Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
2012, Vol. 103, No. 3, 472–488

0022-3514/12/$12.00 DOI: 10.1037/a0029054

Measuring Up: The Unique Emotional and Regulatory Outcomes of Different Perceived Partner-Ideal Discrepancies in Romantic Relationships

Sandra D. Lackenbauer and Lorne Campbell
Western University

Guided by the ideal standards model (Simpson, Fletcher, & Campbell, 2001), the present research investigated the emotional and regulatory consequences of different forms of perceived partner discrepancies in a relationship context. Studies 1 (dating sample) and 2 (married sample) demonstrated that perceiving one's partner to be the source of a partner discrepancy (i.e., a PD-partner) was associated with dejection emotions, whereas perceiving oneself to be the source of the partner discrepancy (i.e., a PD-self) was associated with agitation emotions. Study 3 provided experimental support for the findings of Studies 1 and 2 by demonstrating that participants primed with either a PD-partner or a PD-self exhibited facilitated responses to dejection and agitation emotions, respectively. Studies 4 and 5 provided experimental support for the prediction that a PD-partner also results in a promotion focus regulatory style, whereas a PD-self results in a prevention focus regulatory style. The importance of understanding the emotional and regulatory ramifications of evaluation outcomes within a romantic relationship context is discussed.

Keywords: partner evaluations, romantic relationships, ideal standards model, emotions, regulatory focus

In a romantic relationship, partners are simultaneously the source and target of interpersonal evaluations, meaning that the outcomes realized by partners in relationships are interdependent (Kelley et al., 2003). For example, Tom's degree of satisfaction or happiness is due partly to his evaluation of his partner Mary but also to Mary's evaluation of him. One model that takes into account the dyadic nature and consequences of interpersonal evaluations is the ideal standards model (ISM; Fletcher, Simpson, Thomas, & Giles, 1999; Simpson, Fletcher, & Campbell, 2001). Consistent with hypotheses derived from this model, research has demonstrated that people are less satisfied with their romantic relationships when they perceive their partners as not closely matching their own image of an ideal partner (e.g., Fletcher et al., 1999) and when they fall short of matching their partner's ideals (Campbell, Simpson, Kashy, & Fletcher, 2001; Overall, Fletcher, & Simpson, 2006).

Although each type of discrepancy is uniquely associated with relatively low levels of relationship satisfaction in both partners, Campbell et al. (2001) argued that there should also be important differences in the outcomes associated with each type of discrepancy. For instance, feeling that a partner falls short of one's ideals should indicate a failure to reach an important relationship goal, whereas falling short of a partner's ideals should indicate that a person may face rejection for being a less-than-perfect partner. As a result, the perceived options available to partners when faced with each type of discrepancy in their relationship should diverge in important and predictable ways. To date, however, no empirical research has directly tested these ideas. The present series of five studies tests hypotheses derived from the ISM and informed by regulatory focus theory (RFT; Higgins, 1997), along with other research investigating approach and avoidance motivations (e.g., Carver & Scheier, 1990, 1998), to assess the distinct emotional and regulatory outcomes hypothesized to be associated with each type of discrepancy.

The Ideal Standards Model (ISM)

The ISM describes the content of ideal standards within romantic relationships and suggests their evaluative and regulatory functions (see Simpson et al., 2001, for an overview). The model contends that ideal standards operate as chronically accessible knowledge structures that are used as a basis of comparison for current relationship perceptions. Consistent with predictions derived from an evolutionary perspective (e.g., Gangestad & Simpson, 2000), research on the ISM has found that ideal standards center on three major dimensions: warmth/trustworthiness (i.e., being kind, warm, and trustworthy), attractiveness/vitality (i.e., being physically attractive and healthy), and status/resources (i.e., being ambitious and successful). Recent research has demonstrated that this three-dimensional structure replicates well across gender, relationship status, and short-term versus long-term relationship contexts (Boyes & Fletcher, 2007; Fletcher, Tither, O'Loughlin, Friesen, & Overall, 2004; Overall et al., 2006).

Research guided by the ISM has provided support for the evaluative component of the model. This body of research has shown, as predicted, that participants who report smaller partner

This article was published Online First June 25, 2012.

Sandra D. Lackenbauer and Lorne Campbell, Department of Psychology, Western University, London, Ontario, Canada.

We gratefully acknowledge the support of a Canada Graduate Scholarship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) awarded to Sandra D. Lackenbauer as well as a grant from the SSHRC and a Premier's Research Excellence Award (PREA), awarded to Lorne Campbell to assist with this research.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Sandra D. Lackenbauer, Department of Psychology, Western University, London, Ontario, Canada, N6A 5C2. E-mail: slacken@uwo.ca

discrepancies (i.e., the perceptions of their partners closely match their ideal standards) also report higher relationship quality (e.g., satisfaction, stability, commitment; Fletcher et al., 1999). These findings remained significant when the attractiveness of alternative partners was statistically controlled. Smaller partner discrepancies at the outset of a relationship (approximately 3 weeks after the relationship started) have also been shown to predict relationship satisfaction 12 months later (Fletcher, Simpson, & Thomas, 2000). In this research, levels of initial satisfaction did not predict the size of partner discrepancies later in the relationship, suggesting that discrepancies may play a causal role in relationship evaluations over time. In addition, Campbell et al. (2001) demonstrated the dyadic nature of partner evaluations: Participants' relationship satisfaction was uniquely associated with their own perceptions of their partners, as well as their partner's perceptions of them.

According to this model, negative evaluations stemming from large partner discrepancies can fuel regulatory behaviors designed to reduce the size of this discrepancy. For example, Overall et al. (2006; see also Overall, Fletcher, Simpson, & Sibley, 2009) demonstrated that people attempt to motivate their partners to change in ways that are consistent with their own ideals, particularly when they feel that their partners are not matching their ideals. The results of this research imply that people adopt a promotion focus (i.e., they focus on possible gains and initiate strategies to attain them; Higgins, 1997) when they perceive their partners as failing to meet their ideals. Although providing an initial indication that partner discrepancies do, in fact, motivate regulatory behaviors, this research did not focus on individual's regulatory motivations when they perceived they fell short of their partner's ideals. Although not guided by the ISM, other research has shown that when people feel underappreciated by their partners (presumably not closely matching their partner's ideal standards), they internalize the evaluations and engage in self-regulatory behaviors aimed at avoiding or preventing situations that could maintain or increase dependency on the partner and relationship (for a review, see Murray, Holmes, & Collins, 2006). The current research tests both the evaluative and regulatory functions of the ISM by focusing on the unique emotional and regulatory outcomes associated with different types of partner discrepancies. The experience of different emotions and regulatory outcomes produced by each type of partner discrepancy sheds light on how the discrepancies are interpreted or understood by intimates. Such an understanding furthers the ISM research by pinpointing the mechanisms with which discrepancies may affect relationships.

The ISM, Negative Emotions, and Regulatory Focus

According to the ISM (Simpson et al., 2001), people possess perceptions about how discrepant their partners are from their ideal standards and perceptions about how discrepant they themselves are from their partners' ideal standards. Although both forms of partner discrepancies threaten the goal of obtaining or maintaining a satisfying relationship, we argue that they pose subjectively unique experiences for the relationship partners.

Informing our predictions, research guided by self-discrepancy theory (SDT; Higgins, 1987; see also Carver, Lawrence, & Scheier, 1999) and regulatory focus theory (RFT; Higgins, 1997) supports the notion that different types of perceived discrepancies should have unique emotional and regulatory outcomes. Specifically, when one's nurturance-related needs are emphasized (e.g., in the face of failure to live up to an ideal self-guide), the concern or focus of that individual is with gain or nongain. Furthermore, when individuals feel that they fall short of their ideal self-image, they tend to experience dejection-related emotions (e.g., dissatisfaction, depression; Carver & Scheier, 1990, 1998; Higgins, 1987, 1996). Higgins argued that an emphasis on nurturance-related needs leads to a promotion-focused self-regulatory style that involves a concern with advancement, growth, and accomplishment (i.e., a focus on what one would "ideally" like to accomplish). Consistent with this view, a study focusing on the interpersonal consequences of chronic regulatory orientations found that individuals with a dominant promotion-focus were particularly likely to select tactics aimed at approaching a successful friendship (e.g., "be supportive of your friends") from a list of available options provided to them (Higgins, Roney, Crowe, & Hymes, 1994).

On the other hand, an emphasis on security-related needs (e.g., in the face of failure to live up to an ought-self guide) leads to a prevention-focused self-regulatory style involving a concern or focus with loss or nonloss. In this instance, agitation-related emotions (e.g., guilt, anxiety; Carver & Scheier, 1990, 1998; Higgins, 1987, 1996) are likely to be experienced. Higgins argued that a prevention-focus leads to self-regulation aimed at preventing failure or loss and a concern with protection, safety, and responsibility (i.e., a focus on what one "ought" to accomplish). Indeed, in the Higgins et al. (1994) study discussed previously, individuals with a dominant prevention-focus were particularly likely to select tactics aimed at preventing a loss in friendship (e.g., "stay in touch and don't lose contact with friends").

Drawing from this body of research, we predicted that perceiving one's partner as not closely matching one's ideal standards (hereafter referred to as a PD-partner; a partner discrepancy in which the partner is the cause) should be construed as a threat to what one ideally desires in a romantic partner and relationship and should therefore emphasize nurturance-related concerns. For example, when Tom feels that Mary does not meet his standards for warmth and nurturance, he would then focus on the types of warmth behaviors he ideally wants Mary to exhibit. We therefore predict that in this situation, Tom would feel disappointed that Mary is not meeting his ideal standards. Research by Overall et al. (2006) suggests that Tom may also engage in behaviors to reduce the size of this discrepancy, such as talking to Mary about how she may make efforts to change in a manner more consistent with his ideals. Tom, therefore, should be more likely to adopt a promotion-focused regulatory strategy (e.g., focusing on how to achieve positive outcomes in his relationship, considering what needs to be done to solve relationship problems). We predict that a PD-partner is likely to be construed as a nurturance-related threat, resulting in the experience of dejection-related emotions as well as adopting a promotion-focused regulation.

Conversely, we predicted that a partner discrepancy in which an individual perceives himself or herself as being discrepant from his or her partner's standards (hereafter referred to as a PD-self; a partner discrepancy in which oneself is the cause) should result in a focus on potential loss as individuals fear possible rejection by their partners. For example, when Mary feels that she is not as warm and nurturing as Tom would like, she may consider the sanctions that Tom may incur on her as a result; Tom could reduce his affection or contact with Mary, or he may end the relationship altogether. In this instance Mary

has less direct control, or power, over Tom's feelings (e.g., Mary cannot readily control how Tom feels about her lack of warmth) or behaviors toward her. Keltner, Gruenfeld, and Anderson (2003) argued that when individuals perceive reduced power in a situation compared with others, they are more likely to experience inhibition-related affect, such as agitation and anxiety. We predict that Mary would likely interpret the PD-self as a threat to her relationship security and therefore would feel nervous and perhaps fearful. Moreover, Mary should be more likely to adopt a prevention-focused regulatory strategy (e.g., focusing on how to prevent negative events in her relationship, considering what needs to be avoided to solve relationship problems).

The presence of partner discrepancies jeopardizes the goal of having a satisfactory relationship. We suggest that the *type* of discrepancy influences the motivational state of each intimate because each discrepancy highlights a different need—either growth/nurturance or security/safety—that is not being met and such circumstances have been shown to elicit promotion or prevention motivations (see Molden, Lee, & Higgins, 2008). These precipitating contexts simultaneously activate a particular motivational state (i.e., either promotion or prevention) but also an emotional response (i.e., either dejection or agitation) because they signal a particular failure in goal pursuit and the possibility of nongains or losses. This is not to say that the emotions and motivational states elicited are not related to one another but, rather, that the goal-relevant situation results in a multifaceted response (see Gross, 1998).

The Current Research

The current research extends the ISM by identifying the unique emotional and motivational factors associated with two types of perceived partner discrepancies. In summary, it was predicted that a PD-partner would be associated with higher levels of dejection-related emotions (Hypothesis 1), whereas a PD-self would be associated with higher levels of agitation-related emotions (Hypothesis 2). Furthermore, it was predicted that a PD-partner would be associated with adopting a promotion-focused regulatory orientation (Hypothesis 3), whereas a PD-self would be associated with adopting a prevention-focused regulatory orientation (Hypothesis 4). We predict that these hypotheses will be supported most strongly for partner discrepancies occurring in the warmth/trustworthiness domain. Discrepancies in this domain have been shown to link more strongly and consistently with relationship satisfaction than discrepancies in other domains (Campbell et al., 2001; Fletcher et al., 1999; Overall et al., 2006), perhaps because of the importance given to warmth characteristics in romantic partners (Fletcher et al., 1999).

Overall, the purpose of all five studies was to demonstrate that different forms of partner discrepancies are associated with distinct promotion- and prevention-related emotional experiences (Studies 1–3), as well as regulatory orientations linked with these motivations (Studies 4–5). To support our predictions we utilized different types of samples and methodologies to strengthen our propositions that partner evaluations centered on oneself or one's partner lead individuals to focus on different relationship concerns.

Study 1

The purpose of Study 1 was to test Hypotheses 1 and 2, establishing that chronic partner discrepancies are uniquely related to different types of promotion and prevention-related negative emotions. To test these hypotheses, self-reports of each type of perceived discrepancy, as well as the degree to which people experienced dejection- and agitation-related emotions in their relationships, was obtained from a large sample of individuals involved in a romantic relationship.

Method

Participants. In this study, 497 (163 male and 334 female) students at a large University in Southern Ontario, Canada participated for partial credit toward their introductory psychology course. Participants were between 17 and 45 years of age (M = 19.28, SD = 3.26) and had been involved in a romantic relationship for a minimum of 3 months (M = 20.37, SD = 24.85). The majority of the participants were involved in dating relationships (474), four participants were engaged, six reported being common law married, and 13 participants reported being married.

Procedure. Participants were brought into the lab in groups of two to 20 and were asked to fill out a number of questionnaires pertaining to how they perceived themselves, their romantic relationships, and their partners. Participants were instructed not to indicate their identity on their answer booklet. After completing the questionnaires, participants were given debriefing information.

Materials. Participants completed demographic questions as well as a large battery of questionnaires as part of a large mass-testing session. Only materials relevant to the current research are discussed here.

Ideal standards scales. The 18 attributes from the short version of the Ideal Partner Scale (Fletcher et al., 1999) were used to measure perceived partner discrepancies. Participants were asked to rate each attribute on a 7-point scale (anchored 1 = *does not match my ideal at all*, 7 = *completely matches my ideal*) to indicate the extent to which they feel their partners match their ideal standards (PD-partner). As well, participants were asked to rate each attribute on a 7-point scale (anchored 1 = *I do not match his/her ideal at all*, 7 = *I completely match his/her ideal*) indicating how much they felt they match their partners' ideal standards (PD-self). The 18 attributes assess three ideal standard dimensions: warmth/trustworthiness (six items; e.g., understanding, considerate, kind), attractiveness/vitality (six items; e.g., nice body, adventurous, sexy), and status/resources (six items; e.g., good job, financially secure, ambitious). The items within each dimension were averaged to create indices for each type of discrepancy for each of the ideal dimensions. Higher scores represent lower perceived partner discrepancies. The means and internal consistencies of participants' reported partner discrepancies scores (PD-partner and PD-self) for each dimension are presented in Table 1.[1]

Emotions in relationships. A six-item scale was used to measure the emotions participants might typically experience in their relationships. The scale contained three dejection-related emotion items (i.e., sad, dissatisfied, and discouraged) and three

[1] Prior research indicates that measuring partner discrepancies by directly asking participants to report how well their partners match their ideal standards (as we did in this research) yields results that are identical to other methods of assessing partner discrepancies (e.g., by assessing within-partner correlations between stated ideals and current partner perceptions; Campbell et al., 2001; Overall et al., 2006).

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliability Coefficients Study Variables: Study 1

Variable	*M* (*SD*)			Reliability	
	Male	Female	*t*	Male	Female
Warmth/trustworthiness					
PD-Self	5.71 (0.97)	6.00 (0.84)	−3.31**	.88	.87
PD-Partner	5.93 (0.87)	5.99 (0.96)	−0.74**	.87	.90
Attractiveness/vitality					
PD-Self	5.61 (0.78)	5.71 (0.82)	−1.33*	.71	.77
PD-Partner	5.84 (0.84)	5.79 (0.91)	0.60	.76	.78
Status/resources					
PD-Self	5.41 (1.05)	5.59 (0.89)	−1.88	.83	.80
PD-Partner	5.37 (1.03)	5.18 (1.14)	1.80	.82	.83
IOS	5.08 (1.37)	5.15 (1.27)	−0.54		
Commitment	5.18 (1.11)	5.28 (0.92)	1.06	.76	.63
Dejection	2.51 (0.91)	2.63 (0.94)	−1.28	.63	.61
Agitation	2.44 (0.97)	2.23 (0.91)	2.38*	.53	.55

Note. PD = partner discrepancy; IOS = Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992). All variables measured on a 7-point scale.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

agitation-related emotion items (i.e., worried, guilty, and fearful). Participants were asked to think of their relationship and the experiences they usually have with their partners and the different types of emotions they experience in their relationship. Then they were asked how often they experienced each of the six emotions in their relationships on a 7-point scale (anchored 1 = *never*, 4 = *sometimes*, and 7 = *always*). The ratings for the dejection-related emotion items and the agitation-related emotion items were averaged to create aggregate dejection scores and aggregate agitation scores, with higher scores indicating greater emotional intensity. The means and internal consistencies for each scale are presented in Table 1.[2]

Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale (IOS). Participants completed the one item IOS scale. The IOS (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992) assesses the degree to which people include their romantic partners in their self-concept. It measures behavioral and subjective facets of closeness and correlates positively with relationship satisfaction (Aron et al., 1992).

Commitment Scale. Participants also completed Lund's (1985) seven-item Commitment Scale to assess the degree to which they felt committed to their partner and relationship. Participants responded on a 7-point scale (anchored 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *extremely*). The ratings for the commitment items were averaged to create an aggregate commitment score with higher scores indicating greater commitment. The means and internal consistencies are presented in Table 1.

Results and Discussion

For descriptive purposes, correlations between all study variables are presented in Table 2. To test the hypotheses that PD-partner and PD-self discrepancies uniquely predict dejection and agitation emotions, respectively, multiple regression analyses were conducted in which both forms of discrepancy (i.e., self-reported PD-partner and PD-self) were included as predictors of each type of negative emotion for each ideal dimension. As well, in the models where reports of dejection-related emotions served as the outcome variable, reports of agitation-related emotions was entered as a covariate and vice versa. Not surprisingly, the correlation between dejection- and agitation-related emotion was positive and significant ($r = .52$, $p < .001$). This finding is consistent with research investigating social approach and avoidance goals that find a positive correlation between the two motives (see Gable, 2006). We statistically controlled for the shared variance between these two types of negative emotions to provide a more direct test of our hypotheses that the two types of discrepancies are uniquely related to the experience of each type of negative emotion. Overall, this procedure provides a more stringent test of our predictions (see Strauman, Vookles, Berenstein, Chaiken, & Higgins, 1991, for a similar data analytic approach). The following models were run initially testing for interactions between the discrepancy variables and sex of participants, but of the 12 interactions that were tested only one was statistically significant, and thus, these interactions were dropped from the final models. All predictor variables were mean-centered prior to analysis (Aiken & West, 1991).

The results of the models that we tested are presented in Table 3. In the models where the experience of dejection-related emotion served as the outcome variable, the main effect for the PD-partner variable was negative and statistically significant for each ideal dimension. As predicted, when people perceived their partners as *not* closely matching their ideal on each dimension, they also reported experiencing more dejection-related emotions in their relationships. As well, with the exception of a significant effect in the attractiveness/vitality dimension, the main effect for PD-self

[2] The reliabilities of the dejection and agitation emotion scales are relatively low. Given the small number of items included in each subscale (i.e., three items), however, one would expect the alpha values to be affected (Cortina, 1993). Also, the lower reliabilities result in a reduction of power to discover our hypothesized effects thus increasing the probability of a Type II error, rather than a Type I error.

Table 2
Zero-Order Correlations Between Study Variables: Study 1

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Warmth/trustworthiness										
1. PD-partner	—									
2. PD-self	.56**	—								
Attractiveness/vitality										
3. PD-partner	.37**	.46**	—							
4. PD-self	.53**	.41**	.35**	—						
Status/resources										
5. PD-partner	.34**	.40**	.53**	.38**	—					
6. PD-self	.26**	.28**	.40**	.43**	.43**	—				
7. IOS	.32**	.26**	.26**	.20**	.17**	.11*	—			
8. Commitment	.43**	.40**	.35**	.22**	.25**	.14**	.46**	—		
9. Dejection	−.39**	−.31**	−.30**	−.25**	−.18**	−.10*	−.27**	−.37**	—	
10. Agitation	−.29**	−.29**	−.16**	−.21**	−.05	−.02	−.12**	.52**	−.21**	—

Note. PD = partner discrepancy; IOS = Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992).
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

was not significant. That is, how well participants felt they matched their partners' ideal standards in the warmth and status dimensions was not uniquely associated with how much dejection they reported experiencing in their relationships.

In the models where the experience of agitation-related emotions served as the outcome variable, the main effect of the PD-self discrepancy was negative and statistically significant for the warmth/trustworthiness and attractiveness/vitality dimensions but not for the status/resources dimension. As predicted, when people felt they did not match their partner's warmth/trustworthiness or attractiveness/vitality ideals, they reported experiencing more agitation in their relationships. Furthermore, in all analyses the main effect for PD-partner was not significant. That is, how well participants felt their partners matched their ideal standards was not uniquely associated with how much agitation they reported experiencing in their relationships.

Alternative explanation. Prior research has demonstrated that greater perceived discrepancies between ideal standards and partner perceptions are linked with lower perceptions of relationship quality (e.g., Campbell et al., 2001). As shown in Table 2, consistent with previous ISM research, each type of partner discrepancy was positively correlated with scores on the IOS and commitment scale, suggesting that people reported being closer and more committed to their partners when they perceived smaller partner discrepancies. A possible alternative explanation for the results of this study, therefore, is that the associations between partner discrepancies and dejection and agitation emotions simply reflect the lower perceived closeness and commitment of individuals reporting greater perceived discrepancies. This alternative explanation would not explain, however, why each type of discrepancy uniquely predicted either dejection- or agitation-related affect. All of the models presented above were rerun controlling for participant's scores on

Table 3
Unstandardized and Standardized Regression Coefficients of Partner Discrepancies on the Dejection and Agitation Emotion Items: Study 1

	Dejection			Agitation		
Variable	*b*	*t*	β	*b*	*t*	β
Warmth/trustworthiness						
Intercept	2.58			2.31		
PD-partner	−0.26	**−5.58*****	−0.26	−0.03	<1.0	−0.03
PD-self	−0.01	<1.0	−0.01	−0.14	**−2.87****	−0.14
Agitation/Dejection	0.43	11.19***	0.44	0.47	11.18***	0.47
Attractiveness/vitality						
Intercept	2.59			2.30		
PD-partner	−0.18	**−4.28*****	−0.18	0.03	<1.0	0.02
PD-self	−0.11	−2.39*	−0.10	−0.10	**−2.04***	−0.09
Agitation/Dejection	0.46	12.11***	0.47	0.51	12.11***	0.50
Status/resources						
Intercept	2.60			2.29		
PD-partner	−0.13	**−3.60****	−0.16	0.05	1.21	0.05
PD-self	−0.01	<1.0	−0.01	0.00	**<1.0**	0.00
Agitation/Dejection	0.51	12.97***	0.51	0.52	12.97***	0.52

Note. PD = partner discrepancy. Expected effects appear in boldface font.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

the IOS scale and then again controlling for scores on the commitment scale. Inclusion of these measures in the models did not eliminate the significance of any of the presented results. Therefore, the links between the two discrepancies and the two types of negative emotions were not confounded by relationship quality, at least as assessed by the IOS and commitment scale.

Overall, this study provided strong initial support for the predictions of the current research. As predicted, participants' perception that their partner is discrepant from their ideal standards (for all dimensions) was associated with their reports of experiencing dejection in the relationship. As well, the perception that one does not meet his or her partner's ideal standards was not uniquely associated with reported dejection. Instead, when this form of discrepancy was reported by participants, they experienced greater levels of agitation in their relationships.

One limitation of Study 1 is that participants were university students, and most of them were involved in dating relationships; thus, it is difficult to generalize these results to more committed marital relationships. Furthermore, the study involved a sample of individuals involved in relationships and not both members of the relationship. Study 2 addresses these limitations.

Study 2

The purpose of Study 2 was to replicate the effects reported in Study 1 with a community sample of married couples. Responses from both spouses were assessed, allowing us to model the interdependence between spouses' reported emotional experiences in their marriage, as well as between their perceived partner discrepancies. Other measures assessing marital satisfaction, global partner evaluations and attachment styles were also added to Study 2 to serve as controls to investigate alternative explanations for our findings.

Method

Participants. One hundred sixteen heterosexual married couples were recruited from the community of London, Ontario, Canada, to participate in a Married Couples Survey by placing advertisements in various local community newspapers. The city of London is located in Southwestern Ontario and is an urban community with population of approximately 348,000. Individuals each received $50.00 as an honorarium for their participation. Couples reported having dated an average of 35.19 months (SD = 27.79) prior to marriage, and the average length of marriage was 120.23 months (SD = 127.12), meaning that the average amount of time couples had been together was 153.16 months (SD = 124.58). The average age of participants was 38.56 years for men (SD = 11.22) and 36.7 years for women (SD = 10.71). The majority of couples were Caucasian, with an average household income per year of $55,000–$65,000 (CDN). Sixty percent of the married couples reported they had children (M = 1.31 children per couple), ranging in number from one to five.

Procedure. Married couples attended a 2-hr laboratory session to separately and privately complete a booklet of questionnaires. The questionnaires asked about their self-perceptions, partner perceptions, and overall evaluation of the relationship. Couples returned to the laboratory 2–4 weeks after their initial session to separately and privately complete the card sort task to assess global partner evaluations. We informed participants that their responses would remain confidential and would not be shared with their spouses.

Materials

Ideal standards scales. As in Study 1, the 18 attributes from the short version of the Ideal Partner Scale (Fletcher et al., 1999) were used to measure partner discrepancies. The means and internal consistencies of participants' reported partner discrepancies scores (PD-partner and PD-self) for each dimension are presented in Table 4. Also reported in this table are the self–partner correlations for each ideal dimension. For each dimension, significant self–partner correlations emerged showing that, for example, Tom's perceptions of how closely he feels he matches Mary's image of an ideal partner (PD-self) are positively associated with Mary's perceptions of how closely she feels Tom matches her image of an ideal partner (PD-partner).

Emotions in relationships. An eight-item scale was used to measure the emotions participants typically experienced in their marriage. In this study we selected some different indicators of dejection and agitation-related emotions than in Study 1 to demonstrate the effects found in that study were not specific to the emotion indicators used. The scale contained four dejection-related emotion items (i.e., miserable, disappointed, low, and happy—reverse scored) and four agitation-related emotion items (i.e., tense, anxious, worried, and agitated). As in Study 1, participants were asked to respond to each item on a 7-point scale (anchored 1 = *never*, 4 = *sometimes*, and 7 = *always*) indicating how often they experience each emotion in their relationships. The ratings for the dejection-related emotion items and the agitation-related emotion items were averaged to create aggregate dejection scores and aggregate agitation scores, with higher scores indicating greater emotional intensity. The means and internal consistencies of these scales are presented in Table 4.

Marital satisfaction. The satisfaction subscale of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976) was used to measure spouses' satisfaction with their marriage. Sample items from this subscale include, "In general, how often do you think that things between you and your spouse are going well?" and "Do you ever regret that you married?" (reverse-scored); these responses were measured on a 6-point scale (1 = *all the time*, 6 = *never*). Responses across the items were averaged for each participant, with higher scores indicating greater marital satisfaction. Presented in Table 4 is the mean and internal consistency of this scale.

Global partner evaluations (GPE). To assess GPEs, each spouse completed a card sort task adapted from research by Showers and colleagues (Showers, 1992; Showers & Kevlyn, 1999). Participants were provided a sheet of paper containing 20 positive (e.g., successful, giving, capable) and 20 negative (e.g., insecure, disorganized, lazy) adjectives. Participants were asked to generate a description of their spouse by placing the adjectives into categories that described their image of their spouse. The valence of participants' global evaluation of their spouse was calculated by dividing the number of negative attributes used by the total number of attributes used. Participants who used relatively more negative traits to describe their spouse, therefore, have higher scores on this index. Scores on this index were arcsine transformed before anal-

Table 4
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Study Variables: Study 2

Variable	*M* (*SD*)			Reliability		Self–partner correlations	
	Male	Female	*t*	Male	Female	Male	Female
Warmth/trustworthiness							
PD-Self	5.28 (1.00)	5.68 (0.89)	3.57***	.88	.88	.52***	.46***
PD-Partner	5.82 (0.93)	5.79 (1.03)	−0.29	.89	.90		
Attractiveness/vitality							
PD-Self	5.14 (0.92)	5.23 (0.93)	0.70	.79	.74	.45***	.37***
PD-Partner	5.55 (0.89)	5.62 (0.97)	0.66	.80	.79		
Status/resources							
PD-Self	4.98 (1.00)	5.28 (0.96)	2.42*	.75	.73	.53***	.37***
PD-Partner	5.31 (1.08)	5.29 (1.08)	−0.13	.81	.82		
Marital satisfaction	3.68 (0.61)	3.63 (0.60)	−0.73	.80	.90		
Dejection	2.17 (0.90)	2.34 (1.00)	1.63	.82	.80		
Agitation	3.06 (1.01)	3.19 (1.20)	0.94	.78	.84		
GPE	0.14 (0.15)	0.16 (0.19)	1.27	—	—		
Self-esteem	7.82 (1.12)	7.71 (1.14)	0.75	.86	.89		
Anxiety	1.90 (0.75)	1.93 (0.90)	0.28	.89	.89		
Avoidance	2.19 (0.96)	1.95 (1.00)	1.86	.93	.94		

Note. PD = partner discrepancy; GPE = global partner evaluation. All variables measured on a 7-point scale, with the exception of GPE (represents a proportion), Marital satisfaction (6-point scale), and Self-esteem (9-point scale). Dashes indicate that the GPE does not have a reliability score because it represents a proportion calculation.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

yses. The mean and standard deviation of this index are presented in Table 4.

Self-esteem. Global perceptions of self-esteem were assessed with Rosenberg's (1965) 10-item self-esteem scale. Responses were made on a 9-point Likert-type scale (anchored 1 = *strongly disagree*, 9 = *strongly agree*). All items were averaged, and the scale was scored such that higher scores reflect higher levels of self-esteem. The mean and standard deviation of this index are presented in Table 4.

Attachment style. Participants completed the 36-item Experiences in Close Relationships Questionnaire-Revised (ECR-R; Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). The ECR-R contains 18 items measuring attachment anxiety (e.g., "I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me") and 18 items measuring attachment avoidance (e.g., "I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close"). Participants responded to each item on a 7-point scale (anchored 1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). The anxiety and avoidance items were averaged, with higher scores representing greater anxiety and avoidance, respectively. The means and internal consistencies of these scales are presented in Table 4.

Results and Discussion

Data analytic strategy. The data analytic approach we adopted for testing our hypotheses was guided by the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM; Kashy & Kenny, 2000). According to the APIM, when individuals are involved in an interdependent relationship, their outcomes can be associated with both their own (i.e., an *actor* effect) and partner's (i.e., a *partner* effect) characteristics and inputs. The inclusion of partner effects allows us to test for the mutual influence that can exist between persons in a relationship and also allows us to statistically control for partner effects when estimating actor effects and vice versa.

We tested all of the models reported below using multilevel modeling (MLM; also known as hierarchical linear modeling; Kenny, Kashy, & Bolger, 1998; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002) and following the suggestions of Campbell and Kashy (2002; see also Kashy, Campbell, & Harris, 2006; Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006) regarding the use of MLM with dyadic data. In the dyadic case, MLM treats the data from each partner as nested scores within a group that has an *N* of 2. Gender was effect coded (–1 for men, 1 for women), and all continuous predictor variables were centered on the grand mean. Table 5 presents the correlations between all of the study variables.

Predicting dejection and agitation. We conducted two primary models to test our hypotheses, one with reported dejection-related emotion as the outcome variable and the other with reported agitation-related emotion as the outcome variable. Each model was run for each of the three ideal standard dimensions, resulting in six primary analyses. In each model, both forms of partner discrepancies (i.e., PD-partner and PD-self) were included as predictor variables from both the actor and partner perspectives, resulting in four partner discrepancy predictors. All analyses were run initially testing for interactions between the discrepancy variables and sex of participants, but of the 24 interactions that were tested, only one was statistically significant, and thus, sex and the interactions of sex with the other variables were dropped from the final models. As in Study 1, in the models where reports of dejection-related emotion served as the outcome variable, reports of agitation-related emotion was entered as a covariate and vice versa.

Predicting dejection. The results of the models we ran are presented in Table 6. Consistent with our predictions, in each of

Table 5
Zero-Order Correlations of Study Variables: Study 2

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Warmth/trustworthiness													
1. PD-partner	**.37***	.51*	.49*	.46*	.36*	.30*	.40*	−.52*	−.32*	−.44*	.32*	−.55*	−.49*
2. PD-self	.59*	**.27***	.36*	.43*	.14	.17	.48*	−.50*	−.45*	−.37*	.35*	−.51*	−.58*
Attractiveness/vitality													
3. PD-partner	.38*	.42*	**.22***	.44*	.51*	.33*	.30*	−.40*	−.24*	−.35*	.28*	−.37*	−.36*
4. PD-self	.42*	.40*	.29*	**.11**	.31*	.36*	.27*	−.26*	−.22*	−.16	.24*	−.24*	−.38*
Status/resources													
5. PD-partner	.37*	.43*	.51*	.31*	**.22***	.29*	.23*	−.35*	−.15	−.44*	.30*	−.21*	−.19*
6. PD-self	.27*	.32*	.14	.44*	.34*	**.05**	.21*	−.24*	−.02	−.11	.44*	−.24*	−.23*
7. Marital satisfaction	.63*	.47*	.38*	.28*	.46*	.20*	**.43***	−.57*	−.30*	−.31*	.31*	−.52*	−.50*
8. Dejection	−.52*	−.36*	−.25*	−.25*	−.41*	−.21*	−.70*	**.37***	.59*	.52*	−.52*	.62*	.49*
9. Agitation	−.40*	−.30*	−.21*	−.22*	−.41*	−.24*	−.55*	.71*	**.14**	.49*	−.36*	.49*	.43*
10. GPE	−.41*	−.17	−.36*	−.31*	−.28*	−.20*	−.45*	.21*	.30*	**.13**	−.41*	.39*	.38*
11. Self-esteem	.30*	.23*	.09	.38*	.28*	.43*	.43*	−.56*	−.53*	−.28*	**.14**	−.07	−.15
12. Anxiety	−.48*	−.34*	−.30*	−.31*	−.42*	−.31*	−.69*	.64	.65*	.42*	−.55*	**.27***	.68
13. Avoidance	−.54*	−.48*	−.44*	−.27*	−.40*	−.14	−.69*	.52*	.49*	.50*	−.36*	.65*	**.45***

Note. PD = partner discrepancy; GPE = global partner evaluation. Correlations for women appear below the diagonal, whereas correlations for men appear above the diagonal. Correlations along the diagonal are between dyad members.
* $p < .05$.

the three analyses an actor main effect of PD-partner emerged such that the more participants perceived their spouse to be discrepant from their ideal standards on each of the three ideal dimensions, the more dejection-related emotion they reported experiencing in their marriage. No other actor effects emerged. One partner effect of PD-self emerged in the analysis in which the attractiveness/vitality discrepancies served as the predictor variables. This effect suggests that when participants felt that they did not match their spouses' ideals on the attractiveness/vitality dimension, their spouse reported more dejection-related emotion.

Predicting agitation. Again, consistent with our predictions an actor effect of PD-self emerged for the warmth/trustworthiness dimension such that participants who felt they did not meet their partner's warmth/trustworthiness ideal standards reported experiencing more agitation-related emotion in

Table 6
Unstandardized and Standardized Regression Coefficients of Partner Discrepancies on the Dejection and Agitation Emotion Items: Study 2

	Dejection			Agitation		
Variable	*b*	*t*	β	*b*	*t*	β
Warmth/trustworthiness						
Intercept	2.25			3.12		
Actor PD-partner	−0.28	**−4.69***	−0.29	0.03	<1.0	0.03
Partner PD-self	0.02	<1.0	0.02	−0.08	−1.02	−0.07
Actor PD-self	−0.01	<1.0	−0.01	−0.17	**−2.20***	−0.14
Partner PD-partner	−0.11	−1.92	−0.12	0.09	1.27	0.08
Agitation/Dejection	0.44	10.38***	0.52	0.72	10.42***	0.62
Attractiveness/vitality						
Intercept	2.25			3.12		
Actor PD-partner	−0.12	**−2.04***	−0.12	−0.04	<1.0	−0.03
Partner PD-self	−0.13	−2.17*	−0.13	0.12	1.75	0.10
Actor PD-self	−0.09	−1.51	−0.09	−0.03	**<1.0**	−0.03
Partner PD-partner	0.06	1.01	0.06	−0.10	−1.49	−0.09
Agitation/Dejection	0.50	11.93***	0.59	0.76	12.19***	0.65
Status/resources						
Intercept	2.25			3.12		
Actor PD-partner	−0.15	**−2.89****	−0.17	−0.07	−1.11	−0.07
Partner PD-self	−0.04	<1.0	−0.04	0.05	<1.0	0.05
Actor PD-self	−0.06	−1.14	−0.07	0.05	**<1.0**	0.04
Partner PD-partner	−0.02	<1.0	−0.03	−0.04	<1.0	−0.04
Agitation/Dejection	0.49	11.48***	0.57	0.75	11.74***	0.64

Note. PD = partner discrepancy. Expected actor effects appear in boldface font.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

their marriage. No other actor effects emerged, and no partner effects emerged.

Alternative explanations.

Global partner evaluations (GPE). One may argue that the discrepancy measure is confounded with global perceptions of one's spouse, and therefore, the associations between discrepancies and negative emotion are not due to the discrepancies per se but, rather, global partner evaluations. Once again, this alternative explanation cannot account for the unique associations of each type of discrepancy with dejection- and agitation-related affect, but we reran our models controlling for GPE (both the actor and partner GPE were included as covariates). In regards to the dejection analyses, the predicted association between the actor effect of PD-partner and dejection remained significant for the warmth/trustworthiness dimension and the status/resources dimension, although it became nonsignificant for the attractiveness/vitality dimension. In regards to the agitation analyses, the predicted association between the actor effect of PD-self and agitation for the warmth/trustworthiness dimension remained.

Marital satisfaction. Along the same lines as the argument above, one may contend that the association between the perceived discrepancies and reported emotions is confounded with marital satisfaction. Once again, this explanation cannot account for the unique association between the types of emotions and types of discrepancies, but to discount this explanation, the two primary models were rerun controlling for both actor and partner marital satisfaction scores. The predicted association between the actor effect of PD-partner and dejection remained for the warmth/trustworthiness dimension and became nonsignificant for the attractiveness/vitality and status/resources dimensions. The predicted association between the actor effect of PD-self and agitation remained for the warmth/trustworthiness dimension. The partner effect of PD-self in the attractiveness/vitality dimension became marginally significant, $b = -0.12$, $t(220) = -1.66$, $p < .10$.

Global self-esteem. Individuals in our sample who reported higher levels of self-esteem also reported feeling that they more closely matched their partner's ideals (see Table 5). It is therefore possible that global self-esteem can account for the link between PD-self and agitation-related emotions experienced in the marriage. We reran all of our models controlling for global self-esteem. All of the effects reported in Table 6 remained.

Attachment styles. Another alternative explanation for the results found in the current study could be that participants' attachment anxiety or avoidance affects their self- and partner evaluations as well as the emotions typically experienced in their marriage. Recent research has begun to investigate how attachment styles affect relationship goals (e.g., Impett, Gordon, & Strachman, 2008) and therefore may impact the relationship perceptions and interpretations that are made. To address this possibility the models were rerun, controlling for anxiety or avoidance. In regards to the dejection analyses, the predicted association between the actor effect of PD-partner and dejection remained for the warmth/trustworthiness dimension and the status/resources dimension, although it became nonsignificant for the attractiveness/vitality dimension when either anxiety or avoidance was included. The association between the actor effect of PD-self and agitation remained in the warmth-trustworthiness dimension.

These results are consistent with, and strengthen, those of Study 1. In a community sample of married couples, we found that spouses reported experiencing more dejection-related emotion in their marriage when they perceived their partners as not closely matching their image of an ideal partner, and they reported experiencing more agitation-related emotion when they felt that they did not closely match their partner's image of an ideal partner (primarily for the warmth/trustworthiness dimension). These findings remained even when controlling for global partner evaluations (GPE) and general marital satisfaction, primarily for the warmth/trustworthiness dimension, as well as self-esteem and attachment orientations. Controlling for these variables represents a particularly stringent test of our predictions considering these variables are correlated with perceived ideal discrepancies and negative emotions (see Table 5) and that prior research has demonstrated that partner discrepancies predict relationship satisfaction over time (Fletcher, Simpson, & Thomas, 2000).

That the reported effects are robust primarily for the warmth/trustworthiness dimension is not surprising given prior theorizing and research. For instance, Fletcher et al. (1999) found that individuals who hold higher ideals on the warmth/trustworthiness dimension report higher levels of relationship satisfaction, whereas correlations between ratings of the attractiveness/vitality and status/resources ideal categories and relationship satisfaction were low and nonsignificant. Campbell et al. (2001) reported a similar pattern of results. Fletcher et al. (1999) suggested that intimacy-related ideals and perceptions in relationships tend to be the most central and important factors that people use to rate their partners in long-term relationships.

Both spouses of each couple provided responses in this study, allowing for the investigation of partner effects. Only one partner effect remained significant across all analyses (i.e., when people felt that they did not match their spouse's attractiveness/vitality ideal standards, their spouses reported experiencing more dejection-related emotions). Both relationship and emotion researchers argue that the interpretation or cognitive labeling of a situation is necessary for the experience of different emotions (e.g., Fincham, 2001; Lazarus, 1991). Indeed, Murray, Holmes, and Griffin (2000) have demonstrated that people were aware of how they were perceived by their partners, and this perceived regard was uniquely and strongly linked with people's satisfaction with their relationships. It may be, therefore, that the experience of agitation-related emotions in the relationship is more directly tied to people's perceptions of how closely they match their partner's ideal standards (an actor effect), with these perceptions being grounded in reality. Stated differently, the awareness of the discrepancy, and not simply its presence, is important for experiencing the emotional reaction.

In combination with Study 1, Study 2 provides support for our assertion that the perceived source of partner discrepancies is associated with experiences of dejection and agitation. The correlational nature of both studies, however, represents an important limitation in that cause and effect conclusions cannot be drawn from our data. Study 3 uses an experimental paradigm to address this limitation.

Study 3

The purpose of Study 3 was to provide experimental support for Hypotheses 1 and 2 by manipulating the acute experience of different partner discrepancies. Specifically, we manipulated the

presence of two types of discrepancies: (a) a PD-partner discrepancy, in which people wrote about how their partners do not closely match their image of an ideal partner, and (b) a PD-self discrepancy, in which people wrote about how they do not match their partner's image of an ideal partner. It was predicted that dejection-related emotions should be particularly salient for people in the PD-partner discrepancy condition, whereas agitation-related emotions should be particularly salient for people in the PD-self condition. We used a lexical decision-making task (LDT; Meyer & Schvaneveldt, 1971; see Neeley, 1991, for a review) to assess the salience of dejection and agitation-related emotions in all participants.

Method

Participants. In this Study 69 (12 male and 57 female) students at a large University in Southern Ontario, Canada participated for partial credit toward their introductory psychology course. Participants were between 17 and 28 years of age (M = 19.29, SD = 2.48) and had been involved in a romantic relationship for a minimum of 1 month (M = 18.65, SD = 16.49). The majority of the participants were involved in exclusive dating relationships (62); however, five participants reported dating their partner and others, and two participants were engaged. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two priming conditions: the PD-partner condition or the PD-self condition.

Procedure. Participants were brought into the lab in groups of one to five and told that the purpose of the study was to investigate experiences in romantic relationships. Each participant was escorted to a private room where he or she was asked to complete a number of tasks on a computer. All participants were asked to complete demographic questions pertaining to them (e.g., age, sex) and their relationship (e.g., length of relationship, status of relationship). Participants were then asked to write a description of a current partner discrepancy (either a PD-partner discrepancy or a PD-self discrepancy, depending on their condition assignment) in their relationship. Next, participants completed a LDT, for which they were instructed to indicate whether the letter-strings that appeared on the screen were words or nonwords by pressing the spacebar (to indicate a word) or by making no response (to indicate a nonword). Participants were instructed to respond as quickly as possible while retaining accuracy. The LDT included 10 practice trials and 86 experimental trials. After every 21–22 experimental trials, 5 s were provided for rest before the next block began. After completing the LDT, participants completed a number of questionnaires presented on the computer. Finally, participants were asked to recall and write about the happiest event experienced in their relationship in order to minimize any potential negative mood effects of the prime. Once the task was completed, participants were fully debriefed and thanked for their participation.

Materials. Participants completed demographic questions as well as a battery of questionnaires. Only materials relevant to the current research are described here.

Priming tasks. Participants in the PD-partner priming condition were given the following instructions:

> Spend a moment to think of the characteristics and traits that describe your "ideal partner." In other words, think about the important qualities that you tend to look for in a romantic partner. Now think of the characteristics and traits that describe your actual partner. Please write a detailed description of an aspect of your partner that does not meet the qualities that you look for in an "ideal partner" and how this has impacted your relationship.

Participants in the PD-self priming condition were given the following instructions:

> Spend a moment to think of the characteristics and traits that describe your partner's "ideal partner." In other words, think about the important qualities that your partner tends to look for in a romantic partner. Now think of the characteristics and traits that you possess. Please write a detailed description of an aspect of yourself that does not meet the qualities that your partner looks for in an "ideal partner" and how this has impacted your relationship.

Participants were given no time limit to complete the task and all responses were saved.

Lexical decision-making task (LDT). The experimental trials of the LDT included three items associated with dejection-related emotion (e.g., disappointed, low, and miserable) and three items associated with agitation-related emotion (e.g., agitated, guilty, and uneasy; Higgins, 1987). The trials also included 32 neutral words (16 adjectives and 16 nouns) and 48 nonwords matched to the emotion and neutral words in length and letter characteristics (e.g., prefixes and suffixes). The instructions "Get ready for the next trial," followed by a string of asterisks, appeared in the center of the screen for 500 ms prior to the stimulus letter-string. Participants were asked to indicate whether the string was a word (by pressing the spacebar on the keyboard) or a nonword (by abstaining from any keyboard response). This form of LDT (termed a go/no-go LDT) has been shown to produce more accurate responding and requires less processing resources than the alternative yes/no response LDT (Perea, Rosa, & Gómez, 2002). The stimulus letter-string would remain on the screen until the spacebar was pressed or for 2,000 ms. Participants' response latencies to each item and the accuracy of their responses were recorded.

Results and Discussion

Prior to analysis, 12 participants (two male, 10 female) were removed from the sample due either to their failure to complete the priming tasks as requested (i.e., they did not write about a partner discrepancy; seven participants) or because they made 10% or more errors on the LDT (five participants). Therefore, data from the remaining 57 participants (nine male, 48 female) were used in all subsequent analyses. Of this sample, 26 participants were in the PD-self condition, and 31 participants were in the PD-partner condition. In both conditions, the most frequent qualities or traits written about in the priming conditions involved emotional stability, jealousy or trust issues, a lack of spontaneity or outgoing qualities, insensitivity and a lack of supportiveness, or neediness.

The LDT was used in this study to test the hypotheses that the primed partner discrepancies would lead participants in the PD-partner condition to experience dejection-related emotions (and thus respond faster to the trials containing dejection words) and participants in the PD-self condition to experience agitation-related emotions (and therefore respond faster to the trials containing agitation words; see Baldwin, Fehr, Keedian, Seidel, &

Thompson, 1993, for a similar context facilitation methodology used in close relationship research). Participants' response times to neutral words were used as the baseline or control for each participant in order to demonstrate the facilitation effect of the prime on the emotion-related words.

Prior to investigation, response times (RTs) to emotion items that participants specifically mentioned during the priming task were removed from all analyses. Additionally, RTs that were under 250 ms were removed from analyses. To test the predictions, a 2 (sex: male vs. female) × 2 (emotion: dejection vs. agitation) × 2 (condition: PD-self vs. PD-partner) repeated-measures analysis of covariance was conducted, covarying out baseline mean RTs for neutral words.[3] There were no significant main effects of sex or interactions of sex and condition or emotion, and therefore sex was removed from subsequent analyses. As predicted, there were no main effects of condition, $F(1, 54) < 1$, *ns*, or emotion, $F(1, 54) = 1.47$, *ns*. The predicted interaction of emotion and condition, however, was significant, $F(1, 54) = 5.53$, $p < .05$, demonstrating the predicted pattern of results (see Figure 1). Overall, participants in the PD-partner condition responded faster to dejection-related words ($M = 653.41$, $SE = 21.48$) than to agitation-related words ($M = 706.17$ $SE = 18.64$), $t(54) = 1.88$, $p < .05$, one-tailed,[4] Cohen's $d = 0.34$. Additionally, participants in the PD-self condition responded faster to agitation-related words ($M = 662.25$, $SE = 20.42$) than to dejection-related words ($M = 714.53$, $SE = 23.53$), $t(54) = 1.56$, $p < .06$, one-tailed, Cohen's $d = 0.30$; however, this finding was marginally significant.

Overall, the results of this study were conceptually identical to the pattern of results reported for Studies 1 and 2. This study also provides experimental support for the assertion that focusing on different forms of partner discrepancies leads to unique acute emotional experiences. That is, participants who thought about an aspect of their partners that did not meet their own ideal standards demonstrated facilitated responses to the dejection-related items, suggesting that dejection-related emotions were particularly salient for these individuals. We argue that thinking about a current partner discrepancy in which an individual's partner does not meet his or her ideal standards would, presumably, lead to thoughts focused on the standards not being achieved in the relationship and, therefore, feelings of disappointment and dejection.

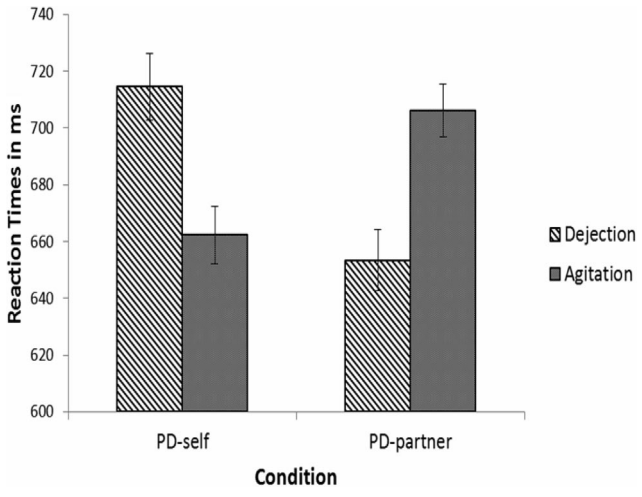

Figure 1. 2 (Priming Condition: PD-self vs. PD-partner) × 2 (Emotion: Dejection vs. Agitation) interaction predicting reaction times to emotion items, with standard error bars in the lexical decision-making task: Study 3. PD = partner discrepancy.

On the other hand, participants asked to think about a characteristic of themselves that was discrepant from their partners' ideal standards demonstrated facilitated responses to the agitation-related items, suggesting that agitation-related emotions were particularly salient for these individuals. This finding was marginal but consistent with the pattern of results for Studies 1 and 2. For this type of partner discrepancy we argue that when individuals think of ways they do not meet their partners' ideal standards, they focus on the possible negative consequences of the discrepancy and therefore experience feelings of anxiety and agitation. In this situation people may feel that their partners would be likely to reject them or seek alternatives to the relationship, given that their standards that are not being met.

Studies 1–3 focused on the different types of negative emotions associated with different types of partner discrepancies, which provides support for our assertion that the discrepancies are interpreted in unique ways by intimates. We also predicted that the different types of discrepancies would lead to different regulatory focuses because they create circumstances that highlight different relationship concerns (i.e., nurturance- vs. security-related concerns). Studies 4 and 5 test the notion that each type of partner discrepancy results in adopting different regulatory styles.

Study 4

In Study 4 we sought experimental support for the assertion that the two distinct kinds of partner discrepancies lead to different regulatory styles. Specifically, we predicted that participants primed to think of ways their partners do not meet their ideal standards (i.e., a PD-partner prime) would adopt a promotion focus regulatory style (Hypothesis 3), while participants primed to think of ways they do not meet their partner's ideal standards (i.e., a PD-self prime) would adopt a prevention focus regulatory style (Hypothesis 4). The priming paradigm from Study 3 was used to induce the assigned partner discrepancies, and a seemingly unrelated thought listing task was used to measure regulatory fit and, therefore, an indication of regulatory style.

Method

Participants. In this study, 103 (30 male and 73 female) students at a large University in Southern Ontario, Canada participated for either partial credit toward their introductory psychology course or payment if they were not enrolled in introductory psychology ($5 per participant). Participants were recruited through the psychology research pool and via advertisements in the local

[3] Reaction time data were not transformed as the skewness of the responses was contained by coding extremely short (i.e., less than 250 ms) and extremely long (i.e., greater than 2,000 ms) latencies as missing. See Fazio (1990) for a discussion of ways to deal with skewness in reaction time data.

[4] Given our specific a priori hypotheses, we use one-tailed tests when we compare specific cell means that directly test our hypotheses in order to increase the power of the tests (Maxwell, 2004).

university newspaper. Participants were between 18 and 49 years of age ($M = 20.35$, $SD = 4.75$) and had been involved in a romantic relationship for a minimum of 6 months ($M = 24.76$, $SD = 22.19$). The majority of the participants were involved in exclusive dating relationships (90); however, two participants reported dating their partner and others, two participants were engaged, four were common law married, and five were married. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four experimental conditions that varied the partner discrepancy prime (PD-partner vs. PD-self) and regulatory fit task (promotion vs. prevention).

Procedure. The procedure for Study 4 mirrored the procedure of Study 3, with the exception that participants completed a food thought-listing task after the partner discrepancy prime instead of an LDT.

Materials. Participants completed demographic questions as well as a battery of questionnaires. Only materials relevant to the current research are described here.

Food-listing task. After participants completed the priming task, the computer prompted participants to complete a health thought-listing task (borrowed from Vaughn, Malik, Schwartz, Petkova, & Trudeau, 2006). Participants read the following instructions: "In the next part of the study, you will be asked to complete a health thought listing task. Please list examples that come to mind until you no longer feel like continuing the task." Participants in the promotion instruction condition received the following instructions: "Please list examples of foods one can eat more of to attain good health." Participants in the prevention instruction condition received the following instructions: "Please list examples of foods one can avoid to prevent poor health." The number of food items listed by each participant was recorded.

Results and Discussion

Prior to analysis, we removed 13 participants (six female, seven male) from the sample due to their failure to complete the priming task as requested. Therefore, all analyses included data from the remaining 90 participants (67 female, 23 male) distributed fairly evenly across the four conditions (i.e., between 21 to 24 participants in each condition).

We used participants' responses to the food-listing task (Vaughn et al., 2006) as an indication of participants' regulatory focus style through principles of regulatory fit theory (Higgins, 2000). According to regulatory fit theory, a match or "fit" between one's regulatory state and the regulatory orientation of a task serves to enhance motivation, enjoyment, and perceived value of the task (e.g., Higgins, 2000, 2005; Freitas & Higgins, 2002). Therefore, we predicted that participants in the PD-partner priming condition would be promotion-focused and, thus, experience regulatory fit in the promotion task condition and nonfit in the prevention task condition. We predicted the opposite pattern for participants in the PD-self priming condition: Participants in this condition would be prevention-focused and, thus, experience regulatory fit in the prevention task condition and nonfit in the promotion task condition. Subsequently, participants in the two fit conditions (i.e., PD-partner/promotion task condition and PD-self/prevention task condition) were predicted to list more food items than those in the nonfit conditions (i.e., PD-partner/prevention task condition and PD-self/promotion task condition).

To test the predictions, a 2 (sex: male vs. female) × 2 (priming condition: PD-partner vs. PD-self) × 2 (thought-listing task: promotion vs. prevention) analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. A main effect of sex emerged, $F(1, 82) = 6.04$, $p < .05$, such that women tended to list more items ($M = 8.04$, $SD = 4.22$) than men ($M = 6.22$, $SD = 3.01$); however, given that sex did not significantly interact with priming condition, $F(1, 82) = 1.96$, *ns*, or thought-listing task, $F(1, 82) = 2.49$, *ns*, it was removed from subsequent analyses. As predicted, there was no main effect of priming condition, $F(1, 86) < 1$, *ns.*, or thought-listing task, $F(1, 86) < 1$, *ns*. The predicted interaction of priming condition and thought-listing task, however, was significant, $F(1, 86) = 5.75$, $p < .05$, demonstrating the anticipated pattern of results (see Figure 2). That is, participants in the PD-partner condition listed more items when in the promotion task condition ($M = 8.42$, $SD = 4.62$) than when in the prevention task condition ($M = 6.41$, $SD = 2.32$), $t(86) = 1.72$, $p < .05$, one-tailed, Cohen's $d = 37$. Participants in the PD-self condition, however, listed more items when in the prevention task condition ($M = 8.65$, $SD = 4.80$) than when in the promotion task condition ($M = 6.67$, $SD = 3.38$), $t(86) = 1.67$, $p < .05$, one-tailed, Cohen's $d = 36$.

The results of Study 4 provide experimental support for our assertion that different sources, or causes, of perceived partner discrepancies lead to unique regulatory focuses. Participants asked to think of characteristics of their partner that were discrepant from their ideals were more productive in an unrelated task when the task instructions were promotion oriented, rather than prevention oriented. Our rationale for this association is that this form of partner discrepancy would lead to a focus on nongain, rather than loss, and subsequently the development of a promotion-focus and the motivation to approach gains (i.e., improving the relationship or partner; e.g., Overall et al., 2006), consistent with regulatory focus research (Higgins, 1997).

In comparison, participants asked to think of characteristics of themselves that were discrepant from their partner's ideals were more productive in an unrelated task when the instructions were prevention oriented, rather than promotion oriented. We argue that

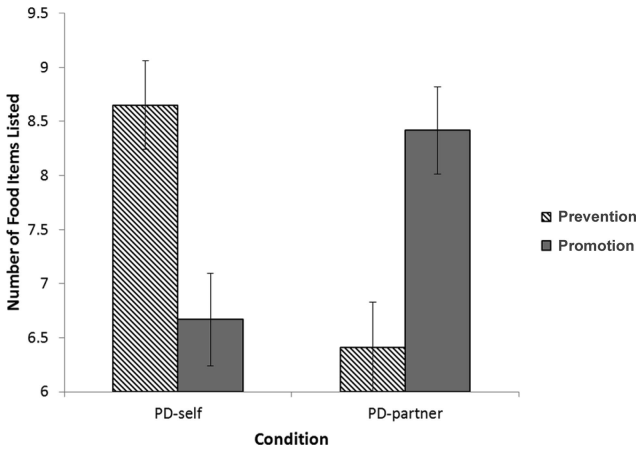

Figure 2. 2 (Priming Condition: PD-self vs. PD-partner) × 2 (Thought-listing Task Condition: Promotion vs. Prevention) interaction predicting items listed, with standard error bars in thought listing-task: Study 4. PD = partner discrepancy.

when individuals focus on their own shortcomings (perceived from their partner's perspective) their concern would be focused on potential losses (e.g., relationship degradation or dissolution), resulting in a prevention regulatory focus.

Overall, these findings provide an initial investigation into the self-regulatory repercussions of self- and partner evaluations within the relationship realm. A benefit associated with our dependent variable being unrelated to the participants' romantic relationship is that it was unlikely that the goals of our study were transparent to the participants. As well, the effect of the partner discrepancy primes on an unrelated task strengthen our argument that participants adopted, at least temporarily, a particular regulatory focus in general that was not limited to a specific aspect of their relationship (see also Cavallo, Fitzsimons, & Holmes, 2009). On the other hand, having a dependent variable unrelated to relationship functioning does not provide insight into the ways different partner discrepancies, and their resulting regulatory orientations, operate within the relationship. As well, Studies 3 and 4 did not assess the importance of the experiences reported by participants in each condition, leaving open the possibility that difference experimental conditions elicited experiences of differential importance. Finally, Study 4 did not include a control condition to demonstrate that the priming procedure is activating the predicted regulatory focuses, rather than suppressing them. Study 5 was conducted to address these limitations.

Study 5

The purpose of Study 5 was to establish a causal link between acute partner discrepancies and the relationship-relevant regulatory responses predicted to be associated with each type of partner discrepancy. In particular, priming a partner discrepancy in which the partner is discrepant from one's ideal standards (PD-partner) was predicted to lead to thoughts and motivations regarding the relationship consistent with a promotion-focus (Hypothesis 3). Priming a partner discrepancy in which oneself is discrepant from the partner's ideal standards (PD-self), however, was predicted to lead to thoughts and motivations regarding the relationship in a manner consistent with a prevention-focus (Hypothesis 4). A self-report measure was used to assess participants' regulatory focus following the experimental manipulation.

Method

Participants. Eighty (26 male and 54 female) students at a large University in Southern Ontario, Canada participated in the study for partial credit toward their introductory psychology course. Participants were between 17 and 33 years of age (M = 19.13, SD = 2.37) and had been involved in a heterosexual relationship for a minimum of 6 months (M = 20.22, SD = 17.85). The majority of the participants were involved in dating relationships (75); however, two participants reported being engaged, two reported being common law married, and one participant reported being married. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the priming conditions (i.e., my partner failed to match my ideal standards [PD-partner] vs. I failed to match my partner's ideal standards [PD-self]) or to the control condition.

Procedure. The procedure for Study 5 mirrored the procedure of Studies 3 and 4, with the following exceptions: (a) a control condition was added in which participants did not write about any aspect of their relationship; (b) following the two priming conditions, participants were asked to indicate how important the event described was to their relationship; and (c) the primary dependent variable was a self-report measure.

Materials. Participants completed demographic questions as well as other questionnaires. Only materials relevant to the current research are described here.

Promotion/Prevention Scale. A short version of Lockwood, Jordan, & Kunda's (2002) Promotion/Prevention Scale was adapted to measure participants' regulatory focus within their romantic relationship. The scale contained six items adapted to tap a promotion focus within the relationship (α = .86; e.g., "In general, I am focused on how to achieve positive outcomes in my relationship," "I often imagine myself experiencing good things that I hope will happen in my relationship") and five items adapted to tap a prevention focus within the relationships (α = .74; e.g., "In general, I am focused on how to prevent negative events in my relationship" and "I often imagine myself experiencing bad things that I fear might happen in my relationship"). Participants were asked to respond to each item on a 9-point scale (anchored 1 = *Not at all true of me*, 9 = *Very true of me*). Responses to the regulatory items were averaged within each subscale, with higher scores indicating higher levels of promotion- or prevention-focus.

Relationship satisfaction. The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS; Hendrick, Hendrick, & Adler, 1988) was used to assess participants' satisfaction with their relationships (e.g., "In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?"). This scale contains seven items. Participants were asked to respond to each item on a 7-point scale (anchored 1 = *Not at all/poor*, 7 = *a great deal/extremely good*). Scores from each item were averaged, with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived relationship satisfaction (α = .91).

Results and Discussion

Prior to analysis, seven participants (six female and 1 male) were removed from the sample due to their failure to complete the priming tasks as requested. Therefore, data from the remaining 73 participants (48 female, 25 male) were used in all subsequent analyses (21 participants in the PD-self condition, 26 in the PD-partner condition, and 26 in the control condition).

Manipulation checks. In order to determine if the experiences participants reported in the priming conditions differed in importance, a comparison of the importance ratings participants attributed to the events in each experimental condition were compared. Importantly, this analysis revealed that importance ratings did not differ between the two priming conditions, $t(45) = 0.40$, *ns*. Furthermore, participants rated the events they discussed in the priming conditions as fairly important to them (M = 4.58, SD = 1.60 and M = 4.38, SD = 1.77 in the PD-partner and PD-self conditions, respectively).

Predicting promotion and prevention focus. Consistent with the findings and procedures of Lockwood et al. (2002), promotion-goal strength (M = 6.61) was greater than prevention-goal strength (M = 4.86), $t(72) = 8.83$, $p < .001$, across all conditions, and therefore, these scores were standardized on the promotion and prevention subscales. In order to test the primary predictions of Study 5, a 2 (sex: males vs. female) × 2 (regulatory

focus: promotion vs. prevention) × 3 (condition: PD-self vs. PD-partner vs. control) split-plot ANOVA was conducted, with the standardized scores on the promotion and prevention focus scales serving as the repeated measure. Participants' relationship satisfaction scores, also assessed following the manipulation, were included as a covariate in this analysis to identify differences in regulatory focus over and above possible changes to individual's global perceptions of their relationship. There were no significant main effects of sex or interactions of sex and condition or regulatory focus, and therefore, sex was removed from subsequent analyses. This analysis revealed the predicted interaction between regulatory focus and experimental condition, $F(2, 69) = 5.09$, $p < .01$ (see Figure 3). To follow up this two-way interaction, planned contrasts were conducted. As predicted, participants reported greater levels of promotion focus when in the PD-partner condition than the PD-self and control conditions combined, $t(70) = 1.63$, $p = .05$ (one-tailed), Cohen's $d = 0.39$, whereas promotion-focus ratings did not differ between the PD-self and control conditions, $t(44) = 0.10$, *ns.* Also as predicted, participants reported greater levels of prevention-focus when in the PD-self condition than the PD-partner and control conditions combined, $t(70) = 2.12$, $p < .05$ (one-tailed), Cohen's $d = 0.51$, whereas prevention focus ratings did not differ between the PD-partner and control conditions, $t(49) = 0.58$, *ns.*

Consistent with the results of Study 4, the results of Study 5 provide experimental support for the assertion that the perceived cause of a partner discrepancy can influence the regulatory focus individuals adopt in their relationship. Participants primed to think of ways their partner falls short of their ideal standards subsequently reported thoughts geared toward how they may achieve their goals and desires in their relationship. On the other hand, participants primed to think of ways they fall short of their partner's ideal standards subsequently reported thinking of ways to prevent negative experiences from occurring in their relationship. Importantly, these differences in regulatory focus cannot be attributed to differential changes in global perceptions of the relationship.

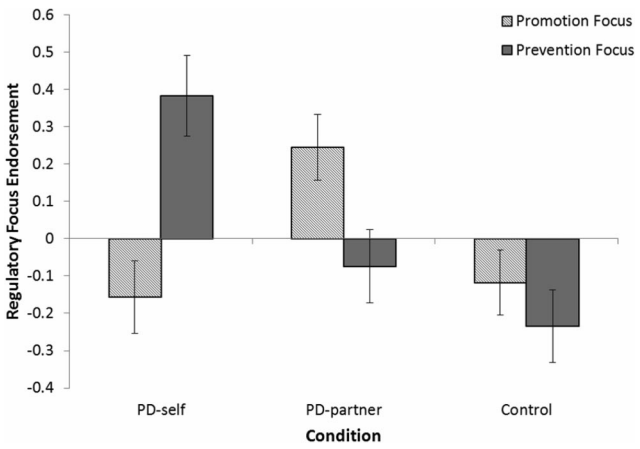

Figure 3. 2 (Priming Condition: PD-self vs. PD-partner) × 2 (Regulatory Focus: Prevention Focus vs. Promotion Focus) interaction predicting endorsement of regulatory items, with standard error bars: Study 5. PD = partner discrepancy.

General Discussion

Given the body of research demonstrating the impact approach and avoidance motivations have on important social outcomes (see Impett, Kogan, Oveis, Gable, & Keltner, 2010), it is important to identify the precursors of different motivational and regulatory orientations in the context of romantic relationships. The present research identifies how different forms of partner and relationship evaluations may result in unique emotional and regulatory outcomes. Guided by the ISM, the present research sheds light on how ideal standards and resulting partner discrepancies influence how intimates feel and are motivated to act in response, because, as suggested by these outcomes, they lead to distinct relationship concerns. Specifically, Studies 1–3 demonstrated that people who perceived their partner as discrepant from their ideal standards experienced more dejection-related emotions, whereas people who perceived that they were discrepant from their partner's ideal standards experienced more agitation-related emotions (these findings were robust, particularly for the warmth/trustworthiness dimension). Importantly, these findings could not be accounted for by the valence of more general partner, self-, or relationship perceptions. Studies 4 and 5 provided a direct demonstration of the link between partner discrepancies and promotion and prevention regulatory focuses. That is, perceived partner discrepancies influence the regulatory focus adopted by intimates such that perceiving the partner to be the source of the discrepancy was associated with a promotion-focused regulatory orientation, whereas perceiving oneself to be the source of the discrepancy was associated with a prevention-focused regulatory orientation.

Implications

The current research investigated the emotions and regulatory orientations elicited by different forms of partner discrepancies to understand the specific consequences they have on intimates but also as an indicator of how people interpret the consequences of such discrepancies for their relationship goals. Although previous ISM research has shown that partner discrepancies are associated with decreased relationship satisfaction (e.g., Campbell et al., 2001) and, therefore, presumably "negative" emotions, the present research delves deeper into what different types of discrepancies signify to partners. Participants who perceived their partners as discrepant from their ideal standards experienced dejection-related emotions and developed a promotion-focused regulatory style, suggesting that such partner discrepancies activate nurturance-related concerns. Consistent with RFT (Higgins, 1997), we suggest that this focus should lead to promotion behaviors intended to reduce the discrepancy in order to achieve the desired relationship outcomes. Our findings are consistent with recent research conducted by Overall et al. (2006), who found that people try to regulate or change their partner to be more in line with their ideal standards, enacting behaviors aimed at reducing the partner discrepancy in order to achieve relationship-relevant goals. Sinclair and Fehr (2005) have also shown that an independent self-construal (assumed to be related to a promotion-focused regulatory style) was associated with approach conflict styles when expressing dissatisfaction with one's relationship.

Perceiving that oneself is discrepant from one's partner's ideal standards, on the other hand, was shown to be associated with

agitation-related emotions and a prevention focus, supporting our assertion that this form of discrepancy leads to a concern over negative outcomes that could occur and therefore security-related concerns. Further, although not directly tested in the current research, we suggest that this type of discrepancy and resulting regulatory focus should lead to behavior aimed at preventing the feared negative outcomes. For instance, Campbell et al. (2001) suggested that an individual may have to avoid conflict and showcase his or her best qualities in an effort to more closely meet his or her partner's standards. Especially for those people involved in generally satisfying and committed relationships, this prevention strategy could be aimed at reducing the partner discrepancy to ultimately maintain the relationship satisfaction. Alternatively, research conducted by Murray et al. (2006) suggested that this form of discrepancy may lead to avoidance behaviors aimed at reducing one's dependency on the partner and relationship to protect against the pain of possible rejection. Campbell et al. (2001) and Murray et al. (2006) suggested similar root causes for the adoption of a prevention focus in a romantic relationship context (i.e., perceived rejection by one's partner) but differ in terms of the outcomes desired when people adopt a prevention focus. Future research should focus on the possible outcomes sought after by people when they adopt a prevention focus in this context.

Demonstrating that different types of partner discrepancies are uniquely associated with different types of negative emotions and regulatory orientations is an important first step in understanding the motivational underpinnings of interpersonal behavior in romantic relationships, but more research is needed to build on these findings. Although we do not directly test if growth/nurturance versus security/safety needs are being triggered by the different partner discrepancies, the unique activation of the dejection or agitation emotions and different regulatory strategies suggests that these concerns may be the motivational factors involved. Further research, however, will need to replicate the current findings and directly assess the presence of such relationship concerns. In addition, future research needs to clarify the specific types of regulatory behaviors associated with each type of partner discrepancy and determine if the regulatory behaviors enacted in the face of different types of partner discrepancies and negative emotions are successful in minimizing perceived partner discrepancies for both partners.

Limitations and Future Directions

One limitation of the current research is that we did not investigate the relationship outcomes of partner discrepancies and regulatory focus over time. Partner discrepancies leading to differences in regulatory focus may lead to conflict when partners try to resolve or reduce partner discrepancies (e.g., Overall et al., 2009; Sinclair & Fehr, 2005). Our findings indicate that couples showing agreement about a particular partner being the source of the discrepancy may subsequently form different regulatory styles. As any resulting attempts at discrepancy reduction or relationship improvement may provide a motivational "fit" for one partner but not the other, further complications may result (Freitas & Higgins, 2002; Higgins, 2000). Other research has suggested that different regulatory orientations are associated with different ways of determining relationship satisfaction (Gable & Poore, 2008), as well as other negative and positive social outcomes (e.g., Elliot, Gable, & Mapes, 2006; Gable, 2006). Research is currently underway to investigate chronic partner discrepancies and regulatory focus over time and their effect on relationship outcomes.

Additionally, the current research focused exclusively, for theoretical reasons, on the experience of two types of negative emotions in relationships (i.e., dejection and agitation). Other emotions, such as frustration and anger, were not assessed. Future research that focuses on the outcomes of specific regulatory behaviors in relationship should also assess the presence of positive emotions, particularly when the goal of minimizing perceived discrepancies is achieved. In this instance, the existence of positive emotions should indicate to people that their goal of having a happy relationship is being facilitated, perhaps motivating the individual to continue to engage in the successful regulatory behaviors. Additionally, future research should consider the broader spectrum of emotional experiences, both negative and positive, experienced by individuals when perceived discrepancies exist in the relationship.

The present research did not assess how these different regulatory focuses would affect the behavior of intimates in the relationship. As discussed earlier, Overall et al. (2006) have found that when people perceive their partners as not meeting their ideals, they initiate strategies to change their partner to reduce such discrepancies. Also, although they did not assess partner discrepancies, Ayduk, May, Downey, and Higgins (2003) demonstrated that prevention-focused intimates are more likely to engage in behaviors aimed at minimizing damage to their attachment with their partners (e.g., suppressing thoughts and feelings that might exacerbate the conflict and more passive means of expressing displeasure). These studies suggest how promotion and prevention focuses might be expressed behaviorally, but future research will need to directly investigate the behavioral ramifications of different partner discrepancies and their resulting regulatory focuses.

Conclusion

Any obstruction of a satisfying relationship is bound to result in negative emotions (Berscheid, 1983) and a motivational response. In most cases, the satisfaction and survival of a relationship is contingent on how well each partner's expectations are being met (Campbell et al., 2001; Fletcher et al., 2000; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). The present research extends this line of reasoning by taking into consideration the fact that relationship well-being is a mutual goal between two people and, therefore, is necessarily impacted by how well both partners meet the other's expectations (Campbell et al., 2001). The ISM provided the framework within which to identify the different types of standards, or expectations, people have for their partner. Within this framework, the present research sheds light on how perceived partner discrepancies affect the emotional climate of relationships and the regulatory orientations people adopt when they, or their partners, fail to meet each other's ideals.

References

Aiken, L. S., & West, S. G. (1991). *Multiple regression: Testing and interpreting interactions.* London, England: Sage.

Aron, A., Aron, E. N., & Smollan, D. (1992). Inclusion of other in the self scale and the structure of interpersonal closeness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 63,* 596–612. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.63.4.596

Ayduk, O., May, D., Downey, G., & Higgins, E. T. (2003). Tactical differences in coping with rejection sensitivity: The role of prevention pride. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 29,* 435–448. doi:10.1177/0146167202250911

Baldwin, M. W., Fehr, B., Keedian, E., Seidel, M., & Thompson, D. W. (1993). An exploration of the relational schemata underlying attachment styles: Self-report and lexical decision approaches. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 19,* 746–754. doi:10.1177/0146167293196010

Berscheid, E. (1983). Emotion. In H. H. Kelley, E. Berscheid, A. Christensen, J. H. Harvey, T. L. Huston, G. Levinger, . . . D. R. Peterson (Eds.), *Close relationships* (pp. 110–168). New York, NY: Freeman.

Boyes, A. D., & Fletcher, G. J. O. (2007). Metaperceptions of bias in intimate relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 92,* 286–306. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.92.2.286

Campbell, L., & Kashy, D. A. (2002). Estimating actor, partner, and interaction effects for dyadic data using PROC MIXED and HLM: A guided tour. *Personal Relationships, 9,* 327–342. doi:10.1111/1475-6811.00023

Campbell, L., Simpson, J. A., Kashy, D. A., & Fletcher, G. J. O. (2001). Ideal standards, the self, and flexibility of ideals in close relationships. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 27,* 447–462. doi:10.1177/0146167201274006

Carver, C. S., Lawrence, J. W., & Scheier, M. F. (1999). Self-discrepancies and affect: Incorporating the role of feared selves. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 25,* 783–792.

Carver, C. S., & Scheier, M. F. (1990). Origins and functions of positive and negative affect: A control-process view. *Psychological Review, 97,* 19–35. doi:10.1037/0033-295X.97.1.19

Carver, C. S., & Scheier, M. F. (1998). *On the self-regulation of behavior.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Cavallo, J. V., Fitzsimons, G. M., & Holmes, J. G. (2009). Taking chances in the face of threat: Romantic risk regulation and approach motivation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 35,* 737–751. doi:10.1177/0146167209332742

Cortina, J. M. (1993). What is coefficient alpha? An examination of theory and applications. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 78,* 98–104. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.78.1.98

Elliot, A. J., Gable, S. L., & Mapes, R. R. (2006). Approach and avoidance motivation in the social domain. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 32,* 378–391. doi:10.1177/0146167205282153

Fazio, R. H. (1990). A practical guide to the use of response latency in social psychological research. In C. Hendrick & M. S. Clark (Eds.), *Research methods in personality and social psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 74–97). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Fincham, F. D. (2001). Attributions in close relationships: From balkanization to integration. In G. J. O. Fletcher & M. S. Clark (Eds.), *Blackwell handbook of social psychology: Interpersonal processes* (pp. 3–31). Oxford, England: Blackwell.

Fletcher, G. J. O., Simpson, J. A., & Thomas, G. (2000). Ideals, perceptions, and evaluations in early relationship development. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 79,* 933–940. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.79.6.933

Fletcher, G. J. O., Simpson, J. A., Thomas, G., & Giles, L. (1999). Ideals in intimate relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76,* 72–89. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.76.1.72

Fletcher, G. J. O., Tither, J. M., O'Loughlin, C., Friesen, M. D., & Overall, N. C. (2004). Warm and homely or cold and beautiful? Sex differences in trading off traits in mate selection. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 30,* 659–672. doi:10.1177/0146167203262847

Fraley, R. C., Waller, N. G., & Brennan, K. A. (2000). An item response theory analysis of self-report measures of adult attachment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 78,* 350–365. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.78.2.350

Freitas, A. L., & Higgins, E. T. (2002). Enjoying goal-directed action: The role of regulatory fit. *Psychological Science, 13,* 1–6. doi:10.1111/1467-9280.00401

Gable, S. L. (2006). Approach and avoidance social motives and goals. *Journal of Personality, 74,* 175–222. doi:10.1111/j.1467-6494.2005.00373.x

Gable, S. L., & Poore, J. (2008). Which thoughts count? Algorithms for evaluating satisfaction in relationships. *Psychological Science, 19,* 1030–1036. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02195.x

Gangestad, S. W., & Simpson, J. A. (2000). The evolution of human mating: Trade-offs and strategic pluralism. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 23,* 573–587. doi:10.1017/S0140525X0000337X

Gross, J. J. (1998). Antecedent- and response-focused emotion regulation: Divergent consequences for experience, expression, and physiology. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 74,* 224–237. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.74.1.224

Hendrick, C., Hendrick, S. S., & Adler, N. (1988). Romantic relationships: Love, satisfaction, and staying together. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 54,* 980–988. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.54.6.980

Higgins, E. T. (1987). Self-discrepancy: A theory relating self and affect. *Psychological Review, 94,* 319–340. doi:10.1037/0033-295X.94.3.319

Higgins, E. T. (1996). Emotional experiences: The pains and pleasures of distinct regulatory systems. In R. D. Kavanaugh, B. Zimmerberg, & S. Fein (Eds.), *Emotion: Interdisciplinary perspectives* (pp. 203–241). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Higgins, E. T. (1997). Beyond pleasure and pain. *American Psychologist, 52,* 1280–1300. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.52.12.1280

Higgins, E. T. (2000). Making a good decision: Value from fit. *American Psychologist, 55,* 1217–1230. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.55.11.1217

Higgins, E. T. (2005). Value from regulatory fit. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 14,* 209–213. doi:10.1111/j.0963-7214.2005.00366.x

Higgins, E. T., Roney, C. J. R., Crowe, E., & Hymes, C. (1994). Ideal versus ought predilections for approach and avoidance distinct self-regulatory systems. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 66,* 276–286. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.66.2.276

Impett, E. A., Gordon, A. M., Kogan, A., Oveis, C., Gable, S. L., & Keltner, D. (2010). Moving toward more perfect unions: Daily and long-term consequences of approach and avoidance goals in romantic relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 99,* 948–963. doi:10.1037/a0020271

Impett, E., Gordon, A., & Strachman, A. (2008). Attachment style, daily sexual motives, and relationship quality in dating couples. *Personal Relationships, 15,* 375–390.

Kashy, D. A., Campbell, L., & Harris, D. W. (2006). Advances in data analytic approaches for relationships research: The broad utility of hierarchical linear modeling. In A. L. Vangelisti & D. Perlman (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of personal relationships* (pp. 73–89). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Kashy, D. A., & Kenny, D. A. (2000). The analysis of data from dyads and groups. In H. T. Reis & C. M. Judd (Eds.), *Handbook of research methods in social psychology* (pp. 451–477). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Kelley, H. H., Holmes, J. G., Kerr, N. L., Reis, H. T., Rusbult, C. E., & Van Lange, P. A. M. (2003). *An atlas of interpersonal situations.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Keltner, D., Gruenfeld, D. H., & Anderson, C. (2003). Power, approach, and inhibition. *Psychological Review, 110,* 265–284. doi:10.1037/0033-295X.110.2.265

Kenny, D. A., Kashy, D. A., & Bolger, N. (1998). Data analysis in social psychology. In D. T. Gilbert, S. T. Fiske, & L. Gardner (Eds.), *The handbook of social psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 233–265). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Kenny, D. A., Kashy, D. A., & Cook, W. L. (2006). *Dyadic data analysis.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Lazarus, R. S. (1991). Cognition and motivation in emotion. *American Psychologist, 46,* 352–367. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.46.4.352

Lockwood, P., Jordan, C., & Kunda, Z. (2002). Motivation by positive or negative role models: Regulatory focus determines who will best inspire us. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 83,* 854–864.

Lund, M. (1985). The development of investment and commitment scales for predicting continuity of personal relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 2,* 3–23. doi:10.1177/0265407585021001

Maxwell, S. E. (2004). The persistence of underpowered studies in psychological research: Causes, consequences, and remedies. *Psychological Methods, 9,* 147–163. doi:10.1037/1082-989X.9.2.147

Meyer, D. E., & Schvaneveldt, R. W. (1971). Facilitation in recognizing pairs of words: Evidence of a dependence between retrieval operations. *Journal of Experimental Psychology, 90,* 227–234. doi:10.1037/h0031564

Molden, D. C., Lee, A. Y., & Higgins, E. T. (2008). Motivations for promotion and prevention. In J. Shah & W. Gardner (Eds.), *Handbook of motivation science* (pp. 169–187). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Murray, S. L., Holmes, J. G., & Collins, N. L. (2006). Optimizing assurance: The risk regulation system in relationships. *Psychological Bulletin, 132,* 641–666. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.132.5.641

Murray, S. L., Holmes, J. G., & Griffin, D. W. (2000). Self-esteem and the quest for felt-security: How perceived regard regulates attachment processes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 78,* 478–498. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.78.3.478

Neeley, J. H. (1991). Semantic priming effects in visual word recognition: A selective review of current findings and theories. In D. Besner & G. W. Humphries (Eds.), *Basic processes in reading: Visual word recognition* (pp. 264–336). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Overall, N. C., Fletcher, G. J. O., & Simpson, J. A. (2006). Regulation processes in intimate relationships: The role of ideal standards. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 91,* 662–685. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.91.4.662

Overall, N. C., Fletcher, G. J. O., Simpson, J. A., & Sibley, C. G. (2009). Regulating partners in intimate relationships: The costs and benefits of different communication strategies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 96,* 620–639. doi:10.1037/a0012961

Perea, M., Rosa, E., & Gómez, C. (2002). Is the go/no-go lexical decision task an alternative to the yes/no lexical decision task? *Memory & Cognition, 30,* 34–45. doi:10.3758/BF03195263

Raudenbush, S. W., & Bryk, A. S. (2002). *Hierarchical linear models: Applications and data analysis methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Showers, C. (1992). Compartmentalization of positive and negative self-knowledge: Keeping bad apples out of the bunch. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 62,* 1036–1049. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.62.6.1036

Showers, C. J., & Kevlyn, S. B. (1999). Organization of knowledge about a relationship partner: Implications for liking and loving. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 76,* 958–971. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.76.6.958

Simpson, J. A., Fletcher, G. J. O., & Campbell, L. (2001). The structure and functions of ideal standards in close relationships. In G. J. O. Fletcher & M. S. Clark (Eds.), *Blackwell handbook of social psychology: Interpersonal processes* (pp. 86–106). London, England: Blackwell.

Sinclair, L., & Fehr, B. (2005). Voice versus loyalty: Self-construals and responses to dissatisfaction in romantic relationships. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 41,* 298–304. doi:10.1016/j.jesp.2004.06.004

Spanier, G. B. (1976). Measuring dyadic adjustment: New scales for assessing the quality of marriage and similar dyads. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 38,* 15–28. doi:10.2307/350547

Strauman, T. J., Vookles, J., Berenstein, V., Chaiken, S., & Higgins, E. T. (1991). Self-discrepancies and vulnerability to body dissatisfaction and disordered eating. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 61,* 946–956. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.61.6.946

Thibaut, J. W., & Kelley, H. H. (1959). *The social psychology of groups.* New York, NY: Wiley.

Vaughn, L. A., Malik, J., Schwartz, S., Petkova, Z., & Trudeau, L. (2006). Regulatory fit as input for stop rules. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 91,* 601–611. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.91.4.601

Received November 8, 2010
Revision received May 7, 2012
Accepted May 9, 2012 ■

Retraction of Avramova, Stapel, and Lerouge (2010)

The following article from the August 2010 issue is being retracted: Avramova, Y. R., Stapel, D. A., & Lerouge, D. (2010). Mood and context-dependence: Positive mood increases and negative mood decreases the effect of context on perception. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 99,* 203–214. doi:10.1037/a0020216

This retraction follows the results of an investigation into the work of Diederik A. Stapel (further information on the investigation can be found here: https://www.commissielevelt.nl/). The Levelt Committee has determined data supplied by Diederik A. Stapel to be fraudulent. The other co-authors were unaware of his actions and were not involved in the collection of the fraudulent data.

DOI: 10.1037/a0029743