THESIS

EXAMINING SOCIAL EXCHANGE MEASURES AS MODERATORS OF POLITENESS

TECHNIQUES IN FACE-THREATENING ACTS BETWEEN ROMANTIC PARTNERS

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

EXAMINING SOCIAL EXCHANGE MEASURES AS MODERATORS OF POLITENESS

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Much has been written concerning *face* and the process individuals engage in to manage both their own and other's face in a variety of contexts (Goffman, 1967). Despite ample research on the management of one's own face (Brown & Levinson, 1987), still little is known concerning the motives behind helping others to create and manage face. This study utilizes measures from Social Exchange Theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) as moderators for face-saving techniques presented in Politeness Theory. Particularly, romantic relationships were examined to determine how relationship satisfaction and stability levels influence decision-making processes when individuals approach their partners with a face-threatening act. Satisfaction was shown to be associated with concern for face whereas stability, commitment, and equity were not. Additionally, satisfaction and stability levels are correlated with the techniques individuals use to reduce uncertainty concerning their partners' face needs. Future research is suggested to further understand effective techniques to reduce uncertainty surrounding face-threatening acts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

To the countless number of teachers who have sacrificed while creating the foundation upon

which this project was possible. Those who have inspired, motivated, critiqued, praised, and

supported me in all of my ideas and academic endeavors. And, importantly, to my family. To my

parents who always put my needs above their own and to my siblings who always have my back.

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CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF STUDY

Introduction

As 'social' beings, it is natural for humans to care about the opinions of others (Fershtman & Weiss. 1996; Gunther, 1991). Research suggests that an individual's concern for what others think about them alters the way apologies are given (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984), requests are sought (Blum-Kulka, 1982; Meyer, 1994), offers are refused (Takahashi & Beebe, 1986), complaints and disagreements are expressed (Olshtain & Weinbach, 1986; Pomerantz, 1984), and countless other communicative acts unfold. Goffman (1967) described this desired public image as *face*, and the process of obtaining this image as managing *face needs*. All individuals possess face that requires constant development, maintenance, and re-evaluation especially in communication encounters that tend to threaten face between romantic partners (e.g., giving advice, asking for a favor, enforcing an obligation, etc.; Wilson & Kunkel, 2000).

In addressing the process by which individuals manage face, Politeness Theory (PT; Brown & Levinson, 1978) demonstrates the importance of face and suggests possible options available in managing face needs for the self and other. Later adaptations of PT, however, have shown that an individual's face is interdependent with the face of those with whom they interact (Wilson, Aleman, & Leatham, 1998). That is, individuals' not only manage their own face but also the face needs of others in communicative interactions. Surprisingly little attention by PT scholars has been dedicated to understanding motives behind individual's attempt to save others' face.

The little research that has been done suggests that the desire to help others manage face is often created for less than altruistic motives; that is, individuals seem to help others maintain

their desired public image in large part because they hope the behavior will be reciprocated (Wilson & Kunkel, 2000). This reasoning is consistent with principles of Social Exchange Theory (SET; Thibaut & Kelly, 1959). Specifically, SET explains interdependency, investments, and outcomes within romantic relationships that may be important to consider when examining the ways people manage their own and others' face.

Prior work has examined romantic partners' attempts to navigate situations that threaten face because of the inherent threats to face that arise in these relationships; it has, however, focused on the process rather than the motives behind *face-work* (Kunkel, Wilson, Olofowote, & Robson, 2003). This study will add to this literature by exploring measures from SET as moderators of the strategies individuals' use to manage their romantic partners' face needs. Bringing SET into the conversation highlights important aspects about individual's motives for helping others save face. Furthermore, a specific focus on romantic relationships is beneficial because of the consistent need for both individuals to manage face within these relationships. It is also important, when comparing communicative behavior, to compare similar groups. Thus, focusing only on romantic relationships also allows for greater consistency when running statistical analysis. Therefore, the literature review will unfold in the following three stages. First, face and PT are reviewed within the context of romantic relationships. Then, SET is introduced as a framework from which to consider partners' decisions to help the other manage face using particular strategies. Finally, hypotheses are advanced predicting individuals' decision to save their partners' face using various strategies.

Face

Although the notion of face is likely to have originated in China (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2003), the conversation surrounding face caught the attention of communication scholars with

Goffman's (1967) influential publication. Goffman recognized that relationships are created and maintained through countless individual communication encounters and felt that these seemingly insignificant interactions appear to be accompanied by motives larger than what is apparent in any one instance. When these communication encounters are used to perform an action (e.g., giving advice, asking for a favor, enforcing an obligation, apologizing) they become a speech act. In naming face, Goffman hoped to better conceptualize the combination of individual speech acts to show how individuals communicatively act to create a public image. Nearly all speech acts influence face, even if only slightly, because they change the way that others perceive the individual.

Goffman (1967) saw face as the interaction between an individual's desired public image and socially approved attributes being imposed upon the individual. He argued that an individual may have a desire to be perceived in a certain way, but that desire is shaped by societal norms. The combination of the individual's desire and culture works to create the individual's identity. The individual's *internal identity* is influenced by cultural norms while their *communicated identity* is influenced by personal desire. Goffman also takes the individual's identity one step further by distinguishing between the ways identity is portrayed. Communicated identity takes place on the 'front stage' where society exists as an audience. Conversely, internal identity takes place 'backstage' where the individual is free to perform aspects of the self that may not be seen as socially appropriate. By performing these acts 'backstage,' individuals are free to act without revealing anything to the audience. In this way, Goffman distinguishes the differences that may exist between the individual's internal identity and their desired image. The separation between 'front' and 'backstage' identities requires an individual to manage face-needs. For communicative interactions with others, individuals

perform speech acts in a way that is appropriate for the 'front stage.' This performance is the expression of the individual's face.

Occasionally, individuals are part of a speech act that invalidates their communicated identity claim. An individual may, for example, desire to appear as the provider in his/her romantic relationship. If this individual is told by his/her partner that there is not enough money to pay the bills, the individual's identity as a provider may become challenged. These invalidating actions often cause embarrassment because they threaten face needs and therefore threaten the individual's communicated identity (Goffman, 1967). To repair this loss, individuals may engage in *face-work*, or attempts to make actions "consistent with face" (p. 12), thereby re-establishing their desired place in society. In the case of the individual whose identity as a provider was threatened, he/she may decide to (a) take on a second job, (b) redefine what it means to be a breadwinner, or (c) engage in countless other communicative behaviors in an attempt to re-establish face.

Whereas acts unintentionally performed by an individual may cause threats to their own face, threats in romantic relationships often come from the actions of romantic partners (Brown & Levinson, 1978). Any communicative act that threatens face for either the individual or their romantic partner is known as a *face-threatening act* (FTA; Bonnefon, Feeney, & Villejoubert, 2009). Wilson and Kunkel (2000) reminded us that any attempt "to alter another person's behavior inherently is face-threatening," which is why individuals employ politeness tactics to get what they want while also reducing threats to face (p. 195).

FTAs are inevitable in most forms of communication, but have the potential of being especially detrimental in romantic relationships. FTAs can be particularly detrimental in romantic relationships because they threaten to change the dynamics of the relationship. An

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individual approaching their romantic partner with any FTA (e.g., giving advice, asking for a favor, enforcing an obligation) risks changing the dynamics of the relationship by changing the perceptions that exist. An individual's partner may, for example, believe that their current face displays their weight as healthy and physically attractive to the individual. The individual, however, may not hold this same perception. If the individual decides to ask their partner to lose weight, they risk invalidating their partner's existing face. Similar to situations that threaten one's own face, face-work may also be employed by the individual in this situation to help their partner save face through the use of different face-saving techniques which have been studied by a wide array of scholars. In this way, the individual may still be able to advise their partner to lose weight while also presenting less threat to face. What remains interesting in this example, is not how the individual chooses to help their partner manage face, but why they choose to do so.

The complexities of face and face-work, have called for many explanations and explorations since Goffman's (1967) initial study (Lakoff, 1973; Eelen, 2001). DuFon, Kasper, Takahashi, and Yoshinaga (1994), for example, compiled a bibliography of articles referencing linguistic politeness (a theory directly connected to face) alone. The single space list continues for 51 pages. Most notably, however, the study of face led to the development of Politeness Theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987) which was created in order to better explain FTAs and possible approaches to face-work.

Politeness Theory

In an attempt to better explain the communicative nature that surrounds the creation and maintenance of face, Politeness Theory (PT) asserts general descriptions of different FTAs and face-saving options. PT first posits that all rational persons have both positive face (the desire to be appreciated and approved of) and negative face (the desire to be perceived as having the

ability to make one's own decisions: free to act and free from imposition). Positive and negative face needs are dynamic and can change over time and contexts. Both positive and negative face needs influence the way individuals treat their partners and how they want to be treated by their partners (Brown & Levinson, 1987).   Positive face tends to be associated with a desire to avoid feelings of embarrassment whereas negative face is often associated with a desire to appear fair and just (Cupach & Carson, 2002). Consider an individual who failed to prepare enough desserts for a dinner with their partner. The individual's positive face might lead them to give their portion of dessert to their partner in order to avoid the embarrassment of not having enough. An individual who is more concerned with negative face in this situation may instead split the dessert in half, thereby avoiding injustice. In both situations, although the approaches and the concerns of the individual are different, the individual is motivated by the desire to have their face validated. Their face needs in each particular situation influence the decisions they make. Similarly, the individual is also likely to design communicative messages in a way that helps to "protect" both their own and the other's desired face (Meyer, 1994, p. 240).

        After establishing the different types of face needs, PT provides a variety of options an individual has for helping others to manage their face. In approaching any FTA, individuals have a countless number of options, which have been placed into five general categories (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Individuals may choose to address the issue through (a) bald on record approaches (directly), (b) appeals to their partner's positive face needs, (c) appeals to their partner's negative face needs, (d) addressing the issue off record (indirectly), or (e) avoiding the act all together. An individual wanting to ask for a favor from their romantic partner would employ a bald on record technique by asking for the favor directly. An appeal to their partner's positive face might involve expressing gratitude for all that the partner has previously

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contributed and then asking for the favor, thus helping the partner to feel liked and appreciated.

If the individual, instead, chose to appeal to their partner's negative face, they might include

language such as 'when you have time,' and 'if it is not too much of an imposition' in order to

demonstrate respect and admiration. An off record approach may include hinting in hopes that

the partner will recognize and fulfill the need without being asked (off-record approaches are

less-predictable in their impact and therefore less encouraged; Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Ultimately, the individual may choose to entirely avoid the conversation. Politeness options are

demonstrated in Figure 1.
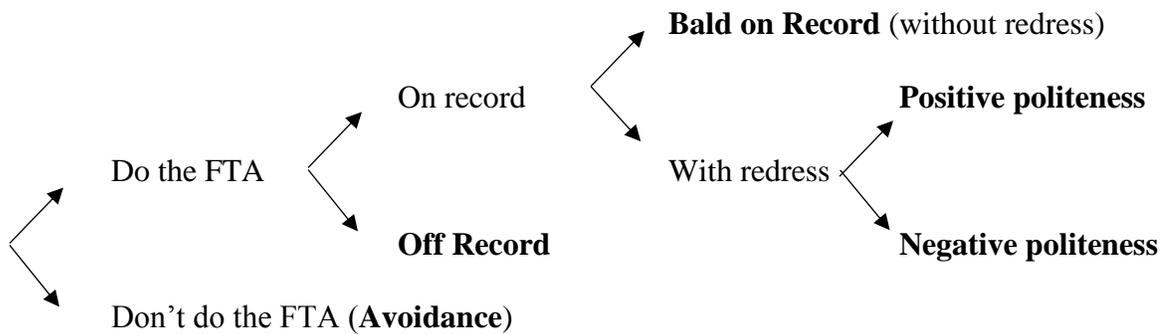
Figure 1- Brown & Levinson (1987) communicative choices

These options are ordered according to their levels of politeness where bald on record is

considered least polite and avoidance is considered most polite. Within the context of PT,

politeness refers to the amount that the act allows the other to maintain face during the FTA

(Brown & Levinson, 1987). In any FTA, regardless of the option that the individual chooses, the

face of their partner may be affected to some degree. Bald on record is seen as the least polite

because it attacks the partner's face without giving the partner any assistance in their

maintenance efforts. Avoidance is seen as the most polite because it allows the individual's

partner to maintain their face without any additional effort. Any face-saving technique in-between will have varying degrees of influence on the partner's face.

Efforts to help others manage face are most effective when individuals use the politeness level that is desired by their partner for that particular time, topic, and relationship (Brown & Levinson, 1987). It may not be appropriate for an individual asking their partner to move to a new state to use a bald on record approach and demand that the partner agree to move. Similarly, it would not seem appropriate for an individual to ask their partner "if it is not too much of a hassle, could you please pass the salt?" Face-saving techniques need to fit to context, time, relationship, and FTA.

Because face needs are universal, it seems that maintaining face is dependent upon assisting in the maintenance of the face of others (Wilson, Aleman, & Leatham, 1998). However, face work requires effort and individuals are likely to put more work into maintaining face and saving others' face in relationships that are more important to them (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Acts that are more face-threatening tend to encourage communication that is more polite and may require additional effort on the part of the individual in order to save their partner's face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Studies have shown that individuals generally tend to employ greater levels of relationship maintenance strategies when perceived equity exists (Canary & Stafford, 1992), suggesting that face-saving practices are more likely to occur in equitable relationships.

In deciding which politeness level to choose, individuals must also determine the goal and the importance of the speech act. Wilson and Kunkel (2000) had participants rate different FTA's for their level of face threat and suggested that face threats "arise from assumptions" (p. 216) about social and relational acceptance of the particular act being performed in the romantic

relationship. FTAs that are generally accepted in society and the relationship (e.g., asking for the salt, expressing gratitude, suggesting a restaurant for dinner, etc.) will not have as much of an impact as those that are seen as unacceptable (e.g., criticizing the actions of others, asking for unreasonable favors, demanding assistance, etc.). Wilson and Kunkel (2000) explained that individuals may decide to use more polite approaches because they have determined that the risk of the FTA is greater than possible benefits. Alternatively, those who decided to use lower politeness levels may have assumed that the goal of the request was more important than the others' face needs or the relationship itself. Therefore, the goal and the importance of the speech act according to the individual will influence how and if the act will occur.

As previously noted, face also differs over time, topic, and relationship. It is important now to note that FTA's have been compared across cultures and that PT assumptions have been questioned in their ability to describe universal face needs (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Mao, 1994). However, other scholars continue to argue for PT's intercultural application due to its abstract form and ability to be adapted to diverse cultures (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2003). Even in early conceptionalizations, PT explained that its application may require cultural elaboration (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Although cultural influences may change face needs and the way politeness levels are expressed, the original five politeness levels utilized in this study remain valid across culture because they may be adapted to cultural norms (Wilson & Kunkel, 2000). PT has also shown adequate application in areas such as non-verbal communication and Computer-Mediated Communication to improve understanding about face-saving techniques done non-verbally or with the help of electronic communication (Trees & Manusov, 1998; Chen & Abedin, 2014). Additional studies included variables such as gender and relationship type,

finding that most FTA's influence relationships similarly regardless of sex or length of

relationship when similar politeness techniques are used (Baxter, 1984; Wilson & Kunkel, 2000).

Understanding the universality of PT allows scholars to take politeness approaches and

apply them to any FTA. PT does not, however, explain all that occurs during an FTA. Ting-

Toomey (1988) combined the concepts of face and PT to create Face-Negotiation Theory to

further understanding on how face is influenced in FTAs. Face-Negotiation Theory generally

asserts that (a) individuals continuously try to maintain and negotiate face regardless of culture,

(b) face becomes more complicated in situations of uncertainty that may threaten individuals'

face more than their partners', (c) culture and situation influence whether individuals will be

more concerned with their own face than others, and (d) that individuals' face concerns influence

face saving strategies. Significant in these assumptions is the idea that FTAs threaten an

individual's face as well as their partner's. Face-Negotiation Theory suggests that this additional

threat to face also influences the individual's decision to use a particular politeness level during

an FTA.

Even after Ting-Toomey's (1988) revision, Wilson, Aleman, & Leatham (1998) felt that

PT lacked the ability to fully explain FTAs. They asserted that PT was sufficient in explaining

how threats to face arise but that it was incapable of predicting conditions for compliance

seeking or explaining multiple face threats. They recognized that FTAs threatened both the

individuals' and their partners' face. However, they also showed that individuals must be aware

of the rules that surround any FTA, both on a relationship level and a societal level. Kunkel,

Wilson, Olufowote, & Robson (2003) described the importance of understanding relational and

societal expectations by pointing out that individuals determine face-threats based on their

knowledge of the goal of the act as well as their knowledge of the socially accepted rules

surrounding such an act. For example, an individual's attempt to offer an apology will be seen as more or less face-threatening depending on their ability to follow societal and relational expectations surrounding apologia. Before extending any FTA, the individual should know the cultural rules and the relational expectations of that specific FTA (Wilson et al., 1998).

In addition to helping individuals, Wilson et al. (1998) felt that increased understanding of societal and relational rules concerning an FTA allows theorists to better understand how individuals take into account the threat to their own face as well as to their partner's face. Their focus narrowed FTA's into three categories that were shown to be particularly face-threatening. After narrowing their focus, they were able to discover the societal and relational rules surrounding these particular FTAs. This study will likewise be utilize Wilson et al.'s (1998) three categories: giving advice, asking for a favor, and encouraging others to complete a required task. These three categories allow us to better understand the goals behind approaching the specific FTAs utilized in this study. An individual gives advice because they perceive that their partner is pursuing a 'less-than-optimal' course, they believe that their advice will be beneficial, and they are motivated by the well-being of their partner, themselves, or the situation. An individual asking for a favor is primarily seeking to benefit themselves and realizes that their partner is under no obligation to comply. An individual encourages their partner to complete a required task when they perceive that their partner has a duty to perform the desired action, that their partner should have already performed the action, and that the individual has the right to expect the action to occur (Wilson et. al., 1998). For example, an individual who reminds their romantic partner to do the dishes believes that their partner has the responsibility to do so, that their partner should have already completed the task, and that the individual has the right to offer

the reminder. Understanding the goals behind each FTA provides one tool for scholars to better understand why an individual may choose a certain politeness level.

Power, Social Distance, Ranking. PT also suggests possible explanations for why individuals choose particular politeness levels during an FTA (Brown & Levinson, 1987). PT proffers three variables which contribute major influences on the type of politeness individuals tend to use during any FTA. PT suggests that perceived power, perceived social distance, and perceived ranking each change the appropriateness of face-saving techniques.

Power within PT is "the degree to which [one individual] can impose his own plans and… face at the expense of [the other's]" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 77). When power plays a significant role in an FTA, individuals most often associate the threat with negative face because of its relation to autonomy (Wilson & Kunkel, 2000). That is, when an individual feels more power during an FTA, they will perceive having more available options and feel more autonomous. This autonomy helps to fulfill their negative face needs. An individual feeling less power will feel their autonomy threatened and therefore perceive a threat to negative face. Perceptions of power between an individual and their partner have also been shown to influence individual's politeness decision making process (Dunbar, 2015). Specifically, Dunbar (2015) asserts that individuals who perceive having greater power than their partner will be less concerned with their partner's face needs. Conversely, individuals perceiving to have less power than their partner will be more concerned with their partner's needs. Often examples of power include employee/employer relationships in which the employee must adapt more to the employers face needs because of obvious power implications (Brown & Levinson, 1987). However, power also plays a role in romantic relationships (i.e., gender differences and relationship stability levels; Theiss & Solomon, 2006). For example, studies have shown that

power is connected to an individual's likelihood to complain (Cloven & Roloff, 1993), emotional investment (Sprecher & Felmlee, (1997), and dominance in contentious interactions (Dunbar & Bergoon, 2005).

The second variable that has been shown to influence the appropriateness of face-saving techniques is social distance (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Social distance refers to closeness and social similarity between the romantic partners. Social distance measures the extent to which individuals are in a newly created or a well-established relationship as well as similarities in age, race, and culture. This distance shows the similarities/differences between the individual and their partner. Social distance is useful in showing that individuals may have differing perspectives of the FTA because of the difference in individual background and experience (Brown & Levinson, 1987). A student approaching another student about cheating on an assignment involves much more similarity, and therefore less threat to face, than that of a student-teacher interaction. Likewise, intercultural relationships have shown enhanced levels of face-threat because face needs and perspectives vary across cultures (Oetzel, Ting-Toomey, Masumoto, Yokochi, Pan, Takai, & Wilcox, 2001). Misperceptions concerning face needs across cultures often lead to misinterpretations and exaggerations of face-saving strategies (Beebe & Takahashi, 1989). Social distance is largely related to positive face. That is, social distance tends to threaten an individual's positive face (desire to feel connected) more than their negative face (desire for autonomy).

The third variable that influences the appropriateness of face-saving techniques is the rank of the FTA (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Rank is the amount of threat socially prescribed to the FTA. The higher the rank of an FTA, the more the act is likely to threaten face. FTA's are ranked by the amount of imposition they place on an individual's face needs (Brown &

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Levinson, 1987). Rank is both culturally and situationally defined, meaning that perceptions

determine the level of threat to face (Eelen, 2001). In some cultures it may be seen as more face-

threatening to ask direct questions whereas in others, directness may be seen as more polite.

Similarly, informing a romantic partner that they have bad breath may be ranked more face-

threatening in a recently created relationship than in a well-established relationship.

Power, social distance, and ranking combine to show the weight of an FTA (Brown &

Levinson, 1987; Eelen, 2001). The greater the power (P) and social distances (D) between the

individual and their partner, combined with a higher ranking (R) of the FTA, the greater the

weight (W) of the FTA. Eelen (2001) reiterated this formula with the following calculation

where 'i' denotes the individual, 'rp' the romantic partner, and x the FTA:

$$W(x) = D(i,rp) + P(i,rp) + R(x)$$

Understanding the weight of the FTA, as perceived by the individual, researchers are better able

to explain why individuals may consider specific face saving techniques. In fact some scholars

go as far as to suggest appropriate politeness levels according to the weight of the FTA. For

instance, Goldsmith and Normand (2015) suggested that an individual should use off record or

avoidance politeness levels for FTAs where weight is large. Alternatively, an individual should

employ a bald on record approach or appeals to positive/negative face when the weight of the

FTA is small. However, the use of SET will further help us understand how power, social

distance, and rank are influenced by the relationship itself and why individuals employ certain

face-saving techniques to benefit their partner.

Social Exchange Theory

In understanding the motives for communicative actions within relationships, many have

compared relationships to that of a fiscal market (Homan, 1958; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959; Blau,

1964; Adams, 1965). Exchange theorists have shown that individuals invest in relationships and

expect to receive gains in return (Chadwich-Jones, 1976). Rather than merely investing

monetary currency, however, investments may include time, energy, love, face-work, and

countless other life currencies. Theorists who take this perspective tend to assume that

individuals are motivated by a desire to improve their own situations while also minimizing the

amount of effort to do so (Dunbar, 2015). In comparing relationships to an exchange, scholars

have hoped to understand what factors influence why a relationship begins, how long it will last,

and when it will end (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998).

Exchange theorists began in the mid-twentieth century with Homans (1958) and Blau

(1964) and included many others across a variety of disciplines. Exchange theories have been

found in disciplines such as anthropology, social psychology, and sociology and have been

shown to be extremely influential in explaining human interactions (Cropanzano & Mitchell,

2005). Homans (1958) began his discussion surrounding exchange theories through a study on

small group communication. He suggested that humans possess an inherent nature of wanting

one thing in exchange for another. Thibaut & Kelley (1959) furthered this idea through the

creation of Social Exchange Theory (SET) to explained how and why individuals perform one

act with the expectation of another.

SET proposes that every relationship involves inputs (costs/investments) and outcomes

(rewards) and that the combination of these costs and rewards allows for the prediction of

relational outcomes. Additionally, this theory provides further insight into why individuals

engage in face-saving techniques for their partners. Specifically, individuals make decisions

based on predictions of what will occur as a result of their actions (Stafford, 2008). Therefore,

individuals will make decisions on how to help others manage face based on predictions of what

will occur. Even in romantic relationships, individuals often choose the course of action that they believe will bring the most reward with the least amount of effort (Ribarsky, 2013).

Exchange theories have validated these assumptions across a variety of disciplines. Applications of this theory have increased understanding between perceived equity and relationship expectations (Sprecher, 2001), risk and trust in relationships (Molm, Takahashi, & Peterson, 2000) marital satisfaction and television viewing habits (Osborn, 2012), and power and expectations (Dunbar, 2015). Important research grounded in SET has also sought to include emotion (Lawler & Thye, 1999), workplace benefits and employee justice (Ko & Hur, 2014; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), intercultural relations (Coulson, McLaren, McKenzi, & O'Gorman, 2014), and online interactions (Blanchard, Welbourne, and Boughton, 2011).

For the purpose of SET, costs and investments can be anything that an individual has put into the relationship. This may include time and energy and other intangible resources, but may also branch out to include children, homes, or mutual friends. Measuring an individual's investment in the relationship is crucial as we start to understand Comparison Levels and Comparison Levels for Alternatives. That is, the amount an individual has invested within a relationship contributes to ways they will compare their relationship to other relationships and to their own expectations (Thibaut & Kelly, 1959).

Comparison Levels. Fundamental to SET are the perceived costs and rewards of the relationship being evaluated. Costs and rewards combine to create a Comparison Level (CL) and are then joined by a Comparison Level for Alternatives (CL$_{alt}$) to create a *relationship expectations ratio* (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). This ratio allows researchers to predict relational outcomes and subsequent effort within the relationship (Rusbult, 1980).

A CL is the comparison between what an individual thinks they deserve from the relationship and the combination of the costs and rewards that occur (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). The CL is indicative of the individual's expectations within relationships compared to actual outcomes (Broemer & Diehl, 2003). CLs reflect relationship satisfaction; those with higher cost/reward ratios are seen as having higher relationship satisfaction whereas those with lower cost/reward ratios have lower satisfaction levels. The more that an individual believes their partner's behaviors and actions meet what they believe they deserve (e.g., trust), the higher their satisfaction levels will be in their relationship.

Satisfaction levels are correlated with relational stability (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). When the expectations are greater than the actual outcomes, satisfaction tends to be lower and the relationship becomes less stable. Alternatively, when expectations are lower than the outcomes, satisfaction tends to be higher and the relationship becomes more stable (Chadwick-Jones, 1976). Individuals perceiving high expectations according to their level of inputs while also perceiving low outcomes are referred to as *underbenefiting*. Conversely, individuals perceiving low expectations and high outcomes are referred to as *overbenefiting* (Canary & Stafford, 1992; Sprecher, 2001). However, relational stability cannot be predicted by CL alone, researchers must also be aware of how the individual's relationship compares to alternatives.

Comparison Levels for Alternatives. CL_{alt} is a measure individuals use (often subconsciously) to compare their current relationship with possible alternatives. These comparisons are made amongst potential partners for similar relationships. The effect of these comparisons on the relationship depends upon the level of desirability of the "best available alternative" (Rusbult et al., 1998, p. 359). For example, CL_{alt} for individuals in romantic relationships will include comparisons with other possible romantic partners. If the best

available alternative is extremely desirable, CL_{alt} will have greater influence on the relationship than if the alternative is undesirable. It is also important to note that an individual may decide that having no romantic partner is better than remaining with his or her current partner. CL_{alt} encompasses this option by including any alternative to the current relationship.

Considered more informally, a CL_{alt} is "the lowest level of outcomes a[n individual] will accept in light of available alternatives" (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959, p. 21). This logic leads us to believe that once the level of outcomes in a relationship dips below the acceptable level (determined according to inputs), the individual will end the relationship. Thus, CL_{alt} is also a predictor of relationship stability; in this case, however, stability is affected through the individual's dependence level rather than satisfaction levels. Dependence levels may also be described as need fulfillment (Le & Agnew, 2001). Individuals who feel their needs may be just as easily fulfilled in an alternative relationship are less dependent on the current relationship (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). These needs may include intimacy, companionship, emotional support, or security. If the individual has no alternatives for fulfilling a need, they are more dependent upon the current relationship. Therefore, as CL_{alt} changes, so do stability levels.

With CL used to determine satisfaction and CL_{alt} used to determine dependence upon the relationship, researchers can predict how likely the relationship is to continue. Particularly, SET is used in this area to determine if a relationship is satisfying and stable, unsatisfying and stable, satisfying and unstable, or unsatisfying and unstable. These four areas demonstrate whether or not an individual is happy with the relationship and if the individual is likely to continue in the relationship (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Individuals who feel that they have many viable alternative options to a relationship that is not satisfying are not likely to continue in the relationship and fall into the unsatisfying and unstable category. Consider an individual who

feels that they are getting less from their romantic partner than they should according to the amount of effort they put into the relationship (low CL). Because they have not received desired outcomes from their invested resources (e.g., time, energy, etc.) their satisfaction levels decrease. If this individual also has many available alternatives (high CL_{alt}), they are underbenefiting, unsatisfied, and less likely to remain in the relationship. Because we know that individuals have shown to be less concerned with their partner's face during terminating stages of the relationship (Kunkel et al., 2003), we may predict that such an individual in this type of relationship would be less likely to employ effort in approaching an FTA in a way that best serves their partner's desired face.

Additionally, these four categories also indicate power levels in the relationship. Individuals who have higher amounts and qualities of alternative options have more power to leave and are less controlled by the relationship (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Individuals who want or need to stay in a relationship will care more about what happens during an FTA because the act might change or destroy the relationship, leaving them with no alternative options. In order to have the best outcome, they will then want to accommodate to their partners desired face needs. These 'low-power' individuals are more likely to engage in communicative behaviors that accommodate to the needs of their partner whereas 'high-power' individuals will care less about the face needs of their partner (Dunbar, 2015, p. 8). We now are able to predict how individuals' concern for their partners' face will relate to individuals with either high or low satisfaction and stability levels, but we do not know how concern for face will be influenced when satisfaction is high and stability is low or vice-versa. We therefore propose the following hypotheses and research questions:

H_{1a}: If the relationship is satisfying (high CL) and stable (low CL_{alt}), individuals will be more concerned with their partner's face desires than those in each of the other CL/CL_{alt} groups.

H_{1b}: If the relationship is unsatisfying (low CL) and unstable (high CL_{alt}), individuals will be less concerned with their partner's face desires than those in each of the other CL/CL_{alt} groups.

RQ_{1a}: How will an individual's concern for their partner's face desires be effected in relationships that are unsatisfying (low CL) and stable (high CL_{alt}) compared to those in each of the other CL/CL_{alt} groups?

RQ_{1b}: How will an individual's concern for their partner's face desires be effected in relationships that are satisfying (high CL) and unstable (high CL_{alt}) compared to those in each of the other CL/CL_{alt} groups?

H_2: Commitment levels (CL + Investments – Clalt) will be positively associated with an individual's concern for their partner's face needs.

In addition to relating to dependency, CL_{alt} is also closely associated to face needs. To individuals desiring autonomy, even while also desiring to remain in the relationship (satisfying and unstable), it may be important to know that there are other possible options available – that they have a choice. This availability of choice would serve to fulfill their negative face needs (desires for autonomy, justice, etc.) without requiring them to leave the relationship. Because these individuals believe that they can leave the relationship whenever they desire, they will want to be treated accordingly during any FTA. Some individuals, for example, may wish to leave a relationship without becoming single, but are unable to find alternatives. These individuals have little power to leave the relationship. Thus, face is correlated with CL_{alt} because

CL$_{alt}$ will change the way the individual wants to be perceived in the relationship. Because we know CL$_{alt}$ influences desired perceptions in the relationship, we propose the following:

H$_3$: High CL$_{alt}$ levels will be positively associated with the desire for romantic partners to use face-saving techniques (e.g., expressing respect or admiration) that cater to negative face needs.

H$_4$: Low CL$_{alt}$ levels will be positively associated with the desire for romantic partners to use face-saving techniques (e.g., expressing gratitude or liking) that cater to their positive face.

Equity. Also essential to SET theory is the assumption that humans seek equity in their relationships. If CL and CL$_{alt}$ ratios are not equal between the individual and their romantic partner, the relationship itself is inequitable with one being underbenefited and the other overbenefited (Canary & Stafford, 1992). As previously discussed, it is clear to see here that underbenefited individuals will be more likely to leave a relationship whereas overbenefited individuals will be more likely to remain in a relationship. Specifically, underbenefited inequity has been shown to be strongly associated with lower levels of both satisfaction and commitment in the relationship (Sprecher, 2001).

Whether overbenefited or underbenefited, Adams (1965) and Walster, Berscheid, and Walster (1973) showed that individuals will attempt to restore equity in their relationship through (a) changing their own inputs or outcomes, (b) distorting their perceptions of inputs and outcomes, (c) leaving the relationship, (d) influencing their partner to change, (e) changing comparison bases, or (f) punishing their partner. Adams (1965) has argued that inequality causes feelings of injustice and deprivation especially for the individual who feels underbenefited. Individuals will change their actions to restore balance if they feel equity has been lost (Walster

et al., 1973). Those who feel they are underbenefited will attempt to lessen their own inputs or increase outcomes while those who feel they are overbenefited will employ tactics to generate the opposite effect.

As discussed previously, face-saving techniques used during any FTA require effort on the part of the individual. Those techniques that are more polite tend to entail greater effort than those that are less polite (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In attempting to restore equity, an underbenefited individual in an unstable relationship is likely to put less effort into the relationship and therefore to choose less polite face-saving techniques. We also know that individuals strive to achieve balance through reciprocation, benefit for benefit and cost for cost (Gouldner, 1960). It is therefore also likely that overbenefited individuals will be more likely to use face-saving tactics that cater to their partner's face needs.

The interdependency involved in social exchanges for romantic relationships often leads individuals to act similarly to the way they want their partner to act towards them (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Face needs are similarly interdependent and individuals are also motivated to support their partner's face in hopes that their partner will do the same in return (Wilson & Kunkel, 2000). We may therefore conclude that individuals who perceive equity in romantic relationships will have a desire to maintain that equity and will employ appropriate face-saving techniques according to the desired politeness level of their partner. Furthermore, aside from interdependency, we also know that individuals tend to employ greater effort into relationships when perceived equity exists (Canary & Stafford, 1992) and therefore conclude that they will also be willing to employ greater effort during FTAs. We therefore propose the following hypothesis:

H$_5$: Perceived equity will be positively associated with an individual's concern for their partner's face needs.

As is now apparent, SET and PT both explain some aspects of motivation in interpersonal relationships. Through a combination of the literature surrounding these theories, we are better able to explain why individuals seek to help one another during FTAs. Although no study has directly combined these theories, some have used concepts from the two in connection with one another (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998). However, research has yet to combine the two theories to understand motives behind face-saving techniques. For the current study, SET provides a lens through which we can investigate how comfortable individuals are in the relationship and how much effort they feel they need to contribute to face management. This knowledge will allow us to predict the amount of concern an individual will have for their partner's face needs.

In addition to these predictions, however, exploratory work is needed to discover how an individual determines which politeness technique their partner would like them to use in any given FTA. We know that the best politeness level to use is the one that is desired by the recipient (Brown & Levinson, 1987), but we do not know how individuals go about determining which approach their partner wants. Research in this area is extremely limited, opening the door for groundwork exploration. Researchers are therefore interested in determining what conscious efforts, if any, are employed by individuals to ascertain their partner's face needs.

In helping us understand possible approaches to this question, Berger and Calebrese (1975) suggest that individuals use active, passive, and interactive strategies to reduce uncertainty. Similarly, this study will seek to understand how individuals reduce the uncertainty of not knowing what their partners want by asking their partner questions (interactive), asking

mutual friends/family questions (active), relying on previous experiences (passive), or using a combination of approaches to determine which politeness level their partner finds most desirable. Because it has been shown above that satisfaction and stability levels are likely to change the way FTAs are approached, this study will also seek to understand the differences between CL/CL$_{alt}$ groups. We therefore set forth the following research question:

RQ$_2$: Are individuals more likely to ask their partner, ask others, rely on previous experience, or use a combination of approaches to determine which politeness level their partner would like them to use based on CL/CL$_{alt}$ group?

Confounding Variables

Conflict Style. In order to best determine if SET may be used as a predictor of politeness techniques, we must understand other possible variables. For example, decisions on face saving techniques may also be influenced by individual conflict style. Conflict styles "provide an overall picture of a person's communication orientation toward conflict" (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003, p. 601) and may change their willingness or likelihood to choose particular politeness levels. Conflict theorists have identified two major influences on individual's conflict styles: concern for self and concern for others (Rahim, 1983). These two influences combine to create a matrix including five different conflict styles: integrating, obliging, dominating, avoiding, and compromising (Rahim & Magner, 1995).

Although the five-style model of conflict continues to be popular amongst management theorists, communication scholars have utilized the less complex three-style model in previous research relating to politeness techniques. The three-style model explains conflict styles as controlling, solution oriented, or non-confrontational (Putnam & Wilson, 1982). Oetzel, (1998) claimed that an avoiding conflict style was connected to interdependence (negative face) and a

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strong concern for the others' face. Oetzel & Ting-Toomey (2003) asserted that those with dominating conflict styles tend to be more concerned with their own face than the face of others. If this holds true across all conflict styles, we ought to be able to factor conflict style into our prediction of face saving techniques.

Although individuals do tend to have a prevailing conflict style, conflict styles may change depending on the situation (Cupach & Canary, 1997; Wilmot & Hocker, 2001). An individual might have a dominating conflict style when it comes to most topics, but adapt a solution oriented approach for FTAs concerning finances. Oetzel and Ting-Toomey (2003) accounted for this variability by rating conflict styles for each FTA included in their study. By rating conflict styles for each FTA instead of the individual's overall conflict style, researchers are better able to determine which conflict style an individual expresses for the specific act. This study will similarly seek to understand how conflict styles influence individual FTA's.

Relationship Stage. Kunkel, Wilson, Olufowote, & Robson (2003) furthered the discussion on PT by examining the different approaches to face-work in different stages of a relationship (i.e., initiating, intensifying, & ending). One of their significant findings showed that within initiating relationships, individuals were more concerned with how their face would be influenced than they were concerned about the others' face. However, during intensifying stages of the relationship, when they had both invested and received more, their concern for the others' face increased. Relationship stages may also influence the politeness levels used and therefore need to be considered throughout this study.

CHAPTER 2: METHODS

Sample

The survey utilized in this study was distributed through classes at a large mid-western university, the local community, and through online mediums (i.e., Facebook and Craigslist). Many of those enrolled in the university were offered nominal extra credit for participation by individual professors. In order to be eligible for participation in the study, participants had to be currently involved in romantic relationships. In total, 411 individuals agreed to participation and were provided surveys. A number of individuals excluded themselves from analysis by not completing the survey ($n = 122$) or were excluded because they did not meet the inclusion criteria of having a romantic partner ($n = 4$). Final data analysis consisted of 285 individuals who were currently in a romantic relationship.

Demographics of final participants included a largely Caucasian population ($n = 244$, 85.6%), and smaller representations of those claiming Hispanic ($n = 17$, 6%), Black/African American ($n = 9$, 3.2%), Asian/Pacific Islander (n = 4. 1.4%), and other ethnicities ($n = 11$, 3.9 %). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 69 years of age with a mean age of 22.75. Participants included mostly females ($n = 201$, 70.5%) and fewer males ($n = 84$, 29.5%). Participants were also asked to report on the length of their relationship with their romantic partner. Relational duration ranged from less than one month to 46.5 years ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 4.99$).

Procedure

After expressing interest, participants were provided a link to an online survey. The survey enfolded in the following steps. First, before answering questions, participants were provided digital informed consent forms which also served to inform participants that they had

the option of withdrawing from the study at any time throughout the survey. Second, preliminary questions ensured that inclusion criteria were met; specifically that participants were over the age of 18 and currently in a romantic relationship. They were also asked general demographics and information about their relationships to assess relationship stages (Kunkel et al., 2003). Participants were then asked to consider their current romantic relationship for the entirety of the survey. Third, eligible participants were next asked to complete a questionnaire containing measures related to Social Exchange Theory (Rusbult et. al., 1998) such as Comparison Levels, Comparison Levels for Alternative, commitment, and investments. Fourth, the survey asked participants to recall and record a time in which they had offered advice to, asked for a favor from, or enforced an obligation upon their romantic partners. Fifth, participants were asked questions concerning their conflict styles during the specific encounters recorded in step four, their goals in these situations, and their concern for romantic partners' face during these situations (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003). Finally, participants were asked to describe how they would have liked to be approached by their partners in the same situation. No identifying information was collected and participants had the ability of withdrawing their data at any time.

Measures

  Social exchange. CL, investment, CL_{alt}, and commitment levels were all measured using Rusbult et al.'s (1998) Investment Model Scale. All questions use a 9-point Likert-type scale asking participants to rate the level to which they agree with specific statements with $1 = Do\ Not$ *Agree at All*, 5 being *Agree Somewhat*, and 9 being *Agree Completely*. Items were averaged together to create subscales for CL, investment, CL_{alt}, and commitment.

To measure satisfaction levels, participants were asked questions to determine the degree to which needs were gratified in their relationships: their CL levels (e.g. "My partner fulfills my needs for intimacy," "Our relationship does a good job of fulfilling my needs for intimacy, companionship, etc.," and "My relationship is close to ideal"). As expected, satisfaction levels were shown to be positively correlated with commitment scores ($p < .01$), demonstrating external validity. The satisfaction scale was shown to be internally reliable ($\alpha = .92$).

To measure investment size, participants were asked to rate the degree to which they agreed with specific statements (e.g., "I have invested a great deal of time in our relationship," "I feel very involved in our relationship," and "My sense of personal identity is linked to my partner and our relationship"). These answers were used to determine the degree to which participants' felt they were invested in the relationship. The investment scale was shown to be internally reliable ($\alpha = .86$).

To measure CL_{alt}, participants were asked to rate the degree to which they agreed with specific statements (e.g., "My needs for intimacy, companionship, etc., could easily be fulfilled in an alternative relationship" and "My alternatives are attractive to me"). These answers were used to determine stability levels: the degree to which individuals felt they were dependent upon their relationships. The stability scale was shown to be internally reliable ($\alpha = .84$).

Lastly, participants demonstrated the likelihood of continuing the relationship through rating the degree to which they agreed with specific statements (e.g., "I want our relationship to last for a very long time" and "I would not feel very upset if our relationship were to end in the near future"). These answers were used to determine the degree to which participants' felt they were committed to the relationship. The commitment scale was shown to be internally reliable ($\alpha = .91$).

The survey also utilized adaptations from Sprecher's (1986; 2001) SET scale to determine equity levels. Items were adapted to include a 9-point Likert-type scale. For equity, participants were asked to rate items according to fairness with 1 = *very unfair: I'm getting the worst deal*, 5 = *fair,* and 9 = *very unfair: I'm getting the better deal*. Items in this scale were averaged together. However, because equity is curvilinear, scores closer to 5 represent equity while scores on either side demonstrate different types of inequality. Scores further from 5 demonstrate less equity. In order to make the scale linear and representative of low to high scores, averaged scores were recoded to reflect their distance from five in order to show high equity (scores closer to 5) and low equity (scores further from 5). That is, scores were recoded to show 5 as the highest point and 1 as the lowest point (6=4, 7=3, 8=2, 9=1, etc.) The equity scale was shown to be internally reliable (α = .70).

Politeness. To evaluate politeness levels employed by participants to save their partners' face, participants were asked to recall a recent situation in which they gave advice to, asked for a favor from, or enforced an obligation upon their romantic partners. They were first asked to write down the purpose of the speech act. They were then provided definitions for each of the politeness approaches (i.e., direct, appeal to positive face, appeal to negative face, off record, and avoidance) and asked which approach they felt they used during the FTA.

Open-ended questions were also utilized to determine why individuals chose to approach their partners in a particular way. In accordance with Uncertainty Reduction Theory's conceptualization of active, passive, and interactive strategies of uncertainty reduction (Berger and Calabrese, 1987), participants were first asked if they had asked their partner, if they had asked mutual family/friends, and/or if they had relied on past experience to determine how their partner would like to be approached during the FTA. Those who affirmed using more than one

of the three options were coded into a fourth group: multiple approaches. Participants were then asked to provide examples of questions they had asked and/or specific past experiences that they found useful in deciding how their partner wanted to be approached during an FTA. Participants were additionally asked to record how they would have liked their partners to approach them in the same FTAs. In addition, the Oetzel and Ting-Toomey (2003) scale used to measure the amount of concern individuals felt for their partners' face needs. This scale included items such as "I was concerned with maintaining the poise of my partner" and "I tried to be sensitive to my partner's self-worth" and was internally reliable ($\alpha = .85$).

Conflict style. A Likert-type scale was also used from Oetzel and Ting-Toomey (2003) to determine which conflict style the participants were likely to enact in response to their FTAs. These items have been shown to be internally consistent (Ting-Toomey, Yee-Jung, Shapiro, Garcia, Wright, & Oetzel, 2000). Participants were asked to rate items from each conflict to determine if they would try to avoid such a conversation, try to persuade their partner, or attempt to negotiate with their partner. Scores were averaged for individual scales and used as covariates in appropriate tests. Each scale demonstrated reliability in finding an individual's tendency towards avoiding ($\alpha = .91$), dominating ($\alpha = .81$), or integrating ($\alpha = .87$) approaches during the conversation.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

Data was assessed for extreme cases and outliers. All variables were below the guidelines for both skewness and kurtosis (<3 and < 10, respectively) as recommended by Kline (2005). Therefore, no data was removed. Additionally, bivariate correlations between CL, CL$_{alt}$, commitment, equity, and concern for partners' face were assessed to determine if multicollinearity was present between any of the primary variables. Results are presented in Table 1. No problematic relationships emerged among the primary variables. Statistical analysis were then run to determine influences on concern for partners' face, influences on individuals' desired face, and approaches to reduce uncertainty concerning face needs.

Table 1- Primary Variable Correlations

	M	*SD*	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
CL	7.21	1.57	--				
CL$_{alt}$	4.35	1.84	-.48**	--			
Commitment	7.34	1.76	.73**	-.61**	--		
Equity	3.56	1.01	-.22**	.21**	-.2**	--	
Concern for Partners' Face	6.51	1.63	.24**	-.01	.15*	-.12	--

Note. N=285.
p < .05, ** *p* <.01, *** *p*<.001

Concern for Partners' Face

H$_{1a-1b}$ and RQ$_{1a-1b}$ consider the difference between CL/CL$_{alt}$ groups (i.e., satisfied/stable, unsatisfied/stable, satisfied/unstable, and unsatisfied/unstable) and an individuals' concern for their partners' face needs. In order to determine CL/CL$_{alt}$ groups, each participant's score was averaged and categorized as either high or low using a median split for both satisfaction (*M* = 7.21, *Mdn* = 7.6, *SD* = 1.57) and stability (*M* = 4.35, *Mdn* = 4.4, *SD* = 1.84). Scores in the low

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satisfaction category ranged from 1.8 to 7.4 ($M = 6$, $SD = 1.22$) and scores in the high

satisfaction category ranged from 7.6 to 9.0 ($M = 8.39$, $SD = .47$). Scores in the low stability

category ranged from 1 to 4.2 ($M = 2.7$, $SD = 1.02$) and scores in the high stability category

ranged from 4.4 to 8.6 ($M = 5.78$, $SD = 1.02$). After performing median splits, the following

groups were created: satisfied/stable ($n = 100$), unsatisfied/stable ($n = 32$), satisfied/unstable ($n = $

55), and unsatisfied/unstable ($n = 97$).

In order to determine how concern for partners' face varied between the four CL/CL$_{alt}$

groups, a 4x1factorial ANCOVA was conducted using CL/CL$_{alt}$ groups as the independent

variable, level of concern for other's face as the dependent variable, and conflict styles and

relationship stages as covariates. A significant difference was noted between the CL/CLalt

groups with respect to their level of concern for face: $F(3, 273) = 3.10$, $p = .027$, $\eta^2 = .03$.

Pairwise comparisons were analyzed to determine differences between high and low CL/CLalt

groups and their concerns for face. H$_{1a}$ posited that individuals in satisfied/stable relationships

would demonstrate more concern for their partners' face than those in unsatisfied/stable,

satisfied/unstable, and unsatisfied/unstable relationships. The results demonstrate that

individuals in satisfied/stable relationships ($M = 6.58$, $SD = 1.82$) were no more or less likely to

demonstrate higher levels of concern for their partners' face than those in unsatisfied/stable

relationships ($M = 6.05$, $SD = 1.75$, $p = .09$), satisfied/stable relationships ($M = 6.95$, $SD = 1.29$,

$p = .15$), or unsatisfied/unstable relationships ($M = 6.28$, $SD = 1.42$, $p = .19$). Thus, H$_{1a}$ received

no support.

H$_{1b}$ hypothesized that individuals in unsatisfied/unstable relationships would show lower

levels of concern for their partner's face than those in the other groups. The results demonstrate

that individuals in unsatisfied/unstable relationships showed significantly less concern for their

partner's face than individuals in satisfied/unstable relationships ($p = .01$), but not for those in satisfied/stable relationships ($p = .19$) or those in unsatisfied/stable relationships ($p = .46$). Therefore, H_{1b} was partially supported.

Research questions sought to understand how concern for partner's face would vary between groups compared to satisfied/unstable as well as unsatisfied/stable relationships. The results of the pairwise comparisons demonstrate that individuals in satisfied/unstable relationships concern for their partners' face was significantly higher than individuals in unsatisfied/stable relationships ($p < .01$) and unsatisfied/unstable relationships ($p = .01$), but not for satisfied/stable relationships ($p = .15$). Results likewise demonstrated that individuals in unsatisfied/stable relationships concern for their partners' face was significantly lower than individuals in satisfied/unstable relationships ($p < .01$), but not for satisfied/stable relationships ($p = .09$) or unsatisfied/unstable relationships ($p = .46$). RQ_{1a-1b} therefore indicated that satisfaction appears to be associated with considering partners' face needs whereas stability is not.

Also analyzing variables that influence concern for face, H_2 and H_5 assert that individuals' commitment and equity levels would predict concern for their partners' face needs. For H_2, a multiple regression was utilized with commitment levels as the predictor variable and concern for partners' face as the outcome variable. The three subscales of conflict style (avoiding, integrating, and dominating) and the type of relationship (initiating, intensifying, ending) were used as covariates. Regression results indicated that the overall model significantly predicts concern for partners' face, $R^2 = .13$, $R^2_{adj} = .12$, $F(5, 275) = 8.32$, $p < .001$). This model, however, only accounts for 13% of the variance in concern for partners' face. A summary of

regression coefficients for H_2 is presented in Table 1 and indicates that only one (integrating conflict styles) of the five variables significantly contributed to the model.

Table 2- Coefficients for Model Variables, H_2

	B	ß	t	p	Bivariate r	Partial r
Avoiding	-.084	-.069	-1.143	.254	-.118	-.069
Integrating	.243	.303	5.370	**< .001**	.312	.308
Dominating	-.083	-.104	-1.721	.086	-.160	-.103
Relationship Stage	-.046	-.036	-.584	.559	.022	-.035
Commitment	.084	.091	1.438	.151	.140	.086

A similar multiple regression was used for H_5 with equity levels as the predictor variable and concern for partners' face as the outcome variable. The three subscales of conflict style and the type of relationship were again used as covariates. Regression results indicated that the overall model significantly predicts concern for partners' face, $R^2=.14$, $R^2_{adj}=.12$, $F(5, 240) = 7.65$, $p < .001$). This model, however, only accounts for 14% of the variance in concern for partners' face. A summary of regression coefficients for H_5 is presented in Table 2 and indicates that only one (integrating conflict styles) of the five variables significantly contributed to the model.

Table 3- Coefficients for Model Variables, H_5

	B	ß	t	p	Bivariate r	Partial r
Avoiding	-.046	-.038	-.586	.559	-.087	-.035
Integrating	.256	.325	5.358	**< .001**	.327	-.085
Dominating	-.074	-.091	-1.423	.156	-.152	.321
Relationship Stage	-.013	-.010	-.168	.867	.022	-.010
Commitment	-.186	-.115	-1.845	.066	-.128	-.111

Individuals' Desired Face

H$_{3-4}$ predicted that CL$_{alt}$ levels (i.e., stable or unstable relationships) are associated with the way in which individuals would like their partners to approach them during an FTA. A chi-square was conducted to determine whether stable and unstable relationships desire different types of face. CL$_{alt}$ levels were used as the independent variable and desired face was used as the dependent variable. No significant difference emerged between groups: x^2(5, N = 284) = 5.38, p = .37.

Reducing Uncertainty Concerning Face Needs

RQ$_2$ seeks to provide further insight into how individuals determine which politeness level their partner would like them to use for an FTA. Participants were asked to recall how they determined which politeness level their partner wanted them to use. Coding of open-ended questions sought to understand whether individuals asked their partner ($n = 60$), asked others ($n = 20$), relied on previous experience ($n = 163$), or utilized multiple approaches ($n = 39$) to determine which politeness level was desired. Questions participants asked their partners included: "how would you like me to approach you when I am concerned?," "what would you like me to say instead?," and "do you want to talk about this?" Examples of questions participants asked others were directed towards parents, friends, and friends of their partners. These questions ranged from general questions about the scenario ("I asked them how I should approach this and what they thought about the whole situation") to specific questions about their partner ("Do you think he would be mad if I asked him? Is he the kind of guy that would take the question the wrong way?"). There were also questions to determine how others had handled similar situations: "I would ask my Mom… when my dad wouldn't talk to you, and asked for space, what would you do?" Past experiences utilized by participants to determine how to

approach their partners varied dramatically and included responses such as "I determined the best way to approach the situation by remembering previous conversations that we have had and trying to eliminate the components that didn't work and use the ones that did," and "a lot of my past relationships weren't respected because we weren't open and honest with each other, so I made sure not to make that mistake in any of my future relationships."

A chi-square test was also conducted to assess whether CL/CL$_{alt}$ groups varied in their tendency to ask their partner, ask others, rely on past experience, or use multiple approaches when determining the face needs of their partner. A significant difference was found between groups: x^2(9, N = 281) = 28.09, p = .001. Cramer's phi was .18, which indicated that CL/CL$_{alt}$ grouping accounted for approximately 3.24% of the variability in how an individual determines which approach to use during an FTA. As a post-hoc analysis, 6 pairwise comparisons were calculated to determine where the actual differences occurred. To correct for Type I error in this procedure, alpha was changed to $p < .008$. Based on the new alpha value, two pairwise comparisons were found to be statistically significant: satisfied/stable and unsatisfied/unstable (p = .003), and unsatisfied/stable and unsatisfied/unstable (p = .008). Results indicate that individuals in satisfied/stable relationships are less likely than those in unsatisfied/unstable relationships to ask their partner questions, ask others questions, and use multiple approaches. They are, however, more likely to rely on previous experiences. Furthermore, individuals in unsatisfied/stable relationships are less likely than those in unsatisfied/unstable relationships to use any attempt to determine partners' face needs.

Summary of significant findings. In summary, variables were found that influence (a) concern for face and (b) approaches to reducing uncertainty about partners' face needs. There were, however, no indicators for determining participants' own face desires. Specifically,

satisfaction was the one factor that was significantly associated with concern for face, suggesting that satisfaction may be more important to individuals than stability, commitment, and equity when finding motivation to help their partner manage face needs. Additionally, evidence was presented in demonstration of the difference between CL/CL$_{alt}$ groups in their approaches to reduce uncertainty concerning their partners' face needs. This suggests that individuals' perceptions of satisfaction and stability within the relationship alter the way in which they prepare for an FTA. For additional analysis of hypothesis and research questions, see summary of findings in Table 3.

Table 4- Summary of Findings

Hypothesis/RG	Significance Testing	Summary of Finding
H_{1a-b}: CL/CL$_{alt}$ groups (high/high & low/low) will vary in concern for face	H_{1a} not supported **H_{1b} partially supported**	Some individuals vary in concern for their partners' face needs, particularly if they are in unsatisfied/unstable relationships
RQ_{1a-b}: CL/CL$_{alt}$ groups (high/low & low/high) vary in concern for face	**RQ_{1a-b} partially significant**	Individuals are more concerned with satisfaction than Cl$_{alt}$ levels when considering their partners' face needs
H_2: Commitment levels predict concern for face	H_2 not supported	Commitment levels are not significant predictors of concern for face
H_3: High CL$_{alt}$ will be predictive of negative face desires	H_3 not supported	No correlation exists between high Cl$_{alt}$ levels and a desire to be approached with negative politeness approaches
H_4: Low CL$_{alt}$ will be predictive of positive face desires	H_4 not supported	No correlation exists between low Cl$_{alt}$ levels and a desire to be approached with positive politeness approaches
H_5: Equity levels predict concern for face	H_5 not supported	Equity levels are not significant predictors of concern for face
RQ_2: How do individuals reduce uncertainty about partners' face needs	Male/Female not significant **CL/CL$_{alt}$ groups significance**	Sex has no influence on techniques to reduce uncertainty Individuals' perceptions of satisfaction and Cl$_{alt}$ within the relationship alter the way in which they prepare for an FTA

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to better understand why individuals are motivated to help their romantic partners save face during Face-Threatening Acts (FTAs). The major implications of this study are as follows; (a) relational satisfaction is correlated with increased concern for partners' face whereas commitment and equity are not correlated with concern for partners' face, (b) CL_{alt} (stability) levels are not significantly related to desired face needs and therefore not useful in predicting how individuals would like to be approached during an FTA; and (c) individuals tend to rely on past experiences when deciding the best politeness level to use during an FTA, specifically, it is shown that individuals in different CL/CL_{alt} groups vary in the ways in which individuals prepare for FTAs. Additionally, important groundwork is suggested for ways of understanding which method (active, passive, and interactive) used to reduce uncertainty concerning a partners' face needs will work most effectively. The implications of these findings are described in greater detail below.

Concern for Partners' Face

Understanding variables that may influence concern for face can be particularly useful for those trying to improve face-threatening interactions within romantic relationships, principally interactions surrounding conflict. As concern for face increases, individuals are more likely to put forth the effort needed to understand which politeness level is desired by their partners and the chances of success during the FTA increase (Ting-Toomey & Kuragi, 1989). The findings indicate at least one factor that may precipitate concern for face: satisfaction. Satisfaction levels are correlated with participants' concern for their partners' face; that is, as relationships become more satisfying, individuals may begin to care more about their partners' face needs during an

FTA. Commitment levels, however, had no significant relationship to concern for face. Implications of both satisfaction's and commitment's influence on concern for face are explicated further below.

Before discussing predictor variables, however, it is interesting to note the influence of confounding variables in this study. Previous research suggested that avoiding conflict styles would be positively correlated with concern for face (Oetzel, 1998) and that dominating conflict styles would be negatively correlated with concern for face (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003). No previous research was found suggesting a correlation between integrating conflict styles and concern for face. Despite these previous assertions, the integrating conflict style was the only one to demonstrate significance within any of the models run in this study (see Table 1 and Table 2). This may suggest that individuals who approach an FTA with an integrating conflict style are willing to cooperate with their partner and may demonstrate higher levels of concern for face. Future research is needed to explain the effects of an integrating conflict style on concern for face.

Significant predictors of concern for face. H_{1b} demonstrated that individuals in unsatisfied/unstable relationships report significantly lower levels of concern for their partners' face than those in satisfied/unstable relationships. As noted previously, individuals in unsatisfied/unstable relationships report that they are receiving the outcomes they perceive to be appropriate for their invested resources and report that their needs may easily be met in other accessible relationships. Individuals in satisfied/unstable relationships, however, report that they are happy with the outcomes of their current relationship but also report that their needs could just as easily be met in other accessible relationships.

In combination with results from RQ_{1a-1b}, individuals in satisfied/unstable relationships consistently demonstrated stronger concern for their partners' face than those in both unsatisfied/stable and unsatisfied/unstable relationships. Together, H_1 and RQ_1 demonstrate relationship satisfaction to be predictive of concern for face whereas no correlation is shown with Cl_{alt} and concern for face. It is important to note that the predictive relationship between these variables does not suggest a specific directionality. That is, it may be that relational satisfaction leads to higher levels of concern for face. Conversely, findings may instead suggest that higher levels of concern for face lead individuals to have higher levels of satisfaction in their relationship. While no specific claims can be made from these findings, important implications may be discussed.

The first important implication surrounding concern for partners' face, therefore, is that those in satisfied groups are willing to put forth effort to match their partners' desired face needs. This implication is consistent with what we would expect from Social Exchange Theory (SET). Individuals who are satisfied are receiving the outcomes they expect from the relationship and are therefore more likely to care about their partners' face needs.

Furthermore, that individuals in satisfied relationships may be willing to put forth effort to match their partners' face needs provides a connection to variables of Politeness Theory (PT). Specifically, satisfaction may influence the weight (seriousness) of an FTA. As previously noted, power, social distance, and rank influence the weight of an FTA within PT. How then does satisfaction relate to these variables in its influence on individuals during FTAs? First, satisfaction may contribute to individuals' perceptions of power in the relationship. Satisfaction demonstrates an individual's belief that they are getting what they want out of the relationship, creating a feeling of power within the relationship. Satisfied individuals who are getting more

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from the relationship than they expect are overbenefiting (higher power), whereas unsatisfied individuals who are getting less than they expect are underbenefiting (lower power). This additional perception of the individual's power allows them to feel less threat to their own face during an FTA (Dunbar & Bergoon, 2005). In turn, less threat to personal face may allow individuals the ability to care about the others' face needs because they do not need to be as concerned with their own. Given this rationale, it may be that satisfaction interacts with power perceptions such that the perceived weight of an FTA changes for the individuals. FTAs with lower weight are less face-threatening to both individuals involved in the FTA. Therefore, individuals who are able to increase satisfaction within their relationships may be able to reduce the weight of the FTA and lower the threat of face. This lower level of face threat might increase the likelihood that FTAs will accomplish the needed goal (i.e., asking for a favor, giving advice, enforcing an obligation) without damaging face needs. These conclusions, however, are merely speculative and require future research to test the associations between satisfaction, power, and concern for face.

Nonsignificant predictors of concern for face. The findings of this study show no significant associations between CL_{alt}, commitment, or equity and individuals' concern for their partners' face. Whereas no specific claims can be made, these findings suggest interesting implications about FTAs.

The lack of correlation between commitment and concern for face is interesting because of the relationship between commitment and satisfaction. Recall that commitment is determined by the combination of relational satisfaction (CL), CL_{alt}, and investments. If satisfaction is correlated with concern for face, but the combination of satisfaction with CL_{alt} and investments is not, perhaps the role satisfaction plays in concern for face is not as substantial as expected.

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That is, when including other aspects of the relationship, satisfaction may not be as important for individuals' as they consider their partners face needs.

The lack of observed association between perceived equity and concern for partners' face is also surprising given previous research. This finding may indicate that increases in concern for face do not necessarily lead to better face-saving approaches. For example, Canary and Stafford (1992) showed equity to be positively correlated with an increase in the number of maintenance strategies employed in romantic relationships. The current study showed no correlation between equity and concern for partners' face needs. If equity is correlated with maintenance strategies but not with concern for face, concern for face may not be perceived as a maintenance strategy by the individuals. That is, simply increasing concern for partners' face may not lead to implementation of actual maintenance strategies. Although equity levels may still play a role during FTAs, for instance, in the context of actual maintenance strategies, the results demonstrate that they do not predict individuals' concern for their partners' face.

Desired Face Needs

Often, even within romantic relationships, there is a level of uncertainty surrounding the face needs of romantic partners (Brown & Levinson, 1987). This study sought to understand if CL_{alt} levels were predictive of the type of politeness approach (bald on record, appeals to positive face, appeals to negative face, off record, or avoidance) individuals would like their partner to use during an FTA. This predictive ability would have reduced some of the uncertainty surrounding FTAs. Results, however, demonstrated that CL_{alt} levels were not correlated with the type of politeness approach desired during an FTA. Therefore, knowing that a partner has high or low CL_{alt} does not allow the individual to predict the partners' preferred politeness approach. This finding is important to relational research, as knowing the preferred politeness approach of

one's partner is shown to predict the success by which FTAs are resolved (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Furthermore, the ability to successfully negotiate FTAs is an important component of relational growth and decline (Wilson & Kunkel, 2000). It is therefore important for individuals to have some way of reducing uncertainty surrounding their partners face needs. Because individuals are not able to use CL_{alt} levels to learn their partners' preferred politeness approach, they must employ some other tactic to learn of their partners' face needs. Researchers need to investigate additional ways in which individuals may reduce uncertainty concerning their partners' face needs in the wake of an FTA. In the section below, additional factors are discussed that may indicate ways in which individuals are able to reduce uncertainty about their partners' face needs and improve the outcome of an FTA.

Reducing Uncertainty Concerning Face Needs

Understanding how individuals may reduce uncertainty about their partners' face needs may help researchers determine ways to improve the success of an FTA. Research explicitly shows that the most effective politeness level to use during any given FTA, is the one that is preferred by the recipient (Brown & Levinson, 1987). There is, however, no research suggesting how individuals should determine their partners' preferences for a specific FTA. For example, both of the following participants wanted their partners to accomplish a task. Participant A used a bald on record approach, saying: "My boyfriend never does the dishes and I didn't want to do then [*sic*] because it had all of the stuff from when he made beer, which is pretty messy, so I just asked him to do the dishes. I had to ask multiple times before they got done." Participant B also engaged in a bald-on-record approach and commented: "I had asked nicely several times that she put away the dishes, but in order for the task to be completed, i [*sic*] had to remind her in a less-than-nice way that i [*sic*] had already asked several times." Both participants needed to

determine the best approach for the given situation in order to have their interpersonal goal accomplished. Depending on the concern they felt for their partners' face, they may have also been concerned with helping their partners manage face. In order to best decide his/her decision to approach his/her partner by asking multiple times, participant A utilized previous experiences, saying: "In the past when we have told each other what to do instead of ask it usually ends up in an argument or we simply won't complete the task that the other is demanding." Participant B instead used interactive strategies when deciding to ask his/her partner multiple times. They indicated asking their partner: "Is there a way you would rather have me phrase this?" This example highlights the differences between situations, individuals, and FTAs that make it difficult to reduce uncertainty surrounding face needs. Findings of this study begin a conversation to further understand which techniques for learning face needs are most effective by utilizing Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT).

Consistent with URT, this study sought to understand which types of individuals (based on CL/CL$_{alt}$ groups) tend to employ active, passive, interactive, or multiple techniques to reduce uncertainty in this area. Significant differences in uncertainty reduction techniques were found between individuals in satisfied/stable and unsatisfied/unstable relationships, and those in unsatisfied/stable and unsatisfied/unstable relationships. There are at least three implications to these findings.

First, these differences suggest that CL/CL$_{alt}$ groups may vary in factors other than just satisfaction and stability. For instance, a larger portion of individuals in unsatisfied/unstable relationships reported using interactive uncertainty reduction techniques (asking their partner questions) than those in satisfied/stable relationships. Alternatively, a larger portion of individuals in satisfied/stable and unsatisfied/stable relationships reported using passive

strategies (past experiences) than those in unsatisfied/unstable relationships. It may be, that

individuals in unsatisfied/unstable relationships have less information about their partners and

therefore must rely on interactive strategies to reduce uncertainty. Conversely, those in

satisfied/stable relationships already have more information about their partners and are able to

simply recall past experiences when preparing for an FTA.

Second, the different techniques for reducing uncertainty may require more or less effort

than the others. Consistent with previous research showing the strategic processes individuals

employ within relationships (Crowley, 2013), these differences between groups demonstrate the

strategic process individuals engage in when determining which politeness level to utilize during

an FTA. That is, differences may exist because different uncertainty reduction techniques

require more or less effort and individuals in different CL/CL$_{alt}$ groups may be more or less

willing to put forth the effort required for certain techniques. Satisfaction and Cl$_{alt}$ therefore play

major roles in the process individuals engage in to prepare for an FTA.

Third, differences between CL/CL$_{alt}$ groups may demonstrate that individuals who are

satisfied with their relationships, and who have no alternatives to their relationships, rely more

heavily on past experiences because they do not want to be too direct or offensive in their

approaches. Realizing that they are getting their needs met in their current relationship and

unlikely to have their needs met elsewhere, they may not want to appear too abrasive.

Individuals who are not satisfied and have other alternatives to their relationships may have

utilized more active uncertainty reduction techniques because they felt less threat to their own

face during the FTA and do not care as much about the outcome.

In general, CL/CL$_{alt}$ groups have demonstrated interesting connections to the ways in

which individuals attempt to discover their partners' face needs. These connections suggest

unique characteristics about CL/CL$_{alt}$ groups and about the uncertainty reduction techniques used in this study. More important, however, is the foundation provided for future research to test these uncertainty reductions techniques in order to see which are most effective in discovering face needs.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study both discovers additional influences on individuals' concern for face and prepares future scholars for applied research. However, it is important to note, even with reliable measures and a relatively large sample size, a few important limitations may have contributed to the findings of this study. Limitations include distribution of data, the inability to determine causality, and cultural specific data.

First, although participant Cl$_{alt}$ scores were distributed in a normal curve with a mean near the center of the scale, satisfaction scores as a whole were much higher. Because this study required a median split in order to place participants into CL/CL$_{alt}$ groups, many of those placed into unsatisfied categories had, in fact, scored averages higher than the middle of the scale. Still, a significant difference was found between groups, indicating the importance of satisfaction in individuals' motivation to help their partners save face. Additionally, median splits reduce statistical power through combining otherwise diverse variables into dichotomous groups (Maxwell & Delaney, 1993).

Another important limitation was the survey's inability to determine how successful individuals were during the FTA. Surveys measured participants' concern for partners' face and asked questions to understand how individuals discovered their partners' face needs, but did not show how these attempts played out in the actual scenario. Importantly, this limits our ability to know which questions or past experiences are most successful at reducing uncertainty

concerning partners' face needs. Future research should further test the success of uncertainty reduction strategies surrounding partners' face desires. Specifically, research should test whether asking questions to partners, asking questions to others, relying on past experiences, or using multiple approaches are more successful in discovering which politeness level partners' want to be used during an FTA.

Finally, as discussed previously, the five politeness levels presented in PT can be applied across cultures (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Mao, 1994). However, it is essential to note that we are unable to make intercultural generalizations when it comes to the ways in which individuals decide how to approach their partners during an FTA because the enactment of face-work varies between cultures (Ting-Toomey & Kuragi, 1989). Findings of this study are both interesting and important, but may not be generalizable across cultures. Questions that are appropriate in one culture may not be seen as appropriate in another and individuals may have different tendencies towards a particular politeness level depending on their culture. As demonstrated, this study contributes to an ever growing body of research surrounding face and face-work. Nevertheless, important research is still needed to further explicate satisfaction's role in motivating individuals' to help others save face and to find successful ways in which face saving processes may be enacted intra-culturally and inter-culturally.

Conclusion

Joining the vast array of research surrounding face, this study pushes the discussion specifically through an inclusion of the motives behind face-saving techniques within romantic relationships. Among the first to analyze motives behind face-saving approaches, this study highlights relational satisfaction as a potential motive for individuals' helping their partners manage face during an FTA. Satisfaction is shown as a predictor of individuals' concern for

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their romantic partners' face. Individuals who feel they are getting the outcomes they deserve from their relationships are more likely to care about their partners' desired politeness level during an FTA. Furthermore, satisfaction and Cl_{alt} levels are shown to change the way in which individuals attempt to discover their partners' face needs. CL/Cl_{alt} groups are shown to differ in their preparation for FTAs, likely because of the amount of information individuals in each group possess. This study lays the groundwork for more successful FTAs by (1) connecting satisfaction to concern for face, (3) highlighting the different uncertainty reduction strategies used between CL/Cl_{alt} groups and (2) initiating research that will demonstrate the best ways for individuals to discover their partners' face needs. This, in turn, allows individuals the ability to use the politeness level that will be most effective for both the individual and their partner during any given face-threatening act.

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Thank you for participating in our study. Throughout this survey, you will be asked questions pertaining to yourself and your *current romantic partner.* Please consider your thoughts, feelings, and actions towards your romantic partner, and only them, for each section of the survey.

Your answers will not be linked to you personally and you may choose to end participation and withdraw your answers at any time. Completion of this survey will take between 10 and 20 munites.

The following questions will be used to determine general demographics and factors of your current relationship.

Demographic Questions:

1. Please report your age (in years): _____

2. What is your biological sex?

    a. Male

    b. Female

3. How would you describe your ethnic background?

    a. Black/African American

    b. Asian/Pacific Islander

    c. Native American

    d. Hispanic

    e. Caucasian

    f. Other (Please Describe) _____

4. What is your current level of education?

    a. High School Graduate

    b. First Year of College

    c. Second Year of College

    d. Third Year of College

    e. Fourth Year of College and Beyond

    f. Graduate Student

    g. College Graduate

5. How would you describe your current romantic relationship?
    a. Single (Thank you for your time)

    b. Dating

    c. Engaged

    d. Married

    e. Other (Please Specify) _____

6. How long have you been in a romantic relationship with your partner? (Please report in years and months, e.g., 2 years 4 months) _____

7. From your perspective, which relationship stage would you say best describes your current relationship?
    a. Initiation (We are just beginning to see how things will work)
    b. Intensifying (We are very committed and ready to take things to a new level)
    c. Ending (We are still together, but probably will not be for long)

Investment Model Scale (SET)

The following questions will be used to determine different aspects of your current relationship such as satisfaction and commitment level. Answer each question as it pertains to your current romantic relationship on a scale of 0-8 with 0 being 'Do Not Agree At All,' 4 being 'Agree Somewhat,' and 8 being 'Agree Completely.'

Satisfaction Level Global Items

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

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

   Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
      At All   Somewhat   Completely

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

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

   Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
      At All   Somewhat   Completely

3. My relationship is close to ideal.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

   Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
      At All   Somewhat   Completely

4. Our relationship makes me very happy.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

   Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
      At All   Somewhat   Completely

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

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

   Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
      At All   Somewhat   Completely

Quality of Alternatives Global Items – Please consider any alternative options (if any) you have that would replace your current relationship (i.e., being single, individuals other than your current romantic partner). Thinking of these alternative options, please answer the following questions.

1. The people other than my partner with whom I might become involved are very appealing.

     1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
  At All   Somewhat   Completely

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

     1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
  At All   Somewhat   Completely

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

     1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
  At All   Somewhat   Completely

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

     1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
  At All   Somewhat   Completely

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

     1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
  At All   Somewhat   Completely

Investment Size Global Items - Again thinking about your relationship with your current romantic partner, please answer the following questions.

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

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
  At All   Somewhat   Completely

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

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
  At All   Somewhat   Completely

3. I feel very involved in our relationship-that is, I have put a great deal into it.

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
  At All   Somewhat   Completely

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

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
  At All   Somewhat   Completely

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

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
  At All   Somewhat   Completely

Commitment Level Items

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

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
  Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
    At All   Somewhat   Completely

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

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
  Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
    At All   Somewhat   Completely

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

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
  Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
    At All   Somewhat   Completely

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

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
  Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
    At All   Somewhat   Completely

5. I feel very attached to our relationship-that is, very strongly linked to my partner.

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
  Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
    At All   Somewhat   Completely

6. I want our relationship to last forever.

      1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
  Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
    At All   Somewhat   Completely

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

    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
 At All   Somewhat   Completely

Equity
The following questions will be used to determine equity within your relationship. Please rate the following items on a scale of 0-8 with 0 being 'Do Not Agree At All,' 4 being 'Agree Somewhat,' and 8 being 'Agree Completely.'
Considering what you put into your relationship, compared to what you get out of it . . . and what your partner puts in compared to what he or she gets out of it, how does your relationship "stack up"?

 1. I am getting a much better deal than my partner.
     1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
 Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
  At All   Somewhat   Completely

 2. I am getting a somewhat better deal.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
 Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
  At All   Somewhat   Completely

 3. I am getting a slightly better deal.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
 Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
  At All   Somewhat   Completely

 4. We are both getting an equally good deal.
     1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
 Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
  At All   Somewhat   Completely

 5. We are both getting an equally bad deal.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
 Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
  At All   Somewhat   Completely
 6. My partner is getting a slightly better deal.
    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
 Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
  At All   Somewhat   Completely

7. My partner is getting a somewhat better deal.

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree

  At All   Somewhat   Completely

8. My partner is getting a much better deal than I.

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree

  At All   Somewhat   Completely

Sometimes things get out of balance in a relationship and one partner contributes more to the relationship than the other. Consider all the times when your relationship has become unbalanced and one partner contributed more than the other for a time. When your relationship becomes unbalanced, which of you is more likely to be the one who contributes more?

1. My partner is much more likely to be the one to contribute more.

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree

  At All   Somewhat   Completely

2. My partner is somewhat more likely to be the one to contribute more.

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree

  At All   Somewhat   Completely

3. My partner is slightly more likely to be the one to contribute more.

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree

  At All   Somewhat   Completely

4. We are equally likely to be the one to contribute more.

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree

  At All   Somewhat   Completely

5. I am slightly more likely to be the one to contribute more.

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree

  At All   Somewhat   Completely

6. I am somewhat more likely to be the one to contribute more.

       1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree

  At All   Somewhat   Completely

7. I am much more likely to be the one to contribute more.

          1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
    Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
       At All   Somewhat   Completely

Critical Conversations

For the remainder of the survey, please consider a time when you gave advice to, asked for a favor from, or enforced an obligation upon your *current romantic partner*. Pick the conversation that is most salient in your mind and that you feel you remember most accurately. You will be asked to describe the situation, why you approached it in a certain way, and questions concerning your motives.

Please select the type of communication that you will consider for the remainder of the survey:

1. I gave advice to my romantic partner
2. I asked for a favor from my romantic partner
3. I enforced an obligation upon my romantic partner (My partner should have performed an action and I was requesting that he/she complete that action)

(Conflict style) During the conversation you had with your partner concerning the option selected above, please rate yourself on each of the following items on a scale of 0-8 with 0 being 'Do Not Agree At All,' 4 being 'Agree Somewhat,' and 8 being 'Agree Completely.'

1. I tried to ignore the conversation and behaved as if nothing happened.

          1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
    Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
       At All   Somewhat   Completely

2. I tried to pretend that the conversation didn't need to happen.

          1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
    Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
       At All   Somewhat   Completely

3. I pretended as if the conversation didn't exist.

          1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
    Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
       At All   Somewhat   Completely

4. I tried to persuade my partner that my way was the best way.

          1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
    Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
       At All   Somewhat   Completely

5. I dominated the argument until my partner understood my position.

```
        1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9
Do Not Agree              Agree              Agree
    At All                Somewhat           Completely
```

6. I insisted my position be accepted during the conversation.

```
        1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9
Do Not Agree              Agree              Agree
    At All                Somewhat           Completely
```

7. I tried to meet my partner halfway.

```
        1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9
Do Not Agree              Agree              Agree
    At All                Somewhat           Completely
```

8. I tried to use "give and take" so that a compromise could be made.

```
        1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9
Do Not Agree              Agree              Agree
    At All                Somewhat           Completely
```

9. I proposed a middle ground for breaking the deadlock.

```
        1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9
Do Not Agree              Agree              Agree
    At All                Somewhat           Completely
```

10. I tried to find a middle course to resolve the situation.

```
        1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9
Do Not Agree              Agree              Agree
    At All                Somewhat           Completely
```

During this conversation, please indicate whether or not you agree that the statements below mirrored your intentions on a scale of 1 to 7 with 1 being "Do not Agree at All" and 7 being "Agree Completely."

1. I did not care about my partner image during this conversation.

```
        1    2    3    4    5    6    7
Do Not Agree         Agree         Agree
    At All           Somewhat      Completely
```

2. I wanted to help my partner know that I liked them during this conversation.

```
        1    2    3    4    5    6    7
Do Not Agree         Agree         Agree
    At All           Somewhat      Completely
```

3. I wanted to help my partner know that I respected his/her decision and their autonomy.

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

4. I did not want my partner to realize that I was approaching them about this conversation. I hinted around what I really wanted to talk about.

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

5. I avoided this conversation.

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

What led you to think this was the best approach? Select all that apply:
  A. I asked my partner questions to determine how they would like me to approach this discussion
    a. What questions did you ask:
  B. I asked mutual family/friends to determine how my partner would like me to approach this discussion
    a. What questions did you ask:
  C. I relied on past experience to determine how my partner would like me to approach this discussion
    a. What experiences helped you to make your decision:

Please consider the scenario you have chosen and rate yourself for each item below on a scale of 0 to 8 where 0 means 'Do Not Agree At All,' 4 means 'Agree Somewhat,' and 8 means 'Agree Completely.'

    1. I was concerned with maintaining the poise of my partner

        1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
  Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
    At All   Somewhat   Completely

    2. I was concerned with maintaining humbleness to preserve the relationship

        1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9
  Do Not Agree   Agree   Agree
    At All   Somewhat   Completely

3. Helping to preserve my partner's pride was important to me

```
        1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9
Do Not Agree              Agree              Agree
  At All                Somewhat          Completely
```

4. Maintaining peace in our interaction was important to me

```
        1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9
Do Not Agree              Agree              Agree
  At All                Somewhat          Completely
```

5. I tried to be sensitive to the my partner's self-worth

```
        1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9
Do Not Agree              Agree              Agree
  At All                Somewhat          Completely
```

6. I was concerned with helping my partner to maintain credibility

```
        1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9
Do Not Agree              Agree              Agree
  At All                Somewhat          Completely
```

7. I did not want to bring shame to myself

```
        1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9
Do Not Agree              Agree              Agree
  At All                Somewhat          Completely
```

8. I was concerned with protecting my self-image

```
        1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9
Do Not Agree              Agree              Agree
  At All                Somewhat          Completely
```

9. I was concerned with not appearing weak in front of my partner

```
        1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9
Do Not Agree              Agree              Agree
  At All                Somewhat          Completely
```

10. I was concerned with protecting my personal pride

```
        1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9
Do Not Agree              Agree              Agree
  At All                Somewhat          Completely
```

Imagine that the above scenario were to enfold again. This time, however, imagine that your partner is approaching you to offer advice, ask for a favor, or enforce an obligation. How would you like your partner do approach you in this situation?

      A. Directly give me the advice without any fluff
      B. Show that he/she cares for me then offer the advice
      C. Demonstrate that I can make my own decisions while giving me the advice
      D. Hint at the advice without directly giving advice
      E. I would not like my partner to approach me in this situation
      F. Other. Please explain:_____

This concludes participation in our study, thank you for your time. If you would like further information, or wish to withdraw your answers from the study, feel free to contact Ryan Allred at ryan.allred@colostate.edu .

APPENDIX B: COVER LETTER

Date, 2015

Dear Participant,

My name is Ryan Allred and I am a researcher from Colorado State University in the
Communication Studies department. We are conducting a research study on the effects of
relationship satisfaction on communication behavior during conversations that involve giving
advice, asking for a favor, or enforcing an obligation. The title of our project is "Politeness, is it
really worth it?'. The Principal Investigator is John Crowley of the Communication Studies
Department and I am the Co-Principal Investigator.

We would like you to take part in our short research project. Participation will take no more than
45 minutes. **After expressing interest, you will complete a consent form and a 30 minute
online survey.** Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the
study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participation at any time without penalty.

We will not collect your name or personal identifiers. When we report and share the data to
others, we will combine the data from all participants. While there are no direct benefits to you,
we hope to gain more knowledge on ways to improve communication in romantic relationships.
You will not receive any additional benefits from the researchers.

This study will include no known risks greater than those encountered in everyday
communication interactions. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research
procedures, but the researchers have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and
potential (but unknown) risks.

If you would like to participate, please use the following URL to complete consent forms and the
survey:
> https://colostatecommstudies.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_e9b9lejhtkFGXoF

If you have any questions about participating, please contact Ryan Allred
at ryan.allred@colostate.edu or John Crowley at john.crowley@colostate.edu. If you have any
questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the CSU IRB
at: RICRO_IRB@mail.colostate.edu; 970-491-1553.

John Crowley   Ryan Allred
Faculty   Masters Student

APPENDIX C: SOCIAL MEDIA RECRUITMENT MESSAGE

As part of my thesis, I am looking for volunteers who are in a current romantic relationship to participate in my study. This study looks at the effects of relationship satisfaction on communication behavior during conversations that involve giving advice, asking for a favor, or enforcing an obligation. Participation in this study requires the completion of one online survey lasting approximately 20-30 minutes.

If you are interested in participating, please follow the link below where you will be provided complete details of the study as well as the actual survey. Participation is voluntary and you may choose to withdraw at any time.

https://colostatecommstudies.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_e9b9lejhtkFGXoF

Informed Consent

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Colorado State University

TITLE OF STUDY: Politeness, is it Really Worth it?: Utilizing Social Exchange Theory as a Moderator of Politeness Techniques

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:
Dr. John Crowley, Communication Studies, john.crowley@colostate.edu

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:
Ryan J Allred, MA Student, Communication Studies,
(208) 206-4611, ryan.allred@colostate.edu

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?
This study looks at satisfaction levels within romantic relationships in the contexts of potentially harmful conversations. You have been invited to participate in this study because you are currently in a romantic relationship and your participation will lead to further understanding of communication in romantic relationships.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?
This study is being done as part of a graduate thesis. Dr. John Crowley, supervising this study, is a faculty member in the Communication Studies Department. He is accomplished in his research on the physiological effects of communication. Ryan Allred is a graduate student in the Communication Studies Department. He is interested in understanding variables that influence communication within interpersonal communication encounters.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?
The purpose of this study is to better understand to motives behind individuals' behavior towards their romantic partners. Specifically, researchers are interested in understanding why individuals put effort into helping their partner maintain appearances during potentially harmful conversations.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?
This study consists of one online survey which can be completed at the time and location chosen by the participant. Upon providing consent, participants should expect to spend 30 minutes to complete this survey. Your total time commitment will be no more than 45 minutes.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?
All you are asked to do in this study is complete a short survey concerning your current romantic relationship. You will be asked questions concerning your investments, outcomes, and satisfaction in the relationship. You will also be asked to consider a time in which you either asked for a favor from your partner, gave advice to your partner, or tried to get your partner to something they were supposed to have already completed.

ARE THERE REASONS WHY I SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?
You should not participate in this study if you are not currently in a romantic relationship.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?
➢ Participants will not be exposed to any risks greater than those encountered in everyday communications.
➢ It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?
There are no direct benefits to participants; however, participants will be provided the study findings.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?
Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE?
We will keep private all research records that identify you, to the extent allowed by law.

For this study, we will assign a code to your data (John Doe will be assigned the code: 118) so that the only place your name will appear in our records is on the consent and in our data spreadsheet which links you to your code. Only the research team will have access to the link between you, your code, and your data. The only exceptions to this are if we are asked to share the research files for audit purposes with the CSU Institutional Review Board ethics committee, if necessary. When we write about the study to share with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. You will not be identified in these written materials. We may publish the results of this study; however, we will keep your name and other identifying information private.

CAN MY TAKING PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY?
Participation in this study may end early if:
- You fail to complete any section of the survey
- You are unable to provide answers to questions

WILL I RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?
Investigators in this study do not provide any compensation for participation. Any extra credit rewarded for participation must be worked out with individual instructors, and is not guaranteed by investigators.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM INJURED BECAUSE OF THE RESEARCH?
The Colorado Governmental Immunity Act determines and may limit Colorado State University's legal responsibility if an injury happens because of this study. Claims against the University must be filed within 180 days of the injury.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?
Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Ryan J. Allred at (208) 206-4611. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the CSU IRB at: RICRO_IRB@mail.colostate.edu; 970-491-1553.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

After completing this consent form, your participation will be completed in three simple steps.

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 3 pages.

_____   _____
Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study   Date

_____
Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

_____   _____
Name of person providing information to participant   Date

_____
Signature of Research Staff

Thank you for your interest in participating in our study.

This research is being conducted by Dr. John Crowley, an assistant professor in the Department of Communication Studies at Colorado State University and Ryan Allred, a Graduate Student in the Communication Studies department at Colorado State University.

The purpose of this study is to better understand the motives behind an individual's behavior towards their romantic partners. Specifically, researchers are interested in understanding why individuals put effort into helping their partner maintain appearances during conversations that threaten perceptions.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete the following survey, which should take you around 15 to 30 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. There are no foreseeable benefits or risks to you as a result of participating in this study.

Your participation in this survey is completely anonymous. There will be no information linking you to any information you provide within this survey. No names will be collected in the survey and data will be reported in aggregate.

If you have questions regarding this study, please contact Ryan Allred at ryan.allred@colostate.edu. For the IRB participant's rights contact, contact the Colorado State University Institutional Review Board Coordinator at ricro_IRB@mail.colostate.edu or 970-491-1553.

If you're taking this survey for extra credit, please either print the last page of the survey and bring it to your instructor or take a screen shot of the last page (completion page) and send it via e-mail to ryan.allred@colostate.edu. The manner in which you distribute this information is dependent on what your instructor has asked that you do.