The Interactive Role of Implicit and Explicit Partner Evaluations on Ongoing Affective and Behavioral Romantic Realities

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Abstract

Past research on close relationships has increasingly focused on the assessment of implicit constructs to shed new light on relationship processes. However, virtually nothing is known about the role of such constructs in understanding ongoing affective and behavioral romantic realities and how implicit and explicit relationship constructs interact in the context of daily relationship outcomes. Using a 21-day diary approach, the present research examined the unique and interactive role of implicit partner evaluations and explicit partner perceptions on relationship outcomes (daily relationship quality and positive relationship behaviors enacted toward partner). Results showed that more positive implicit partner evaluations uniquely predicted more positive relationship outcomes during the 21-day diary period, but that this was especially pronounced in individuals who did not explicitly perceive their partner's attributes in an overly positive manner. Implications for the close relationship literature are discussed.

> I don't like you, but I love you, . . . Seems that I'm always thinking of you.

These song lyrics, written by Smokey Robinson, depict a dilemma experienced by many people in their romantic relationships; on one hand they do not explicitly perceive their partners very favorably, on the other hand they intuitively feel a very strong and positive bond with their partners. Although most of the past research on relationship quality has relied on explicit measures, recently an increasing number of researchers have successfully utilized so-called implicit measures to further our understanding of close relationship processes (for a review, see Baldwin, Lydon, McClure, & Etchison, 2010). Indeed, important theoretical insights have been discovered using implicit measures, attesting to the fact that these measures can tap unique aspects of romantic relationships beyond what is captured by explicit measures. For instance, implicit measures have been used to assess relationship partner attitudes, which have led to important new insights about relationship processes (Baldwin et al., 2010). That being said, virtually nothing is known regarding the role of implicit partner evaluations (IPEs) in understanding ongoing day-to-day relationship processes. Furthermore, no research has examined the interplay (or interactive role) of implicit and explicit partner evaluations in predicting *ongoing* affective and behavioral realities of romantic relationships. The current study aimed to fill these

gaps in the literature. Using a 21-day diary approach, we examined how implicit partner feelings and explicit perceptions of partner attributes uniquely and interactively played out in the dynamics of daily relationship outcomes such as perceived relationship quality and positive relationship behaviors.

Research on the dynamics of relationship satisfaction and relationship quality almost without exception has utilized self-report methodology to assess explanatory variables (for a review, see Fincham & Beach, 2006). As is well known, however, self-report methodology is subject to various limitations (Stone et al., 2000), including impression management (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960), self-deceptive motivated distortions (Paulhus, 1984), and limits to self-awareness (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). These limitations may be particularly pronounced in the context of romantic relationships, given that it may be difficult for an individual to admit to herself/himself, and to others, their changing feelings toward their partner. To address these limitations, researchers have developed implicit

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measures to capture these feelings. In addition to addressing these limitations, such implicit measures have also been argued to capture unique aspects of the psychological realities within a romantic relationship, reflecting a fuller range of thoughts and feelings toward one's romantic partner that conscious beliefs assessed using self-report may often miss (Murray, Holmes, & Pinkus, 2010).

Indeed, implicit and explicit measures of relationship or partner evaluations typically show nil or weak correlations with each other (Baldwin et al., 2010). Nonetheless, as will be reviewed below, the measures predict unique variance in important relationship outcomes (e.g., relationship quality and stability), attesting to the theoretical utility of using implicit measures in addition to explicit measures to further our understanding of relationship processes.

A growing body of research within the romantic relationship domain has used implicit measures of partner evaluations to gain a deeper understanding of relationship processes. For instance, Scinta and Gable (2007) discovered that implicit partner feelings corresponded to self-reported relationship satisfaction for individuals having few barriers to exit the relationship, whereas the two diverged (or were negatively related) for those having higher barriers to exit the relationship. This provided some of the first provocative evidence, suggesting that IPEs may unearth feelings individuals are unable or unwilling to report on self-report measures (see also Banse, 1999; Banse & Kowalick, 2007). Zayas and Shoda (2005) showed that securely attached individuals have much stronger associations between uniquely descriptive partner words and positively valenced words than insecurely attached individuals. Also, DeHart, Pelham, and Murray (2004) found that explicit ratings of relationship quality were positively predictive of IPEs for individuals with low, but not high, self-esteem (see also DeHart, Pelham, Fiedorowicz, Carvallo, & Gabriel, 2011).

Remarkably, more positive IPEs have even been linked either indirectly (via relationship satisfaction; LeBel & Campbell, 2009) or directly (controlling for relationship satisfaction; Lee, Rogge, & Reis, 2010) to a decreased likelihood of breakup in the future. Examining the origins of implicit partner feelings, Murray, Holmes, and Pinkus (2010) found that individuals who experienced higher levels of daily negative unresponsive behaviors from their partner had less positive implicit partner feelings 4 years later, even though these negative partner behaviors had no impact on explicit reports about the partner or the relationship. Finally, implicit and explicit partner evaluations have been found to be differentially affected by autonomy costs in close relationships (Murray, Holmes, et al., 2009b, experiment 2). Participants reminded of how their partner had thwarted their goals (vs. a control condition) automatically showed more positive partner evaluations on the implicit measure, whereas more positive explicit partner evaluations only emerged for high self-esteem individuals. Taken together, the reviewed set of findings collectively underscores the utility of using implicit measures of partner evaluations to further our understanding of romantic relationship dynamics.

Though past research supports the theoretical importance of examining IPEs, a careful examination of past studies reveals that virtually nothing is known about the role of IPEs in understanding *ongoing* day-to-day romantic relationship processes. For instance, in a longitudinal study of newlyweds, Murray, Aloni, et al. (2009a, study 1) found that feelings of inferiority to one's partner enacted dependence-promoting behaviors on subsequent days, suggesting partners automatically activated an exchange script to promote interdependence, which the authors labeled implicit contingencies. However, the label implicit contingencies was used to explain their effects rather than a process that was actually assessed in their longitudinal study; moreover, such a construct is evidently conceptually distinct from the IPE construct. And though the aforementioned Murray et al. (2010) longitudinal study *did* assess IPEs, the authors' focus was on understanding how IPEs are formed rather than the role of those evaluations on daily relationship experiences. In addition, and importantly, almost nothing is known regarding the interaction of IPEs and explicit partner constructs in understanding important daily relationship outcomes. For instance, Murray et al. (2011, study 4) found that more positive evaluative partner associations were predictive of reduced self-protective behavioral distancing, but only when reflective trust in the partner was situationally low. However, this research was not designed to examine the interaction of IPEs and explicit partner constructs on *ongoing* daily relationship psychologies. Hence, it is an open question how the interplay between IPEs and explicit partner constructs plays out in day-to-day relationship dynamics.

The current investigation aimed to fill these gaps by investigating the unique and interactive nature of implicit and explicit partner evaluations in the context of a diary study tracking daily relationship outcomes for 21 days. More specifically, we examined two categories of daily outcomes: (a) daily thoughts and feelings about the relationship and (b) daily positive behaviors enacted toward one's partner.

Existing theory and past research guide our expectations regarding the general role of IPEs and explicit partner perceptions in the context of understanding daily relationship outcomes. First, the literature clearly suggests that more favorable explicit perceptions of partner attributes should, all else being equal, lead to higher levels of reported daily relationship quality and positive behaviors toward one's partner (Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996; Rusbult, 1983). For instance, Murray, Holmes, & Griffin (1996) found that individuals reporting more positive perceptions of their partner attributes were more satisfied with their relationship (see also Rusbult, 1983).

Baldwin's (1992) relational schemas framework guides our general expectations regarding the unique effect of IPEs in the context of daily relationship outcomes. Baldwin proposed the existence of relational schemas composed of associative linkages between the mental representations of the self, one's partner, and one's relationship. These associative linkages include declarative and nondeclarative aspects of repeated

interpersonal experiences with one's partner. From this theoretical perspective, one would anticipate a positive relation between IPEs (which are in part formed by repeated interpersonal partner experiences; Murray et al., 2010) and daily reports of relationship quality, given the theorized associative linkages between the mental representations of one's partner (i.e., IPEs) and one's relationship (i.e., relationship satisfaction and relationship behaviors; Baldwin, 1992).

Our expectations regarding the interaction of implicit and explicit partner evaluations on daily relationship outcomes were guided by three streams of research. First, insights about self-esteem outcomes have been discovered by simultaneously considering both implicit and explicit forms of self-esteem (for a review, see Bosson et al., 2008). A common finding in this literature, for instance, is that individuals with discrepant self-esteem profiles (e.g., relatively positive self-worth beliefs combined with relatively low implicit self-esteem [ISE]) are more likely to engage in various forms of maladaptive behaviors than individuals with congruent self-esteem profiles (e.g., Jordan, Spencer, Zanna, Hoshino-Browne, & Correll, 2003). Hence, in a broad sense, it follows that examining the configurations of explicit partner evaluation and IPE profiles may lead to novel insights into relationship processes.

Second, a clearer picture regarding our expectation of the specific form of the implicit–explicit partner evaluation interaction emerges when considering additional relevant empirical research. For instance, Murray et al. (2011, study 5) found that when participants' expectations of their partner's responsiveness was situationally low, more positive automatic partner associations motivated seeking greater closeness to one's partner (and this was more pronounced when working memory capacity was reduced). Given that explicit perceptions of partner attributes assessed in our study (e.g., attributes such as *supportive* and *considerate*) arguably overlap to some extent with the partner responsiveness manipulation in Murray et al.'s study, we might expect IPEs to have their strongest impact on daily relationship outcomes for individuals having relatively less positive explicit partner perceptions.

Lastly, given the touted benefits of having idealized perceptions of one's partner's attributes (Murray et al., 1996), it is possible that not perceiving one's partner's attributes in an overly positive way (i.e., perceiving partner's attributes as "only" average compared to his/her peers) could create ambivalence about one's relationship. And it is known from past research that under situations of ambivalence about a target, implicit automatic biases are more likely to affect judgments and behaviors (e.g., Dovidio & Gaertner, 2004; Son Hing, Chung-Yan, Hamilton, & Zanna, 2008). These considerations suggest that IPEs might have a stronger impact on daily relationship outcomes for individuals who have not-so-positive perceptions of their partner's attributes compared to those with more positive perceptions.

To test these hypotheses, the current study employed a daily diary approach. During an intake session, individuals completed an explicit measure of partner perceptions on a series of attributes and also indicated their preferences for all letters of the alphabet. Following past research (DeHart et al., 2011; LeBel & Campbell, 2009), we used the extent to which individuals liked their partner's initials (over and above relevant baselines) as an index of IPEs. Each day, individuals reported on their satisfaction with their relationship and also indicated the extent to which they enacted positive behaviors toward their partner.[1]

Method

Participants

Participants were 67 heterosexual couples recruited from a large Canadian university campus using ads placed in campus newspapers (as previously reported in Campbell, Simpson, Boldry, & Rubin, 2010, study 2a). Thirty couples were exclusively dating, 4 were in a common-law relationship, 7 were engaged, 21 were married, and 5 couples did not specify their relationship status. The average age of participants was 27.39 years for men ($SD = 9.93$; range: 18–60) and 25.96 years for women ($SD = 8.75$; range: 18–58). The average length of relationship was 48.60 months ($SD = 69.58$ months; range: 3–400 months). Each participant was compensated up to $50 (Canadian), depending on the number of daily diaries completed.

Procedure

Phase 1. The study had two phases. In the first phase, small groups of couples attended lab sessions during which they completed a pre-diary survey. Men and women were placed in separate rooms, where they completed a brief demographics questionnaire, the explicit partner perceptions measure (adapted from Fletcher, Simpson, Thomas, & Giles, 1999) and the name–letter task (NLT; as used by LeBel & Campbell, 2009). Participants were then reunited with their partners and were told that Phase 2 of the study would involve having each partner privately complete daily diary questions about his or her perceptions of the relationship every day for 21 consecutive days online. Each participant was given an identification number and a link to a secure website where she or he would log on to complete the daily diary questions. Participants were told to complete one diary form at the end of each day (separately from their partner) regarding their perceptions of the relationship on that day and asked to start completing their diaries that evening.

Phase 2. The second phase was the 21-day period. A daily reminder e-mail was sent to each participant that contained a link to the secure website, the participant's identification number, and the diary number the participant was to complete that day. All diary entries were time stamped to ensure that they were completed each day. None of the participants reported problems completing the daily diaries. Overall, the average number of diaries completed was very high for both women ($M = 19.68$, $SD = 2.98$) and men ($M = 19.67$, $SD = 2.77$).

Phase 1 measures.
  Demographics. The general background questionnaire asked participants to provide basic demographic information (i.e., gender, age, dating status, number of months dating).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Measures

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Implicit self-esteem	−1.63	4.07	1.41	1.11	.06*				
2. Implicit partner evaluations	−2.50	4.57	0.85	1.24	.53*	.16*			
3. Explicit partner perceptions (1–7)	2.50	7.00	5.71	0.94	.10*	.10*	.43*		
4. Daily satisfaction (1–7)	1.00	7.00	6.32	0.86	.13*	.22*	.32*	.51*	
5. Daily positive behaviors (1–7)	1.00	7.00	4.82	1.43	−.03	.06*	.15*	.46*	.45*

Correlations on the diagonals represent the concordance between partners.
*p < .05.

Explicit partner perceptions. As an explicit measure of partner perceptions, participants completed a variant of Fletcher et al.'s (1999) partner ideal scale. Individuals were asked to indicate the extent to which their partner exhibited a series of traits related to the warmth/trust dimension. Participants were instructed to think about their partner's positive and negative personal attributes as a romantic partner and were asked to rate their partner compared to his or her same-sex peers on a series of six attributes (*understanding, supportive, considerate, kind, a good listener,* and *sensitive*). We focused exclusively on attributes from Fletcher et al.'s warmth/trustworthiness dimension (rather than also considering the vitality-attractiveness and status-resources dimensions) because these attributes more closely correspond to the interpersonal behaviors assessed daily. Responses were made on a 7-point scale, using the stem my partner scores X on this attribute (X ranging from 1 = *much lower*, 2 = *lower*, 3 = *slightly lower*, 4 = *average*, 5 = *slightly higher*, 6 = *higher*, and 7 = *much higher*). This scale showed adequate reliability for both men (α = .88) and women (α = .94).

IPEs. As an index of IPEs, participants completed the NLT (Nuttin, 1985), which involves rating how much one likes each letter of the alphabet on a 7-point scale, anchored by 1 = *I don't like it at all* and 7 = *I like it very much* (order of letter presentation was randomized across participants). As in past research (LeBel & Gawronski, 2009), participants were instructed to make their judgments quickly and focus on their intuitive feelings toward each letter. IPE scores were computed using the scoring algorithm recommended and previously used by LeBel and Campbell (2009).[2] In this algorithm, scores are ipsatized within participant such that each letter rating is centered around that participant's mean rating of all non-initial and nonpartner initial letters. Then, ipsatized partner initial letter ratings are centered around the respective baseline preferences for those letters, whereby the baseline letter preferences are calculated as the mean (ipsatized) letter rating from participants whose own and partner's initials do *not* contain that letter (Baccus, Baldwin, & Packer, 2004; LeBel & Gawronski, 2009). Preference scores for partner's first and second initials were averaged to form an index of IPE. Higher scores indicate greater levels of positive IPEs. Reliability estimates for these preference scores were α = .53 for men and α =

.52 for women. Using this algorithm, as originally applied to the self, we also calculated an index of ISE (Baccus et al., 2004) to control for this variable in our analyses (reliability estimates for ISE indices were α = .70 for men and α = .60 for women).

Phase 2 measures.

Daily relationship quality. At the end of each day, participants were asked to respond to seven questions (as used in Campbell et al., 2010), regarding their thoughts and feelings about their relationship on that day. Participants were asked (1) how satisfied they felt with their relationship that day, (2) how committed they felt to their relationship that day, (3) how close they felt to their partner that day, (4) how much love they felt toward their partner that day, and the degree to which they felt their relationship (5) would continue to develop positively, (6) was strong and secure, and (7) may be ending soon (reverse keyed). All seven items were answered using a 7-point scale, anchored 1 = *not at all*, 7 = *very much*. Scores from these seven items were averaged for each day to create a measure of daily relationship quality. The average α reliability coefficient across the 21 days for men was .93 (range: .88-.97) and for women was .92 (range: .87-.95).

Self-reported positive behaviors. This diary measure indexed how often a partner behaved positively toward the other partner (i.e., "I said something that made my partner feel loved," "I showed an interest in the events of my partner's day," and "I made a special effort to spend time with my partner"). Participants were instructed to indicate how frequently they engaged in these three behaviors for that day, using a 7-point scale (anchored from 1 = *not at all* to 7 = *a lot*). We averaged the actor's reports on these three sampled situations across the 21 days to index positive behaviors enacted toward one's partner. The average α reliability coefficient across the 21 days for men was .77 (range: .64-.81) and for women was .81 (range: .71-.89).

Results

Table 1 presents descriptives and correlations among variables. Data collected from couples often violate the data independence assumptions required for many data analytic techniques

(e.g., ordinary least squares regression). The current data were analyzed within the framework of the actor–partner interdependence model (APIM; Kashy & Kenny, 2000; Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006), which models the interdependence inherent in close relationships and also provides estimates for both actor and partner effects. These effects were estimated using a multilevel modeling approach, with responses from each romantic partner nested within their appropriate dyad using recommendations made by Campbell and Kashy (2002). In addition, a unique index was calculated for each day for each couple, which can be conceptualized as a couple-specific code for each day of the dairy period. These codes were used to model the nonindependence that exists between partners on measures assessed each day (Kenny et al., 2006).

We tested two models, one with daily reports of relationship quality as the outcome and one with daily reports of positive behavior directed toward the partner as the outcome. In these models, gender was effect coded (−1 for men and 1 for women) and all continuous predictor variables were centered on their respective grand means. For both models, we controlled for gender and also participant's ISE to ensure that our findings distinctly reflect IPEs (as has been done in past research; LeBel & Campbell, 2009). No partner or sex-moderating effects emerged for either models, and hence these will not be further discussed.

Model 1. The dependent variable in our first model was scores on the index of relationship quality during the 21-day diary period. The predictor variables included gender, actor ISE scores, actor IPE scores, actor explicit partner perception scores, and an interaction term composed of the actor IPE and actor explicit partner perception scores. Results of this analysis revealed a statistically significant actor IPE effect ($b = .12$, $SE = .05$, $p < .02$), indicating that individuals with more positive IPEs perceived their ongoing romantic relationship more positively across the 21-day diary period. A statistically significant actor explicit partner perception effect also emerged ($b = .23$, $SE = .06$, $p < .001$), showing that individuals perceiving more positive attributes in their partners reported higher ongoing perceptions of relationship quality on a daily basis. Qualifying these two main effects, a statistically significant interaction emerged between actor IPE and actor explicit partner perceptions ($b = −.09$, $SE = .04$, $p < .04$). To probe the precise form of the interaction, simple slope analyses were executed at ± 1 SD around the mean of the explicit partner perception scores (Aiken & West, 1991). As depicted in Figure 1, actor IPE positively predicted ongoing relationship quality for actors whose explicit partner perception scores were relatively low ($b = .21$, $SE = .07$, $p < .004$), whereas the actor IPE-relationship quality relation was positive but nonsignificant for actors whose explicit partner perception scores were relatively high ($b = .04$, $SE = .06$, $p > .45$).[3]

Model 2. The dependent variable in our second model involved scores from the index of ongoing positive behaviors toward one's partner during the diary period. The predictor variables were the same as in our first model. Results of this analysis again revealed a statistically significant actor IPE
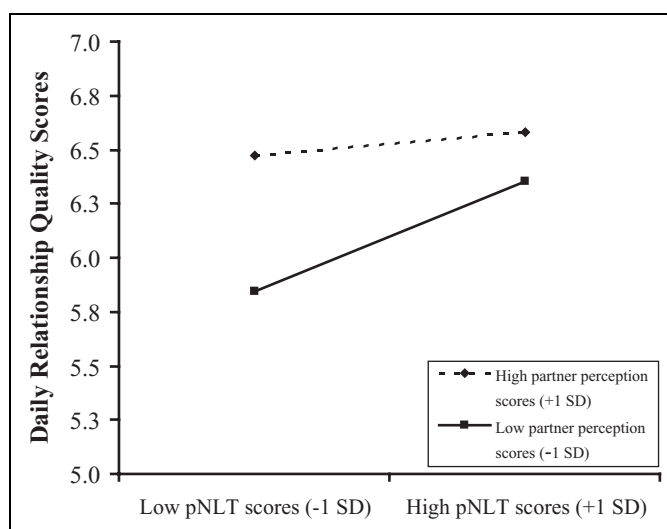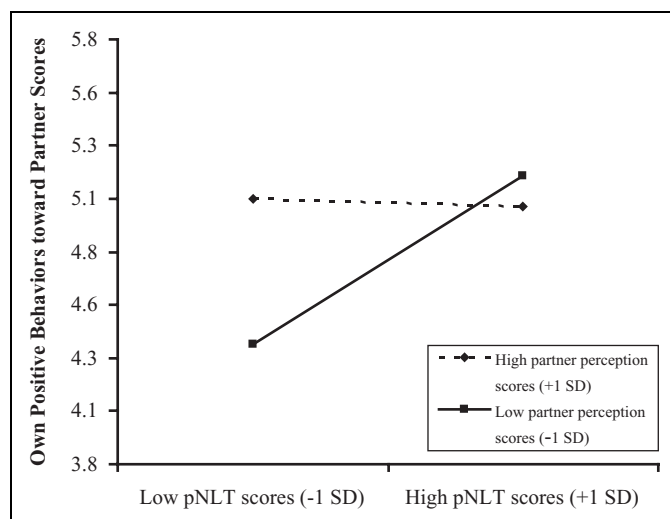

Figure 1. Daily relationship quality as a function of partner name–letter score preferences (implicit partner evaluations) and explicit partner perceptions (plotted at $\pm$ 1 *SD* around the mean of both continuous predictors).

effect ($b = .15$, $SE = .07$, $p < .05$), indicating that individuals with more positive IPEs reported enacting more positive behaviors toward their partner during the diary period. For the actor explicit partner perception effect, a linear trend emerged ($b = .14$, $SE = .09$, $p < .10$), suggesting a tendency for individuals perceiving more positive attributes in their partners to report enacting more positive behaviors toward their partner. In addition, a statistically significant interaction emerged between actor IPE and actor explicit partner perceptions ($b = −.18$, $SE = .06$, $p < .006$). As in the previous model, simple slopes analyses were executed at $\pm$ 1 SD around the mean of the explicit partner perception scores to probe the precise form of the interaction (Aiken & West, 1991). As depicted in Figure 2, actor IPE positively predicted positive behaviors toward the partner for actors whose explicit partner perception scores were relatively low ($b = .32$, $SE = .10$, $p < .003$), whereas no actor IPE-positive behavior relation emerged for actors whose explicit partner perception scores were relatively high ($b = −.01$, $SE = .09$, $p > .5$).

Discussion

Though past research supports the theoretical importance of examining IPEs, virtually nothing is known about the role of IPEs in understanding *ongoing* affective and behavioral realities in romantic relationships. In addition, and importantly, little is known regarding the interplay of implicit and explicit partner evaluations in the context of understanding day-to-day relationship outcomes. The current study aimed to fill these gaps by investigating the unique and interactive role of implicit and explicit partner evaluations on ongoing affective and behavioral romantic realities. In summary, we found that more positive IPEs uniquely predicted more positive relationship outcomes during the 21-day diary period, but that this was

Figure 2. Reports of positive behaviors toward partner as a function of partner name–letter score preferences (implicit partner evaluations) and explicit partner perceptions.

especially pronounced for individuals who did not explicitly perceive their partner's warmth–trustworthiness attributes in an overly positive manner (i.e., only perceiving one's partner's attributes as about average relative to his or her peers). The positive relationship outcomes were reflected in higher levels of relationship quality and positive behaviors enacted toward one's partner during the 21-day diary period.

Broadly consistent with Baldwin's (1992) relational schemas framework, our findings suggest that being happy with one's relationship on a day-to-day basis is not simply a function of explicit beliefs about one's partner but also depends on associative linkages between the mental representations of one's partner and one's relationship. More specifically, our interaction patterns suggest that positive implicit partner feelings, presumably resulting from past interpersonal partner interactions (e.g., Murray et al., 2010), can act as a kind of buffer for individuals who are not necessarily satisfied with their partner's attributes. In other words, although we may not be that thrilled about some of our partner's characteristics, intuitive partner feelings resulting from rewarding past partner interactions may nonetheless contribute to a more satisfying relationship on a day-to-day basis.

Our findings are important for several reasons. First, they provide the first empirical evidence that IPEs can uniquely predict *ongoing* affective and behavioral psychological realities in romantic relationships, over and above explicit partner evaluations. Second, and more importantly, the findings regarding the interaction of implicit and explicit constructs are important given their broader implications for understanding the psychological realities underlying romantic relationship processes. The interaction of implicit and explicit partner evaluations in predicting ongoing relationship outcomes implies that it can potentially be misleading to examine the unique effects of each of these constructs on relationship outcomes in isolation. That is, a "main effects" approach, as has often been utilized in past

research (e.g., Banse, 1999; Zayas & Shoda, 2005), may paint an incomplete picture regarding the psychological realities underlying romantic relationship processes. Hence, the current results imply that it is crucial to simultaneously consider the role of implicit and explicit partner constructs in understanding romantic relationship processes.

The present results are also important because they imply that even though people may not always be aware of intuitive feelings they have for their partner, such feelings may nonetheless contribute to experiencing more satisfying relationships on a day-to-day basis. This inference is based on the logic that IPEs were centered on how much individuals liked certain letters of the alphabet (i.e., the extent one liked the initials in their partner's name). Given that past research has shown that the vast majority of individuals do not recognize a connection between these letter judgments and the construct being assessed (Koole, Dijksterhuis, & van Knippenberg, 2001), it follows that individuals were likely unaware that the letter preferences reflected in any way their feelings toward their partner (but see Gawronski, Hofmann, & Wilbur, 2006; Krizan, 2008).

Of course, boundary conditions likely exist which would qualify the main findings of the present research. For instance, when a major transgression arises in the relationship (e.g., cheating), a case can be made that it could be dysfunctional for an individual to continue relying on their IPEs, which may take longer to change than explicit evaluations. In such a case, it may be more functional for the individual to override their implicit evaluations and heed to their explicit evaluations.[4] It is also important to note the low reliability of the IPE measure compared to our explicit measure of partner evaluations, and thus consider other more reliable implicit measures in future research. Lastly, the stability of the IPE construct has yet to be examined. These issues offer interesting potential avenues for future research.

Taken together, and returning to our opening quote by Smokey Robinson, the present results suggest the tantalizing possibility that intuitive feelings we have of our partner, which we may not always be aware of or have difficulty articulating, may nonetheless contribute to experiencing more satisfying and rewarding romantic relationships. This may especially be the case when our beliefs about our partner do not coincide with such intuitive feelings.

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Notes

1. Negative behaviors were also assessed, however the frequency of reporting such behaviors exhibited floor effects (mean of 1.5 compared to 4.8 for positive behaviors where 1 = *not at all* and 7 = *a lot*) and reduced variability (almost 50% less) in comparison to positive behaviors. Unsurprisingly, we did not find any statistically reliable interaction patterns with negative behaviors and hence do not discuss this further.
2. An SPSS-compatible syntax of this algorithm is available on the first author's website: http://publish.uwo.ca/~elebel/pNLT.html
3. It is important to keep in mind that explicit partner perception scores at 1 *SD* below the mean (value of 4.77) reflected perceptions that one's partner was about average for the attributes, given the scale anchors used (4 = *average*, 5 = *slightly higher*).
4. We thank an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion.

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