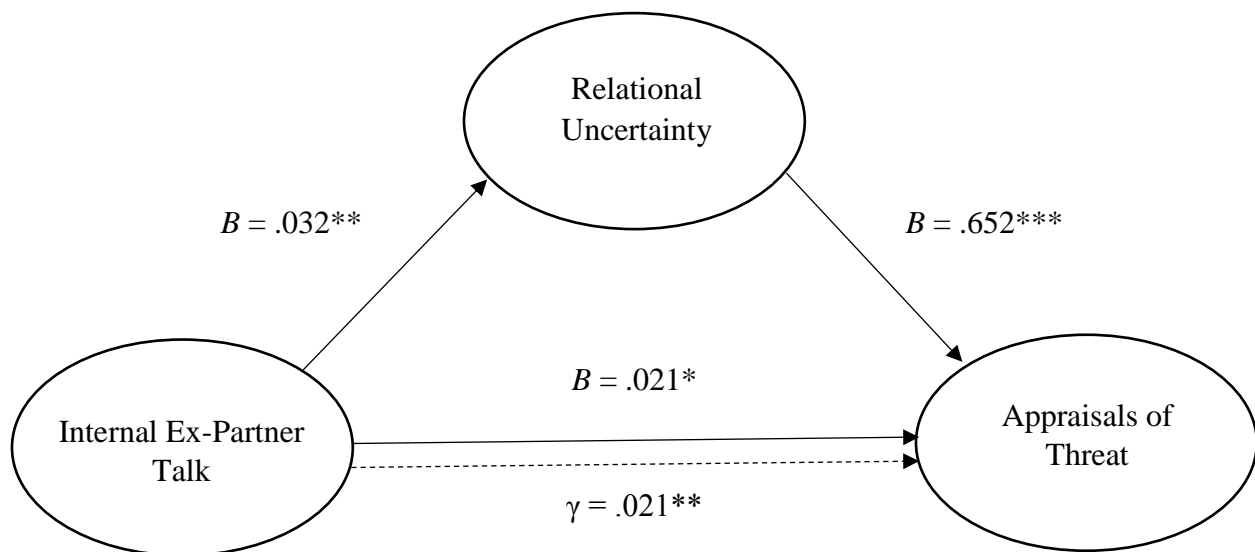


Figure 8. SEM Results on Relationship between Internal Ex-Partner Talk and Appraisals of Threat as Mediated by Relational Uncertainty

Note. $N = 147$. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$. The dashed lines represent indirect effects, while solid lines represent direct effects.

In addition to analyzing appraisals of threat, a linear regression model was conducted to examine the relationship between increased internal ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic

relationships and avoidance of relationship talk (H9b), ($F(16, 130) = 2.17, p = .009, R^2 = .211$).

This linear regression contained the log of avoidance of relationship talk as the dependent variable and internal ex-partner talk as the independent variable. Internal ex-partner talk was found to be significantly and positively associated with avoidance of talk ($B = .035, p = .029$). Therefore, H9b, part I is supported. Moreover, those dating ($B = -.299, p = .001$) have on average lower avoidance of talk compared to those who are single.

Table 26. Regression Results for Relationship between Current Avoidance of Relationship Talk and Internal Ex-Partner Talk

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Constant | 0.341 | 1.73 | -- |
| Internal Ex-Partner Talk | 0.035 | 2.21* | 0.178 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | -0.199 | -2.14* | -0.390 |
| Seriously Dating | -0.299 | -3.27** | -0.597 |
| Engaged/Married | -0.258 | -1.73* | -0.203 |
| <i>N</i> | 147 | | |
| R^2 | 0.211 | | |
| Adjusted R^2 | 0.114 | | |

Note. * prob < .10, ** prob < .05, *** prob = .001

Since the relationship between internal ex-partner talk and relational uncertainty (H7) has already been established, SEM was utilized to test for mediation. When looking at the first equation, after relational uncertainty was included in the model, internal ex-partner talk is no longer significant ($B = .019, p = .230$) while relational uncertainty, the mediator, is significant ($B = .653, p < .001$). The second equation showed that internal ex-partner talk significantly predicts relational uncertainty, which was necessary to establish mediation ($B = .032, p = .004$). Finally, a significant indirect effect was obtained ($\gamma = .021, p = .010$). Overall, mediation was supported as shown in Figure 9.

The third and final aspect of this research question and hypothesis focused on the relationship between internal ex-partner talk and enacted relationship talk (H9c). To begin, a

linear regression was utilized and provided that there was no significant relationship between internal ex-partner talk and enacted relationship talk ($B = -86.3, p = .405$) as shown in Table 26 ($F(16, 130) = 3.84, p < .001, R^2 = .321$). Therefore, H9c, part I was not supported and there was no need to proceed with mediation testing.

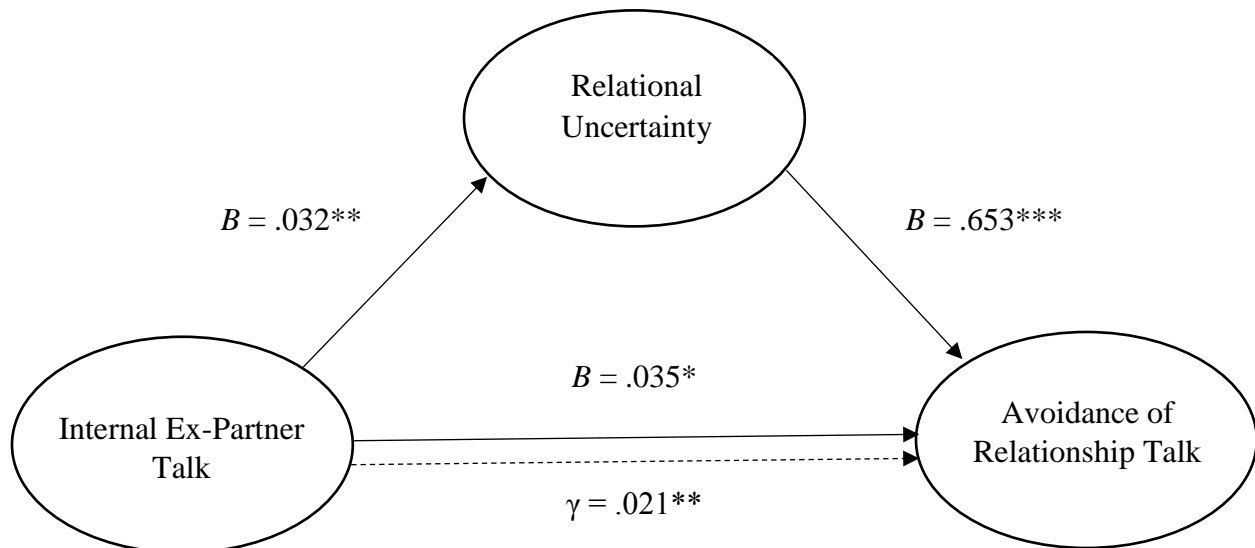


Figure 9. SEM Results on Relationship between Internal Ex-Partner Talk and Avoidance of Relationship Talk as Mediated by Relational Uncertainty

Note. $N = 147$. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$. The dashed lines represent indirect effects, while solid lines represent direct effects.

Table 27. Regression Results for Relationship between Current Enacted Relationship Talk and Internal Ex-Partner Talk

| Variable | B | t | β |
|--------------------------|--------|---------|---------|
| Constant | 175.4 | 0.14 | -- |
| Internal Ex-Partner Talk | -86.31 | -0.84 | -0.63 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | 1759 | 2.94** | 0.497 |
| Seriously Dating | 3083 | 5.22*** | 0.885 |
| Engaged/Married | 3373 | 3.65*** | 0.383 |

N 147

R^2 0.321

Adjusted R^2 0.237

Note. * prob < .10, ** prob < .05, *** prob = .001

Hypothesis 10

A linear multiple regression model was computed to analyze if in subsequent romantic relationships, as individuals' level of relational uncertainty and interferences increase, commitment level to a current subsequent relationship and partner will decrease. Within this model, commitment was the dependent variable and relational uncertainty and current interference were the independent variables. The previously mentioned covariates (gender, race, age, student's classification, and relationship status) were also included in this model. Overall, the model was statistically significant with variables predicting overall current commitment, $F(17, 129) = 9.11, p < .001, R^2 = .546$. Therefore, 54.6% of the variability in overall current commitment is explained by the predictor variables. Relational uncertainty was statistically significant and negatively associated with commitment ($B = -14.1, p < .001$). Current inference was also negatively associated with commitment, although it is only significant at a 10% level ($B = -2.47, p = .074$). Results also show that those seriously dating have greater levels of commitment compared to those who are single ($B = 33.4, p < .001$). Therefore, H10 was supported.

Table 28. Regression Results for Relationship between Current Commitment and Current Relational Uncertainty and Interference

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|--------------------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Constant | 68.52 | 3.88 | -- |
| Current Relational Uncertainty | -14.09 | -6.96*** | -0.473 |
| Current Interference | -2.470 | -1.80* | -0.114 |
| Age | -1.183 | -1.61 | -0.126 |
| Female | 4.280 | 0.97 | 0.063 |
| Ethnicity | | | |
| African American/Black | -2.232 | -0.48 | -0.030 |
| Asian | -4.660 | -0.26 | -0.018 |
| Hispanic | -12.01 | -1.34 | -0.087 |
| Latino/a | 3.203 | 0.25 | 0.015 |
| Native American | 2.309 | 0.11 | 0.007 |
| Other | 8.685 | 0.87 | 0.054 |
| (table cont'd) | | | |

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Education Classification | | | |
| Sophomore | 6.107 | 1.16 | 0.104 |
| Junior | 11.51 | 1.91 | 0.170 |
| Senior | 11.46 | 1.46 | 0.125 |
| Other | 10.65 | 0.59 | 0.042 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | 16.34 | 1.96* | 0.274 |
| Seriously Dating | 33.39 | 3.97*** | 0.569 |
| Engaged/Married | 24.01 | 1.81* | 0.162 |

N 147

*R*² 0.546

Adjusted *R*² 0.486

Note. * prob < .10, ** prob < .05, *** prob < .001

Hypothesis 11

To test whether or not increased frequency of ex-partner talk was associated with decreased levels of commitment in a subsequent romantic relationship, and whether the relationship between ex-partner talk and commitment was mediated by relationship talk (appraisals of threat, avoided and enacted relationship talk), a linear regression was first conducted. This linear regression model included power-transformed commitment as the dependent variable and frequency of ex-partner talk as the independent variable as seen in Table 28 ($F(16, 130) = 4.45, p < .001, R^2 = .354$). The model was adjusted for previously mentioned covariates (gender, race, age, student's classification, and relationship status). Frequency of ex-partner talk was not found as a significant predictor of commitment ($B = -.56, p = .649$), therefore H11a is not supported. Since there was no relationship between frequency of ex-partner talk and current commitment, it was not necessary to test for mediation (H11b). On the other hand, those dating ($B = 21.1, p = .035$), seriously dating ($B = 45.9, p < .001$) and those engaged or married ($B = 47.8, p = .003$) have on average greater commitment compared to those who are single.

Table 29. Regression Results for Relationship between Current Commitment and External Ex-Partner Talk

| Variable | <i>B</i> | <i>t</i> | β |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Constant | 51.13 | 2.42* | -- |
| External Ex-Partner Talk | -0.560 | -0.46 | -0.037 |
| Relationship Status | | | |
| Dating | 21.13 | 2.13* | 0.354 |
| Seriously Dating | 45.92 | 4.60*** | 0.783 |
| Engaged/Married | 47.76 | 3.05** | 0.322 |

N 147

*R*² 0.354

Adjusted *R*² 0.274

Note. * prob < .10, ** prob < .05, *** prob = .001

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION

At the beginning of this study the following questions were posited, “as individuals enter into a subsequent romantic relationship, what aspects of the previous relationships are being carried over? Ultimately, how is a subsequent romantic relationship impacted by the previous romantic relationship?” which, at a very basic level, portrays the focus of this study: determining how previous romantic relationships impact subsequent romantic relationships. In pursuit of an answer to these questions, the application of Relationship Turbulence Model (RTM) as theoretical framework allowed for the evaluation of relational uncertainty and interference in past and current romantic relationships. Additionally, the communication behaviors that occur between and about an ex-partner were considered separately, as well as through the lens of RTM. The final theoretical perspective supporting this study was the Investment Model, which introduced the concept of commitment to the study. Overall commitment was analyzed in past and subsequent relationships, as well as part of hypothetical interaction between commitment, relational uncertainty, and interference. Overall, the following variables were pulled into focus: relational uncertainty, interference, communicating with and about an ex-partner, types of talk with an ex-partner, role played in breakup, relationship talk, and commitment. Various hypotheses and research questions were postulated concerning relationships between these variables, and were analyzed using a collection of univariate, bivariate and multivariate statistical tests. The key findings offer insight into the influence one’s past can have on one’s present and future, therefore a closer look and evaluation is needed. Figure 10 displays all the important findings from this study.

Because RTM highlights various times of transition in relationships (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004), it may help explain the presence of uncertainty during the transition into a new subsequent romantic relationship. In addition, an evaluation of communication between ex-

partners, as well as communication concerning both previous and subsequent relationships was evaluated. The communicative behaviors addressed in this study were analyzed through the RTM lens, such that the influence of relational uncertainty on these areas of communication was considered. When communication exists between ex-partners, or focused on an ex-partner within a transitioning subsequent relationship, uncertainty is likely to develop and impact the individual's commitment level. Which introduces the final variable of interest, the investment model (Rusbult, 1980). The investment model was utilized to evaluate the overall commitment partners had in both a previous and subsequent romantic relationship. Just as communication in previous and subsequent relationships was evaluated through the RTM lens, so too was commitment in both relationships. If present in either relationship, relational uncertainty and interference are likely to significantly impact the level of commitment assessed in either relationship. Finally, the communicative perspective addressed in this study may also impact commitment in previous and subsequent relationships, therefore this relationship was analyzed as well.

Relational Turbulence Model (RTM)

The primary components of RTM, relational uncertainty and interference were utilized in this study as both independent and dependent variables in various research questions and hypotheses. RTM highlights transitional periods in romantic relationships (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004), therefore focusing on partners' experiences of uncertainty and interference associated with relational shifts. Relational uncertainty addresses how sure or unsure a relational partner is about the nature of his or her relationship (Theiss & Knobloch, 2014, p. 29), whereas interference is the perception of one's partner literally interfering with one's life (Nagy & Theiss,

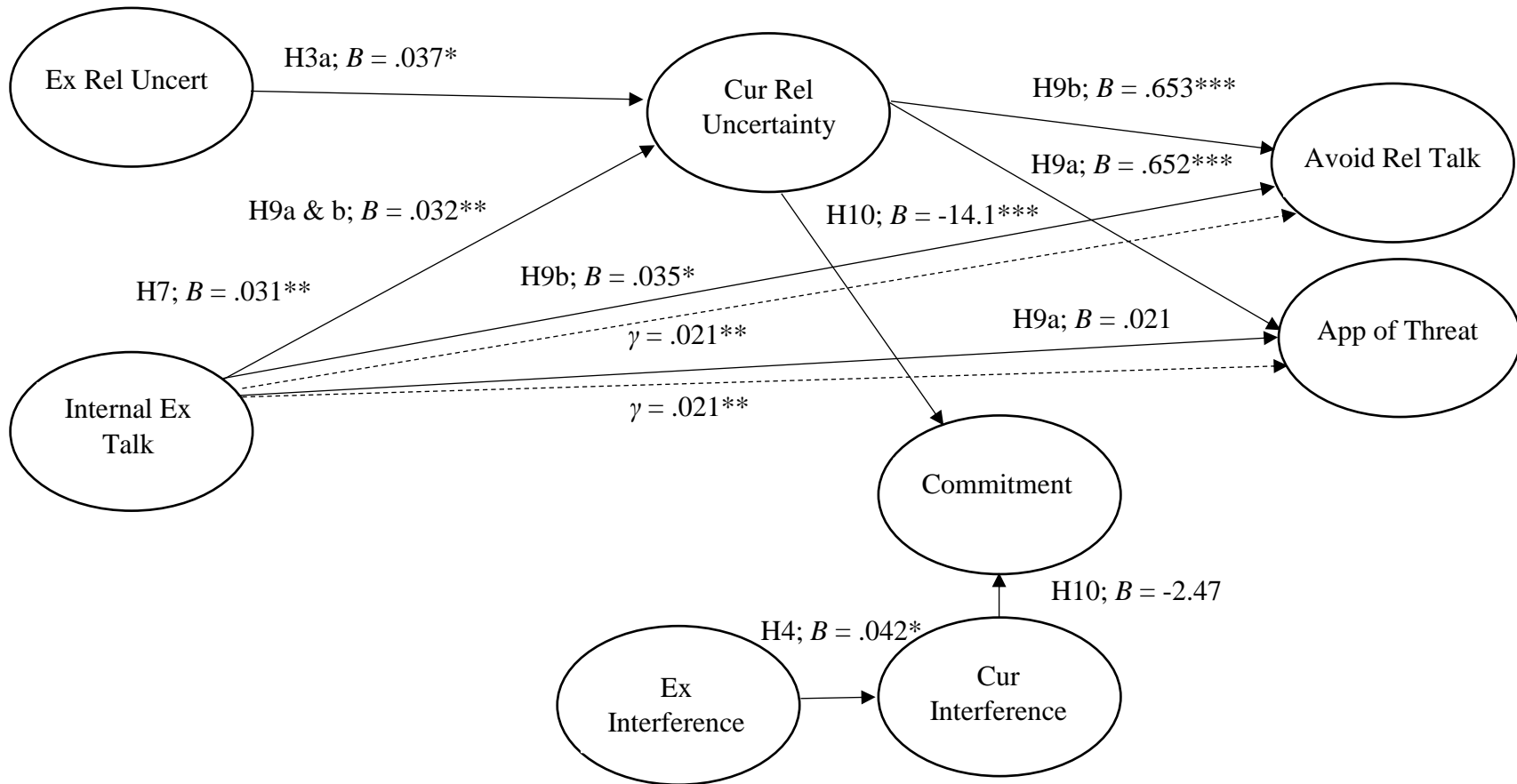


Figure 10. Path Diagram of Significant Findings

Note. $N = 147$. $^*p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$; $^{***}p < .001$. The dashed lines represent indirect effects, while solid lines represent direct effects.

2013, p. 284). The primary significant findings pertaining to each component are evaluated below.

Relational uncertainty

First and foremost, this study wanted to determine whether previous relational uncertainty, or uncertainty in a previous romantic relationship would influence relational uncertainty in a subsequent romantic relationship, which was supported. The model found evidence that previous relational uncertainty increases subsequent relational uncertainty. Therefore, when an individual experiences any doubt or questions in the form of self, partner, or relationship uncertainty in one romantic relationship, it increases the presence of doubts or questions in the form of self, partner, or relationship uncertainty in a the next romantic relationship. Could this lingering or past relational uncertainty be considered baggage that a partner carries into a new relationship? As previously mentioned, as one relationship ends and another begins partners might work to rebuild, recast, and rewrite themselves and the previous romantic relationship (Dragon & Duck, 2005; Rollie & Duck, 2006). This grave-dressing and resurrection process highlighted by Duck and Rollie (2006) acknowledges that people attempt to rework themselves into desirable future partners, however the uncertainty felt in the previous relationship may not be addressed or subsided by this process and a door is left open for it to carry over or increase the relational uncertainty in the next relationship. According to Sidelinger and Booth-Butterfield (2009), “People sometimes enter into romantic relationships that entail pre-existing challenges, or relational “baggage.” ... the three most commonly mentioned [baggage categories] were past history (e.g., bad relationship record), personality (e.g., needy), and external context (e.g., long distance relationship)” (pg. 414). Past relational uncertainty may

fit within the “baggage” category of past history, therefore allowing it to become a pre-existing challenge that influences relational uncertainty in the new relationship.

Regardless of how the relationship ended, partners are likely to feel some degree of dissatisfaction or negative effects through the breakup process. Knobloch and Theiss (2010) note that stress and anxiety are often byproducts of uncertainty, which can cause individuals to question or doubt the status of the relationship. If a partner experienced relational uncertainty in a past relationship causing stress and anxiety, these negative consequences of relational uncertainty may carry into the subsequent relationship. This finding insinuates the presence of relational uncertainty allows the relationship status to be questioned, so would this not impact relational satisfaction? According to Cortes, Leith, and Wilson (2018), “those lower in relational satisfaction do not engage in...relationship-protective processes, potentially exacerbating their interpersonal difficulties” (p. 1110). Therefore, when relational uncertainty is present in an unsatisfactory or unsuccessful relationship, it is likely uncertainty is intensified. As an individual is holding onto heightened degrees of uncertainty while moving into a subsequent relationship, it can contribute to the increase in subsequent relational uncertainty. Other studies found partners’ reactions to occurrences within a relationship are increased by the presence of relational uncertainty, as well as causing partners to once again question involvement and commitment to the relationship (Ellis & Ledbetter, 2015; Solomon & Knobloch, 2004). As relational uncertainty is causing questioning and commitment issues in a past romantic relationship, a partner may enter a subsequent romantic relationship still questioning or experiencing commitment issues therefore increasing relational uncertainty in the new relationship. Ellis and Ledbetter (2015) provide relational uncertainty as one of the “mechanisms that promote heightened reactivity to events that occur in personal romantic

relationships (Steuber & Solomon, 2008, p. 833)” (p. 570). A chain reaction seems to develop for relational uncertainty, such that past relational uncertainty causes heightened reactivity in a new relationship, which causes increased subsequent relational uncertainty.

Although not included in this study, considerations of the individual reporting previous and subsequent relational uncertainty may provide another explanation for the repeated occurrence. More specifically, the attachment style of the individual could show significant differences in perceived uncertainty, such that secure participants, rather than anxious or avoidant participants, are less likely to report uncertainty in the subsequent relationship. An evaluation of personality types could also be beneficial in future studies to gain insight on those partners who carry relational uncertainty from past relationships into subsequent relationships.

Interference

Another significant finding in this study pertains to interference, or the second key component to RTM. Interference is the perception of “undermining personal goals, actions, and routines” experienced by relational partners during times of transition in romantic relationships (Nagy & Theiss, 2013, p. 284). The fourth hypothesis assumed perceived interference in previous romantic relationships to positively influence interference in the subsequent romantic relationship. The regression model supported this assumption. Interference is based on the establishment of interdependence in romantic relationships (Solomon & Knobloch, 2001), which is needed for relational development. However, this process of integration can have errors that partners have to overcome by renegotiating interdependence (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004; Berscheid, 1983). By working through interferences, partners can utilize more facilitative forms of interdependence (Solomon & Knobloch, 2004). The experience of interference in a previous romantic relationship insinuates the presence of the facilitative aspects of interdependence,

which is a desirable outcome in a romantic relationship. This notion supports the idea that a partner may desire interference from a new partner to emulate the interdependence previously established in the past romantic relationship.

The process of integrating lives and establishing interdependence is a key component to relationship development. Ellis and Ledbetter summarize Solomon and Knobloch's (2004) position on the inverse relationship between interference and intimacy by providing, "when couples are still negotiating routines and action sequences, they experience more interference, but once they become more intimately engaged...they develop interdependence and both interference and turbulence decrease" (2015, p. 571). This study's finding that past interference increases current interference allows one to assume it may be caused by basic relational development or the desire to follow a script for relational development. More specifically, the experience of interference is normal or expected, therefore the presence of interference in the subsequent relationship is welcomed due to the perception that the relationship is "on track" or experiencing normal relational occurrences.

Another interesting implication from this finding pertains to rebound relationships specifically. Brumbaugh and Fraley (2014) found that "people who rebounded quickly may have perceived some congruence between their past and new partners... If people saw similarities between their current and ex-partners, this may have also provided a sense of stability" (p. 112). The relationship between past and current relational uncertainty and interference can easily be explained due Brumbaugh and Fraley's finding. The need to find similarities and congruence between past and subsequent relationships creates familiarity, understanding, and stability within one's life. Therefore, if relational uncertainty and interference were present in the past

relationship, one might seek them out or even create them in the subsequent relationship especially if the new relationship falls within the classification of a rebound.

Talk in Subsequent Romantic Relationships

Since this study's aim was to have a better understanding of how past romantic relationships influence subsequent romantic relationships, it was important to consider various aspects of communication or talk occurring with or about the ex-partner and past relationship. For the purpose of this study, there were specific operationalizations of talk chosen for analysis: External ex-partner talk, or talk between the ex-partners; Internal ex-partner talk, or talk about an ex-partner and past relationship within the subsequent relationship; and Relationship talk, which is made of appraisals of threat, enacted relationship talk, and avoided relationship talk.

External ex-partner talk

A research question was asked about the most frequent types of external ex-partner talk. A 29-event taxonomy created by Goldsmith and Baxter (1996) was utilized to measure the types of talk that occur between ex-partners. According to descriptive data from the current study, the five most common types of talk experienced by participants when talking to an ex-partner were "Catching up," "Joking around," "Recapping the day's events," "Conflict," and "Small talk." According to Goldsmith and Baxter (1996), "Everyday relating appears to be dominated by six kinds of talk events: gossip, making plans, joking around, catching up, small talk, and recapping the day's events" (p. 87). Based on this finding, all but one of the most frequent types of talk with an ex-partner can be considered "everyday relating," as posited by Goldsmith and Baxter (1996), which allows one to assume that when ex-partners talk they are treating the conversation as any other. The inclusion of "conflict" is rather fitting due to the ex-partners having obvious disagreements between them since they are no longer together. There is typically a reason for a

breakup to occur and talking to an ex-partner post breakup may not be a positive experience overall, especially since relationship dissolutions have been found to be incredibly distressing (Simpson, 1987; Sprecher et al., 1998).

In addition to questioning the most frequent types of talk between ex-partners, this study also asked whether or not they influence relational uncertainty in a subsequent romantic relationship. From the previously mentioned finding on the most frequent types of talk, only “joking around” was found to be slightly significant. When taking a look at how frequently one joked around with an ex-partner, those who joked around occasionally to regularly actually have less uncertainty in a current relationship compared to those that never or rarely joked around with the ex-partner. As a whole, all of the most frequent types of talk had a negative or inverse directional association with current relational uncertainty. Perhaps the nonchalant nature of these particular types of talk, and joking around in particular, points to moving on or closure from the previous partner and relationship. Brumbaugh and Fraley (2015) found that “in spite of more sustained contact with the previous partner, people who quickly rebounded did not appear to be romantically hung up on their ex-partners...this suggests that having a new partner may effectively serve the purpose of allowing people to more quickly get over their ex” (p. 113). As previously mentioned, romantic dissolutions are tough and reaching a level, communicatively, where partners can talk as acquaintances or by “everyday relating” (Goldsmith & Baxter, 1996, p. 87) may ease the uncertainty within the current relationship. A future prospect for this finding would be the addition of past relational uncertainty. Could an increase in frequency of joking around with an ex-partner impact the relationship between past and current relational uncertainty?

Internal ex-partner talk

Internal ex-partner talk, or talk about an ex-partner in subsequent romantic relationships was found to increase relational uncertainty. Talking to a current partner about one's ex-partner and previous relationship could be classified as viewing the current partner as socially supportive. Previous research not only found the quality of romantic relationships as closely connected to social support, but also identified social support as one of the most important aspects in romantic relationship development (Barbee & Cunningham, 1995; Cutrona, 1996; Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004). Additionally, because this study focuses on how one romantic relationship influences the next, the presence of internal ex-partner talk is likely inevitable. Shimek and Bello (2014) mention that rebound relationships help one emotionally cope with the previous breakup, which may be in the form of internal ex-partner talk or discussing one's ex-partner with a current partner. This communicative process of sharing information about the previous relationship has been found to help individuals cope with and move on past the breakup (Kellas & Manusov, 2003; Weber et al., 1987). Having the ex-partner and past relationship at the center of conversations, which insinuates that the ex is still present in some way or another, can certainly impact relational uncertainty.

Another consideration for future research focuses on the type of response or support a partner is receiving when internal ex-partner talk is occurring. Since it was found that internal ex-partner talk increases relational uncertainty, is it because one's partner is being negative, critical, or unsupportive? Does one begin to question the current relationship because the current partner is being negative or harsh when internal ex-partner talk occurs? An analysis of the type of support one receives during internal ex-partner talk would add needed details to help explain this finding.

Relationship talk

The final consideration of communication in past and current relationships focused on relationship talk. Relationship talk consists of appraisals of threat, avoidance of relationship talk, and enacted relationship talk. Appraisals of threat pertains to a partner's perception of the amount of risk associated with talk concerning the relationship (Knobloch & Carpenter-Theune, 2004). Avoidance of relationship talk means that a partner withholds or avoids talk concerning the relationship (Afifi & Burgoon, 1998; Afifi & Guerrero, 2000). The last component of relationship talk, enacted relationship talk, is the actual occurrence of talk pertaining to the relationship (Acitelli & Badr, 2005; Guerrero & Chavez, 2005). Relationship talk is often avoided when relational uncertainty is present, because of the negative outcomes (Knobloch & Theiss, 2011b). Additional research has found that those experiencing relational uncertainty find relationship talk difficult (Knobloch & Solomon, 2005), and avoid threatening topics (Knobloch & Carpenter-Theune, 2004). Therefore, looking at how relational uncertainty impacts the relationship between internal ex-partner talk and relationship talk was considered.

This study found that increased internal ex-partner talk in subsequent romantic relationships is positively associated with appraisals of threat and avoidance of relationship talk, as mediated by current relational uncertainty. Therefore, the more partners in a subsequent romantic relationship discuss one's ex-partner and past relationship, the more risk and avoidance of relationship talk one experiences due to the presence of relational uncertainty. When relational uncertainty is present in a subsequent relationship, the time and energy spent discussing one's ex-partner with one's current partner allows for the perception of talk about the current relationship with the current partner as too risky. This relationship is heightened by the presence of relational uncertainty pertaining to the current relationship. Basically, while internal

ex-partner talk does influence appraisals of threat and avoidance of relationship talk, it is due to the presence of current relational uncertainty. If an individual is uncertain about the relationship he or she is currently in, then any sort of talk about an ex-partner would discourage any talk about the nature of a current relationship.

Analyzing this finding using the theoretical assumptions of Face Theory provide an interesting explanation. As previously mentioned, Knobloch and Theiss (2011b) state, “people’s desires to protect face may supersede their desire to gain information when they are unsure about the status of their relationship” (p. 21). Protecting one’s face is incredibly important, therefore risky situations may be avoided to save one’s face. Talking about an ex-partner with a current partner is likely a face-threatening event, as well as relationship talk. Therefore if one is already experiencing relational uncertainty and engaging in internal ex-partner talk, then talk about the current relationship is easily deemed as too risky or threatening and ultimately avoided to protect oneself.

Commitment: The Investment Model

The commitment level, as established by the Investment Model, within subsequent romantic relationships was the final area of interest. Specifically, it was postulated that while in a subsequent relationship, if a person’s relational uncertainty and perception of interference increase, then the person’s commitment level to the current relationship and partner would decrease. The regression results support this assumption and provide that there is a negative relationship between relational uncertainty, interference, and commitment level. Similar findings contribute to this discovery by providing an increase in a person’s relationship uncertainty decreases the likelihood of people using commitment indicators to show commitment (Weigel, Brown, & O’Riordan, 2011). Additionally, previous research has found a negative

relationship between uncertainty and commitment (Arriaga, Slaughterbeck, Capezza & Hmurovic, 2007; Knobloch, 2008). As partners experience increased relational uncertainty and interference in subsequent romantic relationships, the level of commitment to the current partner and relationship is negatively impacted. Overall, this finding further displays the rocky nature of romantic relationships by adding commitment level to the many relational aspects impacted by the key components of RTM. If a person is questioning or doubting the current relationship, as well as perceiving his or her partner as disrupting or interfering with daily life, then the decrease in commitment, or intent to stay in the relationship (Sprecher, 2001), to that current partner is justified.

Significance of the Study

Overall, important connections between past and subsequent romantic relationships were found throughout this study. The recollection of past relational uncertainty and interferences contributes to the experience of relational uncertainty and interference in subsequent relationships. The presence of current relational uncertainty in a subsequent romantic relationship is also influenced by the occurrence of internal ex-partner talk, or talk about an ex-partner and past relationship with a current partner. A relationship between internal ex-partner talk, appraisals of threat, and avoided relationship talk was also found when relational uncertainty was present. Better said, internal ex-partner talk caused appraisals of threat and avoidance of relationship talk because of current relational uncertainty. Additionally, the most frequent types of talk that occur between ex-partners are ““Catching up,” “Joking around,” “Recapping the day’s events,” “Conflict,” and “Small talk,” which best relates to everyday talk or relating. This finding indicates that the types of talk occurring between ex-partners are not unique or out of the ordinary when compared to everyday communicative situations. Of these

most frequent types of talk, “joking around” was the only significant predictor of relational uncertainty in a subsequent relationship. More specifically, the presence of “joking around” between ex-partners decreases relational uncertainty in a subsequent relationship surprisingly. The final contribution from this study pertains to the relationship between relational uncertainty, interference, and commitment. If a partner is experiencing relational uncertainty and interference in the subsequent relationship, then his or her commitment level to the current partner and relationship decreases.

Limitations

One of the primary limitations of this study lies within the sample population. The sample size used for analysis consisted of 147 students, which is just over the minimum requirement of 146 participants for medium effect sizes. Also, the participants were limited to college students who may lack having multiple relational experiences that would constitute as serious, committed relationships, which was the primary focus of this study. The participants were also asked to recall past memories, or retroactive recall to account for various factors, such as relational uncertainty, interference, and topics of conversation with a past partner. This use of retroactive recall can lead to subject bias or skewed perspectives of past events. Because this study asked participants to recall aspects of a past, presumably failed, romantic relationship this allowed an opportunity for bias to impact responses.

Another limitation of this study concerns the timeline or timeliness of the study, data collection, and overall study completion. More specifically, due to overall time to analyze and complete the study, it appears to be outdated because of more recent academic contributions. For instance, the data was collected before the standardized measures for self, partner, and relationship uncertainty were developed (Solomon & Brisini, 2017). Additionally, RTM is now

referred to as Relational Turbulence Theory rather than model (Solomon, Knobloch, Theiss, & McLaren, 2016). Any new research contributions that were overlooked or not included in this study have the potential to completely reshape or reframe the approach to looking at relational uncertainty and interference in past and subsequent romantic relationships.

Additionally, the lack of prior research on how past relationships impact subsequent relationships contributed to the exploratory nature of this study, as well as the inclusion of various relational variables. The desire to cover so much within one study stretched its focus, which played in the length of the survey or the number of items accounted for within the survey. This may have caused participant fatigue, which influences the validity of the data collected.

The overall design of the study introduced additional limitations. Initially, this study was thought to collect data on rebound relationships, or relationships that occur shortly after a relational termination. However, the capturing of these relationships seemed difficult, therefore a broader perspective was taken, looking at past and present relationships regardless of time in-between. In regards to the measures used and data analysis, there were issues with item distribution and experiences of skewedness, therefore non-parametric tests were conducted. Therefore limiting this study due to the general lack of power of non-parametric tests as compared to parametric testing. There is also the additional risk or potential of findings present in the study being due to issues of multicollinearity. When looking at the bivariate correlations between the independent and dependent variables, there were significant correlations noted that could potentially impact findings produced within the study (as seen in Table 30).

Finally, one should consider whether or not significant findings pertaining to similarities across relationships is something that is generalizable or rather a “Me” effect, meaning that

Table 30. Bivariate Correlations among Independent and Dependent Variables

| Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|------|-------------|------------|------|------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|----|
| 1. Cur Uncertainty | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Cur Commit | -.67 *** | - | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Cur App Threat Ex | .23 ** | -.09 | - | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Cur Enact Talk | -.54 *** | .61 *** | -.04 | - | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Cur Avoid Talk | .52 *** | -.49 *** | .16 | -.56 *** | - | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. Cur App Threat | .67 *** | -.60 *** | .17* | -.55 *** | .63 *** | - | | | | | | | | | |
| 7. Cur Interference | .17* * | -.16 * | .20* | -.00 | .13 | .19* | - | | | | | | | | |
| 8. Ex Interference | -.14 | .16* | .01 | .11 | -.12 | -.15 | .17* | - | | | | | | | |
| 9. Ex Uncertainty | .14 | -.11 | .07 | -.00 | -.04 | .09 | .06 | -.2 | - | | | | | | |
| 10. Freq Ex Talk | .19* * | -.21 * | .05 | -.22 ** | .06 | .11 | -.09 | -.12 | .11 | - | | | | | |
| 11. Small Talk | -.16 * | .11 | -.12 | .01 | -.01 | -.01 | -.10 | -.09 | -.21 ** | -.07 | - | | | | |
| 12. Joking Around | -.20 * | .13 | -.11 | .11 | -.02 | -.04 | -.13 | -.13 | -.26 ** | -.18 * | .52 *** | - | | | |
| 13. Catching Up | -.05 | .02 | -.15 | .02 | .11 | .14 | -.08 | -.12 | -.25 ** | -.15 | .59 *** | .76 *** | - | | |
| 14. Recapping Day | .01 | .02 | -.16 | -.01 | .08 | .12 | -.14 | -.24 ** | -.23 ** | -.07 | .56 *** | .70 *** | .80 *** | - | |
| 15. Conflict | .01 | .01 | -.12 | -.14 | -.00 | .08 | .04 | -.02 | -.05 | -.04 | .45 *** | .43 *** | .40 *** | .46 *** | - |

Note. $N = 147$. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

different people may have different attitudes about interference and relational uncertainty and therefore will tolerate different levels no matter the relationship. Is the connection between past and current relationships not really a connection at all, but rather something about the individual/s being questioned, such as personality or attachment style? Also, when considering the sample population of this study, the demographics of participants limits the generalizability of the study's findings. Specifically, the average age of participants being around 19 years old limits how applicable the findings are across different age ranges. However, since this study was originally looking at rebounds and targeting a younger population was thought to be ideal due to less likelihood of marriage, divorce, children, etc. These relational outcomes introduce new and unique challenges to relationships, which were ideally avoided by surveying a younger sample population. Another demographic constraint is the education level of participants. Data was collected at Louisiana State University, and all participants were registered students. This impacts the generalizability of the results and limits the findings to only those who are pursuing a college education.

Future Research

Future studies should take these limitations in consideration. The sample population could extend past college aged individuals who may have more relational experience, knowledge, and understanding. As previously mentioned, this study focused or targeted a younger population to avoid the complications of relational outcomes, such as marriage, divorce, and children. However, future research could extend the applicability of this study's findings about the connection between past and current relationships to more complicated relational situations. Therefore, it would be beneficial to focus on a broader age range to capture such phenomena. Another demographic consideration for future research would be the education

level of participants. This particular study included all college students. It would be interesting to see how or if education levels impact the connection between past and current relationships.

Future work on connections between past and current relationships could also include more than one partner, such that data collected would present both partner's accounts as is done in partner-actor data collection. Also, taking a longitudinal approach from breakup through developed, subsequent relationship could more truly capture past relationship influences on the next relationship. Future research could also hone in on rebound relationships, especially since there is very little research found on rebounds. Since rebound relationships are relatively understudied, there is still so much to discover about what makes them unique or different from any other romantic relationship.

Conclusion

Close, personal relationships are essential to one's well-being (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Maslow, 1943), therefore broadening our understanding of the nuances that surround them is a necessity. Most individuals seek out and pursue companionship and romantic relationships, however these romantic relationships are not guaranteed to last, leaving romantic partners to deal with the unsavory consequences of romantic dissolutions or breakups. Just like any disaster, big or small, a residue is left as a mark of remembrance of what once was, but how does the residue of a previous relationship influence one's next romantic endeavor? We now have more insight as to specific aspects from the previous relationship that carry over into the subsequent romantic relationship, illustrating how relationships live on to preoccupy the individual and within the new relationship.

Most people can easily recount or relive these dark breakup experiences. A dear friend of mine served as a source of inspiration for this investigation. I watched her struggle in the dating

world, post-divorce, due to her reliving or being continuously stung by hauntings of her previous relationship. She would be “triggered,” as she would say, by some action or message sent by a new romantic partner that automatically sent her back to the past. An emotional wave would consume her and she would retreat within herself due to the similarities between the past and present. Although not fair to her current partner, my friend would overanalyze and make assumptions based on past experiences and ultimately put unnecessary pressure on the new partner and relationship. She was experiencing how powerful one’s past experiences are and allowing the baggage from her past relationship to creep into her current relationships. I am glad to say that she is currently in a happy and successful relationship that thrives due to her ability to communicate her “triggers” to her new partner and self-awareness of the impact her past experiences have on her and her relationship. So how does one leave the baggage behind? Well, that is an interesting question for another study.

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APPENDIX. SURVEY

Demographics & Relationship Information

1. What is your gender? Male Female
2. How old are you?
3. What is your college classification? Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior
4. What is your current relational status? Single, Dating, Serious relationship, Married, Divorced

Relational Information on Past Relationship and Ex-Partner

5. How long has it been since your previous breakup?
6. How long was the previous romantic relationship?
7. Were you the breakup initiator or breakup victim? Initiator Victim
8. How frequently do you talk to you ex-partner? Never, Rarely, Occasionally, A Moderate amount, A great deal or Never, Monthly, Weekly, Daily or Open-ended?
9. Please recall the previous breakup and provide your narrative of what happened:

Relational Uncertainty – Past Relationship

We have listed a number of statements addressing different facets of involvement in dating relationships. We would like you to rate how CERTAIN you are about the degree of involvement that you had in your past relationship. PLEASE NOTE: We are not asking you to rate how much involvement there was in your relationship, but rather how certain you are about whatever degree of involvement you perceived. It might help if you first consider how much of each form of involvement was present in your past relationship, and then evaluate how *certain* you are about that perception. For these judgments, you should use the following scale:

| | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|--|--|-------------------|---|
| 1 ----- | 2 ----- | 3 ----- | 4 ----- | 5 ----- | 6 ----- |
| Completely or Almost completely Uncertain | Mostly Uncertain | Slightly more Uncertain than Certain | Slightly more Certain than Uncertain | Mostly Certain | Completely or Almost completely Certain |

Think about your most recent past romantic relationship. How certain are you about:

10. Whether or not you wanted the relationship to work out in the long term
11. Whether or not you wanted the relationship to last
12. How important the relationship was to you
13. Whether or not you were ready to commit to your partner
14. How committed your partner was to the relationship
15. Whether or not your partner wanted to be with you in the long run
16. Whether or not your partner wanted the relationship to work out in the long run
17. How much your partner was attracted to you
18. Whether or not the relationship would've worked out in the long run
19. Whether or not you and your partner felt the same way about each other
20. Whether or not you and your partner would've stayed together
21. Whether or not the relationship was a romantic one

Interference

Think about your most recent past romantic relationship and answer the following questions regarding your ex-partner:

22. My partner interfered with the plans I'd make.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|

23. My partner interfered with my plans to attend parties or other social events.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|

24. My partner interfered with the amount of time I spent with my friends.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|

25. My partner interfered with the things I needed to do each day.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|

RELATIONSHIP TALK – SPEECH EVENTS

Please report how frequently you and your ex-partner engage in each of the following kinds of talk.

26. Small talk: How often do you talk about current events to pass time and/or to avoid being rude?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

| | | | | |
|-------|--------|--------------|------------|-----------|
| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Frequently | Regularly |
|-------|--------|--------------|------------|-----------|

27. Gossip: How often do you exchange opinions or information about someone else when that person isn't present?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

28. Joking around: How often do you engage in playful talk to have fun or release tension?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

29. Catching up: How often do you “catch up” by talking about events that have occurred since you last spoke?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

30. Recapping the day’s events: How often do you talk about what’s up and about what happened to you during the day?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

31. Reminiscing: How often do you talk about shared events you experienced together in the past?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

32. Making up: When needed, how often do the two of you “make up,” where one or both of you apologize for violating some expectations?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

33. Love talk: How often do you talk in ways that express love and give attention and affection?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

34. Relationship talk: How often do you talk about the state of your relationship?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

35. Conflict: How often do you disagree?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

36. Serious conversation: How often do you have serious conversations where you are both involved in an in-depth conversation about some personal or important topic?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

37. Talking about problems: How often do you have conversations in which one of you shares about some problem you are having and the other person tries to help?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

38. Complaining: How often do you complain to each other, where one of you expresses negative feelings or frustrations directed toward a topic, but not toward each other?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

39. Persuading conversation: How often do you have conversations where one of you has the goal of convincing the other person to do something?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

40. Decision-making: How often do you have conversations where the two of you are making a decision about some task?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

41. Giving and getting instructions: How often do you have conversations in which one of you is giving the other information or directions about how to do some task?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

42. Lecture: How often do you have one-way conversations, where one of you is telling the other how to act or what to do?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

43. Interrogation: How often do you have oneway conversations, where one of you grills the other person with questions?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

44. Making plans: How often do you or the other person arrange meetings or arrange to do something with someone else?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

45. Asking a favor: How often do you ask each other for a favor?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

46. Sports talk: How often do you have conversations revolving around sports?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

47. Asking out: How often do you or the other person ask the other out?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

48. Breaking bad news: How often do you have conversations where the one of you is sharing bad news to the other?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

49. Getting to know: How often do you have conversations to get to know each other better, to find out more information about each other?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

50. Group discussion: How often do you have conversations involving other people than just the two of you?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

51. Class information: How often do you have conversations focused on information obtained in the classroom?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

52. Morning talk: How often do you have conversations that take place in the morning, during morning routines?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

53. Bedtime talk: How often do you have conversations that take place in the evening, just before going to sleep?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

54. Current events: How often do you talk about current events?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

RELATIONSHIP TALK

For the following section, preface each statement with: “Having a conversation with the ex-partner about the nature of the past relationship would...” and provide how strongly you agree or disagree to the statement.

55. Be embarrassing for me.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Somewhat Agree Agree Strongly Agree

56. Make me feel vulnerable.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Somewhat Agree Agree Strongly Agree

57. Damage my image.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Somewhat Agree Agree Strongly Agree

58. Threaten the relationship.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

Strongly Disagree Somewhat Disagree Somewhat Agree Agree Strongly Agree

59. Have a negative effect on the relationship.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|

60. Damage the relationship.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|

61. How much do you avoid talking about the state of your relationship with your ex-partner?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7

| | | | | | | |
|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|------------|---------|--------|
| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Sometimes | Frequently | Usually | Always |
|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|------------|---------|--------|

62. How much do you avoid talking about the norms and expectations for your relationship with your ex-partner?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7

| | | | | | | |
|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|------------|---------|--------|
| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Sometimes | Frequently | Usually | Always |
|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|------------|---------|--------|

63. How much do you avoid talking about behaviors that put a strain on your relationship with your ex-partner?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7

| | | | | | | |
|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|------------|---------|--------|
| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Sometimes | Frequently | Usually | Always |
|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|------------|---------|--------|

64. We have actively avoided or actively discussed our view of this relationship.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Actively Avoided | Somewhat Avoided | Somewhat Discussed | Actively Discussed |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|

65. We have actively avoided or actively discussed our feelings for each other.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Actively Avoided | Somewhat Avoided | Somewhat Discussed | Actively Discussed |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|

66. We have actively avoided or actively discussed the future of the relationship.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Actively Avoided | Somewhat Avoided | Somewhat Discussed | Actively Discussed |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|

Please indicate the degree to which you agree with each of the following statements regarding your most recent past romantic.

67. How satisfying was your previous serious romantic relationship?

68. I felt satisfied in my previous romantic relationship.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Do Not Agree Agree Agree
At All Somewhat Completely

69. The people other than my ex-partner with whom I might have become involved were very appealing (please circle a number).

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Do Not Agree Agree Agree
At All Somewhat Completely

70. I had invested a great deal in my previous romantic relationship

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Do Not Agree Agree Agree
At All Somewhat Completely

71. I was committed to maintaining my relationship with my ex-partner.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Do Not Agree Agree Agree
At All Somewhat Completely

72. Are you currently involved in a romantic relationship? Yes No

IF YES, GO TO NEW RELATIONSHIP SURVEY

IF NO, END SURVEY

THOSE CURRENTLY IN A RELATIONSHIP

73. How long have you been in this new relationship?

74. Did this relationship begin within 6 weeks of a previous breakup? Yes No

75. How soon after the previous breakup did this relationship begin?

RELATIONAL UNCERTANTY

We have listed a number of statements addressing different facets of involvement in dating relationships. We would like you to rate how CERTAIN you are about the degree of involvement that you have in your relationship at this time. PLEASE NOTE: We are not asking you to rate how much involvement there is in your relationship, but rather how certain you are about whatever degree of involvement you perceive. It might help if you first consider how much of each form of involvement is present in your relationship, and then evaluate how *certain* you are about that perception. For these judgments, you should use the following scale:

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6
Completely or Mostly Slightly more Slightly more Mostly Completely or

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------|------------------------------|
| Almost completely Uncertain | Uncertain | Uncertain than Certain | Certain than Uncertain | Certain | Almost completely Certain |
|--------------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------|------------------------------|

Think about your current romantic relationship. How certain are you about:

76. Whether or not you want the relationship to work out in the long term
77. Whether or not you want the relationship to last
78. How important the relationship is to you
79. Whether or not you are ready to commit to your partner
80. How committed your partner is to the relationship
81. Whether or not your partner wants to be with you in the long run
82. Whether or not your partner wants the relationship to work out in the long run
83. How much your partner is attracted to you
84. Whether or not the relationship will work in out in the long run
85. Whether or not you and your partner feel the same way about each other
86. Whether or not you and your partner will stay together
87. Whether or not the relationship is a romantic one

Think about your current romantic relationship and answer the following questions regarding your current partner:

88. My partner interferes with the plans I make.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|

89. My partner interferes with my plans to attend parties or other social events.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|

90. My partner interferes with the amount of time I spend with my friends.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|

91. My partner interferes with the things I need to do each day.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|----------------------|----------|----------------------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|

RELATIONSHIP TALK – SPEECH EVENTS

Please report how frequently you and your current partner engage in each of the following kinds of talk.

92. Small talk: How often do you talk about current events to pass time and/or to avoid being rude?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

93. Gossip: How often do you exchange opinions or information about someone else when that person isn't present?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

94. Joking around: How often do you engage in playful talk to have fun or release tension?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

95. Catching up: How often do you “catch up” by talking about events that have occurred since you last spoke?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

96. Recapping the day's events: How often do you talk about what's up and about what happened to you during the day?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

97. Reminiscing: How often do you talk about shared events you experienced together in the past?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

98. Making up: When needed, how often do the two of you “make up,” where one or both of you apologize for violating some expectations?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

99. Love talk: How often do you talk in ways that express love and give attention and affection?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

100. Relationship talk: How often do you talk about the state of your relationship?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

101. Conflict: How often do you disagree?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

102. Serious conversation: How often do you have serious conversations where you are both involved in an in-depth conversation about some personal or important topic?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

103. Talking about problems: How often do you have conversations in which one of you shares about some problem you are having and the other person tries to help?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

104. Complaining: How often do you complain to each other, where one of you expresses negative feelings or frustrations directed toward a topic, but not toward each other?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

105. Persuading conversation: How often do you have conversations where one of you has the goal of convincing the other person to do something?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

106. Decision-making: How often do you have conversations where the two of you are making a decision about some task?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

107. Giving and getting instructions: How often do you have conversations in which one of you is giving the other information or directions about how to do some task?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

108. Lecture: How often do you have one-way conversations, where one of you is telling the other how to act or what to do?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

109. Interrogation: How often do you have oneway conversations, where one of you grills the other person with questions?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

110. Making plans: How often do you or the other person arrange meetings or arrange to do something with someone else?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

111. Asking a favor: How often do you ask each other for a favor?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

112. Sports talk: How often do you have conversations revolving around sports?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

113. Asking out: How often do you or the other person ask the other out?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

114. Breaking bad news: How often do you have conversations where the one of you is sharing bad news to the other?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

115. Getting to know: How often do you have conversations to get to know each other better, to find out more information about each other?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

116. Group discussion: How often do you have conversations involving other people than just the two of you?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

117. Class information: How often do you have conversations focused on information obtained in the classroom?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

118. Morning talk: How often do you have conversations that take place in the morning, during morning routines?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

119. Bedtime talk: How often do you have conversations that take place in the evening, just before going to sleep?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

120. Current events: How often do you talk about current events?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Regularly

RELATIONSHIP TALK

For the following section, preface each statement with: "Having a conversation with the current partner about the nature of the current relationship would..." and provide how strongly you agree or disagree to the statement.

121. Be embarrassing for me.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|

122. Make me feel vulnerable.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|

123. Damage my image.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|

124. Threaten the relationship.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|

125. Have a negative effect on the relationship.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|

126. Damage the relationship.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|

127. How much do you avoid talking the state of your relationship with your current partner?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7

| | | | | | | |
|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|------------|---------|--------|
| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Sometimes | Frequently | Usually | Always |
|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|------------|---------|--------|

128. How much do you avoid talking about the norms and expectations for your relationship with your current partner?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7

| | | | | | | |
|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|------------|---------|--------|
| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Sometimes | Frequently | Usually | Always |
|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|------------|---------|--------|

129. How much do you avoid talking about behaviors that put a strain on your relationship with your current partner?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7

| | | | | | | |
|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|------------|---------|--------|
| Never | Rarely | Occasionally | Sometimes | Frequently | Usually | Always |
|-------|--------|--------------|-----------|------------|---------|--------|

130. We, as a couple, have actively avoided or actively discussed our view of this relationship.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | |
|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Actively | Somewhat | Somewhat | Actively |
| Avoided | Avoided | Discussed | Discussed |

131. We, as a couple, have actively avoided or actively discussed our feelings for each other.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | |
|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Actively | Somewhat | Somewhat | Actively |
| Avoided | Avoided | Discussed | Discussed |

132. We, as a couple, have actively avoided or actively discussed the future of the relationship.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | |
|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Actively | Somewhat | Somewhat | Actively |
| Avoided | Avoided | Discussed | Discussed |

RELATIONSHIP TALK ABOUT EX

For the following section, preface each statement with: "Having a conversation with the current partner about the nature of the most recent past relationship and ex-partner would..." and provide how strongly you agree or disagree to the statement.

133. Be embarrassing for me.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|

134. Make me feel vulnerable.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|

135. Damage my image.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|

136. Threaten the relationship.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|

137. Have a negative effect on the relationship.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|

138. Damage the relationship.

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------|-------|----------------|

SATISFACTION LEVEL - IM

139. Please indicate the degree to which you agree with each of the following statements regarding your current relationship (circle an answer for each answer).

(a) My partner fulfills my needs for intimacy (sharing personal thoughts, secrets, etc.)

| | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Don't Agree At All | Agree Slightly | Agree Moderately | Agree Completely |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|

(b) My partner fulfills my needs for companionship (doing things together, enjoying each other's company, etc.)

| | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Don't Agree At All | Agree Slightly | Agree Moderately | Agree Completely |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|

(c) My partner fulfills my sexual needs (holding hands, kissing, etc.)

| | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Don't Agree At All | Agree Slightly | Agree Moderately | Agree Completely |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|

(d) My partner fulfills my needs for security (feeling trusting, comfortable in a stable relationship, etc.)

| | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Don't Agree At All | Agree Slightly | Agree Moderately | Agree Completely |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|

(e) My partner fulfills my needs for emotional involvement (feeling emotionally attached, feeling good when another feels good, etc.)

| | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Don't Agree At All | Agree Slightly | Agree Moderately | Agree Completely |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|

140. I feel satisfied with our relationship (please circle a number).

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8

| | | |
|---------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Do Not Agree At All | Agree Somewhat | Agree Completely |
|---------------------|----------------|------------------|

141. My relationship is much better than others' relationships.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
 Do Not Agree Agree Agree
 At All Somewhat Completely

142. My relationship is close to ideal.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
 Do Not Agree Agree Agree
 At All Somewhat Completely

143. Our relationship makes me very happy.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
 Do Not Agree Agree Agree
 At All Somewhat Completely

144. Our relationship does a good job of fulfilling my needs for intimacy,
 companionship, etc.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
 Do Not Agree Agree Agree
 At All Somewhat Completely

QUALITY OF ALTERNATIVES - IM

145. Please indicate the degree to which you agree with each statement regarding the
 fulfillment of each need in alternative relationships (e.g., by another dating partner,
 friends, family).

(a) My needs for intimacy (sharing personal thoughts, secrets, etc.) could be fulfilled in
 alternative relationships.

| | | | |
|-------------|----------|------------|------------|
| Don't Agree | Agree | Agree | Agree |
| At All | Slightly | Moderately | Completely |

(b) My needs for companionship (doing things together, enjoying each other's company, etc.)
 could be fulfilled in alternative relationships.

| | | | |
|-------------|----------|------------|------------|
| Don't Agree | Agree | Agree | Agree |
| At All | Slightly | Moderately | Completely |

(c) My sexual needs (holding hands, kissing, etc.) could be fulfilled in alternative relationships.

| | | | |
|-------------|----------|------------|------------|
| Don't Agree | Agree | Agree | Agree |
| At All | Slightly | Moderately | Completely |

(d) My needs for security (feeling trusting, comfortable in a stable relationship, etc.) could be
 fulfilled in alternative relationships.

| | | | |
|-------------|----------|------------|------------|
| Don't Agree | Agree | Agree | Agree |
| At All | Slightly | Moderately | Completely |

(e) My needs for emotional involvement (feeling emotionally attached, feeling good when
 another feels good, etc.) could be fulfilled in alternative relationships.

| | | | |
|-------------|----------|------------|------------|
| Don't Agree | Agree | Agree | Agree |
| At All | Slightly | Moderately | Completely |

146. The people other than my partner with whom I might become involved are very appealing (please circle a number).

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Do Not Agree Agree Agree
At All Somewhat Completely

147. My alternatives to our relationship are close to ideal (dating another, spending time with friends or on my own, etc.).

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Do Not Agree Agree Agree
At All Somewhat Completely

148. If I weren't dating my partner, I would do fine-I would find another appealing person to date.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Do Not Agree Agree Agree
At All Somewhat Completely

149. My alternatives are attractive to me (dating another, spending time with friends or on my own, etc.).

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Do Not Agree Agree Agree
At All Somewhat Completely

150. My needs for intimacy, companionship, etc., could easily be fulfilled in an alternative relationship.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Do Not Agree Agree Agree
At All Somewhat Completely

151. Please indicate the degree to which you agree with each of the following statements regarding your current relationship (circle an answer for each item).

(a) I have invested a great deal of time in our relationship

Don't Agree Agree Agree Agree
At All Slightly Moderately Completely

(b) I have told my partner many private things about myself (I disclose secrets to him/her)

Don't Agree Agree Agree Agree
At All Slightly Moderately Completely

(c) My partner and I have an intellectual life together that would be difficult to replace.

Don't Agree Agree Agree Agree
At All Slightly Moderately Completely

(d) My sense of personal identity (who I am) is linked to my partner and our relationship.

Don't Agree Agree Agree Agree
At All Slightly Moderately Completely

(e) My partner and I share many memories.

| | | | |
|-------------|----------|------------|------------|
| Don't Agree | Agree | Agree | Agree |
| At All | Slightly | Moderately | Completely |

152. I have put a great deal into our relationship that I would lose if the relationship were to end.

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Do Not Agree | | | | Agree | | | | Agree |
| At All | | | | Somewhat | | | | Completely |

153. Many aspects of my life have become linked to my partner (recreational activities, etc.), and I would lose all of this if we were to break up.

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Do Not Agree | | | | Agree | | | | Agree |
| At All | | | | Somewhat | | | | Completely |

154. I feel very involved in our relationship-like I have put a great deal into it.

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Do Not Agree | | | | Agree | | | | Agree |
| At All | | | | Somewhat | | | | Completely |

155. My relationships with friends and family members would be complicated if my partner and I were to break up (e.g., partner is friends with people I care about).

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Do Not Agree | | | | Agree | | | | Agree |
| At All | | | | Somewhat | | | | Completely |

156. Compared to other people I know, I have invested a great deal in my relationship with my partner.

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Do Not Agree | | | | Agree | | | | Agree |
| At All | | | | Somewhat | | | | Completely |

COMMITMENT LEVELS - IM

157. I want our relationship to last for a very long time (please circle a number).

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Do Not Agree | | | | Agree | | | | Agree |
| At All | | | | Somewhat | | | | Completely |

158. I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner.

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|------------|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| Do Not Agree | | | | Agree | | | | Agree |
| At All | | | | Somewhat | | | | Completely |

159. I would not feel very upset if our relationship were to end in the near future.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Do Not Agree Agree Agree
At All Somewhat Completely

160. It is likely that I will date someone other than my partner within the next year.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Do Not Agree Agree Agree
At All Somewhat Completely

161. I feel very attached to our relationship-very strongly linked to my partner.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Do Not Agree Agree Agree
At All Somewhat Completely

162. I want our relationship to last forever.

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Do Not Agree Agree Agree
At All Somewhat Completely

163. I am oriented toward the long-term future of my relationship (for example, I imagine being with my partner several years from now).

0 ----- 1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5 ----- 6 ----- 7 ----- 8
Do Not Agree Agree Agree
At All Somewhat Completely

If you would like to be contacted for continued participation in this study, please provide your name and email address below.

If you are currently in a new relationship, we are also interested in your partner's perspective on relationship talk and relational uncertainty. If you would like to continue your participation in this study, and think that your partner would be interested in participating, please provide his or her name and email address below.

VITA

Cassie Shimek received her bachelor's degree from Sam Houston State University in December 2009 with a focus in Communication Studies. She went on to earn her master's degree from the same institution August 2012 with a keen focus on interpersonal communication. As a relationally-oriented person, she enjoyed listening, advising, and learning about the interpersonal aspects of relationships, therefore deciding to pursue a Doctorate in Communication Studies from Louisiana State University. With a fascination for unscripted romantic relationships, especially rebound relationships, she researched the various ways past romantic relationships impacted or influenced those romantic relationships that follow. While furthering her knowledge of the theoretical and methodological aspects of interpersonal communication, she also discovered her passion for teaching, leading, and impacting the lives of others through the instruction of various aspects of communication studies. During her time at LSU she either taught or assisted with Public Speaking and Interpersonal Communication courses. Once she physically left LSU's campus, she continued to teach at Lone Star College in Texas, as well as Northern Virginia Community College in Sterling, Virginia. In addition to the previously mentioned communication courses, she expanded her teaching portfolio to include Business Communication and Introduction to Communication Studies courses. Her future plans include the continuation of instruction, to hopefully change perceptions and attitudes on the importance of communication, as well as to show the gravity of application of communication knowledge, skills, and practices. Additionally, she hopes to continue researching the nuances of rebound relationships or the impact between past and subsequent romantic relationships.