Relational Standards: Rules and Expectations in Romantic Relationships

Submitted by

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Statement of Authorship

I, Alexandra Elizabeth West, hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, and no other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the text. This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree of diploma, at this or at any other tertiary educational institution. All research procedures reported received the approval of the Australian Catholic University Human Research Ethics Committee.

Signed: …………………………….

Date: ……………………………

Abstract

Romantic relationships are assumed to be guided by norms and rules, however research in the field of personal relationships has not directly addressed the area of relationship rules in romantic relationships, but has investigated their violations, with a specific focus on examples such as infidelity and deception. The present research program provides the first comprehensive study of rules and expectations in romantic relationships. The overall aim of the research is to explore the types of rules and expectations, or relational standards that exist in romantic relationships, how they come to exist, and their function within relationships. Given the lack of research on relational standards, a program of four studies, utilising both qualitative and quantitative methods was proposed to address the research aims. A combination of methods was deemed appropriate as qualitative methods would allow exploration of the types of relational standards that exist in romantic relationships, while quantitative methods could be used to explore their structure, function, and potential correlates.

An initial study of the use of deception was based on previous work by the author. This study aimed to combine research on the strategies of deceptive use, with the motivations that are provided for engaging in deception, in order to further understand how deception is used in romantic relationships. A survey of 152 individuals currently in romantic relationships demonstrated that individuals tend to use multiple strategies when they engage in deception, and prefer to use less overt strategies than lying. Consistent with research on victim and perpetrator accounts, individuals believed their partners would view the deception as more serious than they themselves would.

Deception can be viewed as one example of the violation of major relationship rules and expectations regarding trust and honesty, which prompted the question of what other rules and expectations exist in romantic relationships. This question provided the impetus for the subsequent studies, the aims of which were to explore what rules and expectations exist in romantic relationship, and how they come to exist. A qualitative study using focus groups and interviews with couples enabled the development of 16 categories about which rules and expectations typically exist. These categories described both the emotional aspects of a relationship, such as loyalty, fidelity, help and support, and the day-to-day functioning of a relationship, such as those regarding roles and time allocation.

A third study, using quantitative methods, presented the 16 categories to 106 individuals in order to validate the categories, investigate how they come to exist (whether they are discussed or exist as expectations) and explore their function in terms of their importance to the relationship and levels of threat and (un)forgivability when they are violated. It also sought to explore whether relational standards were related to a measure of adjustment, specifically one's self-restraint. All 16 categories were endorsed, and were generally seen as being common in most relationships, and important to a relationship's functioning. The categories differed in their importance, threat and unforgivability, with rules and expectations about the emotional aspects of a relationship consistently rated as more important than rules and expectations about the procedural aspects of a relationship. The number of rules endorsed, and the types of rules discussed and expected, were not related to an individual's adjustment.

A final study of 45 couples aimed to replicate the results from the third study, as well as explore whether there was agreement in partners' responses. The final study also investigated whether relational standards were related to individual factors such as adjustment, personality, and the tendency to betray, and relationship variables such as trust, satisfaction and commitment. The results confirmed the pattern of endorsement found in the third study, that rules and expectations regarding the emotional aspects of relationship are regarded as the most important, and the most threatening and unforgivable when violated. Rules and expectations regarding the procedural aspects or the day-to-day functioning of the relationship are seen as least important to the relationship, and least threatening and easily forgiven when violated.

The present research program demonstrated that there are identifiable areas about which couples have rules and expectations, and that these form a hierarchy based on their importance to the relationship. No differences were found in the way that relational standards come to exist, and relational standards were not found to be related to either individual or relationship factors. The identification of rule and expectation categories may help couples clarify their expectations of each other, and reduce potential areas of conflict. They also provide a starting point from which to further explore the importance of relational standards to relationship functioning.

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Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION AND THEORIES OF RELATIONSHIPS

Introduction

Our relationships with our romantic partners can be a source of great satisfaction and happiness, but they can also be a source of distress and pain. Some relationships that develop last a lifetime, while others may become dissatisfying and result in the relationship's dissolution (Sprecher, 2001). The field of romantic relationships has investigated the features of successful and unsuccessful relationships, and has helped us to understand their functioning in various ways. All social interactions, but particularly our romantic relationships, are guided by norms about how we, as well as our partners will behave. Rules and norms prescribe what is obligated and what is prohibited, and ensures that individuals know what is expected of them in a variety of situations. In this way, norms serve to regulate and co-ordinate behaviour, and maintain the cohesion of the relationship. Relational partners do not always act in ways that meet our expectations, or are consistent with relational norms, and violations of these standards can have negative consequences for an individual as well as their relationship. While a wealth of literature exists that investigates the various ways individuals hurt their romantic partners, and the ways in which individuals violate their partner's expectations through specific acts of betrayal such as infidelity and deception, little is known about the relationship rules or expectations that exist between relational partners. The present research program integrates early research on social norms and rules from Thibaut and Kelley's (1959) Interdependence theory, with research on specific acts of betrayal and transgressions such as infidelity and deception, in order to investigate the rules and expectations, or relational standards, that exist in romantic relationships. The use of Thibaut and Kelley's work on norms and rules provides a segue for the discussion of the theoretical framework to be used in the present research program.

Social Exchange Theories of Relationships

Individuals interact with, and relate to each other in a range of diverse ways. Given the range of interactions individuals have with a variety of interaction partners, across a range of relationship types, it is not suprising that social and romantic relationships are the subject of a broad ranging field of study for social psychologists as well as scholars from a range of other disciplines. Over time, different disciplines and diverse perspectives have resulted in the emergence and development of various theories, which attempt to predict the nature of our interactions. Theories of social exchange have been used in the field of romantic relationships since the 1960s and 1970s when researchers such as Blau (1964) proposed that social relations were constructed in terms of all the parties involved, and Homans (1961, 1971), using a more behaviouristic framework, described the role of the 'other' person as contributing to one's rewards and costs. Social exchange theories are useful in the study of interpersonal relationships because of their consideration of the role of both an individual and their interaction partner/s in producing joint outcomes.

Interdependence Theory

Interactions have differing consequences across different interaction episodes and across different relationships, for the individuals concerned. Individuals are selective about their involvement in interactions, such that those interactions that are more satisfying are likely to continue, while those that are not, are likely to cease. Originally, social exchange theories were concerned with the factors that determined whether a relationship continued or ended (Floyd & Wasner, 1994). Such a framework is useful for examining a range of interpersonal processes, and as a result, social exchange theories have been widely used in the area of intimate relationships.

All interactions involve exchanges between individuals, and it is on this premise that social exchange theories are based. Interactions are seen as transactions, where resources, which may be material (such as money or goods) or immaterial (such as love, support and advice), are exchanged. Individuals, therefore, gain outcomes from their interactions, as well as from their interaction partners. Authors such as Blau (1964) and Thibaut and Kelley (1959), have suggested that processes of exchange can describe much of social relationships.

Blau's (1964) exchange theory was the archetype for this research area, and he described a theory of exchange where interactions were constructed in terms of all parties involved in the interaction. He argued that interactions could not be described in terms of reward and punishment alone, but suggested a more dynamic approach, whereby interaction partners may, at times, tolerate temporary imbalance in their exchanges. In his description of exchange, Blau (1964) saw individuals as mutually dependent on each other for benefits.

Thibaut and Kelley introduced their interdependence model in 1959, which was further developed as a theory in 1978 (Rusbult & Arriaga, 1997). They described an interdependence model of social exchange that focused on the interaction between dyad members as the essence of all relationships. Interdependence refers to the ability of partners to influence each other's outcomes in an interaction or relationship, and the reliance on each other to obtain valuable outcomes and fulfillment of needs.

Rewards and costs.

The outcomes of an interaction exist in the form of rewards and costs. Within relationships, individuals perform various tasks or behaviours for the benefit of themselves or their partner or both; partners love each other, provide support, comfort and affection, and share chores. These things may provide benefits or rewards to one or both individuals, while the actor of the behaviour incurs a cost. Rewards, therefore, refer to the positive component of an interaction, or the positive consequences of an interaction, and may be pleasure, or satisfaction, or the fulfillment of a need, for example. Costs refer to the negative component of interactions, or negative outcomes, and are those things that inhibit or deter behaviour. The greater the deterrence or inhibition, the greater the cost of enacting that behaviour. Interaction outcomes, therefore, are based on the balance of rewards received and costs incurred. Individuals are profit-oriented in their interactions, and evaluate the ratio of rewards and costs obtained from an interaction. The reward-cost ratios of dyad members will improve, as the behaviour each provides to the other becomes more rewarding, and the costs to enact the behaviour become less. Therefore, in interdependent interactions, individuals seek to maximise their rewards, while minimising their costs. They are motivated to continue an interaction when the rewards outweigh the costs, and when alternatives to the current relationship are perceived to be not available or less attractive and rewarding (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). For a relationship to be continue "it must provide rewards and/or

economies in costs which compare favourably with those in other competing relationships or activities available to the two individuals" (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959, p.49).

Outcome evaluation.

Individuals weigh up their interaction outcomes on the basis of their reward-cost ratio, but how do they determine when their rewards are sufficiently high? Interdependence theory suggests individuals evaluate their outcomes on the basis of two standards: one's *comparison level* (CL), and one's *comparison level for alternatives* (CL-alt) (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).

Satisfaction level. Comparison level (CL) is the standard an individual uses to evaluate how satisfied he or she is with their relationship and how attractive it is. This level is determined on the basis of what an individual thinks he or she deserves, and this may be influenced by past relationships or observation of other's relationships. If one's interaction outcomes exceed one's CL, the relationship is evaluated as relatively satisfying, however if one's outcomes were to fall below their CL, the relationship is seen as relatively unsatisfying. Even if you make a profit from your interaction, you may not be satisfied if the profit is not sufficiently large to meet your expectations. Individuals, therefore, are satisfied with their relationship to the extent that their interaction outcomes exceed their CL (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978).

Dependence level. One's comparison level for alternatives (CL-alt) represents one's minimum acceptable level of outcomes, taking into consideration the available alternatives to the relationship, such as another relationship, or independence. How one perceives alternatives outside the relationship may be influenced by the attractiveness of specific alternatives or the general quality of alternatives, as well as the option of not being involved in a relationship. This is the standard by which individuals decide to continue with, or leave a relationship; as soon as one's outcomes drop below their CL-alt, they are more independent, and more inclined to leave the relationship for the best available alternative. As one's outcomes exceed their CL-alt, they are more dependent and more likely to continue in the relationship. Therefore, individuals are dependent on their relationship to the degree that they perceive they have few attractive or available alternatives to that relationship (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Thibaut and Kelley (1959) noted that individuals may remain in unsatisfying relationships (that fall below their CL), if alternatives are perceived to be unavailable or unattractive.

Interdependence between partners can vary on the basis of four properties: degree of dependence, mutuality of dependence, correspondence of outcomes and basis of dependence (Rusbult & Arriaga, 1997). Degree of dependence, as discussed above, refers to the extent that one is dependent on their partner and their relationship for valued outcomes. Mutuality of dependence refers to the extent to which partners are equal in their dependence upon each other, and research has shown that increased mutuality of dependence is related to improved stability and couple functioning (Rusbult, Drigotas, & Verette, 1994; Stafford & Canary, 1991). Correspondence of outcomes refers to the extent to which partners judge events in the relationship in a similar way, while the basis of dependence refers to the extent that an individual's dependence is based on individual versus joint control in the relationship (Rusbult & Arriaga, 1997).

There are various combinations of satisfaction and dependence that can characterise relationships. If the ratio of rewards to costs exceeds both one's CL and CL-alt, the relationship will be one where both satisfaction and dependence will be high (voluntary dependence). If the outcomes fall below the CL, but above the CL-alt, satisfaction will be high, but dependence low; while if outcomes fall below both CL and CL-alt, then the relationship will be one where both satisfaction and dependence are low (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). Partners in long-term relationships exert substantial influence on one another, and so, over the course of a relationship, one's standards for evaluating the relationship may change. As CL may be partly shaped by the outcomes from the current relationship, as well as by past relationships, the more satisfactory the current relationship is, the higher the CL will become. Research has demonstrated that a rise in one's CL is accompanied by a decline in satisfaction level, meaning that partners may, over time, come to take each other for granted (Rusbult & Arriaga, 1997). For individuals in ongoing relationships, research has shown that the perceived quality of alternatives also declines (Rusbult, 1983). Johnson and Rusbult (1989) suggested that this may be due to alternatives removing themselves from potential interactions once they are aware of an individual's existing involvement, or it may be that individuals in relationships behave in ways to discourage attractive
alternatives. Such derogation of attractive alternatives is thought to act as a means of protection from potential threats to the relationship.

In addition to the derogation of attractive alternatives, as partner's outcomes become more entwined over the course of a relationship, they may make behavioural choices based on more than immediate self-interest (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). In an

ongoing relationship, choices may be shaped by broader concerns for not only oneself, but also for a partner's outcomes, and the future goals of the relationship. It is suggested that such preference shifts, or the tendency for partners to behave in ways that promote the relationship's broader goals, rather than acting for selfish gains, can be accounted for by a process called transformation of motivation. Transformation of motivation functions, therefore, to help partners tolerate temporary inequities in their relationship (McClintock & Liebrand, 1988; Rusbult & Arriaga, 1997; Rusbult & Buunk, 1993).

To summarise then, interdependence theory focuses on the interaction between partners, and suggests that partners rely on each other and the interaction to obtain valuable outcomes. Outcomes exist in the form of rewards and costs, and are evaluated on the basis of what an individual feels he or she deserves, as well as the perceived qualities of alternatives to the relationship. Individuals are satisfied with, and dependent upon their relationships, when their outcomes exceed what they believe they deserve, and when alternatives to the relationship are seen as unavailable or unattractive. Those in ongoing relationships tend to act in ways to promote the ongoing relationship, and derogate alternatives as a way to protect the relationship from potential threat, and maintain its stability. Rusbult and Buunk (1993) suggested that interdependence theory is the most comprehensive model of dyadic interaction, providing a thorough approach to the investigation and understanding relationships and their characteristics.

Equity Theory

One social exchange theory that considers rules and norms is Equity theory. Equity theory was proposed to describe the norms by which individuals distribute and exchange resources in relationships (Clark & Chrisman, 1994). In attempting to explain social behaviour, Adams (1965) suggested a rule of distributive justice, and embedded this within a social exchange framework, whereby individuals try to maximise their outcomes from interactions. Equity describes the preference of individuals to have a fair exchange in their relationships, thus it refers to the perceptions of one's own and one's partner's inputs and outcomes. Whether an individual perceives his or her outcomes to be fair or just is determined by an assessment of the contributions to, and outcomes from, the relationship relative to others' contributions and outcomes (Adams, 1965).

Like Interdependence theory, Equity theory suggests that individuals evaluate their contributions to a relationship as well as their outcomes. The rewards one obtains, minus the costs incurred, determines one's total outcomes. Not only do individuals

assess their own ratio of rewards to costs, but they also assess the contributions and outcomes of their partner. It is this evaluation of one’s own reward/cost ratio relative to that of one's partner that determines the perceptions of equity or inequity (Hatfield, Utne, & Traupmann, 1979). An equitable relationship is one where all parties are receiving equal gains from the relationship, while perceptions that partners are receiving unequal gains results in perceptions of inequity. The value of inputs and outcomes, however, is subjective, and individuals differ in the value they attach to various resources. When an individual is receiving more, but contributing less to the relationship, relative to their partner, that individual is said to be overbenefited. An individual who contributes more but receives less, relative to their partner, is said to be underbenefited. Equity theorists posit that any perceived inequity will result in an individual feeling distressed, regardless of whether they are over- or underbenefited. The more inequitable the relationship is perceived to be, the greater the distress experienced, however underbenefited individuals are thought to experience greater distress than individuals who are overbenefited. Those that are overbenefited manifest their distress as guilt, shame, empathy or fear of retaliation, while those that are underbenefited experience distress as anger or resentment (Hatfield, et al., 1979). Davidson (1984) studied the relationship between perceptions of equity/inequity in marriage and marital adjustment, and found that the degree to which individuals were under- or over-benefited was associated with decreased marital adjustment. Those with the highest adjustment were couples in which both partners saw the relationship as equitable. In a study by Utne, Hatfield, Traupmann, and Greenberger (1984), individuals who were classified as following equity rules obtained higher scores on marital contentment and stability than individuals who considered themselves to be under- or over-benefited.

Individuals in inequitable relationships can attempt to restore equity in broadly, one of two ways – by restoring actual equity, or psychological equity. Restoring actual equity involves changing the gains that are received, such as an overbenefited individual foregoing some gains, thus redressing the balance. Restoring actual equity may also mean that the relationship is terminated (Adams, 1965). The other alternative is to restore psychological equity, which involves changing the comparison in order to make the exchange seem fair, or changing perceptions of the situation, and the perceived value placed on certain inputs or outcomes, such that the apparent inequity comes to be seen as fair. Hatfield et al. (1979) suggested that equity should be easier to calculate in casual interactions, because it is easier to determine who owes whom what. Romantic

relationships, and the fact that these are generally ongoing for a period of time, means that inequities may not be redressed immediately. Romantic partners may be able to tolerate temporary inequities due to the fact that they know, in an ongoing relationship, that they have sufficient time to redress the imbalance.

Despite the fact that Clark and Chrisman (1994) claimed there is a lack of evidence that individuals follow equity rules more often than other types of rules, research has demonstrated consistent associations between equity and relational variables such as satisfaction, commitment and stability (e.g. Lloyd, Cate & Henton, 1982; Sabatelli & Cecil-Pigo, 1985). In a study by Sabatelli and Cecil-Pigo (1985) high reports of equity from married couples were related to positive perceptions of the outcomes obtained, and greater commitment. Sprecher (2001) conducted a longitudinal study with couples in order to determine the importance of equity in predicting relationship satisfaction, commitment and stability. She found that being underbenefited was related to lower satisfaction and commitment, but that women's commitment was the strongest predictor of relationship stability. Lloyd et al. (1982) found that equity was correlated with greater relationship satisfaction for those in casual as well as seriously dating relationships. Floyd and Wasner (1994) suggested that the role of equity in the social exchange framework is confused by the research focus in the area. Two bodies of literature coexist, with one regarding equity as a predictor of relationship satisfaction (e.g. Davidson, 1984; Van Yperen & Buunk, 1990), and another that uses both equity and relationship satisfaction to predict commitment and stability (e.g. Cate, Lloyd, & Henton, 1985). A mediational model described by Sprecher (1988) helps to explain the connection between these approaches. Sprecher suggested that perceptions of inequity result in negative affect and relational dissatisfaction. As a result of these, a relationship partner will attempt to reduce their distress by reducing their level of commitment and ultimately terminating the relationship. Equity, therefore, predicts satisfaction, which subsequently influences commitment level, thus the effect of equity on commitment is mediated by satisfaction.

Not all research has found support for Equity theory. Clark and Mills (1979) for example, found that among those individuals that desired a communal relationship, either a close friendship or romantic relationship, levels of liking decreased when the partner reciprocated a favour or other request, thereby engaging in equity-restoring behaviour. Despite these results, principles of equity are useful in explaining exchange and reciprocity in romantic relationships, and may also add to the understanding of relational

standards in romantic relationships and how these operate. In fact, principles of equity have been used to describe the act of infidelity, which is a violation of major relationship rules regarding loyalty, fidelity and trust. Walster, Walster, and Traupmann (1978) described their use of a survey published in *Psychology Today* that asked questions regarding extramarital affairs. From the 62,000 that were returned, examination of a subset of the sample revealed an association between feeling underbenefited and engaging in infidelity. In general, those who reported being underbenefited in their relationship reported a greater number of infidelities than those in overbenefited or equitable relationships. Further, those who were underbenefited reported starting their affairs earlier than those in other groups did. Walster et al. (1978) proposed that inequity in a relationship may provide motivation to engage in infidelity. More recent research by Prins, Buunk and Van Yperen (1993) has provided support for this proposition for wives only. It appears then, that equity may have a role in the process by which relational standards are violated.

Theories of Commitment

Principles of social exchange theory have been further extended to account for commitment and its components (Rusbult, 1980, 1983; Rusbult, Johnson, & Morrow, 1986). Commitment in interpersonal relationships has been the subject of much research, which has often attempted to delineate its components (Rusbult, 1980, 1983; Rusbult, et al., 1986; Kurdek, 1995; Sprecher, 1988; Stanley & Markman, 1992). Commitment is thought to be multiply determined, a position held by many within social exchange and interdependence theory tradition (Levinger, 1979; Rusbult, 1983; Sabatelli & Cecil-Pigo, 1985; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Definitions of commitment proposed in the research literature vary, and have included perceptions of future length of relationship (Surra & Hughes, 1997), permanence, available alternatives and potential losses if the relationship ends (Lund, 1985), dedication to the relationship (Stanley & Markman, 1992), psychological attachment, and motivation to continue the relationship (Rusbult, 1983). Rusbult and Buunk (1993) defined commitment as involving a psychological state reflecting one’s attachment to, and dependence on a partner, combined with the desire to maintain a relationship over time.

Rusbult (1980) extended Interdependence theory by suggesting that dependence manifests itself subjectively as commitment (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). Rusbult (1980) adopted the principles of social exchange and Interdependence theory and developed the

Investment model, which suggests that commitment is mediated by one's satisfaction with a relationship. The Investment model has generated much research and is the most consistently used model of commitment. As posited in Interdependence theory, satisfaction is determined by the balance of outcomes, and the ratio of rewards and costs obtained from the interaction. In addition to the concepts of rewards, costs and quality of alternatives, Rusbult added a fourth predictor of commitment – investments. Investments are defined as resources that cannot be retrieved if the relationship ends, and are thought to increase commitment by increasing the cost of leaving a relationship. Thus the Investment model argues that individuals are satisfied with their relationship to the extent that they receive high rewards, few costs, and to the extent that outcomes exceed their comparison level, which is an internal representation of the level of outcomes the individual believes they deserve. As satisfaction increases, so too should commitment. Rusbult predicted that increased investments, poor alternatives, low costs and greater rewards should therefore increase commitment. Low alternatives, greater investments and low costs have been positively related to commitment.

Tests of the Investment model have generally yielded supportive results (Rusbult, 1983; Rusbult et al., 1986; Sprecher, 1988). A longitudinal study of heterosexual dating relationships found that increased rewards, poorer alternatives and increases in investments led to higher levels of satisfaction and commitment. Costs, however, did not have any significant effect (Rusbult, 1983). Duffy and Rusbult (1986) also found that greater satisfaction was associated with greater rewards and fewer costs, while higher levels of commitment were associated with greater satisfaction, greater investments, and poor alternatives. Findings by Rusbult et al. (1986) from couples at various relationship stages also provided support for predictions made by the Investment model.

In an attempt to integrate the various efforts by researchers to identify the determinants of commitment, Kurdek (1995) developed the Multiple Determinants of Commitment Inventory (MDRCI). The MDRCI is made up of six determinants – rewards, costs, alternatives, investments, match to ideal and barriers. Rewards, costs, alternatives and investments were taken from Rusbult's' (1980) Investment model, while match to ideal was based on the comparison level used in Interdependence theory. The concept of barriers was taken from Levinger's (1979) model of cohesiveness, and represents forces that act to contain the relationship. Although similar to investments, barriers are thought to increase commitment only when an individual considers leaving a

relationship (Levinger, 1979; Sabatelli and Cecil-Pigo, 1985), while investments increase commitment every time they are made.

Research has tested the relationship of these variables to commitment in various combinations, and has shown that increases in rewards, satisfaction and investments, combined with decreases in costs and alternatives, are related to greater commitment (Rusbult, 1983; Rusbult et al., 1986). Using the MDRCI, Kurdek (1995) found that rewards, match to ideal, investments and barriers were positively correlated with commitment, while costs and alternatives were negatively correlated. Only match to ideal, alternatives, investments and barriers, however, were found to be significant predictors of commitment (Kurdek, 1995).

One criticism of the Investment model is that it describes only one type of commitment (Brehm, Miller, Perlman, & Campbell, 2002). Johnson (1982, 1991) described three types of relational commitment; structural, personal, and moral. Structural commitment refers to the external factors that constrain and individual. This type of commitment acts to obligate an individual to a course of action one it has been initiated. The availability of attractive alternatives to the relationship, specifically a perceived lack of alternatives, has been considered a potential cause of structural commitment (Roloff, Soule, & Carey, 2001). In contrast, personal commitment refers to the internal representations of a relationship, and is thought to result out of one's feelings towards a partner, and satisfaction with the relationship. Moral commitment arises from a sense of obligation to a partner and the relationship. Individuals with high levels of moral commitment tend to remain in their relationships because they feel they ought to, and from a sense of duty (Brehm et al., 2002). Research using this conceptualisation of commitment has demonstrated that there is some value in distinguishing between different types of commitment (Johnson, Caughlin & Huston, 1999).

In intimate relationships, behaviour may reflect something more than the pursuit of individual rewards, and being committed to one's relationship has a number of consequences. When the desires of the individual compete with the interests of the relationship, concern for a partner's outcomes may cause the individual to sacrifice their immediate self-interest to engage in pro-relationship behaviours (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993; Wieselquist, Rusbult, Foster, & Agnew, 1999). As a result of interdependence, and the dependence on each other for obtaining positive outcomes, partners become willing to forego individual rewards for the longer-term benefit of the relationship, a process known as *transformation of motivation.* This transformation of motivation is

thought to be necessary for the stability of a relationship (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). In this way, commitment promotes the *accommodation* of behaviour, whereby individuals resist the urge to retaliate, or reciprocate a partner's negative behaviour by engaging in destructive behaviour. By acting in the interests of the relationship, individuals are able to tolerate temporary inequities, as well as negative behaviour by a partner (Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik & Lipkus, 1991). Another consequence of high levels of commitment is the *willingness to sacrifice*, which refers to an individual's ability to forego their own immediate self-interest in the interests of the broader goals of the relationship. By foregoing one's own interests, an individual increases the joint benefits for both partners, as well as the relationship (Van Lange et al., 1997).

Research on commitment has demonstrated that although different definitions and conceptualisations exist, commitment is a multi-dimensional construct that is influenced by a number of relational variables and the balance of outcomes individuals obtain from their relationship. To maintain commitment and ensure the relationship continues, one must engage in pro-relationship behaviours, or behaviours that strengthen the relationship, foregoing other alternatives to that relationship, or increasing the number of resources they invest in the relationship. Achieving greater commitment by being accommodating to a partner's behaviour and sacrificing individual interests for the benefit of the relationship relies on an individual's knowledge of their partner's commitment to the extent that pro-relationship behaviours are reciprocal (Wieselquist et al., 1999).

Commitment plays an important role in the functioning of relationships, and models such as the Investment model and Kurdek's (1995) MDRCI have been valuable in explaining the associations between relationship perceptions and behaviour, and relational outcomes, both positive and negative. Adherence to relational standards involves negotiation, and the desire to act in the interests of the relationship, therefore, theories of commitment may help our understanding of the form and function of rules and expectations in romantic relationships.

Chapter 2
NORMS, RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

Norms, Rules and Expectations

All social behaviour is structured and organised. But what guides these structured and organised interactions? In addition to the principles of exchange and equity that have already been discussed, according to Harré and Secord (1972) and others (e.g. Cushman & Whiting, 1972; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), all interactions are bound by rules. Adherence to social rules maintains social order and ensures the continuation of interdependent interactions. If this is true, then to find out what the rules are, and how they operate, is important information, as such knowledge would provide a guide to successful social interactions (Argyle & Henderson, 1984).

Rules and Norms

Thibaut and Kelley (1959) presented one of the earliest discussions of rules and norms in relationships in their discussion of interdependence theory and exchange principles in dyads and groups. From their social exchange and interdependence position, if dyad members are motivated to maximise their rewards while minimising their costs during an interaction, then interactions are faced with interdependence dilemmas that must be overcome. Dyad members may not be able to obtain positive outcomes from the same segment of an interaction, therefore, some trading or alternation procedure must develop in order to ensure members are obtaining their desired outcomes. Thibaut and Kelley (1959) suggested that the need for alternating and trading can actually be eliminated if both parties reach agreement on the value of joint activities. Having norms and rules represents such agreement, which enables the smooth continuation of an interaction where both dyad members continue to obtain rewarding outcomes. Therefore, norms and rules develop to respond to interdependence patterns in specific ways.

Norms can be defined as rules governing behaviour. They inform an individual what is expected of him or her in a given situation, by defining what behaviours are obligated, preferred, and /or prohibited, so that the individual knows what is expected of him or her today, as well as in the future (Shimanoff, 1980; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). As Baxter (1986) pointed out, rules can, therefore, be stated as a conditional proposition,

whereby "If context A is present, then behaviour B is obligated or preferred or prohibited" (p.290). In order for a rule to exist, authors such as Thibaut and Kelley (1959) and Elangovan and Shapiro (1998) maintain that there must be consensus – that both dyad members must accept the rule, at least to some degree. If it is not accepted in part by both dyad members, for example if one dyad member attempts to impose a rule that the other person does not accept, then it is not, by definition, a rule, at least in a dyadic context. Argyle and Henderson (1984) referred to the importance of having 'shared beliefs' among group members in order for a rule to exist. Other criteria by which rules are defined are that the breaking of a rule leads to some kind of disruption in the relationship, and that regular sanctions are imposed for breaking prescribed rules (Argyle & Henderson, 1984), while Shimanoff (1980) suggested that attempts to repair relational damage implies the existence of a rule that was previously violated.

Shimanoff (1980) suggested that certain 'evidence' must be demonstrated in order to say that a rule exists. The first piece of evidence refers to rules being context-specific, and in order to demonstrate this, there must be co-occurrence between a context and certain behaviour. The second piece of evidence that must be demonstrated is that the behaviour is able to be controlled or followed, such that an actor can choose to perform or not perform the behaviour. The third piece of evidence Shimanoff suggests must be demonstrated is that the behaviour is obligated, preferred and/or prohibited. In order to demonstrate this, the behaviour must be able to be subjected to positive or negative appraisal. Take the example of partner A going out socialising with friends for an evening. A late evening may be accompanied by a phone call to partner B, informing him or her of partner A's whereabouts and what time partner A will arrive home. According to Shimanoff's evidence, firstly, a late night out co-occurs with a phone call made by partner A to partner B. Secondly, partner A can choose whether to call or not call partner B. Thirdly, the behaviour is preferred, as partner B likes to know what time partner A will be home, as well as his or her whereabouts when staying out late. If partner A does not call partner B on these occasions, negative appraisal in the form of conflict, anger, upset or worry may result. While Shimanoff (1980) suggested certain evidence must be present in order to ascertain that a rule exists, Thibaut and Kelley (1959) suggested that when a rule does in fact exist, it manifests itself to the outside world in a number of ways. The first way a rule would be demonstrated is that an outsider would be able to observe regularity of behaviour. This is similar to Shimanoff's 'evidence' that there must be co-occurrence of behaviour and context. Secondly, Thibaut

and Kelley (1959) maintain that when regularity in the interaction or relationship is disrupted, the wronged party attempts to restore it by either appealing to the rule or exercising personal power. Lastly, the individual responsible for the disruption is likely to feel obligation to act in accordance with the rule, and might outwardly exhibit guilt or conflict about their non-adherence.

Expectations

Jones and Burdette (1994) suggested that the most fundamental part of any relationship is expectations. While the research literature clearly describes the existence of norms and rules, less attention has been paid to the expectations that individuals have of their interaction partners; expectations that may never become formalised as rules.

An individual usually begins a relationship with a model of what it will be like, what should happen, and how each partner should be treated (Jones & Burdette, 1994). Thus, individuals have expectations about how they, as well as their interaction partners, will behave. In the field of communication, Burgoon (1993) pioneered research into expectations in an attempt to explain communication behaviour, as well as the consequences of expectancy confirmation and violation. Expectations, in this research context, are defined as denoting "an enduring pattern of anticipated behaviour" (Burgoon, 1993, p.31). Like the definition of rules and norms, the definition of expectations refers to consistency or predictability of behaviour. Like rules, expectations can inform, as well as help an individual to evaluate interpersonal information, and as a result, expectations help to define further interactions (Rubin, Kim & Peretz, 1990). Expectations, as a guide to dealing with interactions and how one might behave, are particularly useful when there is no past history of interaction, or during relationship formation.

Rubin et al. (1990) discussed expectations in terms of the negotiation process, and posited that expectations are a fundamental part of all negotiations. Given this, it makes intuitive sense to investigate the existence of both rules and expectations. While research into 'expectancies', and 'expectancy violations' has its roots in the communication field, and reflects research into communication behaviours, the definitions and concepts are compatible with those in the psychological literature on norms and rules. Thus, combining the relevant literature on rules and expectations from both psychology and communication should provide a more comprehensive understanding of the form and function of both rules and expectations, and how they

operate to regulate and enhance our romantic relationships. In the current discussion, both rules and expectations can be referred to as relational standards, as they refer to an agreed-upon or anticipated level of behaviour.

The Function and Purpose of Rules and Expectations

The existence of rules serves a number of functions in interactions, and more specifically, in romantic relationships. The purpose of agreement on rules is to regulate and co-ordinate behaviour in an interaction, in order to avoid disruption, and maintain harmonious interactions (Rusbult & Arriaga, 1997). Through regulation and co-ordination, the attainment of common goals is facilitated, and uncertainty is reduced. If a rule is accepted, then person B will behave in a prescribed way, even in the absence of A's presence, which reduces the need for monitoring. In turn, these promote cohesion of the dyad. The existence of rules also contributes to the solidarity and cohesion by making the interaction less vulnerable to disruption from outside the dyad (Argyle & Henderson, 1984; Metts, 1994; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).

In terms of social exchange, rules are needed to maintain the presence of rewards and minimise costs for dyad members. The attainment of rewards is important for the maintenance of a relationship – we know from social exchange theories that individuals will not stay in relationships unless their reward-cost ratios are sufficiently high (Argyle & Henderson, 1984). Conforming to rules may also provide other reinforcements, such as conflict reduction, reducing communication costs and interference, provision of external rewards, increasing the value similarity between dyad members, and ensuring task performance. To the extent that these are provided, dyad member's reward-cost ratios are improved, and cohesion is increased. Therefore, agreement to a given rule is reinforced by the functional value of the rule to the relationship; that is, its ability to reduce costs and improve rewards (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). While the presence of norms and rules helps to increase solidarity in the dyad, there may be difficulties when too many norms exist. The system of rules can be come too complex for people to grasp, the consequence of which may be a reluctance to act due to confusion over which rule may be applicable (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).

Development of Rules and Expectations

The relational, social psychological, and communication research literature asserts that individuals hold expectations about the behaviour of others during interactions, and that interactions are guided by a series of rules (e.g. Burgoon, 1993; Jones & Burdette, 1994; Montgomery, 1994; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). The process of how such expectations and rules are arrived at, and the process by which an agreed rule is established and implemented in an interaction, however, remains unclear. In describing how a couple may come to set a relational standard, Montgomery (1994) stated that "No matter how this conclusion developed, it represents a relational standard of communication that affects the quality of their relationship" (p.83). This statement is typical of this position that asserts the existence of rules and expectations without explication or understanding about what they are and how they come to exist.

Rule Structure and Development

Cushman and Whiting (1972) stated that there are two ways a rule structure develops; either through explicit negotiation, or the recognition of a rule structure already in existence. An existing rule structure may be imported from another relationship, whether existing or previous, therefore, rules may not need to be reinvented for each new relationship (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Dyad members act together to develop a standard system of rules, based on shared intentions and expectations.

It may be that certain behaviours are required in an interaction due to the environment, or a task on which those behaviours are based. Therefore, rules in the form of agreement about who performs these behaviours and when, encourages efficient task performance (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Thibaut and Kelley (1959) provided a social exchange explanation of why some behaviours might be subjected to rule governance, and the process by which this occurs:

> "Some of A's activities may be totally unsatisfactory to B. These may be items that raise costs or that are low in reward value, either because of their intrinsic nature or because of their general incompatibility with the behavioural sets in B's repertoire. For example, the husband may have the habit of responding to minor irritations with rather "strong" language, which greatly embarrasses his wife. If her outcomes from the relationship are to be maximal, this behaviour must be

entirely eliminated from their interaction, and an agreement to rule it out may indeed develop" (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959, p.138).

Fitness and Fletcher (1993) noted that relationship partners develop what are described as relational scripts over time, which outline the various aspects of their lives, such as who does what in the relationship and how communication and conflict are acted out. Through repeated interactions over time, relationship partners develop ways of interacting that are more effective and satisfactory for them as a couple (Jones & Burdette, 1994). Through adaptation, negotiation, and on the basis of their beliefs about how a relationship develops and operates, the couple develops their own set of rules and expectations, or relational standards, within a broader relational culture. This relational culture reflects all the unique ways in which a particular couple interact, communicate and interpret events in their relationship, which characterise and reinforce the individual nature of their specific relationship (Montgomery, 1994). Through repeated interactions, relationship partners may discover, through arguments, hurt feelings, discussion or silences, what standards will ensure the smooth running of their relationship. For example, Baxter and Wilmot (1984) found that relationship partners identified 'taboo topics' of conversation (such as prior romantic involvements or known topics of disagreement) that were perceived as threatening to disclose to, or discuss with a partner. Therefore, the inclusion or exclusion of certain behaviours or conversational topics will affect the quality of the relationship, and adherence to relational standards ensures that both relationship partners are happier and more satisfied (Montgomery, 1994). Jones and Burdette (1994) suggested that there are two types of relationship expectations – general and specific. Individuals begin relationships with ideals and models about what that relationship will be like and how relational partners will act. The authors refer to these as general or global expectations, and these describe general expectations that a partner is supportive and responsive, and will not act abusively or cause harm. Importantly, Jones and Burdette (1994) stated that these general expectations are not necessarily expressed overtly to one's partner, and this is an important point that will be discussed later in this section. Specific expectations evolve out of interactions in the relationship itself, and are unique to that relationship as a result.

Rules and expectations during relationship formation.

During the formation of a relationship, expectations are essential, as they provide a guide to dealing with an interaction partner when there is no relationship history (Drigotas, Safstrom, & Gentilia, 1999; Rubin, et al., 1990). Relationship formation then, is a prime example of a time when those general or global expectations that Jones and Burdette (1994) referred to are likely to be highly salient, and when rules and expectations may be imported from other relationships, as there has been insufficient time for the dyad to negotiate rules and expectations specific to their own relationship. During this time, interaction partners, whether they are in friendships or intimate relationships, may test and explore the boundaries that will define and characterise their relationship. They do this by negotiating, assuming, expecting, and defining relational standards of conduct, and by adapting and modifying established social norms. The process of developing and modifying standards to their own unique needs homogenises the dyad's values and goals, and produces a system of standards that defines and characterises their relationship (Metts, 1994; Montgomery, 1994). It appears, then, that during the relationship formation process, expectations may play a larger role than agreed-upon rules, due to the lack of time or intimate knowledge of another person needed to establish such rules. During this stage of relationship formation, expectations may serve to align the values and attitudes of the dyad members, and co-ordinate behaviour, such that the relationship has the chance to further develop.

Rules and expectations in ongoing relationships.

In long-term relationships, partners are faced with interdependence dilemmas regarding how to continue maximising one's outcomes on an ongoing basis. In order to solve such dilemmas, partners may develop specific rules or agreements (Buunk, 1987; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). For example, with regard to extradyadic involvement, couples may adhere to existing rules, or develop specific guidelines to govern such behaviour as a way to minimise any potential negative impact on the primary relationship. Buunk (1987) reported that couples who follow their relationship rules are inclined to display less jealousy over the infidelity of a partner. Thus, rules are important to ongoing relationships, as well as relationship formation.

Other sources of rules and expectations.

While authors have acknowledged that individuals may import their rules and expectations from other relationships, thereby accessing an existing rule structure (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959; Cushman & Whiting, 1972), there are other sources of relationship rules and expectations. Some researchers (e.g. Baldwin, 1992; Fitness, 2001; Fletcher & Thomas, 1996) have examined the relationship knowledge structures or relational schemas that individuals bring with them into relationships. Such knowledge structures occur as a product of learning. From childhood, individuals learn about the nature of relationships and how they operate from the world around them – their parents, family and culture. These knowledge structures include various beliefs about what makes a satisfying relationship, what is appropriate behaviour in a relationship, and expectations about how relational partners behave (Argyle & Henderson, 1985; Fletcher, Rosanowski & Fitness, 1994; Metts, 1994). It seems then, that relational standards are derived from a number of sources. Individuals bring a relationship schema or knowledge structure into the relationship that outlines their beliefs about relationships. In addition to this, they may import rules or expectations that they have, or have had previously, in other relationships. These, in addition to repeated interactions with a specific partner, define the idiosyncratic nature of a dyad's relationship, and its associated rule structure.

Implicit Expectations Versus Explicit Rules

How agreements about relational standards of behaviour between dyad members are reached has implications for how those agreements are defined. While some researchers from the social exchange tradition assert that norms and rules exist as such on the basis of agreement and consensus (e.g. Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), Burgoon's (1993) definition of expectancies, from her work in the communication field, refers to anticipated behaviour that is not necessarily agreed upon. Thus, there appears to exist a set of relationship parameters that are agreed upon and known to dyad members, which will be referred to as rules, and another set of parameters that are not agreed upon, and indeed may not be known at all to both dyad members, which will be referred to as expectations. While they both reflect relational standards, the current discussion differentiates rules and expectations by their level of explicitness, such that those standards that are discussed, negotiated or agreed upon, and thereby made explicit, are explicit rules, while expectations, which may not be discussed, or even mutually known, are implicit rules.

While there are some authors who acknowledge that some rules are discussed while some are expected (e.g. Metts, 1994; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), there is a lack of empirical research that supports this distinction, and the processes that result in a rule's explicitness or implicitness. Metts (1994), in her discussion of relational rules and transgressions, suggested that explicitness may be required in some cases due to the need to specify the conditions of some rules; one dyad member may disagree with the legitimacy of a rule, and as a consequence negotiation is required; or rules may need to be articulated because they never have been. However, Metts (1994) maintains that this final reason may also hold true for implicit rules – that some rules never become explicit because they may be intrinsically difficult to express.

Montgomery (1994) asserted that relational standards are developed through negotiation, until consensus is reached, which would suggest that relational standards are explicit, in that they are known to both dyad members and there is agreement on the standard or rule in question. She then went on to suggest, however, that the negotiation process occurs, more often than not, implicitly, through patterns of behavioural exchange rather than as an explicit topic of conversation. This suggests that many relational standards may remain as implicit expectations. In this case of implicit negotiation that Montgomery (1994) refers to, partners may be reinforced to act in certain ways in certain contexts but it can be argued that this does not denote consensus or agreement of a rule or relational standard. Finkel, Rusbult, Kumashiro and Hannon (2002) also implied that agreement underpins the existence of rules and expectations, by noting that partners may implicitly or explicitly agree about the obligation or prohibition of certain behaviours. From the operationalisation of the concepts in this discussion, agreement, by its very nature, implies a level of acknowledgement or discussion. In order for such negotiation, agreement or discussion to take place, the standard in question would need to be made explicit.

While some rules are explicitly set through discussion or negotiation, others exist as expectations that may be taken for granted, assumed, or are unrecognised. They may also be set through a process of trial and error, where an expectation may not be recognised until it is violated (Metts, 1994). For example, partner A engages in a behaviour that violates an expectation held by partner B. Partner B has not made this expectation known (and in fact may not have recognised it until it was violated), therefore it has not been discussed, nor agreed upon. As a result of the violated expectation, partner B imposes a sanction on partner A for that behaviour. This process

of establishing a relational standard is described as trial and error because the partner violating the standard may do so inadvertently, but further the partner who holds the expectation may not recognise they hold such an expectation until it is, in fact, violated. This situation may result in (a) the expectation and its subsequent violation being discussed, and an explicit rule being negotiated; or (b) the expectation remaining implicit, but known to the parties as a result of the violation and subsequent sanction. As stated earlier, however, such mutual knowledge does not denote consensus or agreement. It is also possible that the expectation remains assumed by partner B and unknown by partner A, who, because unaware of the expectation, and consequently their violation of it, does not know why they have received a sanction for their behaviour. Partner A may only 'know' about the expectation in reinforcement terms, whereby partner A is reinforced to adhere to a certain expectation because it reduces relational costs (being sanctioned), and in general helps the interaction to run more smoothly, rather than because they know there exists an expectation for certain behaviour.

As evidenced in this discussion, the little research that addressed the topic of explicit versus implicit rules and expectations, does not do so coherently, with various authors offering differing propositions. The current discussion and research program has taken into account the definitions of norms/rules and expectations provided by the psychological and communication literature, and offers the distinction between explicit rules and implicit expectations. It appears that by their very nature, rules are generally defined as agreements, and are therefore explicit, while expectations are usually implicit.

Importance and explicitness/implicitness.

In addition to the scant research literature that attends to the distinction between explicit and implicit rules, and the reasons underlying their level of explicitness, the academic research does not coherently address the potential link between a rule or expectation's explicitness/implicitness and its importance to the relationship. One may assume that those rules that are discussed and negotiated would be fundamentally important to the relationship. This certainly may be true for some couples, particularly if one partner has a rule or expectation that is particularly salient for him or her. For example, an individual who has been hurt by being lied to in the past may ensure that subsequent partners are aware of his or her position with regard to lying in a relationship. Metts (1994) articulated an alternative interpretation, which is equally plausible, but remains untested in the research literature. She suggested that while explicit rules may

appear to reflect issues that are more important to the relationship, it may, in fact, be that those that are not explicitly discussed are so inherently important to the relationship or to one's relationship schemata, that their importance is assumed, and the acceptability or unacceptability of the behaviour is taken for granted.

Rule Types and Categories

One way that social interaction rules have been conceptualised is on the basis of their function. For example, Searle (1969) referred to 'regulative' rules and 'constitutive' rules. 'Regulative' rules are those that define and guide how an interaction will be conducted once it has started, and are necessary for the co-ordination of behaviour. Metts (1994) likens these to rules that might guide how a game is played. Researchers have also used the term 'procedural' rules, to refer to these rules that define the appropriate strategies for conducting an activity (Cushman & Whiting, 1972). 'Constitutive' rules are those that refer more to the behaviours necessary for an interaction to begin, or continue to exist, or, according to Cushman and Whiting (1972), specify the content of the behaviour. These appear to be similar to those discussed by Ellis and Weinstein (1986), who argued that particular rules serve to define abstractions such as loyalty, in order to promote the cohesion of a relationship. They argued that it is not the particular rules that are important, but the existence of them, in that being bound by a set of rules provides protection for the relationship.

Montgomery (1994) referred to societal, relational, and individual, idiosyncratic standards. According to her definitions, a societal standard may be the ideal of intimacy, which suggests that romantic partners should openly share their feelings and disclose personal information. A relational standard refers to the fact that a particular couple may find that there are some topics that should be avoided in conversation, or behaviours that should or should not be enacted within the relationship to ensure both partner's satisfaction. The individual idiosyncratic standards that Montgomery (1994) refers to reflect the individual interpretations attached to the broader relational standards, and acknowledges that partners may not value these in the same way.

While it has been established that rules and expectations do exist in relationships, that these rules and expectations may be implicit or explicit, and that they function to co-

ordinate and regulate our relational behaviour in a variety of ways, there is still little that is known about what rules actually exist in romantic relationships. McDonald (1981) suggested that our relationship expectations are based on those relationship norms generally held by society, as well as the individual expectations we hold as a result of our personal experiences. Given individual differences in personal experiences, rules and expectations will not be the same for all dyads, but will be reliant on a dyad's particular patterns of interdependence. However, given also the fact that our expectations and rules are partly based on generally held societal norms, there may be some broad similarities in the types of rules that typically exist in romantic relationships.

The research literature on rules and expectations in interactions is based mainly in the two disciplines of psychology and communication. The field of communication has established that there a number of expectations about verbal and non-verbal communication behaviours, such as proximity, affection and conversational involvement for example (Floyd & Voloudakis, 1999). The present discussion is not concerned with these communication behaviours, but with the broad relational standards that define appropriate conduct within romantic relationships. In the field of psychology, there is limited literature that has attempted to comprehensively identify the types of rules that typically exist in relationships, the process by which such rules and expectations come to exist, or how they differ in their importance. A limited number of studies have specifically focused on the actual rules that exist in relationships; Argyle and Henderson (1984) investigated rules in friendships while others such as Jones and Gallois (1989) and Sabatelli and Pearce (1986) have looked at different aspects of rules and expectations in romantic
relationships. Still others have either tried to establish rules or expectations in another way, by examining break-up accounts, or rule violations (e.g. Baxter, 1984), and determining from these, the rules and expectations that must have existed in the first place. More commonly however, the psychological literature has investigated 'betrayal' or 'transgressions', and has focussed on the violation of specific relationship rules, such as deception and infidelity (e.g. Atkins, Baucom, & Jacobson, 2001; Peterson, 1996). All of these areas, and the way they relate to rules and expectations, will be addressed in the following sections.

Studies on Relationship Rules

Rules in friendship.

Argyle and Henderson's (1984) study of friendship rules provides one of the more comprehensive studies that attempts to address the question of what rules actually exist in interpersonal relationships. They conducted four separate studies that aimed to establish and strengthen the endorsement of rules generated in earlier work; examine the differences in rule-keeping between lasting and lapsed friendships; and investigate the role that rule-breaking may play in the dissolution of a friendship.

Argyle and Henderson (1984) posited that relationships are regulated by rules, and that there would be a set of informal rules for friendship. They generated a number of hypotheses about the form and function of these rules, asserting that rules would exist about, among other things, involvement with third parties, keeping confidences, and respecting privacy, and that there would be gender differences in rule endorsement. Pilot interviews were used to generate lists of informal rules relevant to different relationships, which resulted in 33 rules common to most types of relationships, and ten rules specific to friendships. In their first study, Argyle and Henderson (1984) asked participants to rate the importance of the rules on a 9-point scale whereby participants could specify the direction of the rule. Thus, in establishing those rules that received high and low endorsement, those rules that received ratings at either end of the bipolar rating scale were classified as being highly endorsed, and those in the middle they described as low in endorsement. Twenty-one of the total 43 rules received high endorsement at either end of the scale. They included rules that can be broadly seen to reflect how friends support and communicate with each other. The 21 highly endorsed rules are listed in Appendix A. Those rules that were not highly endorsed included rules about self-presentation, obedience, finances, regular meetings, requesting material help, emotional expression, and swearing.

In their second study, Argyle and Henderson (1984) then sought to replicate these findings in three other cultures. They found four rules that received high endorsement from all four cultures: that interaction partners (a) should respect each other's privacy; (b) should trust and confide in one another; (c) should volunteer help in time of need; and (d) should not be jealous or critical of other's relationships. To compare all the rules,

they then factor analysed the 43 rules, which resulted in 11 factors being obtained. They labelled and defined these factors as listed below:

1. *Verbal intimacy and opinion exchange*: this factor included rules regarding the exchange of opinions, self-disclosure, the expression of emotions, and asking for advice.
2. *Supportiveness*: included rules governing the provision of emotional support and help in times of need, as well as trust and confiding in the other.
3. *Negative behaviour*: included rules about public criticism, nagging, and privacy/keeping confidences.
4. *Keeping other informed and regard*: this category included showing care and positive regard to the other, and keeping them informed of personal activities.
5. *Ritual obligations*: covers rules about using an interaction partner's first name, and acknowledging birthdays and special events.
6. *Requests for help and advice*.
7. *Self-presentation*.
8. *Emotional commitment*: included rules about being faithful, and displays of affection in public.
9. *Demands on time*.
10. An *Unlabelled* category
11. *Exchange*: This described rules to do with the repayment of debts accrued in the relationship. (Argyle & Henderson, 1984).

The combined results of all four of Argyle and Henderson's (1984) studies resulted in six rules being generally considered important to friendships as a consequence of meeting certain criteria. The criteria were: that the rules were highly endorsed; they were able to distinguish between continuing friendships and lapsed ones; they were able to distinguish between high and low quality friendships; and, when broken, these rules were identified as contributing to the dissolution of a friendship. The six rules were: (a) standing up for the other in his/her absence; (b) sharing news of success with him/her; (c) showing emotional support; (d) trusting and confiding in each other; (e) volunteering help in time of need; and (f) striving to make him/her happy while in each other's company.

The authors further categorised the rules that were common across all their studies, and developed four broad categories:

1. Rules that signal or help sustain intimacy
2. Rules governing the exchange of rewards
3. Rules that regulate potential conflict within the relationship
4. Rules that regulate potential conflict as a result of interactions with third parties (Argyle & Henderson, 1984).

Argyle and Henderson (1984) interestingly found some gender differences in the rules that were endorsed. They found that females endorsed rules about being emotionally supportive and respecting privacy more than males, and attributed friendship breakdown to a lack of support significantly more than males did. As a result of their research, Argyle and Henderson (1984) were able to identify some general and specific rules that exist in friendships, and categorise these into broad themes. They suggested that these rules play a role in the development of friendship, in that adherence to common interaction goals allows a friendship to be initiated. Once a friendship is established, more specific rules are implemented, and it is the adherence to these that enables a friendship to grow and continue. If these specific rules are not adhered to, then a friendship may lapse, or be terminated.

It seems then that friendships have rules about various topics, including intimacy, support, regard and respect, loyalty, equity, and time spent together. While the focus of Argyle and Henderson's (1984) research was specifically friendships, one would expect that there may be similarities between the rules that govern friendships and those that govern romantic relationships, particularly if friendship is seen to be an important element of one's relationship with one's romantic partner.

Rules in romantic relationships.

Flannagan, Marsh and Fuhrman (2005) suggested that there are some fundamental differences in our expectations of friends and lovers. Individuals expect their romantic partners to invest more time in the relationship, and attend to their partner more (Baxter, et al., 1997); to be more committed, supportive and intimate (Cann, 2004); to be loyal, and demonstrate exclusivity by limiting extradyadic activities, and to have more desirable traits than friends (Sprecher & Regan, 2002).

In one of the few studies that investigated rules in romantic relationships, Jones and Gallois (1989) examined communication rules in marriage. They identified several rules that regulate how spouses communicate in private and public conflicts: that partner's should (a) be considerate; (b) be rational; (c) be specific; (d) try to resolve the conflict; and (e) maintain positivity in the interaction. While these are guidelines for defining how an interaction should occur, they still do not address the topics about which rules and expectations exist, aside from conflict.

Sabatelli and Pearce (1986) were interested in determining whether marital expectations varied across marital dimensions, and by the importance attached to those dimensions. Thirty-two items reflecting areas of concern in married relationships, derived from Lewis and Spanier's (1979) work, were presented to participants. These items are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Dimensions of Marital Concern used by Sabatelli and Pearce (1986).

Companionship	Conflict over money	Needs met
Freedom to pursue friendships	Compatibility	Trust
House responsibilities accepted by partner	Conflict over leisure	Sexual activity
Conflict (day-to-day decisions)	Partner's interest in sex	Privacy
Spouse's support of occupation	Fairness re money	Time together
Partner's physical attractiveness	Criticisms expressed	Agreement re lifestyle
Sharing of household responsibilities	Mutual respect	Agreement re children
Partner's willingness to listen	Effective communication	Affection displayed
Jealousy expressed by partner	Commitment	Arguing re petty issues
Confiding	Conflict over friends	Communication re sex
Relationship equality	Love	

In order to operationalise the comparison level (CL) construct from Social Exchange theory, Sabatelli and Pearce (1986) developed an Expectation Level index, and asked respondents to indicate their level of expectation from low to high, for each of the 32 relationship dimensions listed. In addition, respondents were asked to rate the importance of each dimension, with regard to its influence on their satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the relationship. Their results showed that respondents rated their expectations as well as importance as being highest for trust, commitment, love and mutual respect, and lower on time together, privacy, communication and sexual activity, although this is not to say the respondent's expectations were low. Those dimensions rated as having the lowest comparative expectations attached were privacy, communication about sex, and sexual activity, while those of least importance, were partner's physical attractiveness, freedom to pursue friendships, house responsibilities, and sexual activity. Expectation levels covaried with importance, such that items with high expectations were rated as more important and vice versa. The three relationship domains with the largest (positive) correlations between expectation and importance were sexual activity, partner's physical attractiveness, and commitment. Interestingly, these categories rated differently in terms of whether their ratings on expectation level and importance were high or low. Both sexual activity and partner's physical attractiveness both had moderate ratings on both expectation level and importance, while commitment was high on both. Sabatelli and Pearce suggested that those relationship dimensions that have high expectations attached to them are likely to be areas that are sensitive in the relationship. They defined such sensitive areas by the fact that "complaints are more significant if and when the outcomes fall below expectation levels" (Sabatelli & Pearce, 1986, p.319). To expand this idea, it is likely that what makes such areas 'sensitive', and subject to more significant complaints are the consequences of, and threat to the relationship if expectations in these areas are not met. Further, the list of relationship domains suggests content areas about which couples have rules or expectations in their relationships. The 32 items reflect a number of relationship areas such as the practical running of the relationship; how time is spent outside the relationship; fairness and equity issues; and the emotional aspects of a relationship. The themes represented by the items used by Sabatelli and Pearce (1986), such as confiding, criticisms expressed, relationship equality, mutual respect and time together for example, are similar to the categories of supportiveness, negative behaviour, exchange, keeping

each other informed and regard, and demands on time respectively, from Argyle and Henderson's (1984) study on friendships.

Sabatelli and Pearce's (1986) findings also showed that the higher one's commitment to the relationship, the higher one's expectations of that relationship – for both husbands and wives, commitment was the most powerful covariate of expectation levels. It may be that those individuals in highly committed relationships may raise their expectation levels over time as a result of high commitment, or, individuals may enter a relationship with high expectations, and achieve high levels of commitment as a result of their outcomes exceeding expectations. Sabatelli and Pearce's (1986) work suggests it is important to have expectations in our relationships, as they are a way to evaluate how well-off we are. It is only when we can recognise that we are not well off in our relationships that we are able to address any imbalance to restore equilibrium and ensure that the relationship continues. In social exchange terms, Sabatelli and Pearce's (1986) work highlights the importance of maintaining a high level of outcomes that exceed one's expectations, and the
implications that meeting or exceeding expectations has for other relational variables, such as trust and commitment. Indeed, Caryl Rusbult's (1980, 1983) work on commitment and the development of the Investment Model from Interdependence theory demonstrates this. Sabatelli and Pearce's (1986) work further suggests that relationship partners have rules and expectations about a variety of topics, not just those that commonly appear in popular culture and in the academic literature, such as infidelity or deception.

Baxter's (1986) work also produced a number of relationship rule categories, although these were derived from examining accounts of relationship break-ups. From the break-up accounts provided, 292 reasons were identified, from which eight rule categories were inductively derived. The category ***Autonomy*** was the most frequently reported reason for break-ups. Baxter suggested that the rule underpinning this reason was that individuals in a romantic relationship should recognise that each has an identity and life outside the relationship. The category ***Similarity Display*** refers to the fact that relationship partners should express similarities in their values, attitudes and interests. ***Supportiveness*** reflects the provision of support and enhancement of each other's self-esteem, while ***Openness*** reflects that partners should be sincere and open with one another. ***Loyalty/Fidelity*** dictates that partners should be loyal and faithful to each other, with regard to external involvements, while ***Shared Time*** suggests the need for partners

to spend considerable time together. ***Equity*** describes the rule that partners should obtain rewards that are in proportion to their investments into the relationship, comparative to their partner. The final rule, ***Romance***, states that partners should "experience a mysterious and inexplicable "magic" in one another's presence" (Baxter, 1986, p. 297).

Baxter (1986) argued that these eight reasons represent underlying relationship rules that are used to guide expectations and behaviour. Of interest in Baxter's study were gender differences in the rule categories, with the results showing that females were more likely to include Autonomy, Openness and Equity in their break-up accounts, while males were more likely to mention Romance. Observations of gender differences may be problematic at times, however, and it is important to ask whether both genders use the same repertoire of behaviour to demonstrate the same concept.

While each of the studies discussed has developed different categories of rules/expectations or their violations, some similarities between the categories developed and identified by different authors can be seen. For example, Argyle and Henderson (1984) developed a category of Verbal Intimacy and Opinion Exchange, which includes the specific rule of disclosing one's feelings and personal problems to a partner. This category was defined as including rules about sharing information and opinions, how emotions are shared and expressed, self-disclosure, and asking for advice. Sabatelli and Pearce (1986) listed 'confiding' and 'partner's willingness to listen' as important relationship areas, which are similar in content and theme to the verbal intimacy rules category suggested by Argyle and Henderson (1984). Further, Baxter's (1986) work produced a category that also appears to be similar to those listed – that of Openness.

Another common theme across all the studies was that of fair exchange and equity. Argyle and Henderson's (1984) category of 'exchange'; Sabatelli and Pearce's (1986) 'relationship equality'; and Baxter's (1986) 'equity' category all reflect this common theme. There are other common themes, such as time spent together, emotional support and trust, and issues of loyalty and fidelity, that are reflected in the different categories, rules types and relationship areas developed by these authors (Argyle & Henderson, 1984; Baxter, 1986; Sabatelli & Pearce, 1986). The similarities between the above-mentioned rule and expectation categories are similar to the work done in the communication field. Positive and negative communication behaviours that have been identified (see Montgomery, 1994 for a review) echo the themes of support, regard, respect and refraining from overt negative behaviour that can be seen in the studies

discussed above. The work by these authors on relationship rules and expectations suggests that despite the idiosyncratic nature of relationship rules, in that they are developed specific to each dyad, there appear to be some common themes that are identified as being important to relationship functioning (Argyle & Henderson, 1984; Baxter, 1986; Sabatelli & Pearce, 1986). This further suggests that those areas, about which dyads commonly have rules, may be able to be identified.

Summary

All social interactions, and therefore our romantic relationships, are bound by rules and expectations about appropriate and inappropriate standards of behaviour. The existence of these rules and expectations, or relational standards, informs individuals about what behaviour is expected today, tomorrow, and in future interactions. As a result, relational standards function to regulate and co-ordinate behaviours in order to ensure a relationship runs smoothly and relational cohesion is maintained. Little is known, however, about the existence, development, types and forms of relational standards that exist in romantic relationships. The fields of communication and psychology have both contributed to what is known about rules and expectations, with communication researchers focussing on expectations regarding communication behaviours in interactions, and social psychologists commonly focussing on specific instances of rule violations. As a result, there is some debate about what defines the existence of a relational standard. Some researchers have argued that consensus or agreement is what defines a rule, however, expectations, by their very nature, are generally not subject to agreement to consensus. The current discussion synthesises the work on expectations from the communication field, and rules and norms from psychology, and argues that individuals in romantic relationships have relational standards that guide their relationships, and these standards are made up of both rules and expectations. Rules are those norms or standards that are made known through discussion or negotiation, therefore are explicit, while expectations are not necessarily made known, may go unrecognised, or may be assumed or taken for granted, and consequently are referred to as implicit. If relational standards incorporate both rules and expectations, then consensus is not a reliable criterion to determine the existence of a standard. There are two other important criteria that are able to identify the presence of

relational standards, however; relational standards can be said to exist if their violation results in relational disruption, and if violations result in sanctions.

While it is acknowledged that relationships are guided by rules and expectations, the process of how they are arrived at or develop is unclear, however the research literature suggests there are a number of ways this occurs. Individuals bring to their relationships relational scripts or schemata about how relationships work, or they may import an existing rule structure from another relationship. Over time, repeated interactions result in relationship partners adapting and modifying previously existing rules and expectations, or developing new ones that are effective for them as a couple, and unique to that relationship. This unique rule structure facilitates goal attainment, and gives the relationship a chance to grow and develop.

While there is a lack of research that has specifically examined the types of rules that exist in romantic relationships, authors have developed and identified various categories of relational standards by examining rules in friendships, communication in marriage, and break up accounts. Despite the difference in research focus, there are some common themes in the categories that have been identified and suggested. Research results demonstrate that relationship partners have rules and expectations regarding intimacy, support, criticism, respect and regard, loyalty, fidelity, equity, how time is spent and how emotions are shared and expressed. Being able to identify such common themes suggests that categories of rules in romantic relationships may be able to be identified, despite the uniqueness of rule structures to their individual dyads.

Chapter 3
RULE AND EXPECTATION VIOLATIONS

One way to explore the area of relationship rules and expectations is to examine violations of these relational standards. Examining violations can help inform us what relational standards exist, and can also help identify how violations occur, as well as the outcomes of such violations.

Defining Violations

Despite the ad hoc approach to the study of the existence of relationship rules and expectations across different research areas, relationship partners clearly have relational standards that define appropriate and inappropriate behaviour within a given relationship. When partners meet each other's expectations and abide by their relationship rules, the relationship runs smoothly. Relationship partners, however, intimate or otherwise, do not always behave in ways that are expected or agreed. According to those in the communication field, any behaviour that is noticed to deviate from the behaviour that was expected is an expectation violation (Baxter, 1986; Burgoon, 1978). This is also the case for violations of agreed upon rules. According to Burgoon and Hale (1988), relationship violations are usually defined as behaviours enacted by a partner that are inconsistent with relationship rules. When violations occur, they cause relational disruption by inducing arousal and prompting an evaluative process. This evaluation and interpretation helps individuals to deal with unexpected events, by attending to the violation and determining its meanings for both the individual as well as the relationship (Burgoon, 1978).

Violations of rules and expectations are not always necessarily negative. Behaviours that occur outside an expected or agreed range may occur in either a positive or negative direction. As a result, while much of the psychological research literature focuses on negative violations, those in the communication field argue that violations can also be positive. For example, Partner A knows that Partner B does not get along with Partner A's sister, and family visits often result in tension or disagreement. For Partner B to behave in a friendly way toward Partner A's sister, thereby avoiding the regular disagreements, does not meet Partner A's expectations. Partner B's behaviour in fact

violates Partner A's expectations, but in a way that is positive. A different example may be that for a partner who usually remains passive during arguments, an expression of anger may violate the expectation of passivity, but such an outburst may be a welcome violation, particularly if their usual passivity is seen as a source of frustration, or serves to impede further communication (Metts, 1989). Consequently, Afifi and Burgoon (2000) argued that to define a violation as that which deviates from what was expected (or agreed), does not take into account the complexities of the experience of violation.

An examination of violations is important, as violations can assist in determining what rules and expectations existed in the first place. Further, the outcomes of violations can elucidate the function that such rules and expectations serve, and their importance to a relationship. The first part of this section examines what the psychological literature calls transgressions and betrayal, as rule and expectation violations, and presents a model of betrayal. The second part of this section looks at some of the features and correlates of violations. The third part of this section examines types of violations, with discussion of the prototypical examples of infidelity and deception. The fourth part of this section looks at the severity and importance of violations and the attached rules, while the last part of this section examines the effects and outcomes of rule and expectation violations, including the evaluation process, responses to violations, and effects on relationships.

Transgressions and Betrayal as Violations

Relational transgressions have been variously described as "momentous interpersonal occasion(s)" (Shackelford, 1997, p.73), a relational challenge (Roloff, et al., 2001), a source of disruption (Metts, 1994), and betrayal (Feldman, Cauffman, Jensen, & Arnett, 2000). There is general consensus that relational transgressions or betrayal involve situations where a dyadic partner engages in a behaviour that violates an implicit or explicit rule or expectation about what is appropriate and expected in a relationship (Afifi, Falato & Weiner, 2001; Boon & Holmes, 1999; Finkel et al., 2002; Jones & Burdette, 1994; Metts, 1994; Roloff & Cloven, 1994; Roloff, et al., 2001). Shackelford (1997) defined betrayal in exchange terms, as any situation where a benefit that would ordinarily be expected is purposely withheld, or where the benefit is given to a third party outside the primary relationship, or both.

While the communication field has focussed on expectations and expectation violations (both positive and negative) regarding proxemic behaviours in communication

interactions, the relationship and psychological literature has generally studied behavioural violations that are highly salient, negatively valenced, and therefore threatening to a relationship (Afifi & Metts, 1998). As a result, the relational and psychological literature uses the terms 'transgressions' and 'betrayal' to describe highly negative violations. Such negative violations generally connote disrespect and disregard for a partner and a relationship, and are consequently thought of as destructive. This tendency to regard violations as harmful to a relationship is highlighted by the fact that Davis and Todd (1985) found that 87% of their respondents terminated a relationship as a result of a rule violation. Further, Roloff and Cloven (1994) discussed transgressions as rule violations that result in doubts about the relationship and mistrust of the partner. Fitness (2001) defined betrayal as acting in a way to serve one's interests over and above another's, which sends a message that the betrayer does not value the relationship with their partner. Perhaps, then, betrayal or transgressions are distinct forms of rule or expectation violations because they send such a message of relational devaluation. For the purposes of this discussion, given that much of the literature discusses rule and expectation violations as betrayal and transgressions, these terms will be used interchangeably to refer to the common definitional element that one partner has acted in a way that is inconsistent with what was agreed or expected.

A Model of Betrayal

Elangovan and Shapiro (1998) offered a conceptualisation and typology of betrayal in organisations, which is based on the relational and psychological literature. This model focuses on the factors leading to an initial act of betrayal, rather than the consequences of betrayal, which is often the focus in the relational literature.

In the organisational literature, Morris and Moberg (1994) argued that betrayal occurs when expectations that are pivotal to a relationship or interaction are violated, which is consistent with the definitions from the psychological literature. Elangovan and Shapiro (1998) elaborated, by defining betrayal as "a voluntary violation of mutually known pivotal expectations of the trustor by the trusted party (trustee), which has the potential to threaten the well being of the trustor" (p.548). From this definition, betrayal is seen to have five key characteristics. Firstly, an act of betrayal is *voluntary*, in that it is not betrayal if carried out under duress. Secondly, betrayal involves the violation of *pivotal expectations*. If the expectations are not pivotal to the relationship, then their violation will not be important to the relationship, and they may be ignored or excused.

This highlights the issue of importance of the rule or expectation to the relationship, which will be further discussed. Thirdly, both parties must be *aware* of the expectations, although they do not need to be mutually accepted. Elangovan and Shapiro (1998) argued that this eliminates attributing actions to ambiguity, thereby making it clear when a violation has occurred. The fourth characteristic is that betrayal is a *result of behaviour*; thinking about violating an expectation does not constitute betrayal. Lastly, to constitute betrayal, the behaviour must have the *potential to harm* the well-being of the betrayed party. The potential for harm rather than actual harm is emphasised here, as the authors note that the harm experienced may be mitigated by other factors (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998).

Elangovan and Shapiro (1998) further defined betrayal with regard to intention. The criterion of intention has two parts –presence and timing. *Accidental betrayal* occurs when the behaviour is voluntary but accidental (or unintentional), while *Intentional betrayal* occurs when the behaviour is both voluntary and intentional. Intentional betrayal can be further divided into two types – when intent precedes the relationship or interaction, *premeditated betrayal* is said to have occurred; while *opportunistic betrayal* occurs when the intent forms in the context of an ongoing relationship. Research in this area suggests that opportunistic betrayal is the most common, and is likely the type that occurs most commonly in romantic relationships.

An Interdependence and Social Exchange Perspective of Betrayal

A number of authors have offered a social exchange description of betrayal (Cole, 2001; Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998; Finkel et. al., 2002; Shackelford, 1997), where betrayal is thought to occur as a result of evaluating the outcomes of one's relationship. Alternatives to the relationship are considered, as is the balance of rewards and costs. After an assessment of the overall situation, betrayal may be chosen as a viable course of action. The fact that betrayal is seen as a viable course of action suggests that the individual will gain more through violating the rule or expectation than by adhering to it. For example, low levels of dissatisfaction may motivate an individual to violate a rule or expectation, and with it the associated relational trust, in order to change the status quo, or restore equity where inequity is perceived (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998; Shackelford, 1997). However, because the violation of relationship-relevant rules and expectations tends to harm the victim and communicate relational devaluation, interpersonal debt is created, which results in negative affect and behaviour. Finkel et al. (2002) in fact,

argued that the negative consequences of a rule or expectation violation are more due to the fact that a relational standard was violated, rather than being due to the act itself.

Features of Violations

Individual Differences

The idiosyncratic nature of a couple's rule and expectation structure, or their relational standards, has been previously discussed with regard to the development of rules and expectations, but is also important to note in the discussion of violations. Because couples vary in their relational standards, the range of behaviours that are expected or agreed upon may differ as a function of the relationship and the context. The same behaviour may be expected in one relationship, but unexpected in another, whether the status of the relationship differs (for example a friendship versus romantic relationship), or whether between a past and current romantic involvement. Further, partners may have different expectations of each other, such that partners are not subject to identical standards of behaviour. Rules and expectations, and subsequently, what constitutes violations, are therefore linked to the specific relationship in question and its history, as well as the context of the behaviour (Shackelford, 1997).

Correlates of Betrayal

A number of correlates of betrayal have been identified, from demographics, to personality variables. Jones and Burdette (1994) investigated betrayal as an individual difference variable, and reported on earlier work that resulted in the development of the Interpersonal Betrayal Scale (IBS), a behavioural self-report measure designed to measure one's tendency to betray a relational partner. They found that scores on the IBS were higher among individuals who were younger and less well educated, while divorced individuals scored higher than those who were married. IBS scores were also correlated with various psychological measures. High scores were significantly related to personality characteristics such as guilt, suspiciousness, resentment, shame and a lack of tolerance for authority, and with histrionic and dependent personality types. In another study, Montgomery and Brown (1988, cited in Jones & Burdette, 1994) found that IBS scores were inversely related to the normal personality dimensions of responsibility, self-control, well being and tolerance. In terms of the tendency to betray, Feldman et al. (2000) suggested that 'tolerance of deviation' might play a role. Tolerance of deviation is

an attitudinal variable that represents the extent to which individuals view particular transgressions as wrong. Feldman et al. (2000) looked at the acceptance of a number of transgressions, from violence, lying and cheating, to more minor transgressions such as the use of swear words. Participants answered questions regarding the acceptability of betrayal under different conditions, and described their levels of self-restraint, betrayal behaviour and tolerance of deviation. Acceptance of betrayal was positively associated with betrayal behaviour and tolerance of deviation, and negatively related to self-restraint.

In terms of gender, Metts (1994) has reported differences with regard to what constitutes betrayal. She found that men listed sexual involvement more than women did, while women were more likely to identify transgressions related to the emotional or functional/practical side of the relationship, such as violations of privacy or breaking promises. Jones and Burdette (1994) reported that men indicated that they had been the subject of infidelity more frequently than women, while women reported that they were more likely to disclose a secret or confidence. Both men and women agreed, however, that men tend to instigate the more significant and important forms of betrayal. The research literature remains mixed, however, with regards to gender differences and betrayal. With regard to relational variables, higher IBS scores have been linked to lower commitment scores for men, but not women. The causal direction of this link is unclear however, as IBS scores have also been found to be strongly related to personal and relational problems (Jones & Burdette, 1994). Metts (1994) suggested that in relationships where rules or expectations have not been explicitly discussed, such differences between the genders might result in uncertainty and conflict. Correlates of the specific violations of infidelity and deception will be discussed in the relevant sections of this discussion.

Types of Violations

While there are a wide variety of behaviours that might be considered rule violations, transgressions or betrayal, the research literature does not offer a comprehensive picture of what these are. As Thompson (1983) noted, research on relational transgressions is dominated by reference to specific acts, the most common of which are third-party involvements outside the primary relationship, or infidelity, and

deception, which will be discussed as prototypical examples of rule and expectation violations.

So what behaviours commonly constitute violations of relational standards? Jones and Burdette (1994), in their discussion of betrayal, listed the disclosing of a confidence, jilting, ignoring or avoiding, criticism, gossiping, and a lack of support as common acts of betrayal, in addition to infidelity and deception. Friesen, Fletcher and Overall (2005) investigated forgiveness by looking at accounts and perceptions of specific transgressions, and found a large number of behaviours were reported as transgressions. These included verbal insults (including criticisms, disrespect, gossiping, name calling or badmouthing others); lack of support and inconsiderate behaviour (such as ignoring, not contacting a partner, choosing others over a partner, or being distracted with study or work); infidelity, including the perceived threat of (such as being in contact with an ex partner, or flirting); problems with alcohol or drug use; broken promises, being careless with finances, sexual issues, not communicating, arguments/disagreements, problems related to commitment to the relationship versus independence, and mistakes or accidents. Fitness (2001) noted that apart from lies, deception and infidelity, a number of other relational offences were reported by respondents, including neglect, being embarrassed in public, uncaring behaviour and extradyadic conflict. In another area of psychological research, that of hurtful events, Leary, Springer, Negel, Ansell, and Evans (1998) described a number of situations or events that could be considered rule violations that result in hurt feelings. They included sexual infidelity, private and public criticism, forgetting significant events such as birthdays, being ungracious and insensitive, and avoiding or ignoring, for example not returning phone calls.

It appears, therefore that despite the focus on sexual infidelity and deception by the relational literature, there are other behaviours that can be identified as violations of rules and expectations, or transgressions. Metts (1994) suggested that they fall into five categories. Transgressions of c*ommitments* made to a partner include things such as breaking promises and plans; violating *privacy and secrets* refers to the use of deception and breaking a confidence; violating *interaction management* rules and expectations means fighting in ways that are unfair or abusive; transgressions of *appropriate emotions* refer to not reciprocating love and affection; and violations of *privileging the primary relationship* describe actions that denigrate or disregard the importance of the partner or the relationship. These are similar to a number of trust violations listed by Bies and Tripp (1996) in an organisational setting, which included breaching a contract or agreement,

breaking promises, lying, stealing (whether material or ideas), changing rules retrospectively, betraying confidences, and wrong or unfair accusations.

Two studies by Afifi and Metts (1998) aimed to develop and validate a typology of relationship violations. From accounts of unexpected behaviour, the authors defined nine types of violations. The first category was (violations of) *support or confirmation*, which refers to behaviours that communicate support, or confirmation of a partner's self-esteem. In later analysis, this category was collapsed with that of *acts of devotion*, which reflects unprompted behaviours that communicate how valued the relationship and the relational partner are. *Acts of disregard*, conversely, reflects behaviours that show disregard for the relationship culture, as well as a lack of effort and concern for aspects of the relationship, such as displays of affection and partner's welfare. Upon removal of the *support and confirmation* category, another category, that of *uncharacteristic social behaviour* was added. This category reflects behaviours that may be unexpected or inconsistent in social interactions, but do not have implications for the primary relationship. The category of *criticism or accusation* refers to behaviours or messages that are critical or accusatory in nature. *Relationship initiation, intensification or escalation* refers to those behaviours that indicate that commitment to a relationship is increased or confirmed. In contrast, *relationship de-escalation, destabilisation or termination* refers to actions that damage the relationship, communicate doubts about the relationship, or result in its dissolution. *Uncharacteristic relational behaviour* is a category that describes behaviours that are inconsistent with the way the relationship has previously been characterised. *Gestures of inclusion and high regard* are those that validate and include a partner, while *relational transgressions* refer to behaviours that "constitute clear violations of taken-for-granted relational rules" (Afifi & Metts, 1998, p.377). It is unclear however, how relational transgressions are differentiated from the violation of rules or expectations of the other categories. From the above quote, it may be that the other categories are based on expectations rather than explicit rules, with the implication being that relational transgressions are defined as such by acting against what is know to be agreed upon. Interestingly, violations of this category were reported the least of all violation types.

Afifi and Mett's (1998) research suggested that violations of relational standards occur frequently, and in more varied ways than is generally considered. The results showed that violations differ in terms of the extent to which they are unexpected, and in their importance to the relationship. Results also demonstrated that positive and

negatively valenced violations were differentially associated with relational outcomes. Negative violations that increased uncertainty in the relationship had more negative effects on satisfaction, closeness, trust, commitment and attraction than did negative violations that decreased uncertainty.

In a later study, Afifi, Dillow and Morse (2004) investigated information seeking in romantic relationships. In coding the events about which information was sought, they combined the typology of expectation violations developed by Afifi and Metts (1998) described above, with one of transgressions by Metts, Morse and Lamb (2001, cited in Afifi et al., 2004). Broadly, the events were divided into relationally focused acts and target focused acts. The main addition to the categories described by Afifi and Metts' (1998) study above, was a category of *Threats/abuse*, and other acts that could be described as becoming potential issues, or that could not be coded elsewhere. It is interesting that of the literature that does exist in this area, discussion of rule and expectation violations, transgressions and betrayal has generally not touched on the issue of threats or physical and/or sexual harm or abuse. Perhaps as Metts (1989) suggested, for such extreme behaviours, their unacceptability may be taken for granted. As a result, they do not get reported in lists of transgressions from research studies, and included in the typologies of violations that have been developed. Another reason that acts of harm, threat and abuse have not appeared in the lists of transgressions is that when asked about incidents of transgressions of betrayal, the respondents participating in the research studies may not have experienced such extreme rule or expectation violations, thus would have no reason to report on it.

Infidelity

It is widely accepted that dating and marital relationships carry with them expectations of exclusivity (Feldman & Cauffman, 1999; Holmes & Rempel, 1989; Metts, 1994; Treas & Giesen, 2000; Wiederman & Hurd, 1999). Shackelford (1997) stated that those behaviours that will be interpreted as betrayal in a given relationship can be predicted by identifying the benefits that are consistently associated with participation in that relationship. From this perspective, exclusivity may be expected as a result of being a specific benefit that an individual obtains from a romantic relationship that cannot be obtained from another type of relationship. Previti and Amato (2004) argued that sexual fidelity serves to increase cohesion in the relationship as it restricts opportunities for relationship partners to become emotionally attached to an alternative

partner. From an evolutionary perspective, the sexual fidelity of a woman ensures that her children are her husband's (or partner's) biological offspring, while a man's fidelity ensures he is not responsible for children born to other women (Previti & Amato, 2004). Sexual and emotional involvement outside the primary relationship is, therefore, seen as a major violation of relational standards, and is usually associated with severe consequences for the relationship. Not only is a specific rule or expectation violated, but the trust on which the relationship is based is also undermined (Feldman & Cauffman, 1999; Holmes & Rempel, 1989; Metts, 1994; Previti & Amato, 2004). This is highlighted by the research on hurt in relationships, which has found that the most hurtful message types are those that disclose negative and harmful, relationally-relevant information (Vangelisti, 1994).

Infidelity is a prototypical example of a major violation of relational standards, and has been the focus on much research (e.g. Aune, Metts, & Ebesu, 1998; Boon & Holmes, 1999; Drigotas et al., 1999; Feldman & Cauffman, 1999; Feldman, et al., 2000; Finkel et al., 2002; Kowalski, Walker, Wilkinson, Queen, & Sharpe, 2003; Roscoe, Cavanaugh, & Kennedy, 1988). Infidelity has been defined as any romantic or sexual behaviour with a third party outside of the primary relationship, where there exists an expectation or agreement of exclusivity (Seal, Agostinelli, & Hannett, 1994). Drigotas et al. (1999) suggested that infidelity can be distinguished from other extradyadic behaviours that do not violate exclusivity norms, on the basis of (a) an individual feeling that his or her partner has violated an expectation or agreement about third party interactions, and (b) the fact that violation of this particular norm elicits jealousy and rivalry. While some research on infidelity has focussed on distinguishing between sexual and emotional infidelity (e.g. Shackelford, 1997), this distinction is not a primary point of concern in the current discussion. What is of concern is the general nature of infidelity as involvement with a third party outside the relationship, whether sexual or romantic, that is in violation of a relational expectation or rule.

While Feldman and Cauffman (1999) asserted that instances of sexual infidelity are relatively common despite strong societal disapproval, the rates of infidelity cited were not current for the time. From their own findings, they reported that two thirds of their sample had experienced betrayal as either the perpetrator or the victim, or both. According to Wiederman and Hurd (1999), 75% of men and 68% of women had engaged in some form of extradyadic behaviour while in a serious relationship with expectations of exclusivity. Atkins, et al. (2001) cited more conservative estimates gained from

national surveys in the United States, which suggested that 20 to 25% of Americans will be sexually involved with someone other than their spouse during their marriage. Despite differences in the reported incidence of infidelity, its focus as a severe relational transgression or rule violation likely stems from the threat it presents to the relationship, and violation of those qualities such as trust and loyalty, that are regarded as fundamental features of ongoing relationships (Holmes & Rempel, 1989; Jones & Burdette, 1994). The importance of infidelity as a major rule violation can perhaps be illustrated by Allan and Harrison's (2002) findings. The authors used mass-observation archive data from Britain, where people anonymously responded to open-ended questions about affairs and infidelity. Respondents who had no experience with affairs gave their reasons why they would *not* be unfaithful, as opposed to the more common research focus on the reasons provided for engaging in infidelity, hypothetical or otherwise. Some respondents referred to a sense of duty and responsibility as a function of making promises to the relationship, demonstrated by taking marriage vows for example. To be unfaithful would be to breach a contract or break a promise, which would be dishonourable. Another theme was that one's partner does not deserve to be disrespected or hurt in such a way, thus infidelity was a betrayal of the commitment to the relationship as well as betrayal of the partner. Other respondents discussed the difficulty they would have in living with the subsequent guilt from infidelity, while still others focussed on harm to others at a broader level, including not only the partner, but specifically harm to any children and family life.

Research in this area has generally been interested in describing infidelity, looking at responses to infidelity, or examining explanations and motivations for infidelity (Drigotas et al., 1999). Roscoe, et al. (1988) examined behaviours that constitute infidelity, as well as the possible reasons for, and responses to it. They found that adolescents listed three main behaviours as constituting infidelity: dating or spending time with someone, sexual intercourse, and engaging in other sexual interaction such as flirting and kissing, with someone other than one's relationship partner. Metts (1994) refers to her earlier work, in which college students were asked to list behaviours, as well as attitudes that constituted a transgression. Sexual intercourse outside one's relationship was most frequently reported, followed by wanting to be with, or dating other people.

The research on infidelity suggests there are many varied reasons for engaging in such an important rule violation, including dissatisfaction with the ongoing relationship, a desire for sexual variety or excitement, revenge, anger or jealousy, insecurity or being

unsure about the relationship, companionship and intimacy, immaturity and lack of commitment, strong attraction for or being in love with the extradyadic partner, sexual dissatisfaction, enhancing self-esteem, being unable to resist temptation, the unavailability of the primary partner, and being under the influence of drugs or alcohol (Buunk, 1980; Drigotas et al., 1999; Feldman & Cauffman, 1999; Feldman, et al., 2000; Glass & Wright, 1988; Roscoe et al., 1988). Glass and Wright (1988) cited a variety of hypothetical reasons provided for engaging in infidelity from the research literature. These included wanting revenge, feeling young, wanting company or closeness, increasing self-esteem, boredom, feeling understood, and wanting an intellectual connection. A factor analysis on these hypothetical reasons produced four factors – sexual, emotional, extrinsic (for example revenge), and love motivations. In a later review of the research by the same authors (Glass & Wright, 1992), 31 reasons for infidelity were identified, the majority of which tended to reflect motives of personal gratification. In Roscoe et al.'s (1988) study, older adolescents reported boredom, revenge, dissatisfaction, being unsure or insecure about the relationship, or wanting variety as the main reasons for infidelity. Adolescents were more likely to offer the reasons of boredom, insecurity, and lack of communication than were adults, and were more likely to consider, or act to terminate the relationship as a result of infidelity.

In addition to the reported motivations for engaging in infidelity, the research literature has demonstrated a relationship between infidelity and a number of variables, such as age, education, opportunity, relationship length, divorce history, religiosity, relationship satisfaction and other relational variables, and gender (Atkins et al., 2001; Greeley, 1994). According to Atkins et al. (2001), age when first married, divorce, income, work status and education affected one's likelihood of engaging in infidelity. Treas and Giesen (2000) attempted to examine the relationship between infidelity and a number of correlates that they believe had been inconsistently addressed in the research literature in this area. They found that those factors positively related to infidelity included having permissive sexual values, increased opportunities to engage in infidelity in the form of available partners, and dissatisfaction with the primary relationship. When interest in sex and permissiveness of sexual values were controlled for, main effects of gender were substantially reduced or eliminated, which is an interesting finding, given that the research literature has often reported inconsistent results regarding the role of gender. Education was also positively related to infidelity, as was the status of the primary relationship – cohabiters were not as sexually exclusive as married couples.

Relationship quality has been variously reported as a correlate of, motivation for, and consequence of infidelity (e.g. Atkins et al., 2001; Drigotas et al., 1999), however the research results are somewhat inconsistent. A number of findings have confirmed a link between relational variables including satisfaction, commitment, alternative quality and investments, and infidelity (Atkins et. al., 2001; Buss & Shackelford, 1997; Drigotas et. al., 1999). Drigotas et al. (1999) used the Investment Model to predict infidelity, and found that commitment level at the beginning of the semester significantly predicted subsequent infidelity. This supports the deficit model proposed by Thompson (1983), which explains infidelity as a result of deficiencies in the primary relationship. Barta and Kiene (2005) also found that relational variables have been identified as a motivation for engaging in infidelity. They reported that dissatisfaction was consistently highly rated as a motivation for infidelity, with women more likely than men to report dissatisfaction. Infidelity appears to be more common among individuals who view their relationships in a negative light. Those who doubt the viability of their relationships may, as a result, be more inclined to engage in infidelity. Once this relational standard is violated, however, there are consequences for the stability of the relationship. From a 17-year longitudinal study, Previti and Amato (2004) found that infidelity, specifically sexual infidelity, resulted in decreased happiness and increased tendency to divorce, and concluded that infidelity is both a cause and an effect of relationship deterioration. Buunk (1987) also supported the idea that it is the quality of the primary relationship that is the issue, arguing that it is the factors that push an individual away from their relationship, rather than extradyadic factors that pull an individual away, that are responsible for an individual being unfaithful. Not all studies, however, have confirmed a negative relationship between relationship quality and infidelity (Atkins et al., 2001). Blumstein and Schwartz (1983) for example, found no relationship between marital satisfaction and sexual infidelity.

Like the definitions and the motivations for infidelity, the responses to, and outcomes of this rule violation are varied. Responses to infidelity studied in the literature include terminating the relationship, ignoring one's partner, reevaluating the situation, and discussing the infidelity with one's partner (Buunk, 1980; Feldman & Cauffman, 1999). Victims of infidelity may also respond with recriminations and conflict, revenge infidelity, physical aggression, or through sanctions such as withholding sex, financial support or companionship and intimacy (Treas & Giesen, 2000). Feldman and Cauffman (1999) reported that in their study, 60% of relationships were terminated. In situations of

hypothetical infidelity, Roscoe et al. (1988) reported that 44% of their sample would terminate the relationship as a result of infidelity, and 14% would either do nothing, or forgive their partner. Allan and Harrison (2002) reported that their respondents highlighted a theme of irreversible change to the relationship, whether it terminated or not. The sense of commitment and level of trust in the relationship were also altered, which was confirmed by those with experience of affairs. Reactions of partners who had been subject to infidelity were coloured with themes of immense emotional pain, and a loss of self-esteem and self-worth.

Romantic relationships have specific expectations about sexual and emotional exclusivity that serve a number of functions that help to increase and maintain relational cohesion. Whether to be faithful and loyal to one's partner exists as an explicitly defined rule, or as an implicit expectation, to engage in infidelity is to violate a fundamental relational standard, therefore represents one of the more significant examples of a rule or expectation violation. To be unfaithful to one's primary partner causes harm to another person, thus it communicates disregard for the relationship and one's relationship partner, which may carry significant consequences for the relationship. Not only does the act of infidelity undermine the relationship and the qualities on which the relationship is based, such as trust and commitment, but also the fact that a relational standard has been violated further contributes to the outcome of the violation. A variety of justifications, motivations and correlates of infidelity have been reported in the research literature. Many of these suggest problems in relational quality, and the need to restore some perceived inequity in the relationship, whether the motivation is boredom or variety, or something more problematic such as dissatisfaction or revenge. In this sense, infidelity may be seen as the result of outcome assessment, and used as a strategy to produce change in the relationship. No matter what the motivations or justifications, infidelity, as a violation of relational standards, has negative consequences for romantic relationships.

There are some methodological limitations to the research that has been done on infidelity that should be noted. Atkins et al. (2001) reported that many studies use hypothetical reports of infidelity, and do not use samples in which infidelity has actually occurred, which is problematic when trying to evaluate the importance of infidelity as a rule or expectation violation, as well as evaluating the motives for and effects of infidelity on one's relationship. Further, given the difficulty of obtaining information on private topics such as infidelity, responses are likely to be subject to social desirability biases (Feldman & Cauffman, 1999; Feldman et al., 2000). An interesting point about

methodology, specifically the definitions of infidelity, was made by Drigotas et al. (1999). The behaviours that are generally measured and purported to constitute infidelity are not accompanied by information about whether such behaviours violate relationship rules or expectations. Without this information, the behaviours studied as infidelity may actually be extradyadic behaviours that are permissible in the relationship.

Deception

Deception is another often-cited example of a major rule or expectation violation that occurs in close relationships, and has been the focus of much research in interpersonal relationships. While deception is used to achieve basic communication goals, its use in romantic relationships is generally considered damaging (De Paulo, Kashy, Kirkendol, Wyer & Epstein, 1996; Fehr, 2001; Finkenauer & Hazam, 2000; Metts, 1989). The fact that deception is considered an aversive interpersonal behaviour makes it of interest in the discussion of relational rules and expectations. Just as romantic relationships come with expectations of exclusivity that can be violated by acts of infidelity, as discussed in the previous section relationships also come with expectations of honesty and trust. In fact, discussion of infidelity and deception often occurs together, presumably because of the need to use deception in order to avoid one's infidelity being discovered. To engage in deception in one's relationship violates these expectations, which will inevitably have consequences for the relationship (Aquino, 1998). This discussion of deception aims to give an overview of the use of deception in romantic relationships, from the perspective of it being a violation of major relational standards. This discussion does not, however, aim to examine all the definitions, taxonomies, and motivations related to the use of deception, nor the variety of viewpoints on these topics. An overview and discussion of deception and its use in romantic relationships enables us to understand how deception may be regarded a rule violation, and the implications deception has for expectations and rules regarding honesty in romantic relationships.

Deception has been referred to as an aversive interpersonal behaviour (Kowalski, 1997), and in Western culture, lying has been viewed as a selfish act that poses a danger to social mores (Bok, 1978), a predictor of negative life circumstances (De Paulo et al., 1996), and as a social skill (De Paulo & Jordan, 1982). In 1989, Metts noted that deception was being recognised as increasingly important in communication in close relationships, but that research needed to move beyond ideological debate about the ethics of its use. The view of deception as an immoral behaviour then, preceded research

into its use in romantic relationships. Moving away from the debate about the ethics of its use, research has since shown that deception is a common occurrence in everyday life, and is often used to achieve basic communication goals, to facilitate interactions, and to maintain impressions, as information is selectively disclosed or withheld (De Paulo & Kashy, 1998; Kashy & De Paulo, 1996; Millar & Tesser, 1988). While disclosure can have positive outcomes, through increasing intimacy and trust, deception is generally seen as negative and damaging (Finkenauer & Hazam, 2000), as it invites suspicion, which may undermine the values on which relationships are based (Fehr, 2001).

Research into deception has typically focussed on deception detection (Boon & McLeod, 2001; Levine & McCornack, 1992), the contexts in which it occurs (Millar & Tesser, 1988), who lies to who and what they lie about (De Paulo & Kashy, 1998; Kashy & De Paulo, 1996), reasons for lying (Finkenauer & Hazam, 2000), and the impact of deception on various types of relationships when it is discovered (Cole, 2001; Finkenauer & Hazam, 2000; Peterson, 1996). Due to the varied nature of the literature, defining deception is somewhat difficult. This is further complicated by the fact that deception has often been divided into types or strategies, such as falsification, omission and distortion, for example (De Paulo et al., 1996; Peterson, 1996), not all of which involve outright lying. Roloff and Cloven (1990) noted that individuals might still withhold information from their partners without overtly deceiving them. Finkenauer and Hazam (2000) defined this deliberate withholding of information as secrecy. In contrast, lying involves falsifying and concealing information (De Paulo et al., 1996). De Paulo et al. (1996) suggested that what characterises deception is the intent to produce a false belief or impression in another person, and defined it as "…any time you intentionally try to mislead someone. Both the intent to deceive and the actual deception must occur" (De Paulo et al., 1996, p.981). Miller, Mongeau and Sleight (1986) presented a similar definition, where deception occurs with the intent of simulating a belief in another person that the communicator knows to be untrue. Definitions by other authors (Buller & Burgoon, 1994; Ekman, 1985; Knapp & Comadena, 1979; O'Hair & Cody, 1994) have also commonly characterised deception as involving an intention to communicate untrue information, and an expectation that the receiver will be misled or will labour under a false impression as a result of the communication.

On the basis that not all deception involves overtly lying to another individual, researchers have proposed various typologies of deception, and the strategies that individuals use to achieve deception. Metts (1989) provided an exploratory study of

deception, which focused on the types of deceptive behaviour individuals used, and the reasons provided for such behaviour. Her results indicated that falsification was the most frequently reported type of communication. Peterson (1996) also investigated types of deception, and categorised them into omission, distortion, half-truths, blatant lies, white lies and failed truths. She found that respondents reported using white lies most often and blatant lies least, and perceived that their partners behaved in a similar manner.

Boon and McLeod (2001) provided another classification of deception, which was based on work by Metts (1989), and proposed five deceptive strategies: (1) saying something is true that is not (lying); (2) saying a true statement in a way to make your partner believe it is not true; (3) communicating a false message non-verbally; (4) purposely omitting information or failing to mention something, leading your partner to a false belief; and (5) exaggerating or distorting information, leading your partner to a false belief. By investigating modes of deception, and estimates of success at deceiving romantic partners, Boon and McLeod (2001) found that beliefs about success at deceit predicted which deceptive strategy was used. Other authors such as Ekman (1985), Turner, Edgley, and Olmstead (1975) and Hopper and Bell (1984) have proposed further typologies, which variously divide and label strategies of deceptive use, and cover the same range of deceptive behaviours as those typologies discussed above. Despite the development and existence of different typologies, the variety of deceptive behaviours that are proposed by researchers tend to represent a continuum of deceptive behaviour from overt to covert (Metts, 1989).

Given the perception that the use of deception in romantic relationships is damaging, it may be fair to expect the motivations for engaging in deception to be due to self-interest. It appears, however, that this is not the case. In 1974, Goffman broadly distinguished motives for deception into those that benefited the person the deception was aimed at, and those that served the interests of the deceiver. Hample (1980) went on to devise a four-part taxonomy of the motives behind deceptive behaviour. The four categories were (1) lies that benefit the deceiver; (2) lies that are in the interest of the relationship; (3) lies that benefit the deceived, and (4) an ‘other’ category. Hample (1980) reported that two thirds of all self-described deceivers reported reasons that served their own interests. Lippard (1988) work extended the types of motivations individuals provide for engaging in deceptive behaviour, identifying eight primary motivations. These are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2
Primary Motivations for Deception proposed by Lippard (1988).

Motivation label	Description
Resources	Deception is used to acquire or protect resources and assets
Affiliation	Deception used to direct or manipulate interactions
Self-protection	Deception used to protect oneself (image, reputation) or avoiding self-disclosure
Conflict Avoidance	Deception used to avoid confrontation and conflict
Protection of Others	Deception used to protect another's esteem, prevent hurt or worry
Manipulation of Others	Deception used to control another's behaviour, or induce guilt or sympathy
Obligation Excuse	Deception used to remove or excuse oneself from a situation
Joke	Deception used to tease others

In a culture where people are expected to be agreeable and sensitive to other's feelings, whether to be truthful or not can present a dilemma in social interactions. Engaging in deception, therefore, may sometimes be used to benefit others, by avoiding conflict protecting another's self-esteem, and minimising hurt feelings (De Paulo et al., 1996), and may be a strategy that can be employed to temporarily resolve events that threaten the disruption of a relationship (Millar & Tesser, 1988). Millar and Tesser (1988) hypothesised that people lie when their behaviour violates the expectations that another person holds for them. From this perspective, deception is seen as a strategy that is employed as a response to violated expectations, rather than as a way to violate them. The authors found support for their predictions in role-play studies of parent-child and employer-employee relationships. They suggested that because close relationship partners have more expectations for each other, the likelihood that expectations will be violated and lies will be told is greater in close relationships than in other social interactions (Millar & Tesser, 1988).

DePaulo et al. (1996) investigated lying in everyday interactions. Using diary study data, they examined rates of lying, self-perceptions of lying, and types and characteristics of lies. They found that lying was indeed a common strategy in social interactions, and that individuals generally reported that their lies were not serious. The

researchers believed that lies are more frequently told to benefit oneself rather than to benefit others, but that these lies are told for psychological rewards, such as esteem and affection. By developing a taxonomy of lies, DePaulo et al. (1996) found that individuals tended to tell more self-centered lies than other-oriented lies, which supported their contention. They further suggested that lies are frequently told to avoid conflict and tension, and to minimize hurt feelings. This position was supported by Peterson's (1996) research, which found that individuals often use deception as a method of conflict avoidance. In a later study, DePaulo and Kashy (1998) looked at the difference between lies in close and casual relationships. They found that people told fewer lies to those they felt close to, and that these lies tended to be more altruistic. They suggested that because lies (and deception) may be used to benefit others, in that individuals lie to compliment others, pretend to agree, or in an attempt to show understanding, the underlying messages of these lies may be supportive instead of threatening. DePaulo and Kashy's (1998) findings that fewer lies were told in close relationships was inconsistent with the predictions made by Millar and Tesser (1988). Boon and McLeod (2001) suggested that the violated expectations model put forward by Millar and Tesser (1988) might predict serious lies more strongly than the everyday lies that DePaulo and Kashy (1998) focussed on. In such situations of serious lies, for example lying about infidelity, the truth (that the infidelity occurred) may present a greater threat to the relationship than a lie (Boon & McLeod, 2001).

The use of deception appears to have a number of motivations, and therefore serves a number of functions. While deception in romantic relationships is generally regarded as damaging, Kashy et al. (1996) suggested that the attitudes towards deception in romantic relationships may not be as disapproving. As Metts (1989) noted, dilemmas of truth and deception are often more complex in romantic relationships than in other relationship types, due to the interdependence of partners, both emotionally and behaviourally. Given that trust and honesty are often seen as characterising committed romantic relationships, one might expect that acts of deception meet with greater disapproval and heavier sanctions than in other contexts, due to the violation of fundamental relational standards and beliefs about the nature of one's relationship. Boon and McLeod (2001) noted, however, that attitudes towards the use of deception in a romantic relationship may be moderated by the effect of the truth on one's partner and on the relationship, such that deception may be seen as acceptable in some circumstances but not in others.

Turner et al. (1975) assessed the importance of honesty by asking participants about their beliefs regarding the importance of total honesty (complete disclosure) in romantic relationships. Respondents generally supported the idea that total honesty is important in a romantic relationship, however, only 27% of respondents endorsed the idea that a relationship's success depends upon total honesty. Sixty-five percent expressed the more conditional view of such success depending on the situation and circumstances. Further, 63% responded that deceiving one's partner is appropriate at times in order to protect the partner's feelings and self-esteem, and to avoid harm to the relationship. It was suggested that this seeming contradiction may be due to respondents viewing relational honesty in terms of remaining true to the maintenance of an ongoing relationship, rather than as disclosure about every aspect of behaviour. The researchers found that the more importance that was attached to honesty, the less likely they were to use falsification (i.e. lying) as a deceptive method (Boon & McLeod, 2001). Perhaps one way that relational partners avoid clearly violating relational standards regarding honesty is to use deceptive strategies that are less blatant than outright lying. Aquino's (1998) investigation into deception in dyadic negotiation found that one of the factors that affected a negotiator's willingness to engage in deception was the salience and importance of the standards governing deceptive behaviour. From a social exchange perspective, Cole (2001) suggested that deception might be an attractive course of action when the costs of being truthful outweigh the costs of being deceptive. Deception, therefore, may often serve the function of maintaining relational cohesion when driven by altruistic motives. Despite this, Peterson (1996) found that Australian students regarded all selfish acts of deceit between romantic partners as morally wrong.

If deception is to be viewed as a violation of an important relational rule and expectation, then it is important to look at the standard that deception violates. Loyalty and trust are seen as necessary requirements for an ongoing relationship, and accordingly, other concepts such as trust and honesty are commonly mentioned as fundamental features of committed relationships (Feldman et al., 2000; Holmes & Rempel, 1989). Research has demonstrated that levels of trust, satisfaction and commitment are indeed related (e.g. Fehr, 2001; Wieselquist et al., 1999). It is fair to say then, that relational partners expect honesty of one another in their interactions, and place their trust in one another to adhere to relational standards and values. To engage in the use of deception violates rules and expectations about trust and honesty in two ways: firstly, the act of deceiving has violated the expectation that one's partner will be honest;

but secondly, the deception may actually hide behaviour that constitutes a further violation of relational standards. In the most obvious example of infidelity, the act of deception violates expectations of honesty, but the behaviour that is covered by the deception, infidelity, is a further violation of a different relational standard – that of being faithful. Aquino (1998) investigated deception in the context of dyadic negotiation, and found that the importance of what he referred to as 'ethical standards' decreased the use of deception, and resulted in more equal agreements.

Although it may help avoid conflict and to minimise hurt feelings (Metts, 1989; DePaulo et al., 1996), deception invokes suspicion (Finkenauer & Hazam, 2000), which may serve to undermine if not violate any beliefs individuals hold about their relationships as being trusting, honest and committed (Fehr, 2001), and the discovery that one's partner has been deceptive is usually a disruptive event (Aune et al., 1998). It has been shown to increase uncertainty (e.g. Planalp & Honeycutt, 1985) and induce strong negative affect in the deceived party (Aune et al., 1998). As Aune et al. (1998) noted, once a deception is discovered, it must be accounted for and explained, and the consequences (such as decreased trust and commitment) addressed. Evidence suggests that relational variables such as satisfaction and commitment are indeed negatively associated with concealment and falsification (Cole, 2001).

Peterson (1996) investigated the use of deception strategies in intimate relationships, and predicted that lying to an intimate partner would diminish satisfaction. By examining scenarios and self-report measures, respondents who used deception in their relationships were found to be less satisfied. In addition, perceptions of a partner's dishonesty were also negatively related to satisfaction. In their investigation of the effect of disclosure and secrecy on marital satisfaction, Finkenauer and Hazam (2000) found that secrecy, as well as the perception of secrecy by one's partner, was negatively related to marital satisfaction. Cole (2001) described this effect of perceptions of a partner's behaviour on one's own outcomes in terms of principles of exchange and reciprocity. Reciprocity involves the tendency to match partner's contributions, both positive and negative, in order to avoid incurring debts. Cole (2001) argued that as the costs for being truthful increase, deception is more likely to occur. Conversely, when commitment and satisfaction decrease, people may be more likely to engage in behaviours that weaken the relationship. He therefore proposed that individuals would view a partner's use of deception as costly, and would result in lowered satisfaction and commitment, which was found to be the case (Cole, 2001). The costs associated with accusing one's partner

of deception, however, when combined with feelings of trust and commitment, may instead lead people to assume that their partners are telling the truth. This assumption of truth by one's communicative partner is known as truth bias (Levine & McCornack, 1992).

Consequences of deception for the deceived party may include hurt feelings, confusion, feelings of suspicion and doubt about one's partner, decreased self-esteem, strain on the relationship, conflict, and aggression. For the deceiver, one of the more obvious consequences is the loss of trust and respect. Being caught may also result in embarrassment or loss of face, loss of friendships or termination of the primary relationship, punishment, being known as a liar, and feelings of guilt (O'Hair & Cody, 1994). McCornack & Levine (1990) found among US college students, that only 24% of those who had discovered deception actually broke off the relationship. Attempting to reestablish trust in the relationship, and one's credibility after the discovery of deception can be one of the most challenging and difficult relational processes. While repair strategies are not a focus of this discussion, the strategies employed to deal with deception detection vary depending on the importance of the event to the deceived party and to the relationship (Aune et al., 1998). Aune et al. (1998) reported that those who engaged in deception, but reported being satisfied with their relationship, were more likely to use prosocial repair strategies after deception detection. Further, the use of prosocial repair strategies was positively related to an increase in trust and affection by the deceived for the deceiver, as well as increased intimacy.

Deception, as a violation of a relational standard, is a relational cost that has consequences for a relationship, for one or both partners. It has also been suggested that such a violation may also be used in response to obtaining negative outcomes from one's relationship (Cole, 2001). Cole (2001) found that the use of deception was related to lower levels of satisfaction and commitment, and that individuals received the most positive outcomes when they did not engage in deception, and when they perceived their partner did not engage in deception. From an organisational perspective, Trevino and Youngblood (1990) reported that managers adhere to ethical standards to the degree that such behaviour increases the likelihood of being rewarded, and that further, an organisation's norms and standards can restrain selfish behaviour. From a relational perspective, these findings suggest that adhering to relational standards helps to maintain positive relational outcomes, and having such standards helps individuals refrain from acting in selfish ways that may cause harm to the relationship.

This discussion has presented an overview of deception from the perspective of it being a major violation of relational standards. While it is used as a communication strategy and is commonly used in social interactions, deception is viewed as damaging, with negative consequences for romantic relationships. Various typologies describe the different strategies that are used to achieve deception, and a variety of motivations for deceptive behaviour can be identified. While they can be broadly seen as serving oneself or serving another, motivations identified by the research literature commonly reflect the desire to protect oneself, one's partner, or the relationship, and avoid confrontation and conflict. Deception, regardless of its motives, represents a violation of relational standards, in that it undermines the notions individuals hold of their relationships being trusting, honest and committed. There may be instances where deception of one's partner is seen as more acceptable, however, such as when being truthful may hurt one's partner, or the relationship itself. From a social exchange perspective, the use of deception is more likely to occur when the costs of being truthful are high. The use of deception for reportedly good intentions can perhaps be seen as a positive rule or expectation violation. Burgoon (1978; 1993) suggested that expectation violations can be both positive and negative, on the basis of the valence or meaning that is attached to the violation. While the act of deception is generally a clear violation of relational standards, in that it directly contravenes expectations of honesty and trust, the meaning attached to such a relational violation may ameliorate the effects that such a rule violation has on both the individual and on the relationship, as well as the responses to discovered deception.

Observing which behaviours result in sanction is one way to define a rule (Cupach, 1994). It is clear, then, that there are expectations and rules about honesty in relationships. Such rules and expectations about honesty, and the expectation to not be deceived, appear to be common, and fundamental to most relationships. This is evidenced by the research literature devoted to exploring the ways individuals deceive each other, the strategies they use to do it, and the study of negative outcomes for relationships, and responses to such behaviour. The importance attached to the expectation of honesty is further underscored by the fact that the research literature shows that to deceive or to be dishonest with one's partner commonly results in hurt to the deceived party, may be followed by sanctions, has negative effects on the relationship, and requires relational repair.

Violation Severity and Importance

Behaviours that constitute a violation of rules and expectations vary in their distance from the range of expected or agreed behaviours, that is, their degree of severity. Afifi and Metts (1998), in their discussion of expectation violations, suggested that most appear not to be extreme in their distance from expected/agreed behaviours. However, those behaviours that are more extreme, and therefore very much unexpected, are likely to be important, with significant consequences for the relationship, and this has been evidenced by discussions of infidelity and deception. When discussing the severity of a violation, however, it must be noted that not all couples will consider severity in the same way, as couples differ in the type of rules that are most fundamental to their relationship. Therefore, what might be a severe rule or expectation violation for one couple may not be for another, while for yet another couple, severity may only result from repeated violation of the rule or expectation in question, resulting in a cumulative effect (Afifi & Metts, 1998; Fitness, 2001; Metts, 1994). Further, the violation of rules or expectations by one partner may not be perceived as betrayal by the other partner. This may be due in part to accommodation processes, and an ability to cope with temporary situations of relational inequity. It also may be that the betrayed partner may not consider the violation sufficiently important to the relationship to feel betrayed (Jones & Burdette, 1994).

Many regard betrayal and transgressions as constituting ‘serious’ violations of relational standards (Couch, Jones, & Moore, 1999; Feldman et al., 2000). Jones and Burdette (1994) posited that the common feature of betrayals and transgressions is the violation of trust, commitment or expectations. Trust, commitment and loyalty are considered fundamental aspects of relationships, and trust and its related concepts such as honesty, are often ranked as central aspects of both friendships and relationships (Feldman et al., 2000; Jones & Burdette, 1994; Metts, 1994). Acts of betrayal violate this trust and communicate a message of relational devaluation, thus betrayal is seen as a serious transgression because it involves issues of fairness and justice, and has implications for another’s welfare (Feldman et al., 2000). Jones and Burdette (1994) suggested that if an individual interprets the actions of his or her partner as lessening their commitment to the relationship, then they are likely to feel betrayed. Metts (1994) argued that in any situation where violations can affect the viability or integrity of a relationship, acting contrary to relational standards is a transgression. It can be argued

that transgressions and betrayal are considered serious, therefore, as a result of the importance attached to the rule or expectation and its violation, in terms of its implications for the cohesion and integrity of a relationship. The more important a rule or expectation is in maintaining a relationship, the more serious its violation will be. The examples of infidelity and deception are a case in point. They serve specific functions that are important to the cohesion of the relationship, thus their violations often have negative consequences.

Some researchers suggest the presence of certain conditions can increase the severity of a rule or expectation violation. For example, both Vaughan (1986) and Metts (1994) noted that when infidelity is discovered, the public embarrassment, and knowledge that others were privy to knowledge of the affair, can add to the hurt that is experienced. Shackelford (1997) looked at infidelity under different conditions, and found that betrayal was more severe when infidelity occurred with one's rival or enemy, but it was most severe when it occurred with one's close friend. Not only is the standard of sexual exclusivity violated and such exclusivity lost, but it is lost to a competitor, or to an ally, which results in the disruption not only to one's primary relationship, but to another social relationship.

While transgressions are usually regarded as serious, with negative consequences, Finkel et al. (2002) suggested that betrayal can involve both minor and major infractions. Metts (1994) also noted the existence of minor transgressions, stating that such transgression can affect the stability of a relationship as a result of relational standards being violated, rather than as a result of the minor nature of the violation itself. This is an important point, but one that is not reflected in the research literature. Any deviation from an expectation or rule is technically a transgression, regardless of the importance or level of severity attached to the rule or expectation in question. However, it is the importance of the standard to the relationship, as well as subsequent interpretation of the violation, that determines its effects as negative or positive. The relationship literature has largely focussed on highly salient and negative violations, such as infidelity and deception, but the nature of more minor transgressions, and the rules and expectations that these minor transgressions violate, remains largely unexamined.

Another issue that remains unclear and unresolved is the role of intentionality. With serious transgressions such as infidelity and deception, there appears to be the implication that the perpetrators of such behaviours either knowingly or intentionally act contrary to their relationship rules and expectations (Finkel et al., 2002). By virtue of the

fact that expectations, by their very nature, are generally unknown or unstated in a relationship, it is possible that one relational partner may violate another's expectations without knowing. This would still be considered a transgression, as it deviates from what was expected, and in fact Elangovan and Shapiro (1998) would call such voluntary but unintentional behaviour *accidental betrayal*. In terms of the consequences of an unintentional expectation violation, these are unclear. They may be trivial or significant, but it should not be assumed that just because an implicit expectation was violated, and not an explicitly agreed-upon rule, then that expectation must be of lesser importance. As has been previously discussed, the importance of some relational standards may appear obvious and are taken for-granted, thus are never explicitly discussed, remaining as implicit expectations, while others, due to their importance, are in fact explicitly discussed. There is a danger, therefore, in assuming that relational partners always know they are violating a relational standard. Further, the violation of unstated expectations cannot be assumed to be less important as the violation of explicit agreed-upon rules.

The discrepancy between the perspectives of victims and perpetrators is a further regarding the importance of rules and expectations and evaluations of their importance and severity. The research literature that investigates the differences between victims and perpetrators is well-established (Jones & Burdette, 1994; Kaplar & Gordon, 2004; Kowalski, 2000; Kowalski, et al., 2003; Leary et al., 1998; Stillwell & Baumeister, 1997). In general, perpetrators tend to diminish the severity and negative impact of their transgressions. They emphasised mitigating circumstances, view the behaviour as more innocuous, and more benevolently motivated, while downplaying aspects that highlighted the behaviour's severity, or their responsibility (Leary et al., 1998; Stillwell & Baumeister, 1997). Kaplar and Gordon (2004) investigated motives for lie telling by having participants write accounts from the position of both the lie teller (perpetrator) and the lie receiver (victim). They found that when in the role of the perpetrator, as opposed to the victim, participants regarded their lies as more altruistic, justified by the circumstances, spontaneous, provoked, and resulting in guilty feelings. From the victim's perspective, Stillwell and Baumeister (1997) found an emphasis on details that highlighted the severity of the offence, and diminished the effect of any positive actions on behalf of the perpetrator. Such differences in perspectives between victims and perpetrators of relational events have implications for how rule and expectation violations are managed, and the subsequent effect they have on a relationship.

Effects of Rule and Expectation Violations

Evaluation of Violations

Once a rule or expectation is violated, the receiver, or victim, as they are referred to in the research literature, evaluates and interprets the violation, and this process determines their response, and the subsequent effects on the relationship. Boon and Holmes (1999) suggest that a number of stages are involved in the process of evaluation. Initially following a rule or expectation violation, there are observations and initial judgements made. Following this, further interpretations are made about the event's importance, severity, and how distressing it is. At a deeper level other factors contribute to the evaluation of the violation, including the wider context, extenuating circumstances, or reasons that may help explain the event. As a result of this evaluative process, the individual then determines the broader meaning of the violation for themselves and for the relationship.

Burgoon (1978; 1993), from her work on communication expectations, developed Expectancy Violation Theory in order to account for what happens when an expectation is violated in communication interactions. Although it was developed in regard to communication behaviours, it is pertinent to the discussion of relationship rules and expectations, in that it describes a process of evaluation and interpretation of violations. Further, it suggests that not all violations are negative; the outcomes and effects of a violation can vary depending on the meaning attached to the violation.

Expectancy Violation Theory (EVT)

Expectancy Violation Theory (EVT) focuses on these violations, and developed from an attempt to understand proxemic behaviour in communication interactions. EVT holds the fundamental tenet that people have expectations about their own and other's behaviour. When these expectations are violated, through behaviour that is sufficiently discrepant to, or distant from the expected behaviour so as to be recognised, arousal intensifies and the recipient of the violation engages in a process of cognitive appraisal (Burgoon, 1993; Floyd & Voloudakis, 1999).

According to EVT, people assign meaning to an expectancy violation, and the discrepancy or distance between the expected and enacted behaviour is what determines the meaning or valence of the violation. When an expectation is violated, if the interpretation of the event is positive, then the violation itself is considered positive,

while the reverse is true for a negative interpretation. As a result, violations are assigned a valence on a positive-negative continuum, based on overall judgements the receiver makes about the nature of the violation and the person who betrayed the expectancy. In general, EVT suggests that individuals react more strongly towards negative violations than positive ones (Burgoon, 1993; Floyd & Voloudakis, 1999).

One's communication partner also plays a role in the interpretation and evaluation of a violation. When interacting with others who are rewarding communication partners, EVT suggests that individuals will either reciprocate or compensate for increases and decreases in involvement, so that access to the rewards provided by the other person can be maintained (Floyd & Voloudakis, 1999). The identity of the communication partner further becomes an important part of the evaluation process when the violation is subject to multiple or ambiguous interpretations. People who are highly regarded are able to engage more in violations than those who might be not so well regarded. For example, those in more rewarding and satisfying relationships may allow their partner more leeway with regards to expressions of negative behaviour such as frustrations or disappointments without attaching a highly negative interpretation of this behaviour (Burgoon, 1993).

This analysis of EVT suggests that it may be complementary to social exchange principles, as well as providing insight into how individuals interpret violations of their relational standards. Once it is established that a violation of a relational standard has occurred, it must be addressed and responded to. EVT provides a framework for how violations may be evaluated, and how responses to and outcomes of violations are shaped. The research literature shows that EVT has obtained empirical support in a range of areas, including affection, eye-gaze, proximity, immediacy, conversational involvement, touch, and pleasantness (Floyd & Voloudakis, 1999).

Outcomes of Violations

The extent to which rule and expectation violations affect the stability of a relationship varies. Some violations may be more easily managed than others, and while some may actually increase understanding and cohesion, others may result in relationship termination (Buunk, 1980; Feldman & Cauffman, 1999; Metts, 1994; Roscoe et al., 1988). So, while violations do present a threat to relationships, they may not always result in the dissolution of the relationship. It remains unclear, however, why some individuals continue their relationships after a rule or expectation has been

violated, while others choose to terminate them (Roloff et al., 2001). EVT may help to explain these differences. Work by Boon and Holmes (1999) suggests that when faced with threatening situations, individuals respond by utilising a variety of processes aimed at protecting the views they hold about their relationships, while simultaneously dealing with the threat itself. Some individuals may engage in behaviours that attempt to confine the relational damage, and attempt reparation, which may keep the relationship intact, and increase understanding (Argyle & Henderson, 1984; Roloff et al., 2001). Level of commitment is one factor that facilitates constructive responses to relational rule and expectation violations. Drigotas et al. (1999) used the Investment Model of commitment to try and predict infidelity, and found that low levels of commitment predicted both sexual and emotional infidelity. Work by Roloff et al. (2001) suggests that those individuals who are highly committed to their relationships are more likely to evaluate the possible effect of their response to the betrayal on the future of the relationship. Further, those who are more committed, tend to respond to conflict or negative relational events more constructively than those who are less committed (Rusbult et al., 1991). Roloff et al (2001) examined the reasons for remaining in a relationship, and responses to relational transgressions. They found that staying in one's relationship because one is emotionally attached is related to positive responses to transgressions, while remaining because of a fear of losing one's partner is related to negative responses.

Several factors can determine the extent to which a rule or expectation violation affects a relationship: the severity of the violation as perceived by the victim; how explicit the rule was in the relationship; the motivations offered and attributions made about the violation, and understanding that occurs as a result of discussion of the violation (Metts, 1994; Cupach, 1994). Similarly, decisions about reproach or sanction also depend on a number of factors, including the severity of the offence, as well as characteristics of the transgressor (Cupach, 1994). There is evidence to suggest that the severity of the reproach or sanction given, is positively related to the severity of the violation (e.g. Schonbach, 1990; Cupach, 1994). In terms of transgressor characteristics, those who are seen to be competent, have a history of adherence, and are of a higher status tend to be able to deviate from the norms more than transgressors of lesser status (Cupach, 1994). Cupach (1994) claimed that when the transgressor is reproached or sanctions are given, they tend to be motivated by either the desire to repair the relational damage, to obtain revenge, or to discourage future transgressions. Some attributions, specifically of blame and intentionality, have been associated with some of the more

negative relational outcomes such as distress, escalation of conflict, dissatisfaction and criticism (Fincham, 1985; Fincham, Beach & Nelson, 1987; Vangelisti, 1994).

Like the literature specific to the violation examples of infidelity and deception, research on more general rule violations has generally pointed to negative relational outcomes such as decreased relational quality and satisfaction, decreased trust and respect, and less stability and support (Afifi et al., 2001; Davis & Todd 1982), and emotional responses such as anger, sadness, mistrust and disappointment (Feldman & Cauffman, 1999). Afifi and Metts (1998) suggested that violations of relational standards are generally considered to be disruptive, with negative consequences, because they increase uncertainty. Uncertainty may grow because behaviour that violates expectations is thought to increase the range of possible behaviours that may be enacted in future. As a result of a greater number of behavioural predictions that can be made, uncertainty is increased. Afifi & Metts (1998) however, suggest that while violations may increase uncertainty, they may also act to reduce it, by making clear attitudes or beliefs, or the value of the relationship. In fact, while acknowledging that extreme negative violations can have a significant negative impact on relational quality, Afifi and Metts (1998) propose that effect on relational quality may be minimal when the event actually reduces uncertainty, and when the event is not negative enough to result in relationship dissolution. On this note, while the revaluation of rules may result in decreased trust and commitment, or termination of the relationship, it may also result in a closer and stronger relationship as a result of greater understanding (Metts, 1994).

Summary of Rule and Expectation Violations

This discussion has attempted to highlight the utility of examining rule and expectation violations as a way of exploring and understanding the rules and expectations themselves. When relationship partners meet expectations and act in ways that are agreed, the relationship runs smoothly. When partners act in ways that are inconsistent with relational rules and expectations, violations are said to occur. Violations of relational standards cause relational disruption by causing distraction and prompting evaluation and interpretation of the event. The psychological literature refers to the violation of relational standards as betrayals and transgressions, and tends to focus on highly salient and negative instances of violations. Elangovan and Shapiro (1998) presented a model that identified five main features of betrayal: the behaviour is

voluntary; the expectations that are violated are pivotal to the relationship; expectations are mutually known; violation has the potential for harm; and violation is the result of behaviour, not thoughts. To use a social exchange description of violations, to betray suggests that the costs of adhering to a relational standard is too high. Violating a relational standard may be a way of prompting change in a relationship, or may be a way to resort a perceived inequity, but because of the potential for harm to the victim, betrayal also causes inequity by creating debt.

Just as dyads differ in their unique relational standards, what constitutes violations of these standards also differs. Researchers have identified a variety of behaviours that constitute violations. Infidelity and Deception are prototypical examples of highly negative violations that often result in harm to one's partner as well as to the relationship. Other examples of violations identified have included acts of criticism, lack of support, inconsiderate and insensitive behaviour, breaking promises or confidences, communication problems and disrespect and disregard, to name a few. Violations also vary in their severity and importance. Severity may reflect directly the importance of a relational standard to a relationship, but it may also be the result of repeated violations of a more minor relational standard. Violations are seen to be serious, with negative consequences because they undermine the qualities on which relationships are thought to be based, and because issues of justice and harm to another person are involved.

The violation of relational standards involves an evaluation process, in order to make sense of the unexpected behaviour and determine its meaning for the victim as well as for the relationship. Those in the communication field proposed Expectancy Violation Theory (EVT), which can be used to understand this process. According to EVT, all violations have a valence attached to them, which means that violations can be interpreted as either positive or negative. There are several factors that influence the extent to which a violation affects a relationship, including the perceived severity of the violation, the explicitness of the rule in the relationship, motivations, and attributions. Violations of relational standards have generally been associated with negative relational outcomes such as decreased relational quality, trust and respect, however it has been suggested that violations can strengthen a relationship as a result of increased understanding.

Implication of Violations for Rules and Expectations

After a violation, the transgressor may be subject to sanctions and/or reprimand, encounter new restrictions and rules, they may experience stricter conditions and have their behaviour more closely monitored, and have less room to make mistakes. (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998). A discussion of violations and its effects is, therefore, important to the study or rules and expectations in a number of ways. By studying violations and their impact and outcomes, researchers are able to identify what rules and expectations must have existed in the first place. Responses to violations on the part of the transgressor, such as attempts to repair relational damage, further confirm the existence of a rule, as the transgressor is attempting to ameliorate damage, and prevent negative judgements for deviating from an agreed or expected behaviour (Baxter, 1986; Shimanoff, 1980). An examination of violations and their severity further adds to our understanding about what rules and expectations are important to a relationship and its cohesion and maintenance, and how and why rules and expectations may differ in their importance.

Explicitness of a rule has been indicated in the management of transgressions, which has implications for how relational rule structures are conceptualised. Metts (1994) claimed that a couple's ability to discuss and manage a transgression is likely to be better if the rule in question was one that had been explicitly discussed within the relationship. The explicitness of a rule certainly means that it is easier to determine that a violation has occurred, whereas this is not always the case with implicit expectations. Explicitness may actually increase attributions of intentionality to the transgressor. Metts (1994) also suggested that explicitness might be related to severity, a point that has been previously discussed. She claimed that rules that are not explicit are often those that are taken for granted because they are so important and fundamental to the relationship that they never come up for discussion. Given the idiosyncratic nature of rules and the fact that they are specific to each dyad, this is a large assumption to make. Some couples, for example those who have been the victim of specific transgressions, may ensure that those standards that are so fundamental to their relationship are discussed and made explicit, in order to reduce uncertainty in the relationship.

The typologies and categories of relational rules and expectations developed by researchers, and the categories of violations that have been identified, show distinct similarities, which underscores the argument that examining violations helps to identify underlying rules and expectations. Common to both the typologies of rules and

expectations, and typologies of violations, have been themes of respect and consideration of one's partner, loyalty and fidelity, trust and honesty, the provision of support and help, time spent with one's partner and with others, and issues of privacy. By integrating the information provided by the research into both relational standards as well as their violations, a common set of relational standards may be able to be identified.

Chapter 4

POTENTIAL CORRELATES OF RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

Relational standards serve to regulate and co-ordinate behaviour, and maintain relational cohesion. Violation of relational standards often results in negative consequences for both partners, and for the relationship, such as a loss of trust, decreased satisfaction and commitment, and even termination of the relationship. If violations of relational standards are negatively related to relationship outcomes, then is adherence to relational standards associated with positive relationship outcomes? Given the function that relational standards serve, and the often dire consequences of their violation, it would be logical to expect a possible relationship between relational standards and both individual and relationship factors. Some of the potential correlates of relational standards are outlined below. The following discussion does not attempt to provide an exhaustive review of each of the areas discussed, as each is supported by its own area of research. The aim is to provide an overview of the concepts and how they might be related to relational standards.

Couple Variables

Trust

Trust is seen as a fundamental feature of committed relationships, and is therefore a factor often associated with romantic relationships and relational outcomes (Attridge, Berscheid & Simpson, 1995; Rempel, Holmes & Zanna, 1985). Despite its apparent importance to romantic relationships, it has been the focus of comparatively less research than other relational variables.

There are a number of definitions of trust (Rempel et al., 1985; Rempel, Ross & Holmes, 2001) in the empirical literature. Rotter (1980) saw trust as involving an expectation that the word or promise of another can be relied upon (Rempel et al., 1985), while others have described trust as the lessening of doubt and uncertainty in a relationship (Holmes & Rempel, 1989). From a social exchange perspective, trust can be conceptualised as the expectation that one's partner will act to maximise positive outcomes or minimise negative results for the benefit of both couple members (Bartle, 1996).

Trust is thought to develop over time as a result of past and present interactions. On the basis of repeated interactions, individuals evaluate their partners as reliable and dependable, such that the partner has shown they are motivated to fulfill the individual's expectations. In order to do this, individuals must be willing to disclose intimate information and rely on their partner. As a result, trust develops and is enhanced through perceptions of confidence in the strength of the relationship and security in the benevolence of the partner (Bartle, 1996).

Rempel et al. (1985) defined trust as the expectation that a partner is reliable and benevolent, and proposed a component model of trust consisting of three factors: Predictability, Dependability and Faith. Predictability is the assessment that a partner's behaviour is consistent, and is based on past experience. Dependability is the expectation that a partner will be honest and reliable, while Faith represents feelings of confidence in the relationship, and includes the belief that one's partner is fundamentally motivated to be caring and attentive towards their partner (Rempel, et al., 1985; Wieselquist et al., 1999). Rempel et al. (1985) used self-report measures from individuals and established couples, and found faith to be the most important contributor to trust. This model is based on the assumptions that trust is developmental, deriving from experience; that one must be seen as trustworthy in order to be trusted; and that trusting one's partner involves risk, by relying on the word of a partner, and acting in the future interests of the relationship (Jones, Couch & Scott, 1997).

There have been distinctions made between generalised trust, or one's general expectations of the motives of others and the world around them, and relational trust of a romantic partner. Focus on relational trust has been more recent, however. As relationship partners become more interdependent, trust is thought to increase, and partners become inherently motivated to engage in pro-relationship behaviours. When individuals perceive their partner to engage in pro-relationship behaviours, trust develops, which results in other positive outcomes, including increases in satisfaction, dependence, and investment in the relationship (Canary & Spitzberg, 1989; Holmes & Rempel, 1989; Wieselquist et al., 1999). Wieselquist et al. (1999) found that trust positively influences commitment through increases in dependence. Trust then, can be seen as a gauge of the strength of one's commitment, to the extent that trust develops from increased interdependence and the willingness to reject alternatives and invest more heavily in the relationship (Drigotas, Rusbult & Verette, 1999; Wieselquist et al., 1999).

The research literature has also established associations between trust and other relationship variables such as self-disclosure (Steele, 1991 cited in Jones et al., 1997), and conflict and its resolution (Canary & Spitzberg, 1989). Couch and Jones (1997) looked further afield, and sought to validate a measure of trust, and explore its associations with personality as well as relational constructs. They found that marital satisfaction and commitment were strongly related to trust. All three measures were negatively related to indices of betrayal, measured by the Interpersonal Betrayal Scale that has been previously discussed. Self-reports of betraying others were strongly correlated with generalised trust.

Individuals expect their partners to be caring, benevolent, and responsive to their needs (Zak, Gold, Ryckman, & Lenney, 1998). Therefore, romantic relationships involve fundamental expectations of honesty and trust, that serve to guide relational interactions, and result in increases in dependence and investments, and consequently increased satisfaction and commitment. Acts of betrayal, or violations of relational rules and expectations violate the tenets of trust and loyalty that are regarded as necessary to the functioning of a relationship, and jeopardise commitment to the relationship (Feldman et al., 2000). Such a position highlights the importance of trust in the discussion of relational standards. While there are specific relationship expectations of trust and honesty, trust is also required in the adherence to relational standards. Relationship partners need to trust that each will act in accordance with the standards of behaviour that have been established in the interests of the relationship. Trust, then, is most salient when there exists the potential for loss on the part of the trusting partner. As a result, the benefits of demonstrating trust must be considered in light of the potential risk of loss or betrayal (Naquin & Paulson, 2003).

Satisfaction

Satisfaction, which has also been referred to as stability, is defined in social exchange terms as how favourably one views their rewards from a relationship, and the extent to which one depends on the relationship for positive outcomes (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). One's satisfaction level determines the degree to which positive outcomes are obtained from one's relationship, and it is this ratio of rewards to costs in a relationship relative to available alternatives that is thought to determine dependence on, and therefore the stability of a relationship (Sabatelli & Cecil-Pigo, 1985).

Satisfaction is one variable that has a long history of study in the field of relationship research. It has consistently been associated with a number of individual and relationship variables. Of interest to the present research program are the associations between satisfaction and individual factors such as personality; between satisfaction and relationship variables such as commitment, trust and equity; and between satisfaction and relational transgressions. These areas, and their associations with relationship satisfaction, have already been addressed in other parts of this discussion, however, so will not be repeated here. The discussion of personality appears in this chapter.

Individual variables

Personality

Researchers have been interested in understanding how personality might influence interpersonal relationships for several decades. After a theoretical shift away from the study of individual differences and relationships (with the exception of attachment, which has remained a strong area of interest), there has been renewed interest in personality research over the last decade (Robins, Caspi & Moffitt, 2000). Gattis, Berns, Simpson and Christensen (2004) suggested this is partly as a result of the limitations of process-oriented work, but also due to the fact that individual differences between partners may help explain why some therapeutic interventions are successful with some couples, and unsuccessful with others (Epstein & Baucom, 2002). Robins et al. (2000) suggested there are a number of reasons the study of personality is important to relationship research (Robins, et al., 2000).

When individuals enter a relationship, they bring with them unique experiences and histories, some of which are partly captured by more stable personality traits. The study of personality in the context of relationships is also important as a way to understand the constituent parts of a dynamic system. While a relationship is an interdependent and dynamic system, it is made up of two personalities, therefore, better understanding of individual personalities can aid in understanding the broader system (Robins et al., 2000). Another way to address the role of personality in relationships has been to investigate how personality traits are related to relationship outcomes. Personality traits that are related to negative relationship outcomes may be regarded as potential risk factors for relationship distress (Kurdek, 1997).

Personality can be measured in a number of ways, but it is most frequently measured using the Big Five model of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1989; McCrae & Costa, 1994). In the Big Five model, adult personality is described by neuroticism (propensity to experience negative emotions), extraversion (propensity to experience positive emotions, sociability), openness to experience (reflects tendency towards curiosity and variety), agreeableness (tends to be trusting and considerate of others), and conscientiousness (inclined to be persistent and organised) (McCrae & Costa, 1994). Personality traits are generally considered to be stable during adulthood (McCrae & Costa, 1994).

While the five-factor model was not designed to measure dysfunction or pathology, certain personality traits have been associated with marital distress and instability. Of the five personality traits, neuroticism, which is variously referred to as trait anxiety, neuroticism, emotional instability and negative affectivity (Caughlin, Huston, & Houts, 2000) is the one trait most consistently linked to poor relational outcomes and relational distress, and has been found to be negatively related to a number of measures of marital adjustment (Buss, 1991; Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Kelly & Conley, 1987; Kurdek, 1997).

In a study that examined the influence of neuroticism and marital interaction on marital satisfaction, Karney and Bradbury (1997) found a negative association between trait anxiety and satisfaction, but no association with marital interaction. Others have also studied the effects on relationship satisfaction. Robins et al. (2000) investigated whether stable personality traits predicted partners' reports of relationship satisfaction and quality. They found that happiness for both couple members was predicted by the partner's low Negative Emotionality. The researchers also examined similarities in partners' responses and whether partners' responses matched, and found that men reported higher levels of happiness when in relationships with similar partners.

Lavee and Ben-Ari (2004) investigated the link between neuroticism and emotional expressiveness, and perceptions of marital quality, and found neuroticism to be a strong predictor of marital quality for both partners. Caughlin et al. (2000) reported findings from a 13-year longitudinal study, and found that neuroticism (or trait anxiety) was negatively associated with marital satisfaction. In their 40-year longitudinal study, Kelly and Conley (1987) studied married couples and found that neuroticism was a stronger predictor of marital quality than any other personality trait, and was able to predict divorce.

Gattis et al. (2004), in a study of distressed and treatment-seeking, and nondistressed couples, found that higher neuroticism, lower agreeableness, lowed conscientiousness and less positive expressivity were related to marital dissatisfaction. They were also interested in the similarity of partner's responses, however found that similarity did not predict relationship satisfaction.

Kurdek (1997) moved away from measures of relationship satisfaction, and investigated the link between personality traits and commitment. Using his six-factor model of commitment, he found that at least one of the Big Five factors predicted each of the six commitment factors. Overall, partners that scored high on neuroticism perceived there were many costs to being in the relationship, saw their relationship as not matching some internal ideal standard, perceived attractive alternatives to the relationship, considered that they had made many investments, and perceived many barriers to leaving the relationship. Given the demonstrated links between satisfaction and commitment, it is perhaps not suprising that neuroticism was found to be negatively related to commitment.

The large number of findings demonstrating the negative relationship between neuroticism and relationship satisfaction and quality are mostly consistent with a recent review of predictors of marital quality and stability undertaken by Karney and Bradbury (1995), which concluded that neuroticism has effects on marital quality more than other personality factors. None of the other personality traits demonstrate such consistent empirical evidence in their influence on romantic relationships, and findings regarding their associations are mixed. In terms of the negative influences of personality on relationship quality, Kelly and Conley (1987) found that high scores on extraversion predicted divorce for men, but not for women, as did low scores on agreeableness, while another study showed that high extraversion in either partner was related to relationship dissatisfaction (Lester, Haig, & Monello, 1989).

Kurdek (1997) suggested that if the Big Five accurately represents the major dimensions of adult personality, then based on the research literature, neuroticism appears to be the one personality trait that may potentially threaten relationship outcomes. He proposed that neuroticism might operate as a risk factor in that those with high levels of neuroticism are more likely to perceive and interpret information about their relationship in a problematic way. As a result, this may influence the way individuals interact with their partner, and other determinants of relationship functioning.

Adjustment

Adjustment is another dispositional factor that has been related to interpersonal relationships in the research literature, and as such, may have implications for relational standards in romantic relationships. Bagwell et al. (2005) investigated friendship quality and its associations with psychosocial adjustment in early adulthood. Their findings suggested that disagreement between friends' perceptions of their friendship successfully predicted adjustment measures such as interpersonal sensitivity, hostility and depression. The study by Bagwell et al. (2005) is particularly noteworthy due to the consideration given to the level of agreement between dyad members' scores, which is not often a focus of dyadic research. It suggests that consideration of the agreement between partner's responses may have implications for relational outcomes and couple functioning.

Feldman et al. (2000) looked at adjustment in terms its role in betrayal and transgressions in relationships. They investigated the role of self-restraint, tolerance of deviation, and self-reports of behavioural betrayal in the acceptance of two types of betrayal – that of a friend's confidence and sexual betrayal by a romantic partner. The results demonstrated that acceptance of both types of betrayal was related to a lack of self-restraint, low tolerance of deviation, and behavioural betrayal. In this study, tolerance of deviation refers to an attitudinal variable that represents the extent to which individuals view particular transgressions as wrong, while self-restraint refers to an individual's ability to control their impulses, inhibit aggression, act responsibly, and be considerate of others. Consequently, self-restraint may be a useful variable to investigate as a potential correlate of betrayal and transgressions.

Self-restraint is a measure of adjustment, and is one of two dimensions of the Weinberger Adjustment Inventory (WAI; Weinberger, Feldman, Ford, & Chastain, 1989). Weinberger and his colleagues (1989) used a hierarchical perspective to develop a measure of adjustment based on two dimensions: distress and self-restraint (Weinberger, 1997). The dimension of distress refers to an individual's subjective experience of distress, including the tendency to be dissatisfied, and to experience anxiety, depression, low self-esteem and low well-being. The restraint dimension, described above, describes socialisation and self-control. Interestingly, while they are measures of adjustment, distress and restraint reflect the Big Five factors of personality. In fact together, distress and restraint incorporate all of Big Five factors, with the exception of openness (Weinberger & Schwartz, 1990). Weinberger and Schwartz (1990) in their discussion of

the construction and correlates of the scale, note that the conceptualisation of the WAI is compatible with other personality models.

Summary

Individual factors such as personality and adjustment have been shown to be associated with aspects of relational functioning. While much is made of the interdependence between relational partners, and the importance of exchange and reciprocity in interactions for determining relational outcomes, research into personality and relational functioning demonstrates that individuals bring to their relationships unique attributes that have implications for they way the perceive relationship information, and interact with their relational partners. Individual attributes, then, may also play a role in the types of relational standards that couples develop in their romantic relationships.

Chapter 5
STUDIES IN THE PRESENT RESEARCH PROGRAM

Rationale and Aims

As the previous discussion has indicated, research on rules and expectations has been under-represented in the academic literature. Therefore, the overall objective of the research is to investigate the existence of rules and expectations in romantic relationships, how they are defined, how they come to exist, and the topics about which relationship partners have rules and expectations. Also of interest in this research program is the investigation of a potential correlate of the number of rules endorsed, discussed/expected; an individual measure of adjustment. The research literature that exists in the area of relational standards is limited due to its narrow focus on specific types of rule and expectation violations such as deception and infidelity. While deception and infidelity reflect expectations and standards of honesty and loyalty/fidelity respectively, there may be other behaviours, or expectations about behaviours, in other domains of couples' lives that are important to couple functioning.

Previous discussion has indicated that rules and expectations may be implicit, explicit, or arrived at through trial and error, and may be differentially important to a relationship and its functioning. A number of areas remain unclear, however. It is unknown whether there are differences between the types of rules and expectations that are implicit and those that are explicit, and the process of rule setting and how rules and expectations develop is yet to be fully investigated. Whether rules and expectations differ in their importance to a relationship, whether some are more likely to be violated and subsequently forgiven than others, and the relative impact of violating different rules and expectations, also remains unknown.

How relationship partners develop and negotiate their relationship rules and expectations, and whether there are differences in the types of rules and expectations that exist, can help to elucidate potential areas of difficulty or conflict in a relationship. This has further implications for improving communication, and helping couples work through difficult times. Knowledge about the relational standards that exist in one's relationship may also help relationship partners to better understand their partners as well as the relationship, and may help improve the ways in which they deal with the outcomes

of violations, both individually and as a couple. This is particularly relevant for couples trying to manage the painful consequences of violation, as new relational standards need to be negotiated, or old ones re-negotiated.

Examination of the literature on individual dispositional factors suggests these may also have implications for relational functioning, and measures of adjustment and personality have been shown to be associated with relational outcomes such as satisfaction. Interestingly, adjustment has also been found to be associated with the acceptance of a range of transgressions in relationships, which is particularly pertinent to the present program of studies.

The aim of the research was to explore what rules and expectations exist in romantic relationships, how they come to exist, and the role they play in the functioning of a relationship. A secondary aim was to also determine whether there is an association between the number of rules endorsed, discussed and expected, and an individual measure of self-restraint. In order to do address these aims, a series of cross-sectional studies was proposed that utilised both quantitative and qualitative methods. How each study was developed and conceptualised is outlined below.

Study 1

The current research program was based on previous work by the author (West, 2001) that investigated the use of deception in romantic relationships, and its effects on relational outcomes such as trust, satisfaction and commitment. While the negative associations between deception and relational outcomes were clear, and consistent with previous research in the area (e.g. Cole, 2001), it was apparent from this previous research that exactly how individuals use deception in their romantic relationships was still not well understood. This provided the basis for the development of the first study. The purpose of Study 1 was to investigate how individuals use different types of deceptive strategies in their romantic relationships, and how the use of different strategies is related to reasons provided for its use. What was also of interest was how the use of deception was perceived. Given the interdependent nature of relationships, and the ability of one’s own outcomes to affect a partner’s outcomes, the study also investigated perceptions of seriousness, that is, how serious the deceiver thought their deception was, as well as how the deceiver thought their partner would view the same deception. Research into victim and perpetrator accounts of hurtful incidents generally demonstrates

differences between victims and perpetrators in their perceptions of an incident, for example with regard to the justifications and motivations for the incident (e.g. Stillwell & Baumeister, 1997). The investigation of different deceptive strategies and the reasons provided for their use allows examination of the number of strategies individuals use, and how the use of multiple strategies may be related to the types of strategies used, as well as to the reasons provided for using deception. A questionnaire-based study was proposed, which utilised both quantitative (in the form of established psychological measures) and qualitative (in the form of open-ended questions) methods.

Study 2

While the first study in the present research program aimed to investigate how different deceptive strategies are used within romantic relationships, and motivations for the use of deception, what became clear is that deception is only one example of how individuals can act to potentially harm their relationship and their partner. This prompted a different approach to the research, resulting in a broader perspective, and consideration of the other types of acts that may result in harm to a partner and/or to the relationship. Within this broader perspective, deception was viewed as an act that violated certain standards or expectations about trust and honesty in relationships. If deception is an example of the violation of one relational standard, then it was thought other standards must exist. This prompted two questions: What rules and expectations exist in romantic relationships? How do they come to exist? On the basis of these questions, the purpose of Study 2 was to explore what rules and expectations exist in romantic relationships, and how they are developed, or how they come to exist. A qualitative study was proposed, utilising focus groups and couple interviews to gather data.

Study 3

Study 3 was developed from the results of Study 2 and the qualitative information that was obtained. The qualitative nature of Study 2 enabled the development of 16 rule and expectation categories, and it was these categories that formed the basis of Study 3. Study 3 aimed to obtain endorsement and validation of the categories, and explore the function that they serve in romantic relationships. In order to address these aims, participants were asked about features of the rule/expectation categories, such as how common rules and expectations in each category were seen to be, how important they

are, how much of a threat violation would present, and how forgivable violations would be. Also of interest in this study was the sources of, or influences on the rules and expectations that couples develop in their relationships. Based on previous work by Feldman and Cauffman (1999), a measure of adjustment, the Weinberger Adjustment Inventory (WAI, Weinberger, et al., 1989; Weinberger, 1997) was used to determine whether a relationship exists between individual adjustment and rules and expectations in romantic relationships. A survey study of individuals was proposed.

Study 4

On the basis of Study 3, which surveyed individuals, it was considered important to investigate the endorsement of the rule categories within a sample of couples. Heterosexual couples were used in this study in order to eliminate any potential confounding of results due to sexual orientation. Similarly to Study 3, Study 4 aimed to obtain endorsement and validation of the categories, and explore the function that they serve in romantic relationships, but in the context of a couple sample. Study 4 extended Study 3 by incorporating additional measures of individual functioning, specifically adjustment, personality and the tendency to betray. In addition, measures of couple functioning, specifically trust, satisfaction and commitment, were also used. The purpose of the addition of individual and couple variables was to examine whether rules and expectations were related in any way to either individual functioning, couple functioning or both. This would allow some conclusions to be drawn about how rules and expectations in relationships are structured, the function they serve, and how they may be associated with other aspects of functioning.

Chapter 6
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The choice of a research design is dependent on a number of factors, including the purpose of the research, the research questions, the period of time the research is being undertaken, and the resources available (Sommer & Sommer, 1991). In the current research program, each individual study developed out of arising questions from the preceding studies. The questions that arose tended to be broad questions about what, how and why, rather than specific directional hypotheses about the relationships between variables, which dictates the use of a mixed methods design (Creswell, 2003).

Qualitative versus Quantitative Methods

In previous research into the areas of relationship rules and expectations, deception, infidelity, betrayal and communication expectancy violations, a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods have been used, including observation, diary studies, vignettes, cross-sectional surveys, experimental methods, focus groups and narratives, to name some examples. The overarching purpose of the current research program was to gain an understanding of the rules and expectations that exist in romantic relationships, and to determine whether there were identifiable categories that could be further examined and tested for their relationship to other variables. In order to achieve this, it was appropriate to use both qualitative and quantitative methods. The rationale for using qualitative methods is that, according to Lyons (2000), qualitative research is "best undertaken when there is no very well-developed theory to enable the researcher to make specific hypotheses" (p.271). Qualitative methods aim to explicate the various viewpoints of participants, and therefore enable the development of theories that are pertinent to the participants (Lyons, 2000).

Creswell (2003) refers to the combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods as a mixed method design. There are a variety of ways to use mixed method designs, depending on the purposes for which the qualitative and quantitative methods are being used. Creswell (2003) describes a *transformative* strategy as being one whereby a researcher uses an overarching theoretical perspective in a design that can involve both qualitative and quantitative methods. The use of social exchange theory as a

guiding framework for a research program using both qualitative and quantitative methods would define the current research program as one that is transformative.

In addition, Creswell (2003) suggests that data collection can be *sequential* or *concurrent*. A sequential method is one where the findings of one method are expanded or elaborated upon by the use of another method, for example beginning with qualitative methods for exploratory purposes, followed by quantitative methods with a large sample. This broadly describes the current research program. Both Study 1 and Study 2 used descriptive information from participants and qualitative methods to explicate and explore participants' understanding of different phenomena, while Studies 3 and 4 used the qualitative results obtained and tested these quantitatively within larger samples.

Qualitative Methods

Focus Groups

Focus groups were one qualitative method employed in order to explicate participant's understanding of the form and function of relationship rules and expectations. The aim of focus groups is to explore participants' perceptions of certain issues. It is suggested that the very nature of focus groups mean people become more conscious of their own views when faced with opposing views and disagreement, which then prompts a more thorough analysis of those perceptions. Through this process, people develop their accounts to elucidate their beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviours (Millward, 2000).

In this way, focus groups are useful for hypothesis formulation and construct development. They can be used on their own as the main source of data, or in combination with other methods, the most common of which is the survey. The advantage of using focus groups in conjunction with the survey method is that surveys do not explore events or experiences in great depth, however its design must be underscored by assumptions or beliefs about that event and the meanings it has for people. Focus groups allow for discussion about these assumptions (Millward, 2000).

Interviews

According to Breakwell (2000), interviews are an "infinitely flexible tool for research" (p. 239). Like focus groups they can be used in the beginning stages of the research process in order to discover areas that may warrant further investigation, they may be used to pilot and/or validate instruments, or be used as the main source of data collection (Breakwell, 2000). Interviews have the advantage of providing quality data, where the context of the interview is controlled, misunderstandings can be corrected, and vague or inadequate responses can be clarified. As a result, an individual's values, beliefs and attitudes, as well as their contexts, can be drawn out (Judd, Smith, & Kidder, 1991).

Quantitative Methods

Surveys

While a combination of methods was used in the overall research program, a survey design was used to collect data for three of the four studies. Studies 1 and 3 used cross-sectional surveys that asked for both qualitative and quantitative information from participants. Study 4 used qualitative information from previous studies to obtain quantitative information, as well as established psychological measures. According to Breakwell (2000), questionnaires have the advantage of reducing interviewer bias, are low cost, and ensure feelings of anonymity. However there may be poor quality of data in comparison with interviews due to poor response rates, poor accuracy and completeness of responses, potential differences between responders and non-responders, and the inability to correct misunderstandings or clarify questions.

Other Design Considerations

Self-report and Sensitive Topics

Despite some of the criticism of self-report measures, particularly with regard to sensitive topics, such measures are still practical for measuring social attitudes, beliefs and other characteristics. The individual is expected to be the most reliable source of his or her feelings and beliefs when asked about attributes that they are willing to report on. Shrauger and Osberg (1981, cited in Judd et al., 1991) stated that because of this, self-

reports have been shown to be just as effective, if not more so, than other methods of evaluation in predicting a variety of criteria.

Some might suggest that asking participants about sensitive aspects of their romantic relationships, such as the violation or betrayal of trust and boundaries, or the use of deception, might impact upon the validity of responses. Social desirability may also be an issue, given the near-universal disapproval of betrayal (Feldman et al., 2000). By using a combination of research methods however, it is anticipated that there will be some convergence in the data. As noted by Ickes (1994), such integration of methodology may "enable researchers to demonstrate a convergence or triangulation of results across various methods…in ways that can help them to account for any discrepancies in the patterns of results obtained by one method versus another" (p.39).

Summary

The objectives of the present research program, namely to explore the existence of rules and expectations in romantic relationship, their form and function, and to investigate potential correlates of relational standards, are best met by a program of studies that use both qualitative and quantitative methods. Use of both methods will allow for a deeper understanding of the concepts, as well as triangulation and convergence of the data, thereby improving the validity of the results.

Chapter 7

STUDY 1: DECEPTIVE STRATEGIES, MOTIVATIONS AND PERCEIVED SERIOUSNESS

Introduction and Rationale

The dark side of relationships has long been an area of interest for those in the field of relationship research. In close relationships, it is inevitable that individuals will engage in behaviours that cause conflict and hurt, and in fact individuals often save their worst behaviour for their romantic partners. Collectively, these worst behaviours are referred to as aversive interpersonal behaviours (Kowalski, 1997).

Deception is one example of such an aversive behaviour, and has received much attention from researchers. While there has been debate about the ethics of deception, and it has been viewed as a potential threat to social values (Bok, 1978), more recent research has been more interested in elucidating how deception is used (e.g. Boon & McLeod), whether it is able to be detected (Levine & McCornack, 1992), why it is used (Peterson, 1996), and the effects of its use (Aune et al., 1998). As a result, deception has been shown to be common in interactions, and is used to achieve communication goals through the selective disclosure or omission of information. While it has been established that the use of deception is common, there are a variety of deceptive behaviours that can be used to deceive another individual (Boon & McLeod, 2001). While deception has been negatively associated with relational outcomes, its use in romantic relationships is still not clearly understood. Despite being generally considered to be immoral and negative, research has shown that individuals will often report altruistic motivations for their use of deception.

This study, as the first in the current research program, developed from previous work by the author (West, 2001), which investigated the use of deception in romantic relationships and its impacts on trust, satisfaction and commitment. Based on work by Cole (2001), who investigated the use of deception and its effects on commitment, the results of the author's (West, 2001) previous work showed that the use of deception and one's perceptions of a partner's deception, were negatively associated with decreased trust, satisfaction and commitment. While they were associated, specifically, one's own

deception did not predict of trust, satisfaction or commitment, while perceptions of a partner's deception predicted only trust for both partners. The results also demonstrated that one's own deception was positively related to perceptions of a partner's deception, and perceptions of a partner's deception were related to that partner's actual use of deception. The results of this study highlighted the negative consequences deception has for romantic relationships, specifically trust, but they also highlighted the reciprocal nature of romantic relationships. Despite this, the study did not address the different strategies, or the ways in which individuals use deception, as only an overall measure of deception was used. Further, while the study examined an individual's perceptions of their partner's deception, it did not investigate the seriousness with which individuals viewed the use of deception. Given the reported negative relational consequences of deception, it is important to investigate how individuals view their own use of deception, as well as how they think their partners might view that same use of deception. Tied up with perceptions about how serious individuals view their use of deception, is the issue of justification, and the reasons individuals provide for their use of deception. While previous research has suggested individuals often report altruistic motives for engaging in deception, such as protecting a partner from hurt feelings, or protecting their esteem, protecting the relationship or avoiding conflict, it would be helpful to examine reasons individuals provide for their deception.

This study, therefore, bring together different areas in the study of deception, and provides an exploratory study of the deceptive strategies that individuals use, the potential threat or perceived seriousness of the use of deception in one's relationship, and the motivations individuals provide for engaging in deception. A number of research questions were asked. Regarding the use of deceptive strategies, the following questions were posed: **RQ1:** Which deceptive strategies were most commonly used? **RQ2:** How many strategies do people use? **RQ3:** Is the number of strategies related to the use, or perception of, deception? **RQ4:** Is one's own perception of seriousness related to how individuals rate their perceived partner's seriousness? Regarding the reasons that individuals provide for their deceptive behaviour, the following questions were posed: **RQ5:** What kinds of reasons are given for engaging in deception? **RQ6:** How frequently are they reported? **RQ7:** Do males and females differ in the reasons they give for using

deception? **RQ8:** Are the deceptive strategies people engage in differentially related to the reasons given for engaging in deception?

Method

Participants

Two hundred and eighteen individuals (104 male and 114 female) with a mean age of 21.2 years (*SD*= 6.24), completed surveys. Of these participants, however, only those in current relationships formed the basis of this study.

Participants were 152 individuals (73 male and 79 female), who were a combination of undergraduate psychology students from an Australian university, participating as a course requirement, and the general population. The overall mean age was 21.73 years (*SD*= 6.93, range 18 to 52 years), while the mean age for the females was 21.05 years (*SD*= 6.05), and 22.47 years (*SD*= 7.74) for the males.

Of the sample, 79.6% (*n*=121) reported that they were exclusively dating, 7.9% (*n*=2) reported de facto (common law) relationships, 7.2% (*n*=11) were married, 2% (*n*=3) engaged, and 3.3% (*n*=5) reported being in 'other' relationships, the most commonly reported being non-exclusive dating relationships. The mean length of relationship was 30.5 months (*SD*=52.49), while the mode was 6 months and the median was 18 months.

Materials

The questionnaire contained a demographics page, followed by a number of measures that were part of a wider data gathering exercise. Of the measures presented to participants, only the deception scale (Cole, 2001) was used for the current study. A single order of presentation was used for the measures in the questionnaire, a copy of which is contained in Appendix B, along with the Information Letter to participants.

Demographics.

The first section of the questionnaire contained questions regarding the participant's age and sex, type and length of relationship, number of children and country of birth.

Deception.

Deception was divided into two parts: one's own deception and perceptions of a partner's deception, but were presented as one measure. The questions contained in the deception scale reflect various types of deceptive behaviour, including lying, withholding information or omission and secrecy, thus giving an overview of the use of deceptive behaviour.

One's own deception was measured using a 9-item scale developed by Cole (2001) to assess how often one uses deception in his/her relationship (e.g. "*I try to hide certain things I have done from my partner*"). The items were rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1=*strongly disagree*, 7=*strongly agree*) and were found to have acceptable reliability, with a Cronbach alpha of .84 (Cole, 2001). In the present study, reliability analysis of one's own deception indicated a Cronbach alpha of .72.

Perceived partner deception was measured using a 4-item scale developed by Cole (2001) and was developed to determine how often people perceive their partners engage in deception. The items (e.g. "*I think that my partner tries to mislead me*") are rated on a 7-point scale (1=*strongly disagree*, 7=*strongly agree*), and the reliability was acceptable with a Cronbach alpha of .80 (Cole, 2001). The present study obtained a Cronbach alpha of .86 for the perceived deception by one's partner. Items 1, 3, 7 and 15 were reverse-scored. The items for perceived partner deception were inter-mixed with the items for one's own deception, and presented as one measure.

Deceptive strategies.

Participants were then asked questions about what types of deceptive behaviour they have used in their relationships. Based on work by Boon and McLeod (2001), five strategies of deception were presented and participants were asked to indicate all those strategies they have used in their relationship with their partner. The strategies were (1) *State something as true that is not true*; (2) *Make a true statement but say it in a way to make your partner believe it is not true*; (3) *Communicate an untrue message non-verbally*; (4) *Deliberately omit information or fail to mention something so as to lead your partner to a false belief*, and (5) *Exaggerate or distort information so as to lead your partner to a false belief.*

Seriousness.

Participants were then asked about the potential threat the use of these strategies may pose to the relationship, from their own perspective, as well as their partner's.

Firstly, participants were asked to rate the seriousness of any deception used in the last week, in terms of the potential threat to the relationship. Participants were then asked to rate the seriousness from their *partner's* perspective, or how they think their partner would view that same use of deception. Both of these questions were rated using the following categories: (1) *All were serious*; (2) *Mostly serious, few trivial*; (3) *Half serious, half trivial*; (4) *Mostly trivial, few serious*, and (5) *All were trivial* (Boon & McLeod, 2001, p.468).

Procedure

Approval was sought and obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University (see Appendix C for approval notification). Undergraduate psychology students had two roles in the present research; one as a participant, and the other as a researcher. As a participant, students were required to complete a questionnaire about how deceptive strategies are used in relationships, as part of a course requirement. An alternative activity was provided for those who declined their consent to participate. On completion of the questionnaires, in order to maintain confidentiality, students returned their consent forms and questionnaires separately.

As researchers, students were required to recruit one member of the general population, of the opposite gender and of similar age to themselves, to fill in the same questionnaire. Again, in order to maintain confidentiality, participants returned their consent forms and questionnaires separately, and in sealed envelopes.

Upon completion of the questionnaires, participants were debriefed as to the nature and purpose of the study.

Results

All analyses were conducted using SPSS version 14.0. Data screening of variables and scales revealed only two outliers with standardised scores of >3.29 (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2001). Standard scores may range between 3 and 4 in samples sizes larger than 80 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1995). Relationship length was the only variable that had outliers greater than 4. In this case, the mean was compared with the 5% trimmed mean, which revealed that the outliers did not have a strong influence on the mean. It was expected that relationship length would have a large range and variance, and consequently the outliers were not removed.

Normality of the variables was assessed through histograms, normal Q-Q plots, detrended Q-Q plots, and skewness and kurtosis. The normality plots revealed that for the most part, the variables approximated normal distributions. The statistics for skewness and kurtosis were mostly within the accepted -1 to +1 range. Age and length of relationship were expected to be non-normal distributions. The skewness statistic for age was 2.60, and kurtosis was 6.49, while for relationship length skewness was 3.89 and kurtosis was 16.06. Perceived Partner Deception was also just outside the acceptable range, with a skewness statistic of 1.27 and kurtosis statistic of 1.68. The appropriate square root or logarithmic transformations were attempted, but did not approach normality, therefore the variables were not transformed.

The number of missing participants (*N*s) was low across variables and analyses, with the highest number of missing data points being n=5 for the variables regarding seriousness of deception, and perceptions of how serious one's partner would view the deception. Given the low number of missing data points, they were not estimated.

A series of analyses were performed in order to address the research questions posed. The results are presented below by research question.

RQ1: Which deceptive strategies are most commonly used?

Of the five strategies, "*communicating an untrue message non-verbally*" (67.8%, n=103), and "*presenting a true statement in a way to imply it is not true*" (63.8%, n = 97) were the strategies reported most frequently. These were followed by "*omitting information or failing to mention*" (52%, n=79), "*stating something as true that is not*", or lying (41.4%, n=63), and "*exaggerating or distorting information*", which was reported by 36.8% (n=56) of respondents. The frequency of each strategy for both males and females followed the same pattern. Chi square analysis was used to determine if there were any gender differences for each of the deceptive strategies. Results showed no significant differences between males and females across each of the strategies.

RQ2: How many strategies do people use?

Of the sample, 3.9% reported that they used none of the strategies, 21.7% reported using one strategy, 27.0% used two strategies, 20.4% used three strategies, 9.9% used four strategies, and 17.1% used all five strategies. Most individuals, therefore, reported using two strategies, followed by the use of one or three.

Table 3
Types of Deception Used for Individuals Who Use Multiple Strategies

Strategy	Number of strategies used				
	1	2	3	4	5
A: Stating something as true that isn't (lying)	5	8	15	9	26
B: Presenting a true statement in a way to imply it is not true	12	22	25	12	26
C: Communicating an untrue message non-verbally	13	26	24	14	26
D: Omitting information or failing to mention	2	18	19	14	26
E: Exaggerating or distorting information	1	8	10	11	26

With the exception of those respondents who used all five deceptive strategies, Table 3 presents the types of strategies by number of strategies used. Those who reported using one or two strategies reported that their top two strategies of choice were "*Communicating an untrue message non-verbally"*, closely followed by "*Presenting a true statement in a way to imply it is not true"*. Following this, the one-strategy group chose lying, followed by omission then exaggeration, while the two-strategy group chose omission, followed by lying and exaggeration equally. Those who reported using three strategies most commonly used the same top two strategies as the one-strategy and two-strategy groups, but in the reverse order. The three-strategy group most commonly used "*presenting a true statement in a way to imply it is not true*" followed by non-verbal communication of an untrue message. Following these, they used omission, lying, and then exaggeration. Those respondents who reported using four strategies reported that "*communicating an untrue message non-verbally*", and "*omitting or failing to mention information*" were equally their strategies of choice. These were followed by non-verbal communication of an untrue message, exaggeration then lying. For this group, however,

the frequency of strategies used was more evenly spread. Interestingly, none of the groups followed the same pattern.

An independent groups t-test, used to determine if there were any gender differences in the number of strategies used, found that the number of strategies does not appear to be gender-related. Analyses also revealed that length of relationship or relationship type were not significantly related to the number of strategies used.

RQ3: Is the number of strategies related to the use, or perception of, deception?

Independent t-tests were run in order to determine the existence of any gender differences in the use of deception. The results revealed no significant differences between males and females in their use of deception (t (150) =.15, p=.88), nor their perceptions of deception (t (150) =1.03, p=.30).

A hierarchical regression was run using deception as the predictor variable and number of strategies as the criterion variable. One's own deception was entered at the first step of the regression, followed by perceptions of a partner's deception at the second step. Results indicated that one's own deception significantly predicted the number of strategies used, F (1,150) =51.70, p<.001, uniquely contributing 25.6% of the variance. Perceived partner deception was not a significant predictor of the number of strategies used, uniquely contributing only 1.6% of the variance. In the overall model, beta weights confirmed that one's own use of deception was the most important predictor of the number of strategies used (β=.44, t (151) =5.66, p<.001).

RQ4: Is one's own perception of seriousness related to how individuals rate their perceived partner's seriousness?

Participants were asked to rate the seriousness of the use of their deception in two ways. They were asked their own view of how serious their use of deception was, but they were also asked to rate how they think their partner would view that same use of deception. Cross tabs and chi square analyses were run between an individual's rating of their own perception of seriousness, and their rating of how they think their partner would view the seriousness of the deception. Results indicated that 39 individuals reported that they and their partners would share ratings, that is, rate the use of deception as equally serious. The majority, 64 individuals, reported that their partner would see the use of deception as more serious than they would, while 10 reported they would see the

use of deception as more serious than their partner. Significant chi square results $\chi^2(16, N=113) = 65.59$, $p=.03$, indicated that individuals thought their partners would rate the use of deception as more serious than they would.

Two-way ANOVAs, with gender and number of strategies as independent variables, and seriousness (both own rating and perceived rating by partner) as the dependant variable, indicated that there were no significant main effects or interaction effects.

RQ5: What kinds of reasons are given for engaging in deception?

Of all the reasons provided by participants, there were 28 types of reasons provided. On the basis of previous research (DePaulo et al., 1996; Metts, 1989), seven broader categories of reasons were identified: Conflict Avoidance ("To avoid a fight"); Protecting Self ("Because I did something wrong"); Protecting Relationship ("To protect the relationship"); Protecting Partner ("To protect my partner's self-esteem"); Maintaining Impressions ("To hide my true self"); Provoking Partner ("To annoy my partner"); and Manipulation ("To get my own way").

RQ6: How frequently are they reported?

Descriptive statistics showed that Protecting One's Partner was the most commonly reported reason given for engaging in deception, with over half of the sample reporting it. Conflict Avoidance was the second most commonly reported reason, followed by Protecting Self and Maintaining Impressions. Provoking Partner was the least commonly reported reason. The frequencies and percentages are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Frequency and Percentage of Reasons provided for Use of Deception

Reason category	Frequency reported	Percentage reported
Conflict Avoidance	35	23.0
Protecting Self	22	14.5
Protecting Relationship	12	7.9
Protecting Partner	66	43.4
Maintaining Impressions	22	14.5
Provoking Partner	7	4.6
Manipulation	10	6.6

RQ7: Do males and females differ in the reasons they give for using deception?

A chi square analysis was run for each reason category and gender to determine whether there were any gender differences in the reasons provided. Results revealed no significant differences between males and females in the reasons given for engaging in deception.

RQ8: Are the deceptive strategies people engage in differentially related to the reasons given for engaging in deception?

In order to answer this question, for each of Boon and McLeod's (2001) deceptive strategies that were presented to participants in the current study, crosstabs results were obtained to look at how many respondents who used each strategy reported the various reasons. Chi square analyses were then performed between the specific deceptive strategy and each reason category. Table 5 shows that crosstabs results for strategy used with reasons given.

Table 5
Frequency of Reasons for Deception for each Deceptive Strategy

Deceptive Strategy Used	Reason Category	Yes, gave as reason	No, did not give as reason
Lying	Conflict Avoidance	19	44
	Protecting Self	15	48
	Protecting Relationship	3	60
	Protecting Partner	30	33
	Maintaining Impressions	8	55
	Provoking Partner	3	60
	Manipulation	3	60
Making a true statement in a way that implies it is true	Conflict Avoidance	21	75
	Protecting Self	18	78
	Protecting Relationship	10	85
	Protecting Partner	46	50
	Maintaining Impressions	13	83
	Provoking Partner	4	92
	Manipulation	9	87
Non-verbal communication of an untrue message	Conflict Avoidance	27	76
	Protecting Self	17	86
	Protecting Relationship	8	94
	Protecting Partner	54	49
	Maintaining Impressions	14	89
	Provoking Partner	3	100
	Manipulation	6	97
Omission or failing to mention	Conflict Avoidance	24	55
	Protecting Self	17	62
	Protecting Relationship	2	76
	Protecting Partner	39	40
	Maintaining Impressions	8	71
	Provoking Partner	3	76
	Manipulation	2	77
Exaggeration or distortion	Conflict Avoidance	16	40
	Protecting Self	14	42
	Protecting Relationship	2	53
	Protecting Partner	27	29
	Maintaining Impressions	9	47
	Provoking Partner	2	54
	Manipulation	4	52

Note: totals vary as frequencies reflect only those who reported actually using the strategies. Those that reported not using the strategies are not represented.

For each of the deceptive strategies, respondents consistently provided the reasons of Protecting Partner as the most reported reason for deception, followed by Conflict Avoidance and Protecting Self. For each strategy, more respondents reported not providing the reason than providing the reason. For the reason category of Protecting Partner however, relatively equal numbers of respondents endorsed both providing and not providing that reason.

Only a small number of significant chi-square results were obtained. For the strategy of lying, or stating something as true that is untrue, significant chi-square results (χ^2 (1) = 6.46, p<.05) were obtained for Protecting Self as a reason, indicating that those who used lying as a strategy, tended not to report Protecting Self as a reason. For the strategy of communicating an untrue message non-verbally, significant results for Protecting Partner (χ^2 (1) = 6.84, p<.01) indicates that those who used this deceptive strategy tended to report Protecting Partner as their reason.

For the strategy of omission, significant results were obtained for a number of reason categories. Significant results indicate that those who used omission did not tend to report their reasons as Protecting Self (χ^2 (1) = 5.43, p<.05), Protecting the Relationship (χ^2 (1) = 7.42, p<.01), or Manipulation (χ^2 (1) =5.15, p<.05). For the strategy of exaggeration/distortion, significant results for Protecting Self indicate that those who used this deceptive strategy did not tend to report Protecting Self as a reason (χ^2 (1) =6.85, p<.01).

Discussion

The present study provides valuable descriptive information about how people use deceptive strategies in their relationships, and how the reasons people give for using deception are related to the way they actually use deception. With regard to the types of deceptive strategies people use, the results demonstrated that few individuals rely on one deceptive strategy, instead using a variety of different strategies of deception. Further, the results demonstrated that those who reported using higher levels of deception in their relationship also reported using more deceptive strategies, and that actual use of deception was related to the number of strategies used. Regarding the reasons individuals gave for their deceptive behaviour, a number of categories were identified, but there

were mixed results regarding how these reasons were related to the types of deceptive strategies that individuals employed.

The finding that "*communicating an untrue message non-verbally"* and "*presenting a true statement in a way to imply it is not true"* were the most frequently reported deceptive strategies is inconsistent with the results obtained by Metts (1989) and Peterson (1996). Metts (1989) found that falsification was the most commonly reported deceptive strategy, while Peterson (1996) found that white lies were most commonly used. Peterson, however, used a different taxonomy of deception that included omission, distortion, half-truths, blatant lies, white lies and failed truths. While she found that white lies were the most frequently reported, blatant lies, which could be seen to be the equivalent of Metts' (1989) falsification strategy, was the least commonly used strategy. While the taxonomy used in the current study, proposed by Boon and McLeod (2001), was based on work by Metts (1989), it was a refinement of the four categories (falsification, omission, distortion and escape) that Metts proposed. It appears then, that people tend to favour deceptive strategies that are more subtle, and that do not involve directly falsifying information. While the current study did not investigate this issue in more detail, it may be that when attempting to deceive one's relationship partner, subtle strategies of deception may be more believable to someone who has intimate knowledge of their partner, or it may be that the use of more subtle strategies is more easily explained or justified if found out, and therefore less costly to the relationship.

Despite the fact that people tend to use more subtle strategies of deception, most people do use some form of deceptive behaviour. Only a small proportion of the sample in the current study reported that they did not engage in any of the deceptive strategies. This would appear to confirm the assertion that deception is commonly used in our social communications, not only with strangers, but also with those close to us (DePaulo & Kashy, 1998; DePaulo et al., 1996; Kashy & DePaulo, 1996). It is difficult to know, however whether this small proportion of people who reported not using deception accurately represents those people who actually do not use deception, or whether the study was subject to social desirability biases. The current study directly asked participants about how they deceive their relational partners, and given the likelihood that people would like to think they do not engage in deception with their partners, social desirability biases are likely to have some impact.

Of the majority of participants that did engage in some kind of deceptive behaviour, it was interesting to note that they tended to use multiple strategies. Individuals, once they do engage in deception, appear to employ a variety of strategies to achieve their motives. While most respondents tended to use between one and three strategies, there was a decrease in the number of people who reportedly used four strategies, then an increase again for those who reportedly used all five strategies. Replication with a larger and more representative sample may shed some light on the pattern of use when individuals report using multiple strategies.

When the types of strategies used in multiple strategy use was examined, "*presenting a true statement in a way to imply it is not true"*, and "*communicating an untrue message non-verbally"* were the strategies favoured by individuals who reported using one, two or three strategies. For those who used four deceptive strategies, "*communicating an untrue message non-verbally"*, and "*omission"* were the most favoured. Using a larger sample would help to clarify the differences in strategy selection of those who use different numbers of strategies, but it may be that individuals who use fewer strategies tend to choose strategies that appear to be less serious or more subtle. As the number of strategies an individual employs increases, it may be a case of 'in for a penny, in for a pound', whereby the use of deception increases both in the ways in which it is employed, and in seriousness. For an individual who is using a larger number of deceptive strategies, one would expect that he or she is being deceptive about a wider range of topics, and perhaps inevitably, topics that are more serious or relationship-threatening than those individuals who employ fewer strategies.

One's own use of deception was a composite score that represents an individual's overall reported use of deception in their relationship, with higher scores representing higher levels of deception. It also represents the various deceptive methods, and is not focused on one specific deceptive strategy. It is logical to expect that an increase in one's use of deception would be reflected in an increase in the number of strategies they use, which was demonstrated by the results. Therefore, the more you deceive your relationship partner, the more strategies you use to do so. This provides some support for the assertion made earlier that those who use more deceptive strategies are likely to be deceptive about a wider range of topics, and are therefore using deception more. It was surprising however, that perception of a partner's deception was not predictive of the number of strategies used. Given the interdependent and reciprocal nature of

relationships, particularly romantic relationships, one would perhaps expect that individuals would reciprocate the behaviour they perceive their partner to be engaging in. In this study at least, individual's strategy selection is based not on what they perceive is happening in their relationship, but on their own behaviour, that is, on their own levels of deception. This is in contrast to the literature on relational variables such as trust and commitment, where social exchange and reciprocity dictate that trust and commitment increase once one's partner demonstrates that they are trustworthy and committed to the relationship (Holmes & Rempel, 1989; Rusbult & Buunk, 1993; Wieselquist, et al., 1999). Generalising this to the use of deception may not be as straightforward as expecting number of strategies used to increase based on perceptions of a partner's deception. It is likely, and research has shown that individuals tend to assume their partners are being truthful (Levine & McCornack, 1992). In addition, when faced with a partner's negative behaviour, individuals engage in a number of behaviours and cognitive processes, such as accommodation, or maintenance behaviours (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993; Rusbult et al., 1991) that serve to make sense of the partner's behaviour in a way that restores equity and does not damage the relationship.

Participants were asked about how they viewed their use of deception, and how they thought their partners would view that same deception. Individuals tended to think that their partners would view the use of deception as more serious than they themselves would, which suggests that reciprocity plays a role in how romantic partners use deception. This finding is consistent with research on victim and perpetrator accounts in various situations, where perpetrators are generally found to minimise the seriousness of the event in comparison with victims (Kowalski, 2000; Kowalski et al., 2003; Stillwell & Baumeister, 1997).

There were surprisingly few gender differences found, however it may be that if they do exist, they exist elsewhere, such as in the topics that individuals deceive their partners about. Further study would be able to clarify whether gender differences exist regarding the topics people deceive their partners about, and how these topics may be related to other aspects of deceptive behaviour.

From individual's responses to open-ended questions, seven categories of reasons for deceptive behaviour were formed, using categories developed from previous research as a guide (DePaulo et al., 1996; Metts, 1989). The seven categories identified were Conflict Avoidance, Protecting Self, Protecting Relationship, Protecting Partner, Maintaining Impressions, Provoking Partner, and Manipulation. Of these, Protecting

One's Partner was the most commonly reported reason for engaging in deception, while Provoking One's Partner was the least commonly reported reason. Protection seemed to be the main theme in participants' responses, with vindictiveness or intentional hurt being the least reported reasons. The finding that Protecting One's Partner was the most commonly reported reason is consistent with Metts' (1989) results. Metts did note however, that the predominance of this category was largely a result of the frequency of the specific reason "to avoid hurting partner", which reflects the responses provided in the current study. This finding was inconsistent with the results presented by DePaulo et al. (1996), but as these researchers noted, social relationships rather than close relationships were the focus of their data collection.

The finding that Protecting One's Partner was the most common reason category would also seem to reflect, from a social exchange perspective, the reciprocity involved in dyadic behaviour. As Cole (2001) suggested, if the cost of being honest is too high, for example causing hurt to one's partner or causing conflict, engaging in deception may be an attractive alternative.

Surprisingly, the results did not show any significant differences between males and females in reasons they gave for engaging in deception. While DePaulo et al. (1996) discussed social relationships, they did find gender differences in reasons for lying. Their results indicated that women told more other-oriented lies, and less self-centered lies than did the men. Within close relationship however, the interdependence, and the more intimate knowledge of the partner, may mean that men and women are more similar in their reasons for deceiving, particularly, if as Metts (1989) suggests, the goal is to preserve the relationship rather than pursuing self-serving interests, and to maintain relational cohesion.

In terms of how deceptive strategies were related to the reasons provided, there were mixed results. Those who used deceptive strategies such as lying, exaggeration or omission, tended to not report that they were protecting themselves. Further, those who used omission further reported they were not protecting their relationship, nor being manipulative. The only deceptive category for which the results indicated that people were providing a specific reason, was for the strategy of non-verbal communication of an untrue message, where individuals reported they used this strategy to protect their partner. Perhaps individuals who use lying, exaggeration and omission as deceptive strategies reason that if they are to use more overt deception, then there better be a good reason, such as protecting someone else as opposed to oneself, if there is ever the need to

explain themselves. These mixed results need further clarification, which may involve refining the categorisation of reasons people provide for their deception. It could be argued that even though individuals may report using deception to protect other people or to protect the relationship, the underlying motivation is still to indirectly protect the self from harm; either from harm to the self as a result of upsetting one's partner and the partner's subsequent reaction, or harm to the self as a result of causing damage to an important relationship.

It may also be the categorisation of the various types of deception that needs refining. As Metts (1989) pointed out, various researchers have provided a number of different classifications of deceptive strategies, and there has been no attempt to integrate these. While the results of the current study are not clear in terms of elucidating how deceptive strategies may be differentially related to the reasons people provide for their use, they provide important information about the reasons people give for deceiving those they are close to, and provide a starting point from which further analyses may be done.

Limitations of the Present Study

A number of factors may have influenced the results. Overall, the sample was high on other relational variables not discussed in this particular study - commitment, trust and satisfaction. These measures were collected, but did not form part of the analyses for this study. As a result, it is possible that this sample may differ in their use of deception from those who are not in satisfying relationships, and who have a different pattern of scores on relational variables. The research would also benefit from further analysis on differences between relationship types, and differences between age groups. Social desirability biases, as well as the use of general deception measures that did not differentiate between types of deception, have already been mentioned.

Conclusions

The current study provides valuable descriptive information about how deception is used in romantic relationships. Individuals tend to use a variety of deceptive strategies when deceiving their relationship partners, but tend not to favour overt strategies such as lying. While individuals tend to use a variety of deceptive strategies, they report that their reasons are largely altruistic. There exists an interesting juxtaposition between the levels of deceptive use, or the multiple use of deceptive strategies, and the fact that individuals use more covert deceptive strategies with their partners, and report altruistic motives. Whether these are convenient ways to justify deceiving one's relational partner or reflect true altruistic intentions is, however, unclear. Previous research has not investigated the use of multiple deceptive strategies in romantic relationships, or linked them with the types of reason provided for deception, this the current results provide a basis for further investigation into the ways in which relationship partners deceive each other.

Chapter 8
STUDY 2: THE RULES OF RELATIONSHIPS

Introduction and Rationale

The presence of rules and expectations in relationships has been an area that is under-represented in the psychological literature. Thibaut and Kelley (1959) first discussed the idea of rules and norms in relationships in their early work, which produced interdependence theory. They defined norms as behavioural rules that inform an individual of requirements for behaviour in different situations. For us to form, develop and continue relationships, we all have expectations of our relationship partners, in that we expect them to behave and communicate with us in specific ways, and this is particularly true within those relationships we have with our romantic partners. Rules and expectations have a number of functions. According to Argyle and Henderson (1984), such rules and expectations function to enable the attainment of goals through the regulation and co-ordination of behaviour. Further, Shimanoff (1980) suggested that the presence of rules stipulates those behaviours that are specifically required within the relationship and those that are prohibited. According to Burgoon (1993), expectations indicate an ongoing pattern of behaviour that can be expected and predicted. In the context of romantic relationships, the goal of implementing rules and expectations may be seen as cohesion of the dyad, and continuity of the relationship.

There is a lack of consensus about the features of rules. Thibaut and Kelley (1959) suggested there are two features that are characteristic of rules. The first is that norms are stable over time, which means that there is consistency of expectation, so that individuals know what is expected of them today, is what will be expected of them next week, as well as in the future. The second feature is that rules only exist (as rules) if there is agreement between dyad members. These features of stability over time and agreement provide consistency of values between the dyad members, and serve to promote cohesion of the dyad.

Expectations and rules have their origins in a number of sources, including social norms, internal working models from relationships, past relationship experiences, and personal knowledge of an individual (Afifi & Metts, 1998; Burgoon, 1993; Fitness, 2001; Knobloch & Solomon, 2002). Further, as one would expect, rules and expectations

may be transferred across relationships. Due to the variety of their sources, and the individual nature of these sources, rules and expectations are not the same across dyads, but grow out of the combination of the couple member's individual experiences and their dyadic pattern of interaction.

In the psychological literature, rules and expectations have received little attention, however there are two key studies that address rules in relationships. Argyle and Henderson (1984) focussed on rules in friendships, and conducted four studies in order to investigate this. In terms of identifying specific friendship rules, Argyle and Henderson's (1984) results generated a number of rules from which the following factors or categories emerged: rules about Verbal Intimacy, Supportiveness, Negative Behaviour, Information and Regard, Ritual Obligation, Request for Help, Self-Presentation, Emotional Commitment, Time Demands, an Unlabelled category, and Exchange. Of those, rules that received the greatest endorsement were rules dictating trust and support.

Baxter's (1986) work investigated the rules and expectations people have in their opposite-sex romantic relationships. Baxter obtained accounts of relationship break-ups from college students, and, by implication, derived the rule categories from the perceived violations that participants reported. Eight primary rule categories were derived: Autonomy, Similarity Display, Supportiveness, Openness, Loyalty/Fidelity, Shared Time, Equity, and Romance.

In examining the results of both Argyle and Henderson (1984) and Baxter (1986), there appear to be some similarities between the researchers' categorisations, such as the common categories of Supportiveness, and the similar categories of Shared Time and Time Demands for example. This suggests there may be common rules that exist across various types of relationships.

While it is acknowledged that rules and expectations exist in our relationships, little is known about what rules actually exist in relationships, whether there are similarities between dyads, how these rules are structured, and how they come to exist. Therefore, the aim of the current study was to investigate these questions and explicate participants' understanding of what relationship rules and expectations are. The following research questions are proposed. RQ1: What are relationship rules and expectations and how are they defined? RQ2: What rules and expectations typically exist in romantic relationships? RQ3: How do these rules and expectations come to exist? It was expected that relationship partners would have rules and expectations about a range

of topics within their relationship. In order to address the proposed research questions, a qualitative study is proposed.

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited through media outreach, through advertisements in state-wide and community/local newspapers. Community agencies providing a range of counselling and support services for individuals and couples, and pre- and re-marriage education, were approached for permission to make details of the research available to their clients. It was up to interested individuals to contact the researcher in order to participate. Participants contacted the researcher by phone or email to arrange their participation. The focus group participants were recruited after contact was made by the researcher with a member of a community-based men's group that offered support post-separation and divorce. Six members of this group consented to participate in the focus group phase.

Participants in the focus group were six males, ranging in age from 45 to 61 years, with a mean age of 53.5 years (SD=5.79). All participants had been married once previously. Four participants were currently in a second marriage, one was in a non-married relationship, and one participant was single.

Participants in the interview phase were five heterosexual couples (males n=5, females, n=5). Ages ranged from 25 to 76 years. All couples were involved in either married, engaged or de facto relationships ranging in length from two to 32 years.

Materials and Procedure

Approval was sought and obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University (see Appendix D). As the current study was essentially exploratory, it was decided that a semi-structured schedule of basic discussion questions to be prompted by the researcher was the most appropriate methodological procedure.

The eight open-ended, semi-structured interview questions were directed towards understanding how individuals and couple's defined 'relational standards', that is their rules and expectations, what types of rules and expectations exist in relationships, how they come to exist, and what happens when they are violated (see Appendix E for schedule of questions). The term 'relationship boundaries' was one chosen by the

researcher to use in posing the questions, in order to reflect the emotional and behavioural limits of one's romantic relationship with one's partner. While the researcher's understanding of these boundaries was essentially about the rules and expectations that exist in romantic relationships, this language was not used in the questions proposed to participants in order to allow them to use their own language and define the concept for themselves.

Initially, open sampling, or sampling those who responded to recruitment advertisements, was deemed most appropriate. While a certain sample size was anticipated beforehand, it was not possible to define numbers, as it was contingent on theoretical saturation. It was aimed to run three focus groups – one female, one male, one mixed gender, however this was contingent on the responses received. Once the focus groups were completed, it was aimed to recruit between 6 and 10 couples to interview about their own relationship experience.

Participants were recruited through advertising within local universities, local and state newspapers, volunteer registers, and numerous agencies providing relationship counselling and/or courses. Despite extensive advertising and recruitment attempts, there were enough participants to run only one focus group. A member of a community men's group offering support post-separation and divorce was contacted by the researcher, and six of its members consented to participate in the focus group. The focus group was run in a meeting room in the psychology department of an Australian university at a mutually convenient time. The interviewees were informed of the purpose of the study, that their participation was voluntary, and that their information would be kept confidential. The participants were also informed that their focus group was being video-taped for transcription purposes. Participants were provided with two consent forms, which they completed, returning one copy to the researcher and retaining the other copy. The group lasted approximately one and a half hours.

After the single focus group, and the lack of participants to run any further focus groups it was decided to proceed with the couple interviews, using the same semi-structured interview schedule. This would enable information to be obtained for the same questions, but also have input from both couple members. Participants were recruited through the same advertisements as those for the focus groups. Again, despite widespread advertising and recruitment, five couples responded, for whom interviews were completed. Interview times were arranged and were conducted at participants' homes, or in the psychology department of an Australian university. The interviewees

were informed of the purpose of the study, that their participation was voluntary, and that their information would be kept confidential. The participants were also informed that their interview was being audio-taped for transcription purposes. Participants were given two consent forms that they completed. Participants retained one copy and returned the other copy to the researcher. The interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes.

Results and Discussion

Data Analysis

All tapes were transcribed, and pseudonyms have been used to protect the identity of participants. A qualitative approach with a focus on thematic analysis was used to understand how participants understood the concept of 'relationship rules', and their own experiences of rules and expectations within relationships in order to investigate if there were common themes. The first five pages of the focus group transcript are contained in Appendix F.

To complete the data analysis, the constant comparative process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) was used in order to decipher the themes. From the initial reading of the transcripts, there were general themes that surfaced. After discussion between the researcher and others in the field regarding the interpretation of the themes, the transcripts were read again, with a focus on the emerging themes. The constant comparative method involved successive readings of the transcript, each time giving more attention to the revised themes. Data analysis continued until recurring themes became apparent, or until no new information was being uncovered (Creswell, 1998). These themes, informed by previous literature and in discussion with other researchers in the field, were used to develop categories of rules/expectations.

Definition of a 'Relationship Rule'

Initially, the term 'relationship boundaries' was used by the researcher, in order not to define the term as meaning rules and expectations for the participants. Participants themselves clarified this term to mean "rules" and "expectations", and as such, these words have been used throughout this thesis as a reflection of participants' experiences.

Participants used a number of words and phrases to describe their meaning and experience of what "relationship rules" are. Phrases such as "polite behaviour", "hypothetical line", "acceptable behaviour", "expectations", "how far you can go",

"agree not to go over", "values" and "rules to conduct one's relationship" were used. In examining these responses, there were some common elements. One such element was the idea that rules provide a way to define and guide behaviour, both for one's partner and oneself. This idea of guiding behaviour is evidenced by the following separate comments:

A boundary is a rule or boundaries are a set of rules…under which let's say two people, myself and my wife, have negotiated, that these are the rules by which we will conduct our relationship and if, for whatever reason, one goes beyond those rules, either accidentally or on purpose, then that's discussed and, you know, you move forward from there (Steve, FG:1) †.

It's something that you would, a hypothetical line I guess, over which one or two people agree not to go (Damien, FG:1).

In a relationship I also see boundaries where the two people can trust each other to be – to stay in that boundary, either if they're together or they're at the pub with the boys, so individually, and still say, "I can trust him on a Thursday night to go out with the boys and I know…because he knows the boundary" (Ben, FG:3).

In the following interaction, one couple noted:

FEMALE: Well a boundary is something that you don't…
MALE: You don't do.
FEMALE: …step over. A boundary is something which defines how far you can go I guess (C2:1) ❖

A second element was that of acceptability or unacceptability. Rules function to make clear to relationship partners what is acceptable behaviour within the relationship, and what is not. Even behaviour that may not be acceptable in other situations, or even

† Referenced by pseudonym, FG denotes a focus group member, followed by page number of transcript

❖ Referenced by C for couple, followed by the couple identification number, followed by page number of transcript

to other couples may be acceptable, as long as it is within the bounds of the relationship in question. This position is highlighted by the following comment and interaction:

And then if your wife or your partner has agreed with that, that's within the boundaries of the relationship so it's okay (Damien, FG:3)

Damien: So it's sort of like…ah yes. Yes so those ugly situations might be within the boundary too, if it's agreed.
Tony: That's right so what's acceptable is the boundary (FG:3).

The third common element from participants' responses was the idea of agreement. When discussing the existence of rules, participants described them as being agreed upon by relationship partners. This reflects work by Thibaut and Kelley (1959), as well as Elangovan and Shapiro (1998). Thibaut and Kelley (1959), in their discussion of norms and rules, suggested that a norm or behavioural rule is based on agreement, and only exists as a norm if there is some degree of acceptance by both dyad members. In addition, Elangovan and Shapiro (1998), in their model of betrayal, suggested that in order for a transgression of a rule or expectation to occur, expectations must first exist, and be mutually known.

This aspect of agreement was shared by participants, and as one participant stated:

And so that boundary is that rule or that agreement or that understanding or that common ground… (Steve, FG:4).

How Rules Come to Exist

While agreement appeared to be a feature of participants' definitions of relationship rules, as they explored how rules come to exist, it emerged that rules are not always explicitly discussed and set as rules.

In terms of the process or rule setting, participants recounted a variety of ways that rules might come to exist. Examination of the responses suggests a distinction between explicit and implicit rules. Participants talked about rules that were discussed or negotiated within the dyad. Discussion or negotiation however, did not necessarily mean that the rules were agreed upon, only that through discussion they were made known to

the other dyad member. This appears to suggest that some rules are explicit. A higher proportion of responses by participants referred to instances where rules existed, but were not discussed. Participants used terms such as 'implied', 'unspoken', 'expectations' and 'assumptions' to reflect these implicit rules, which may be better referred to more broadly as expectations. These are reflected in an excerpt from the focus group:

> *STEVE: And so that boundary is that rule or that agreement or that understanding or that common ground where you say, "Well here is the way I will conduct myself or how I agree to conduct myself within this relationship." Whether it be the pub, or another woman, or taking the kids to school or cooking a meal or…*
> *BEN: Being late.*
> *STEVE: Being whatever. You know, some, you know agreed-to, negotiated, understood, spoken or non-spoken.*
> *TONY: In most cases I would expect though that the boundaries or the agreements are not written down and agreed.*
> *JOHN: Oh no.*
> *TONY: No I think it's just implied.*
> *JOHN: They're implied.*
> *DAMIEN: They develop over time.*
> *STEVE: It's interesting because J and I when we got together, we did put together a set of…*
> *TONY: Did you?*
> *STEVE: Yes we did put a contact together, virtually a contract and it was not an all-encompassing contract, it was the start of a contract. You know, that there are certain things in that that we agreed to.*
> *TONY: A relationship agreement.*
> *STEVE: Yes, which formed the basis of the set of rules (FG:4).*

The differences between those rules that are made explicit and those that remain implicit is unclear, however they appear to be a reflection of those influences that are particularly salient to the individual. In discussing which rules and expectations are discussed and which are not, one participant identified that this is a somewhat fluid process, often based on contextual and environmental factors:

I think too, looking at the question you just asked, I think that it's liquid. I think that there are certain things which go on the table for conversation at one time, which may be completely different to things that go on the table another time because of stuff that may have happened and so it's not necessarily…(Steve, FG:38).

Another participant summarised this issue by stating:

"I would have thought that everyone's different. In the sense that everyone's different there's going to be some similarities in a whole range of relationships but for some relationships, it's not going to be an issue and it's totally unsaid, whereas financially it might be for another couple a huge issue and it needs to be said" (Ben, FG:39).

This comment emphasises the idiosyncratic nature of rules and expectations to specific dyads. Upbringing, past relationship experiences, values, and societal roles were commonly mentioned as influencing the types of rules individuals deem important for their relationships. For one participant, previous experience with a violated boundary meant that it was particularly salient in his subsequent relationship, and was therefore brought up for discussion. Not only was it discussed, but also its existence was reinforced with his partner.

In my first relationship that boundary was crossed to a huge degree and it was very, very tough and that made a very, very well major impact on me and if I was feeling particularly low, vulnerable or whatever, for whatever reason, um…I might say to J, "Hey," you know, "You're not going to cross that boundary are you?" you know, or she might be going away for a weekend seminar or whatever or I might be going off overseas to do some business or something like that and sort of say, "Well while you're there or while I'm over there, you're not going to…" you know, because I used to fly out of Melbourne and somebody else was driving in the front door sort of thing (Steve, FG:17).

The following comment by one participant reveals the interplay between the importance of some rules and what comes up for discussion, as well as the factors that influence what rules and expectations exist:

> *I think the fidelity one for example is a given in 99.99 per cent of cases, but things like financial arrangements or how time is spent, that's a big boundary that gets crossed sometimes. You know, you're never in agreement about who spends time doing what. You know, I think they have to be negotiated. I think we take a lot of our primary boundaries from society as we said before. You know, it's just not done to cheat on your partner. It's not done to steal or whatever it is. But how you spend your time and how you spend your money, who does what in the relationship, needs to be…it's more likely to be negotiated than the primary ones (William, FG:38).*

While there appear to be different types of rules, in terms of explicit versus implicit, it appears that there also exists a hierarchy of rules, in terms of their importance to the relationship. This hierarchy is determined within the relationship, and defines which rules are more important and central to maintaining the unity and integrity of the relationship within the range of rules that exists. In general, rules about issues such as fidelity, respect, support and intimacy were more integral to the cohesion of the dyad than were rules about everyday activities, or time spent in hobbies, for example. As one would expect, participants reported that any violation of the more important rules had more severe consequences for the relationship than the violation of more minor rules. In fact one participant discussed a relational standard that he accidentally violates on a regular basis. While he described this standard as relatively unimportant to the relationship, he noted that it is still a standard, which, if violated, has consequences, even if those consequences are not as serious as the consequences of other violations. As such, the existence of rules and expectations could be thought of as a hierarchical structure, based on relative importance of the rule to the relationship, which was summarised by one participant:

I think you could almost say there are primary, secondary and tertiary boundaries, you know. Like with some…the primary one is like a fidelity thing, which you just don't go there, and integrity and stuff like that. Then there's secondary stuff, financial, and then there's all the golf… (William, FG:57).

In addition to discussing implicit and explicit rules and expectations, and how they come about, participants also identified a process of trial and error that results in a relational standard. Some participants reported incidents of having inadvertently violated a partner's expectations that were not known about. A violation of these expectations led to discussion and negotiation of an actual rule or desired behaviour. The process of trial and error is also one that was referred to by Thibaut and Kelley (1959). The following two excerpts explain this process:

TONY: Well in a mature relationship, or in some sound and mature relationships you might have that maturity to set that agreement up formally, but in most cases they would be implied I would have thought.
BEN: I would have thought they were being implied, depending on the level I guess of your experience you have with relationships. The other…one person may think that in the implication there is a certain boundary line, without having confirmed it and reaffirmed it with the other person. So all of a sudden the boundary gets crossed without him knowing about it…
TONY: Yes.
BEN: …and one person gets upset so now you have one person going "Hang on" (FG:5).

TONY: And in that case, where someone's line is crossed and they say something or they crack the shits or whatever, and the other guy gets aware that there is a boundary.
WILLIAM: How many of you have been in a situation where you cross a boundary, you don't know it, and you find out about it in the car on the way home? (FG:6).

It seems then, that relational standards can develop from the unintentional violation of relational standards, however it appears it is the violation of unknown expectations that are subject to this process rather than the intentional violation of known or agreed upon standards, which was reflected by participants' response. Another participant expressed a slightly different view of instances where a relationship partner realises an expectation has been violated, evident in the following excerpt:

> *STEVE: See the golf boundary is not a boundary. It just is a pop-up. It just popped up at that moment and became a boundary and you went and did it.*
> *BEN: If I abused it though, I…*
> *STEVE: Then it's different because you can talk about a one situation, so it was a one situation, a one-off, so I'd just call it a pop-up boundary that just happened to become a boundary because she was ticked off about something or other and you said, "Well fuck you, I'm going to go and play golf anyway." You went and played golf anyway, you come back, there's a bit of noise and weeping and gnashing of teeth, then it disappeared or dispersed and off you go again (FG:57).*

These comments reflect the point made earlier that those things that come up for discussion are often contextually and situationally-based, and what may be important at one time may not be at another.

Types of Rules and Expectations

In discussion of the topics about which rules and expectations might exist, participants typically identified intimate involvement with a third party outside the dyad as the most common. Discussion of this topic elicited a wide range of specific rules that participants identified from within their own relationships, as well as topics about which rules or expectations might exist. One participant acknowledged the tendency to identify the issue of third party involvement immediately, but suggested the existence of other important relational standards:

You know what's really interesting. We've only talked about one boundary, and that's the male-female intimacy or sexual boundary. Like we haven't talked about, say, a financial boundary or how you dress or how you speak. Do you swear? Do you, you know. It's really interesting that the first boundary and the most significant is this male-female thing (William, FG:25).

In discussing the topics about which relationship rules and expectations exist, and through participants reporting their own specific experiences, some general themes surfaced. Broadly, rules and expectation appeared to exist regarding loyalty and fidelity to the relationship, how emotions, care and respect are managed, provided and exchanged, time allocation (within and outside the relationship), types of behaviour (sexual, social, positive and negative) that is tolerated within and outside the relationship, as well as about the routine of the relationship such as roles, rituals and financial management. Participants' responses were consistent with many of the rule categories derived from previous research, such as work by both Baxter (1986) and Argyle and Henderson (1984), who each suggested their own set of rule categories. Baxter (1986) investigated accounts of relationship break-ups in an attempt to identify what rules were violated in order for the relationship to end. Argyle and Henderson (1984), in contrast, tried to identify rules that exist within friendships. In both cases, the rule categories or types were derived from qualitative data, as well as theory. Despite the difference in focus of the current study to this previous work, there appears to be some common elements between the rule categories that were derived. Content-based rule and expectation categories were formed by integrating Baxter's (1986) and Argyle and Henderson's (1984) categories, and theory (social exchange, interdependence, equity and commitment) with participants responses from the current data set. Initial reading of the transcripts allowed surface themes to develop, and repeated readings of the transcripts allowed the developed themes to be further refined, and categories formed. The rule and expectation categories that were derived are presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Rule/Expectation Category Labels and their Features

Category Label	Features
Self-Disclosure and Expression	Confiding in each other, disclosing information to each other; sharing information and opinions; the ways views and emotions are expressed
Help and Support	Giving/ receiving emotional support; respect; trust; provision of help and advice
Loyalty/Fidelity	Being loyal and faithful to each other; about intimate involvement with others outside relationship; loyalty to relationship
Sharing and Equality	Getting out what you put into the relationship, relative to your partner; repayment of debts (emotional or tasks, etc).
Sexual Behaviour	The sexual relationship with your partner; frequency; having needs met/ meeting needs; types of sexual behaviour.
Time with Partner	Amount of time with partner; how this time is spent.
Time with Others	Amount of time spent with others outside relationship; types of activities done with others.
Time in Tasks	Amount of time spent in work, hobbies or tasks; types of activities or tasks.
Negative Behaviour in Private	Nagging; teasing; criticism; conflict; emotional and physical abuse.
Negative Behaviour in Public	Public criticism and teasing; disclosing confidences to others; ignoring partner.
Positive Interaction	Respect; positive regard; showing consideration; affection; keeping each other informed of schedules and events.
Social Behaviour	Behaviour in settings outside the relationship: with family, friends, social events, etc.
Roles	Who does what within the relationship; may be physical tasks, tasks around daily living; emotional roles, gender roles.
Finances	How money is managed and spent, either individual or joint money or both.
Ritual Obligations	Acknowledging or celebrating birthdays, anniversaries and other events.
Self-Presentation	How each person presents themselves to their partner and to the world; consistency of appearance and behaviour over time.

Equity and the Reciprocal Nature of Rules and Expectations

Consistent with equity and interdependence theory, participants identified that there is reciprocity in the way that behaviour is enacted within relationships, and the importance of this to relational maintenance and cohesion. By adhering to relational standards, it appears that equity can be maintained. This may be complicated by the individual perceptions of the importance of those standards, and the weight given to them. One participant discussed the issue of wanting to spend time with a friend playing golf, and having to negotiate his right to have that time to himself:

> *Right yes and really want to get out but really wanted her to feel that it was okay and that's because I was doing a whole range of other things and I'd go through this language of sort of saying, "Gee if I got the bloody scorecard out, I reckon I'm doing all right here." You know and you hear the guys saying, "You don't put the garbage out and you don't do the washing and you don't do the dishes" and I'll make breakfast in bed and do this and this and this and that and buy her a rose every now and again and blah, blah, blah. And you think, well hang on, I reckon my scorecard's doing all right here. I'm not trying to sort of say, look it's right in my favour and I'm owed a few (Ben, FG:41).*

The idea of a scorecard and the balance of exchange were mentioned by another participant in separate comments:

> *You're off working your ring off to do all this sort of stuff and all this, and you go I'm working, I'm out there doing all my stuff and J's out there doing all of her stuff, and then the bloody scorecard comes out and I'm going, hang on, I haven't even got on the board yet and hers is covered in white stuff and I'm going, hang on, how did that happen? (Steve, FG:42).*

> *You'll weight things different to the way I weight things so it's…and I don't know how you're going to weight them and you don't know how I'm going to weight them, and doing the dishes might be, you know, one pound for you and it might be three pound for me but we've never talked about that (Steve, FG:47).*

The idea of equity in terms of adhering to relational standards highlights the importance of relational standards to a relationship's cohesion. Further, it also suggests that when relational standards exist as expectation, rather than as negotiated rules, there may be an increased potential for inequity to occur and conflict to result. Perhaps this suggests that discussion and negotiation increase the chances and opportunities to adhere to relational standards, and help to avoid inequity and conflict from arising.

Rule and Expectation Violations

How rules come to be violated, and the effects of violation are two areas participants discussed. With regard to who and why individuals violate their relational standards, the process of trial and error, whereby the unintentional violation of unknown standards has already been discussed. In terms of the intentional violation of relational standards, a common theme in participants' responses was that violation was seen as a way to provoke discussion of an issue, or to force change in the relationship. Some saw it as a result of decreased relational quality, or when there was inequity, such as not having one's needs met.

One participant, William, made a number of separate comments that reflected these reasons:

> *Yes, and the finance thing, which we talked about before, which I wasn't getting answers there, I wasn't getting my needs met physically or emotionally, I felt I was like six on the pile after the kids, the cat, the dog…(William, FG:52)*

> *When they're not being respected or when the respect or the trust has broken down. That's pretty much what I did in my marriage. I tried very hard to solve our issues and got absolutely nowhere and it comes to a point where I said to myself, "Well, I'm going to go out find a partner somewhere else and, you know, I am going to make a conscious decision to step over that boundary" …I wouldn't do it again. I only did it the once. I wouldn't do it again. It caused all sorts of grief as you can imagine and the ripple effect on families and kids and whatever. But it was a conscious decision as in: I'm not being listened to, I'm not being respected, I am not having my case heard so [snaps fingers] I'll make that choice. Crap choice but, you know, that was the choice I made (William, FG:51).*

In the preceding comments, William refers to the damage caused by the violation of an important relational standard. In discussing violations of relational standards and their outcomes, two issues became clear; differential consequences, and intentionality/motivation. Firstly, participants noted that there are different consequences for the violation of different standards. Participants readily identified that the violation of some standards can be resolved through discussion and negotiation, and may have minimal impact on the quality of the relationship, while others may result in more dire consequences. In line with the proposition that there is a hierarchy of rules and expectations, participants referred to different levels of violations and different levels of consequences. Participants also proposed the idea that repeated violations of some rules and expectation can increase their importance. For example, if a relatively unimportant rule or expectation is violated, it may be resolved, and have minimal impact on the relationship. However, if this same rule or expectation is repeatedly violated, the cumulative effect of violation may have more serious effects on the relationship than a single episode of violation. This may be due to the fact that repeated violation implies disregard for one's partner and/or the relationship.

The second issue in terms of rule and expectation violation was the reason, or intentionality behind the violation, and the way that this may have implications for the effect of violations. Those violations that are seen as intentional and blatant are seen as more serious, with greater consequences for the relationship. This is consistent with the idea that violations of relational standards are seen to be important and generally regarded as serious because they communicate a message of relational devaluation. Participants confirmed that they saw such intentional violations of relational standards as communicating disregard and devaluation. Those violations that are accidental were seen as more easily forgiven and resolved, while those violations that were a conscious act, or enacted through disregard or disrespect, were seen as unacceptable, with serious relational consequences. This position is evident from the following excerpt:

TONY: So it's conscious breaking, then there's unconscious: oops I made a mistake.
WILLIAM: If you're breaking a boundary without the conversation it's a 'fuck you'. It really is.

STEVE: Well it could be the situation, you know, that there may be reasons why you might break your boundary and have to come back and have that conversation and then that becomes a respect I think: Hey I did this and I apologise. I did it because of this and that. And then, you know, two adult people can sit down and say, "Well I understand why you did that and I would prefer you didn't but I'm beginning to understand why you did that" and you move on. But if say you go out and play your golf and just say, "Fuck you" well yes then that's not acceptable. I don't think that's ever acceptable. So I think it's the way that you break it that becomes acceptable (FG:60).

Previous work in this area has not attempted to differentiate between types of rules in relationships, or attempt to understand their structure and use, their importance to the relationship and the differential consequences for violation of different rules. This preliminary classification is somewhat fluid, and individually based. It is also possible that the status of rules can change. It was interesting to note that participants identified this, and suggested that there are instances when a violation of a 'tertiary' or less important rule (which might ordinarily not have serious consequences), might have dire consequences for the relationship if it is repeatedly violated. Therefore the repeated violation of a less important rule can result in an increase in its importance to the relationship if it is repeatedly violated. This structural aspect of rule research is an interesting one that requires further investigation.

The current study initially aimed to explore the concept of 'relationship boundaries': how these are defined, and the types of rules and expectations individuals have in their romantic relationships. From the qualitative data provided by participants, relational boundaries or standards can be defined as rules or expectations that exist between relationship partners, which set the limits of conduct within a given relationship, and that guide and define what is acceptable behaviour within that relationship in order to maintain its unity and continuance.

Such relationship rules appear to be arrived at in a number of ways. The process can be seen broadly as either explicit, where rules or expectations are discussed and negotiated, or as implicit, where the rules are implied, or exist as expectations or assumptions about what a partner will or will not do. There also exists a process of rule setting by trial and error, however, where an implicit rule is violated, which results in an explicit rule being set as a result.

Limitations of the Present Study

The main limitation of the present study was the small number of participants. Despite exhaustive attempts at recruitment, the response rate to advertisements was low. Theoretical saturation, or the point where no new information is obtained (Glaser, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), is a way to determine sufficient numbers of participants. While not claiming that theoretical saturation was reached, there was no new information obtained by the final interview. Replication of the results with a larger sample would enable a point of theoretical saturation to be reached. A particular strength of the study was that despite the low participant numbers, a range of couples were interviewed. Of the five couples that were interviewed, two couples were in distress, either undergoing or having previously had counselling, two had been married for many years, while one were newly engaged.

Conclusions

From the discussion of the various types of rules that participants could identify, or had personal experience with in their romantic relationships, a number of rule categories were identified. Further to this, participants identified that rules differ in their importance to the relationship, in terms of the level of threat to the relationship if the rule were to be violated. This suggests that relationship rules may form a hierarchical structure. Using the terminology of the participants, this hierarchy may involve *primary, secondary,* and *tertiary* rules. *Primary* rules appeared to be typically those rules reflecting fidelity, support, respect and intimacy, and are typically central to maintaining the cohesion and unity of a relationship, while *tertiary* rules typically represent rules that play less of a role in maintaining the relationship itself, and are typically more forgivable if violated. *Secondary* rules were harder to identify any more specifically than falling in between *primary* and *tertiary* rules. Further research would be able to further explore how to define the different levels of rules, and how rules may be classified into these levels. This rule structure appears to be flexible, and rules can increase in their importance to the relationship based on the frequency of violation. This proposal of a rule hierarchy, however, and which rules and expectations are considered more important than others, requires further research.

The current study aimed to define relationship boundaries, based on the experience of individuals. It attempted to further elucidate specific rule types and rule categories that may exist in romantic relationships. This qualitative study has provided valuable descriptive information about this area which can be used to further develop our understanding of the form and function of relationship rules and expectations, as well as developing a model of how rules and expectations operate within romantic relationships.

Chapter 9

STUDY 3: RELATIONAL STANDARDS: RULES AND EXPECTATIONS IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Introduction and Rationale

The second study in the present research program identified 16 topics about which couples in romantic relationships have rules and expectations. The research also established that rules come to exist in a variety of ways. There appears to be a differentiation between explicit rules, that are discussed or negotiated, and implicit expectations, which remain as expectations, unknown and unstated within the relationship. This supports the assertion by some researchers that some rules are explicit while others are implicit (Metts, 1994; Montgomery, 1994). The results from Study 2 also confirmed that the rules and expectations that exist in romantic relationships differ on the basis of their importance to the relationship. The importance of different rules and expectations has not been addressed in the empirical literature, and there are conflicting views regarding the potential relationship between a rule's importance and how it is established, that is whether it is an explicit rule or implicit expectation. While it is plausible to expect that those relational standards that are highly salient and important are the ones that are discussed and made explicit, Metts (1994) suggests it is equally plausible that the standards that remain implicit are so fundamentally important to a relationship that their importance is assumed and taken for granted. Previous research has acknowledged that relational transgressions, and one might assume, relational standards, differ in their severity and importance, however have not addressed the issue further. If rules and expectations differ in their importance to a relationship, then there may be an identifiable hierarchy of relational standards that can be applied generally to relationships.

While the second study was able to provide qualitative information that resulted in the development of a number of categories, these categories need to be validated, and their function, in terms of their importance to the relationship, and whether they are explicit or implicit, needs further investigation. Obtaining information about the endorsement of the rule/expectation categories, how important they are to a relationship, and how violations of the various categories are perceived, allows for a more in-depth

understanding of the form and function of relational standards, but it also allows for exploration of the potential correlates of rules and expectations (the number of rules that exist, and whether explicitness or implicitness, or whether rules are discussed or expected), such as individual dispositional factors. When individuals enter a romantic relationship, they bring with them a history, some of which exists in their experiences, and some of which resides in the more stable traits of the individual. Just as Thibaut and Kelley (1959) suggested that individuals may bring an existing rule structure into a new relationship, individuals may bring with them individual dispositions that may be associated with the form and function of relational standards in their relationship.

Some researchers have investigated how individual factors are related to the violation of relational standards. For example, Feldman et al. (2000) investigated the acceptability of two types of betrayal – breaking a friend's confidence despite a promise not to do so, and sexual betrayal by a romantic partner despite an agreement to be monogamous. In this case, both instances of betrayal are violations of explicitly discussed rules. Individuals answered questions concerning their self-restraint, tolerance of deviation, and betrayal behaviour. The level of acceptability of both types of betrayal was associated with a lack of self-restraint, tolerance of deviation, and behavioural betrayal. In this study, self-restraint was a measure of social-emotional adjustment, and reflects one's ability to weigh up immediate gratification against long-term goals, control impulses, and the ability to be considerate and responsible. Acts of betrayal, and violation of relational standards in general, can be seen as inconsiderate acts, and some may even be seen as a result of poor impulse control. To violate one's relational standards acts contrary to the interests of one's relationship, and, as previously discussed, acts of betrayal often have negative consequences because they convey a message of relational devaluation. If adherence to one's relational standards involves considering one's partner, acting responsibly, and resisting the urge to be impulsive, then self-restraint may have a role in the study of relational standards.

The aim of the current study was threefold: one purpose was to obtain validation for the rule/expectation categories; the second purpose was to explore the structure and function of rules and expectations in terms of how they are established, their importance to the relationship, and the source from which individuals obtain their relational standards. The third purpose was to investigate whether an individual trait such as self-restraint may be associated with relational standards. A number of specific questions were posed regarding the form and function of rules and expectations in romantic

relationships. **RQ1:** Which rules are most/least endorsed? With regard to endorsement of the categories, the current study sought to explore what rules/expectations are most and least endorsed. It was expected that participants would heavily endorse rules and expectations about loyalty and fidelity, and that endorsement may differ between males and females. **RQ2:** Which rules/expectations are discussed and which are expected? **RQ3:** Which rules and expectations are most common, most important, most threatening when violated, and most unforgivable when violated? The current study aimed to explore how rules and expectations in different categories were established, as well as the differences between rule categories in their ratings of commonality, importance, threat and forgivability. This will enable the examination of differences between rule categories on ratings of commonality, importance, threat and forgivability, but will also allow for comparisons between these ratings for each rule category. **RQ3a:** Do rules and expectations form a hierarchy, based on their importance to the relationship? **RQ4:** What sources do participants obtain their rules and expectations from? **RQ5:** Is individual adjustment related to rule endorsement, rule importance, threat and forgivability, or gender?

Method

Participants

Participants were required to be over the age of 18 years, and either be in a current relationship that has been ongoing for a minimum six months, or have had a past relationship, that lasted for a minimum of six months. This is consistent with previous research by the researcher, as well as other relationship research and was chosen in order to give the relationship time to develop basic rules or expectation about partners' interactions.

Twenty-six males and 80 females (*n*= 106) participated in the current study. The ages of participants ranged from 18 to 57 years, with a mean age of 25.72 years (*SD*=8.69). The mean age for males was 30.15 (*SD*=8.78, range 19 to 49 years), while the mean age for females was 24.28 years (*SD*=8.20, range 18 to 57 years).

Of the 106 participants, 72.6% (*n*=77) identified that they were in a current romantic relationship, while 27.4% (*n*=29) identified that they were not currently in a romantic relationship. Overall, in terms of their relationship status, 2.8% of the sample reported being in a casual romantic relationship, 52.8% were in a committed, dating relationship, 4.7% were engaged, 12.3% were married, and 27.4% identified not currently being in a relationship.

For the group that reported currently being in a romantic relationship, there were 19 males and 58 females (*n*=77), with a mean age of 25.38 years (*SD*=7.90, range 18 to 49). Of these, 3.9% reported being in a casual romantic relationship, 72.7% in a committed, dating relationship, 6.5% engaged, and 16.9% married. Participants reported being in their relationships for an average of 52.44 months (or 4.37 years), *SD*=65.24 months (or 5.44 years). Due to the large standard deviation, the mean may not be the most appropriate measure of dispersion. Thus the mode was 7 months, while the median was 30 months. Less than half (36.4%) the participants in a current relationship reported living with their partner.

Of those that did live with their partner, the mean length of time living together was 78.21 months (*SD*=79.54). There were multiple modes for length of time living together: 4, 12, 24, 72, 144, and 252 months. The median was 54 months.

For the group that reported not currently being in a romantic relationship, 7 were males, and 22 females (*n*=29). This group had a mean age of 26.62 (*SD*=10.60, range 18 to 57 years).

Materials

Participants were required to fill in a questionnaire consisting of basic demographic details, and both qualitative and quantitative questions (see Appendix G for complete questionnaire and information letter).

Demographic details included sex, age, relationship status, type and length, whether the participants lived with their partner, and if so, length of time living together, as well as country of birth.

The remainder of the questionnaire was in three parts: the first part asked open-ended questions about the worst offences partners can commit against each other, and focussed participants on what they had done to a partner, and what partners had done to them, both hypothetically, as well as actually within their relationships. The second part involved presenting previously generated rule categories (see Chapter 8 page 114) to

participants and asking a series of questions about those categories as well as the sources of relationship rules and expectations. The third part of the questionnaire involved participants responding to the Weinberger Adjustment Inventory (WAI; Weinberger, et al., 1989; Weinberger, 1997), which asks questions about individual social-emotional adjustment and is described below.

The worst things partners do to each other.

In order to provide a deeper understanding of the nature of rules and expectations, participants were asked open-ended questions about the worst thing one could do to a relationship partner, and the worst that could be done by a relationship partner, across different relationship types. Participants were asked "What is the worst thing a partner could do to you?" for each of the following relationship types: casual, committed dating, engaged, and married. Participants were required to answer for each relationship type, regardless of the type of relationship they themselves were in. They were then asked "What is the worst thing you could do to a partner?" within each of the same relationship types.

Participants were then asked about actual things that have been done to them, or that they have done to a partner. They were presented with the question "What is the worst thing a partner *has done* to you in a relationship?" This was followed by a number of questions about that particular relationship, such as whether the 'worst thing' was from a current or past relationship, whether it was the reason the relationship ended, the relationship type and relationship length. This question was then asked in the reverse: "What is the worst thing you *have* done to a partner?" which again was followed by asking whether the 'worst thing' was from a current or past relationship, whether it was the reason the relationship ended, the relationship type and relationship length. These questions about the actual worst things done do not form part of the current study.

Further questions were asked about behaviour towards partners as part of a wider project on relationships, but do not form part of the current investigation.

Rule and expectation categories.

The rule/expectation categories obtained from the previous qualitative study (see Chapter 8 page 114) were presented to participants, and endorsement of the categories was established by asking a series of questions about the categories. Participants were asked whether they had ever had rules/expectations about each category in their

relationships, and whether they were discussed with their partner or just expected. These were rated Yes/No and Discussed/Expected respectively. Participants were then asked how common they thought rules and expectations for each category were in most relationships, rated on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1=*very uncommon*, 5=*very common*.

Participants were also asked how important rules/expectations in each category were to their relationship, the potential threat to the relationship if they were violated, and how forgivable a violation in each category would be. Participants rated their responses on a Likert scale from 1 to 5. For importance, 1=*not at all important*, 3=*somewhat important*, 5=*extremely important*; for threat, 1=*no threat to the relationship at all*, 3=*undecided*, 5=*serious threat*; and for forgivability, 1=*very easy to forgive*, 3=*undecided*, 5=*unforgivable*.

Sources of rules and expectations.

Participants were asked to identify the degree to which their relationship expectations were derived from specific and general sources of expectation. Each of ten specific sources of expectation were rated on the scale from 1=*not at all* to 7=*greatly*. The specific sources of expectation were *my best opposite sex friend; my best same sex friend; my brothers/sisters; my own thoughts; my parents; my partner; other individuals; other opposite sex friends; other relatives; other same sex friends.* Seven general sources of expectation were presented and also rated on the same seven-point scale. These were *ethnicity; gender; media; occupation; politics; religion; social class.*

Weinberger Adjustment Inventory.

The Weinberger Adjustment Inventory (WAI; Weinberger, et al., 1989) is a 62-item measure designed to assess long-term social-emotional adjustment taking into consideration external constraints. The WAI measures two primary dimensions, Distress and (self) Restraint, both of which are made up of a number of subscales that reflect specific psychosocial areas. The self-restraint dimension complements the distress dimension, in that it provides information about how individuals deal with and are likely to react to subjective feelings of distress. The WAI was designed for use by children and adults with reading abilities of fourth-grade level, in both clinical and non-clinical samples. The measure has also been validated using multi-method confirmatory factor analysis, and the factor structures are comparable from childhood to older adulthood in both clinical and normative samples (Weinberger & Schwartz, 1990; Weinberger, 1997).

The 62 items are presented in two parts, with items from each of the subscales appearing in both Parts 1 and 2. Both parts of the measure are rated on a five point Likert scale. In Part 1, participants are given the instruction "Please respond to each statement by thinking about how you ***usually*** feel or act ***in the past year*** by circling one of the 5 numbers", and asked to rate the statements on a five point Likert scale, where 1=*false*, 2=*somewhat false*, 3=*not sure*, 4=*somewhat true*, and 5=*true*. In Part 2, participants are instructed "Now think about how *often* you think, feel, or act in a certain way ***during the past year even if it hasn't happened in the past few days or weeks***. After you read each statement, please *circle* **HOW OFTEN** it is true**:**" These statements are rated on a five point Likert scale, where 1=*almost never*, 2=*not often*, 3=*sometimes*, 4=*often*, and 5=*almost always*. The WAI takes approximately 20 to 25 minutes to administer.

Distress Dimension. The distress dimension of the WAI comprises four subscales: Anxiety, Depression, Low Self-esteem, and Low Well-being. This dimension measures distress levels in interactions with the environment. Each of the subscales is described below.

Anxiety. The Anxiety subscale consists of eight items that measure concern for potentially unpleasant future events and outcomes (e.g. "*I spend a lot of time thinking about things that might go wrong*"; "*I feel afraid something terrible might happen to me or somebody I care about*").

Depression. The Depression subscale assesses an individual's responses to perceived losses or failures. Seven items measure this subscale, for example "*I often feel that nobody really cares about me the way I want them to*" and "*I feel so down and unhappy that nothing makes me feel much better*".

Low Self-Esteem. The Low Self-esteem subscale comprises seven items designed to measure one's propensity to feel ashamed. Items include "*I'm not very sure of myself*" and "*I usually feel I'm the kind of person I want to be*" (reverse coded).

Low Well-Being. Low Well-being measures an individual's perception of their inability to create positive experiences, and is measured by seven items, such as "*I enjoy most of the things I do during the week*" and "*I usually think of myself as a happy person*", both of which are reverse coded.

Restraint Dimension. Four subscales make up the Restraint dimension of the WAI: Impulse Control, Suppression of Aggression, Consideration of Others, and Responsibility. Together, the four subscales suggest how likely an individual is to weigh immediate gratification with long-term consequences in order to resolve conflicts and solve problems. Each subscale is described below.

Impulse control. Eight items comprise the Impulse Control subscale, which measures an individual's ability to deliberate long-term goals when making decisions about potential behaviour. Examples of items are "*I'm the kind of person who will try anything once, even if it's not that safe",* and "*I do things without giving them enough thought"* both of which are reverse coded.

Suppression of aggression. This subscale uses seven items to evaluate an individual's reaction to being angered or provoked, and the ability to avoid retaliation. Items include "*People who get me angry better watch out"* and "*When someone tries to start a fight with me, I fight back"* both of which are reverse coded.

Consideration of others. The Consideration of Others subscale evaluates one's altruistic feelings and behaviours. Seven items comprise this subscale, including "*I enjoy doing things for other people, even when I don't receive anything in return"* and *"Before I do something, I think about how it will affect the people around me".*

Responsibility. The Responsibility subscale assesses one's self-control in relation to social and moral rules. Eight items measure responsibility, for example *"I do things that are really not fair to people I don't care about"* (reverse coded item), and *"People can depend on me to do what I know I should".*

Previous work with both clinical and non-clinical samples has shown both dimensions of the WAI to be reliable as indicated by the alpha scores of the Distress (alpha = .94) and Restraint (alpha = .89) dimensions (Weinberger, 1997). In the current study, both dimensions of the WAI were deemed to be reliable, as indicated by the Cronbach alpha scores. The overall Cronbach alpha for the Distress dimension in the current study was α=0.94, while the subscales reliabilities were 0.85, 0.90, 0.81, and 0.84 for Anxiety, Depression, Low Self-esteem and Low Well-being respectively. The overall, Cronbach alpha for the Restraint dimension was α=0.85, with subscale reliabilities of 0.80, 0.80, 0.72, and 0.76 for Impulse Control, Suppression of Aggression, Consideration of Others, and Responsibility respectively.

Procedure

Approval was sought and granted by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the university (see Appendix H). Participants were recruited through media outreach, through advertisements in statewide and community/local newspapers, through undergraduate and postgraduate classes at an Australian university as well as using the snowball technique through individuals known to the researcher.

Questionnaires and information letters in envelopes were distributed to participants either in person or by post. Questionnaires were returned to the researcher in a sealed envelope either by a dedicated drop box at the university, or by using a reply-paid envelope. No consent forms were used, as the research met the university research requirements for a mass distribution questionnaire, whereby completion of the questionnaire was taken as an indication of voluntary consent. Individuals could therefore not be identified by name. Participants were informed that completion of the questionnaire indicated informed and voluntary consent, and that they could withdraw their participation at any time by not completing or returning the questionnaire.

A web-based version of the questionnaire was also used. It was established through the website www.psychdata.com, which allowed the author to construct the questionnaire to be identical to the paper questionnaire. Participants were provided with the URL, or alternatively could access the www.psychdata.com homepage and enter the survey identification number. This took participants to the Information Letter, the same that was used with the hard copy questionnaires. Once participants had read the Information Letter, they could proceed to the questionnaire. As with the hard copy questionnaires, consent forms were not used. Participants could withdraw their consent to participate at any time by exiting the browser and leaving the questionnaire unfinished. No identifying details of participants were gathered.

Results and Discussion

Qualitative Results

Participants were presented with a series of open-ended questions, and were asked about the worst thing that they could do to a partner, or that a partner could do to them, in a casual, committed and exclusive dating, engaged, and married relationship. A list of these 'worst things' was compiled, which was constructed on the basis of actor (the worst thing done to a partner), partner (the worst thing a partner has done to them),

and by relationship type (casual, committed, engaged and married). The responses were read over by the researcher before identifying and developing emerging themes. The approach to this analysis was twofold: participants' responses were read over repeatedly, using the constant comparative method (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), in order to see if there were common themes underlying the responses; secondly, the responses were read to see whether they could be classified according to the previously derived 16 rule/expectation categories. There were two reasons for this approach. Firstly, categories were read for emerging themes because participants were asked about the 'worst things' that could be done to a partner, or by a partner to themselves in a relationship, not about all things, therefore, it was important to get an understanding of the quality of these 'worst things', and to see if there was consistency in the responses. The 16 previously derived categories were then applied in order to see whether the categories that had already been developed, and which attempted to cover *all* the areas in a relationship where couples might have rules and expectations, were able to account for the 'worst things'. The comparison with the 16 categories could then be used to help further understand the results of the quantitative analyses.

Coding involved identifying themes that represented participants' views about the worst things they could do to a partner, and the worst things that could be done to them – all responses formed the one data set and were analysed as such. The analysis involved an inductive approach of identifying and distinguishing phrases from the written responses, through reading and re-reading the list of responses, constantly comparing the themes to see that they were applicable across each combination of actor-partner and relationship type. From the identified phrases, recurring conceptual similarities were collapsed into themes.

The first theme identified was one of *deception*, and reflected all aspects of deception. Previous research has demonstrated that deception involves strategies other than outright lying (see Boon & McLeod, 2001), therefore, actions that involved other forms of deception apart from lying were included in this category also. The focus of the deception was not considered important, just that the response reflected the use of deception by one partner towards another. Responses in this category included terms such as "lie" and "dishonesty", but also included "betray trust" and "steal from me", as well as phrases reflecting a lack of honesty about emotion, such as "not being honest about feelings", and "marry without being in love". Acts of deceit were mentioned across all the relationship types, however participants gave more specific details about the worst

things that could be done to them, than things they could do to a partner. This was common throughout all the responses. Further, participants gave slightly more responses that reflected deception for casual relationships than they did for other relationship types.

The next theme was to do with *infidelity,* or third party involvement outside the relationship. Responses involved mainly physical/sexual infidelity rather than emotional infidelity, and this was the case across all relationship types. The responses that identified physical/sexual infidelity, reflect different levels of physical involvement with a person other than one's primary partner, from "starting seeing someone else" and "kiss others" through to "cheat", "affair", and "sleep/sexual relationship with someone else". This is consistent with work by Roscoe et al., (1988), which investigated the different behaviours that constitute infidelity, and found that a range of behaviours in addition to sexual intercourse constitute unfaithful acts. Participants also gave some qualified responses, regarding infidelity under specific conditions, such as "sleep with best friend", "kiss someone else in front of partner", and "sex with an ex-partner". It appears that for some, infidelity may impact more negatively when it occurs under certain conditions, such as when the infidelity is with someone known to the couple, or with an ex-partner, or when the transgression occurs in front of a partner. This is consistent with work by Shackelford (1997), that explored the outcomes of betrayal under different conditions, such as a partner's betrayal with an enemy, versus betrayal with a friend. Feelings of betrayal were most intense when a partner's betrayal occurred with a close friend of the betrayed partner. In these cases, it appears that the impact of the actual infidelity is compounded by the betrayal by a friend or someone that is known (in the case of infidelity with a known person), doubts about the entire relationship and about whether one's partner ended their prior relationship (in the case of infidelity with an ex-partner), and the humiliation and embarrassment of others knowing about the infidelity. Infidelity again appeared in participant's responses across all relationship types. Interestingly however, for the questions about casual relationships, there were more different responses that were listed, than those that appeared in the more committed relationships. That is, as the level of commitment increased towards marriage, the list of infidelity responses became shorter, and were limited to "sexual relationship with someone else", "cheat", and "affair". For casual relationships however, responses included those mentioned, but also "having multiple relationships going on", "seeing other people", "kissing others", "starting to see someone else", as well as qualifications about the conditions under which infidelity occurs.

Another theme was to do with *violence, harm and abuse*. While there were many responses that reflected negative behaviour towards a partner – participants were, after all, asked about the worst thing that could be done to a partner or to themselves - there were a set of responses that identified overtly abusive or violent behaviours. These included responses such as "be aggressive", "physical/verbal abuse", "kill/harm me or my family", and "violence". It also included other responses such as "making threats", in which harm or violence is implied, and "give me an STD". This last response of "give me an STD" was included in this category due to the potential lasting effects on one's physical and emotional health, in the same way that other forms of abusive or violent behaviour can have long-term effects on physical and emotional health. Responses to do with this theme appeared consistently through each of the relationship types, and for both actor to partner, and partner to actor scenarios.

The next theme had to do with *neglect*, which was characterised by responses reflecting a lack of investment or commitment to the relationship, and also those that might reflect de-escalation or dissolution of a relationship. A common element of these responses was passivity, where there was a lack of action or investment, rather than active moves by one partner to harm the relationship. Responses in this category included: "break up/leave relationship", "stop talking to me/ignoring me", "losing contact", "stop trying", "not communicating", "being emotionally disengaged", "not making time to see me", and "not displaying commitment", to name some examples. This was one of the larger categories, and participants identified neglect behaviours across all relationship types, for both actor to partner and partner to actor scenarios.

Another theme reflected *acts of disrespect and disregard*, which included responses about insensitivity to needs or feelings, indiscretion, and negative acts that were not overtly abusive or violent. Some examples of responses that reflect this theme included "disrespect", "disrespect me in front of friends", "sharing details of (our) relationship with others", "hurt my feelings", "use me", "be rude/inconsiderate", and "behave insensitively". Again, for some, it appears that disrespect may have a more negative impact when done in certain settings, such as in front of friends, possibly due to the added hurt and humiliation as a result of the act being in public. Consistent with the responses for the theme of infidelity, participants identified more acts that were disrespectful to partners or by partners, for casual relationships, than they did for other relationship types.

The last theme was one of *demandingness* or *possessiveness*, whose responses were characterised by a sense of an individual wanting or seeking something from their partner, or examples of dependency, control or manipulation. Another aspect of this theme was one of inequity: what one partner seeks, the other partner does not want. This theme was reflected by a smaller number of responses than the other themes, but included responses such as "telling me what to do", "forcing me to do something I don't want to do", "expecting more than a casual relationship", "become possessive", "be too demanding", and "being too dependent". Interestingly, again most of these responses were made about casual relationships than other relationship types.

The pattern of responses for the themes of *violence, harm and abuse* and *neglect* seemed to be balanced across each of the relationship types, for both self to partner and partner to self scenarios. That is, participants gave a similar range and number of responses. For the themes of *deception, infidelity, acts of disregard and disrespect,* and *demandingness/possessiveness* there was a pattern whereby respondents gave a wider range of behaviours that fit within those themes, as well as a larger number of responses for casual relationships compared to other relationship types. This may be because in casual relationships, the expectations about the nature of the relationship may differ more between partners than in other relationship types, and typically in a casual relationship there has been no formal agreement or consensus about the direction of the relationship or even whether it will continue, as might be expected in committed and exclusive dating, engaged, and married relationships. In terms of social exchange, this may be because those in more committed relationships have a greater knowledge of their partner, as well as the possible motivations for their actions. Individuals have also shown that they go through a process of accommodation of a partner's behaviours, and willingness to sacrifice, in determining level of commitment. When individuals are faced with situations of conflicting interests, such as a partner's transgression, he or she must decide how to respond. Acting in the interests of the relationship over interests of the individual reflects a transformation of motivation, willingness to sacrifice individual interests, and accommodation of a partner's behaviour, all of which are pro-relationship strategies aimed at maintaining the relationship and avoiding further conflict and disruption (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993; Van Lange et al., 1997). The fact that a more narrow range of behaviours appears for those in married relationships as opposed to casual relationships may reflect greater commitment and greater accommodation of a partner's behaviour,

and an increased willingness to sacrifice individual interests for the long-term goals of the relationship.

Looking at the percentage of respondents who gave answers for each of the different themes, there were some observable patterns. Figures 1 and 2 below present the percentage of responses for each theme, for each relationship type. Figure 1 represents the response for the partner to self scenario, while Figure 2 represents the self to partner scenario.

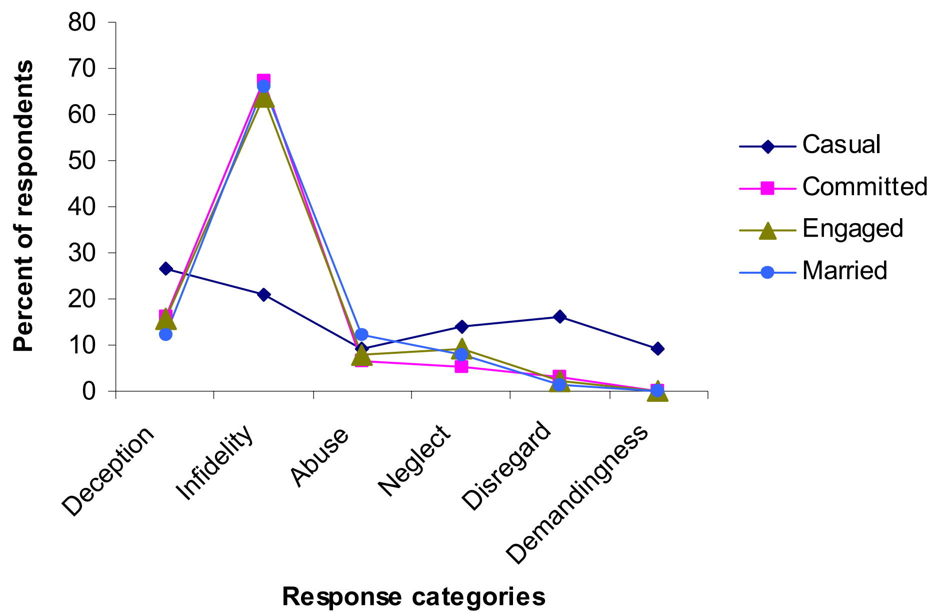

Figure 1. Percentage of respondents by theme and relationship type for partner to self scenario.

Figure 1 shows that the pattern of responses for what is regarded as the worst thing a partner could do in a casual relationship is different from the other relationship types. The pattern of responses for the exclusive dating, engaged and married groups follows the same pattern with little variation.

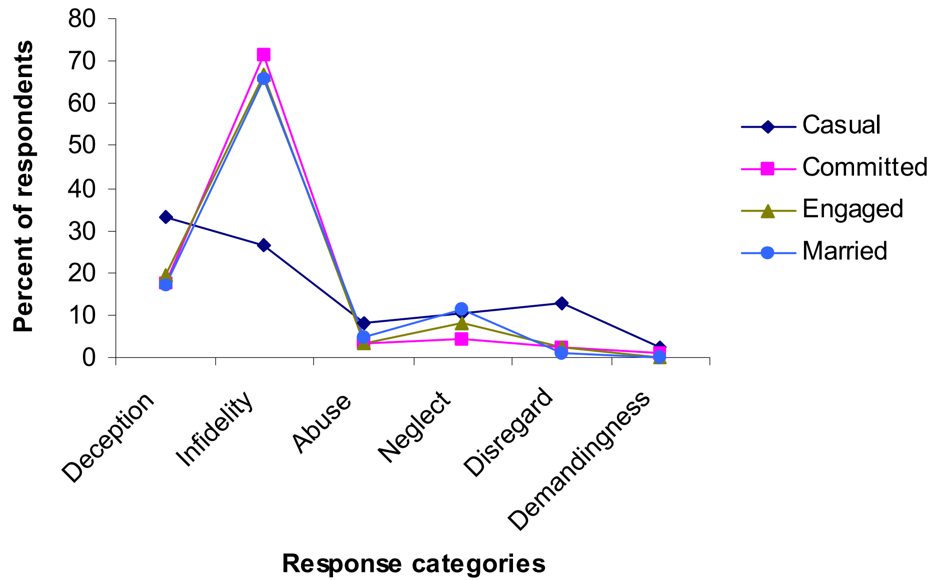

Figure 2. Percentage of respondents by theme and relationship type for self to partner scenario.

Figure 2, which describes the self to partner scenario, displays the same patterns as Figure 1, where the pattern of responses for a casual relationship differs to the pattern exhibited by the exclusive dating, engaged and married groups.

Overall, respondents viewed the worst thing that could be done in a casual relationship, whether to them or by them, were acts of deception, followed by infidelity, then acts of disregard or disrespect. This differed to the pattern of the other relationship types. For exclusive dating, engaged and married relationships, the pattern of responses was generally the same. For these three relationship types, infidelity was by far the worst offence that could be committed, with over 60% of responses in all relationship types reflecting this. Infidelity was followed by deception, a theme which reflected between 12.36% and 19.54% of responses. This makes intuitive sense, and in fact it may be argued that there is overlap between the deception and infidelity categories, as infidelity, by its very nature, is a deceptive act. After infidelity and deception, the responses differed slightly across relationship types. For exclusive dating relationships, participants saw all other categories as relatively equal, while for engaged relationships, neglect was the next worst offence, and for married relationships, abuse and neglect were seen as equal third.

From all of the responses, there were only four that could not be classified by the researcher. There were two responses of “nothing, it’s casual”, “not enjoying a sexual

relationship", and "making family conflicts". With regard to the "not enjoying a sexual relationship', it is unknown whether the term 'enjoying' referred to the non-existence of a sexual relationship, or the presence of one, but that one's partner does not enjoy it. Given this, its classification may change on the basis of the meaning of this term by the participant, for example the non-existence of a relationship could be seen as fitting with *neglect*, while the non-enjoyment of an existing sexual relationship may come under *deceit* if an individual does not know their partner does not enjoy the sexual relationship. With the response "making family conflicts", this refers to an act not done directly to a partner, like other responses, however causing conflict in a family could possibly be seen as an *act of disregard or disrespect*.

The coding was assessed for reliability by giving the list to an independent rater, a layperson, to independently code the responses. The layperson is university educated, but outside the discipline of psychology, and received minimal instructions: only to read over the written responses and to try to categorise them into themes. The independent coder categorised the responses into six themes: three themes were identical to the researcher's (*deception*, *infidelity* and *disrespect*); one of the independent coder's themes (*abuse*) was a theme that the researcher had identified as two (*violence/harm/abuse* and *demandingness /possessiveness*), while two of the independent coder's themes (*lack of communication/emotion*; *lack of commitment/action*) were represented by one of the researcher's (*neglect*). Despite these slight differences in the themes themselves, there was high inter-rater agreement about which responses made up the different themes. For the category of *deception*, inter-rater agreement was 97.2%, calculated as the number of agreements/total number of agreements + disagreements, multiplied by 100 (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For *infidelity*, inter-rater agreement was 100%; and for *acts of disrespect and disregard* agreement was 75.9%. Where the separate themes of *violence/harm/abuse* and *demandingness/possessiveness* reflected only one of the independent coder's themes, in total, there was agreement on 69.7% of the items. Similarly for *neglect*, which conceptually, reflected two themes developed by the independent coder, inter-rater agreement was 92.9% across all those responses.

The response participants gave for the worst things that could be done by them or to them were also investigated to see whether they fit into the previously derived 16 rule/expectation categories. Overall, all the responses could be allocated to one of the 16 categories. As with the thematic analysis described above, depending on the meaning taken from an individual response, it may be allocated to different categories. Again an

independent rater was asked to classify the responses and allocate them to the 16 categories, and inter-rater agreement was 94.3%. Interestingly, participants' views of the worst things that they could do, or that could be done to them, tended to fit into the categories that reflected the more emotional aspects of a relationship, such as the categories of Loyalty/Fidelity, Help/Support, Sharing/Equality, Self-Disclosure and Expression, and Positive Interaction. There was also heavy endorsement of the Negative Private Behaviour and Negative Public Behaviour categories, due to the large number of responses that reflected harm and abuse. Those categories that reflected the more procedural aspects of a relationship, such as Roles or Time in Tasks for example, did not have many, if any responses allocated to them.

Participants were also asked about the worst thing that has actually been done to them by a partner, as well as the worst thing they have actually done to a partner. For the worst thing that participants said was actually done to them, of the responses, 23.9% reflected acts of disregard and disrespect, 21.7% reflected infidelity, 19.6% for both deception and neglect, 8.7% for violence, harm and abuse, and 5.4% demandingness/possessiveness. There was one response that did not fit any of the themes and was therefore not coded. For the worst thing that participants reported they had actually done to a partner, 31.5% reported deception, 27.0% reported infidelity, 19.1% reported neglect, 11.2% acts of disregard and disrespect, 6.7% violence, harm and abuse, and 2.25% demandingness/possessiveness. Again, there was one response that could not be coded. It appears that for acts done by a partner to them, participants experienced mostly disregard and disrespect and infidelity, followed by deception and neglect, while for acts they did to others, participants subjected partners to mainly deception and infidelity, followed by neglect.

Summary.

Participants' views about the worst things that could be done to a partner in a relationship resulted in a number of themes being identified: deception; infidelity; violence, harm and abuse; neglect; acts of disregard and disrespect, and demandingness or possessiveness. The worst acts that could be committed followed the same pattern for committed, engaged and married relationships, whereby infidelity was seen to be the worst offence, followed by deception, abuse, neglect, disregard and demandingness. This was the case for both partner to self and self to partner scenarios. The worst behaviours that could be committed in casual relationships were seen to follow a different pattern

than the other relationship types. In casual relationships, deception was the worst offence, followed by infidelity, disregard, neglect, abuse and demandingness. The difference in patterns may appear to be a reflection of differences in the levels of commitment that are likely between different relationship types, and the associated ability to accommodate a partner's behaviour. Further it appears to also reflect the fact that in a casual relationship, by nature of it being casual, there is no certainty that the relationship will continue, thus rules and expectations about a partner's behaviour are unlikely to be established at this point. As a result, in terms of commitment, a lack of intimate knowledge and understanding of a casual partner combined with uncertainty about the future of the relationship may mean there is less ability or motivation to accommodate a partner's behaviour, and less willingness to sacrifice one's own interests for the relationship.

Quantitative Results

Preliminary analyses and data screening.

All analyses were conducted using SPSS version 14.0. Data screening of variables and scales revealed a number of outliers with standardised scores of >3.29 (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2001). According to Hair et al., (1995), for sample sizes larger than 80, the threshold value of standard scores can range between 3 and 4. The majority of the standardised scores that were >3.29 were still within the range of 3 to 4, with only a small number above 4. Those variables that had outliers with a standardised score greater than 4 included relationship length, length of time living together, importance of Self-Disclosure and Expression, importance of Loyalty/Fidelity, importance of Positive Interaction, the Restraint dimension of the Weinberger Adjustment Inventory (WAI), and the WAI subscale of Responsibility.

For these variables that had outliers greater than 4, the mean was compared with the 5% trimmed mean, which is the mean of the distribution with the top 5% and the bottom 5% of scores removed, the purpose of which is to obtain a measure of central tendency (the mean) that is not affected by extreme scores. With the exception of relationship length and length of time living together, examination of the 5% trimmed mean revealed that the outliers did not have a strong influence on the mean. It was expected that both relationship length and length of time living together would have large ranges and variance, thus outliers were not removed from these variables.

In assessing outliers and normality, Hair et. al. (1995) stated that outliers should be viewed within the context of the analysis, rather than being labelled as beneficial or problematic, with regard to the information they may provide about the construct being studied. Further, outliers "although different from the majority of the sample, may be indicative of characteristics of the population that would not be discovered in the normal course of analysis" (Hair et al., 1995, p.57-58). Therefore, they argued that an observation should be retained in the data set unless there is information that may discount it as a valid observation in the sample.

Normality of the variables was assessed through histograms, normal Q-Q plots, detrended Q-Q plots, and skewness and kurtosis. The normality plots revealed a number of the variables were non-normally distributed. In general, the current sample endorsed the rule categories as common to most relationships and important in relationships, with violation of some rule categories considered as presenting a serious threat and whose violation would be unforgivable, which resulted in a number of negatively skewed distributions. Consequently, given the pattern of responding, these non-normal distributions were expected and can be explained, thus are considered to reflect characteristics of the different rule categories rather than problems in the data set.

The statistics for skewness and kurtosis were mostly within the accepted -1 to +1 range. There were a number of variables for whom one statistic was within acceptable limits and one was outside. The skewness statistic for importance of Help/Support was -1.46, however kurtosis was acceptable (0.14); for forgivability of broken Negative Public Behaviour rules, the skewness statistic was -1.07, but kurtosis was acceptable at 0.89. The skewness statistic for threat of violated Sharing/Equality rules was acceptable at -0.15, but kurtosis was just greater than -1 (-1.04), as was threat of violated Social Behaviour, where skewness was acceptable at 0.09, while kurtosis was just greater than -1 (-1.02).

A number of the sources of rules showed differences in their skewness and kurtosis also. The skewness statistic for Ethnicity as a source of rules was acceptable at -0.22, while kurtosis was -1.14. Similarly, for Best Same Sex Friend as a source of rules, skewness was -0.10, while kurtosis was -1.15. For Occupation as source of rules, skewness was acceptable at 0.46, while kurtosis was -1.03 and for Other Relatives as a source of rules, skewness was at 0.45, while kurtosis was -1.01. Other Same Sex Friends as a source of rules had acceptable skewness (-0.07), while kurtosis was -1.16; as did Social Class as a rule source, with an acceptable skewness statistic of 0.21, and a kurtosis

statistic of -1.26. Lastly, the WAI subscale of Low Self-esteem had a skewness statistic of 1.11, however kurtosis was acceptable at 0.85. For all of these variables, skewness and kurtosis was assessed in conjunction with the normality plots, and on the basis of these, it was decided not to transform these variables.

With regard to the variables whose skewness and kurtosis were outside the accepted -1 to +1 range, appropriate square root or logarithmic, reflected or unreflected transformations were attempted, but did not approach normality, therefore the variables were not transformed. Tabachnick and Fidel (2001) pointed out that if variables are moderately skewed to approximately the same extent, any improvements in analysis gained from transformation are often marginal, and this was the case for a number of variables. Further, these distributions reflected variables that were often highly endorsed by participants. As previously mentioned, this was an expected result, and an essential feature of the rule categories. An example of this is the category Loyalty/Fidelity, which had strongly negatively skewed and leptokurtic (peaked) distributions for commonality, importance, threat and forgivability. It was expected that this particular rule category would have such distributions; therefore to transform the data would compromise an essential feature of this particular rule category and its comparative importance to other rule categories.

The number of participants (*N*s) varied across variables and analyses due to varying amounts of missing data. There was a large amount of missing data for the commonality ratings of the rule categories, whereby participants were asked to rate how common they thought rules in each category were to most relationships. Missing data ranged from N=2 for commonality of Loyalty/Fidelity to N=46 for commonality of Time in Tasks. This missing data was due to participants overlooking the instructions and only responding to those categories they had endorsed for their own relationship. For all other variables, the largest amount of missing data was N=3. It was decided not to estimate the missing values by using any of the available imputation methods in order to avoid artificial increases in the explanatory power of the analysis (Hair et. al., 1995), but to interpret those results with large amounts of missing data with caution.

A series of analyses, both descriptive and inferential, were performed in order to address the various research questions posed, and are presented below by research question.

Rule endorsement.

Which rules are most/least endorsed?

Frequency counts for each rule category show that the majority of respondents stated that they have or have had rules and/or expectations about the majority of rule categories – over 75% of respondents endorsed 11 of the 16 categories.

The most endorsed category was Loyalty/Fidelity, closely followed by the categories of Self-Disclosure and Expression, and Positive Interaction, all of which had frequency counts above 100 (n=106). Time in Tasks was the only category that was endorsed by less than half of all respondents. Table 7 shows the frequency count and percentage of respondents who endorsed each category in descending order from most endorsed.

Table 7
Frequency and Percentage of Endorsement of Rules and Expectations

Rule category	Count[a]	% of respondents who endorsed this category*
Loyalty and Fidelity	105	99.1
Self-Disclosure and Expression	101	95.3
Positive Interaction	100	94.3
Help and Support	98	92.5
Ritual Obligations	95	89.6
Sharing and Equality	94	88.7
Negative Public Behaviour	90	84.9
Sexual Behaviour	87	82.1
Time with Partner	86	81.1
Negative Private Behaviour	81	76.4
Social Behaviour	80	75.5
Time with Others	70	66.0
Roles	67	63.2
Finances	65	61.3
Self-Presentation	62	58.5
Time in Tasks	44	41.5

[a]Valid number of responses n=106
**Note.* Each respondent rated each item, so total percentage will exceed 100%

Does rule endorsement differ between males and females?

Frequency counts and percentages were obtained for rule endorsement for both males and females. Table 8 sets out these figures for males and females.

Table 8
Frequency and Percentage of Rule Endorsement for Males and Females

Category	Males		Females	
	frequency[a]	% of males	frequency[b]	% of females
Self-Disclosure and Expression	25	96.2	76	95.0
Loyalty and Fidelity	25	96.2	80	100.0
Help and Support	24	92.3	74	92.5
Sharing and Equality	24	92.3	70	87.5
Sexual Behaviour	23	88.5	64	80.0
Positive Interaction	23	88.5	77	96.3
Ritual Obligations	23	88.5	72	90.0
Time with Partner	22	84.6	64	80.0
Negative Public Behaviour	22	84.6	68	85.0
Social Behaviour	21	80.8	59	73.8
Negative Private Behaviour	20	76.9	61	76.3
Self-Presentation	20	76.9	42	52.5
Time with Others	19	73.1	51	63.8
Finances	18	69.2	47	58.8
Roles	17	65.4	50	62.5
Time in Tasks	14	53.8	30	37.5

[a] Number of male respondents n=26
[b] Number of female respondents n=80
Note. Rules are listed by endorsement for males, in descending order from highest to lowest.

By looking at the frequency counts, males endorsed Self-Disclosure and Expression (96.2%), Loyalty/Fidelity (96.2%), Help/Support (92.3%), and Sharing/Equality (92.3%) rules the most, with more than 90% of male participants endorsing these categories. The female participants seem to have highly endorsed more rule categories than did the males. They followed a similar pattern, and highly endorsed Loyalty/Fidelity (100%), Positive Interaction (96.3%), Self-Disclosure and Expression (95%), Help/Support (92.5%) and Ritual Obligations (90%), with 90% or more of female respondents endorsing these categories.

The categories least endorsed by the male respondents were Time in Tasks (53.8%), Roles (65.4%) and Finances (69.2%), however these categories were still endorsed by over half of male respondents. For the females, Time in Tasks (37.5%), Self-Presentation (52.5%) and Finances (58.8%) were the least endorsed categories, with only Time in Tasks being endorsed by less than half of female participants.

Chi square analyses were run in order to determine whether there were differences between males and females in their endorsement of rule/expectation categories. Due to over-endorsement of many of the rule categories, and consequent insufficient cell numbers, it was inappropriate to interpret the chi-square analyses for Self-Disclosure and Expression, Loyalty/Fidelity, and Positive Interaction. Of those that were appropriate to interpret, there were no significant differences between males and females in their endorsement across rule categories.

Summary.

Descriptive results showed that all of the rule/expectation categories received endorsement, with over half the sample endorsing 15 of the 16 categories. Males and females demonstrated similar patterns in their endorsement. For clarity, the four most endorsed and four least endorsed categories for both men and women are presented in Table 9.

Table 9
Four Most and Least Endorsed Categories for Males and Females

		Males		Females
Four most endorsed (in order from most endorsed)	1	Self-Disclosure and Expression*	1	Loyalty/Fidelity
	1	Loyalty/Fidelity*	2	Positive Interaction
	3	Help/Support	3	Help/Support
	4	Sharing/Equality	4	Ritual Obligations
Four least endorsed (in order from least endorsed)	1	Time in Tasks	1	Time in Tasks
	2	Roles	2	Self-Presentation
	3	Finances	3	Finances
	4	Time with Others	4	Roles

**Note.* Self-Disclosure and Expression and Loyalty/Fidelity were endorsed equally.

Both males and females heavily endorsed rules and expectations about Loyalty/Fidelity and Help/Support, while both genders gave least endorsement to Time in Tasks, Finances and Roles. Chi-square analysis revealed no significant differences in endorsement between the genders.

Rule setting.

Which rules are discussed and which are expected?

Of those respondents who endorsed the rule categories, a count was run to establish whether the rule categories that were endorsed were typically discussed between partners, or whether they were just expected. Tables 10 and 11 present the counts for both discussed and expected responses, and are both presented with the count in descending order. The ranks are also presented for ease of interpretation.

Table 10
Frequency and Percentage of Rules Discussed in Relationships

Rule category	Count[a]	% of respondents who DISCUSSED this category*	Rank
Sexual Behaviour	65	63.1	1
Self-Disclosure and Expression	61	59.2	2
Time with Partner	61	59.2	3
Finances	55	53.4	4
Loyalty and Fidelity	54	52.4	5
Negative Public Behaviour	47	45.6	6
Negative Private Behaviour	46	44.7	7
Ritual Obligations	45	43.7	8
Time with Others	44	42.7	9
Roles	40	38.8	10
Positive Interaction	39	37.9	11
Sharing and Equality	35	34.0	12
Social Behaviour	34	33.0	13
Time in Tasks	30	29.1	14
Self-Presentation	29	28.2	15
Help and Support	27	26.2	16

[a]Valid number of respondents N=103

The results in Table 10 show that the categories of Sexual Behaviour, Self-Disclosure and Expression, and Time with Partner are the categories most discussed, however these most discussed categories only reflect between 59% and 64% of the respondents who actually endorsed these categories. Those categories least discussed were Help and Support, ranked last, Self-Presentation, and, Time in Tasks, each of which was discussed by less than 30% of those who endorsed these categories.

Table 11
Frequency and Percentage of Rules Expected in Relationships

Rule category	Count[b]	% of respondents who EXPECTED this category*	Rank
Help and Support	71	71.0	1
Positive Interaction	62	62.0	2
Sharing and Equality	59	59.0	3
Loyalty and Fidelity	51	51.0	4
Ritual Obligations	50	50.0	5
Social Behaviour	45	45.0	6
Negative Public Behaviour	43	43.0	7
Self-Disclosure and Expression	40	40.0	8
Negative Private Behaviour	34	34.0	9
Self-Presentation	33	33.0	10
Time with Others	26	26.0	11
Roles	26	26.0	12
Time with Partner	25	25.0	13
Sexual Behaviour	22	22.0	14
Time in Tasks	14	14.0	15
Finances	10	10.0	16

[b]Valid number of responses N=100

Table 11 shows that the most expected rules were those about Help and Support, Positive Interaction, and, Sharing and Equality, with between 59% and 71% of participants who endorsed these categories reporting that they expect these rules as opposed to discuss them. Those categories that were reported as being least expected were Finances, Time in Tasks, and Sexual Behaviour, representing 22% or less of respondents who endorsed these categories.

Comparing the results in Table 10 and Table 11, interestingly, the three categories listed as most discussed (Sexual Behaviour, Self-Disclosure and Expression, and Time with Partner) were not those same categories that were ranked as least expected (Finances, Time in Tasks, Sexual Behaviour) – only Sexual Behaviour was consistent. Further, the three categories listed as most expected (Help/Support, Positive Interaction, Sharing/Equality), with the exception of Help/Support, were not the same categories ranked as least discussed (Help/Support, Self-Presentation, Time in Tasks).

In contrasting which rules were discussed and which were expected, there were a number of rules that were more clearly discussed than expected, or expected than discussed, while for other categories their ranking did not vary by many places from Discussed to Expected. Rule categories that were high discussion/low expectation included Sexual Behaviour (ranked 1 for Discussed and 14 for Expected), Self-Disclosure and Expression (rank 2 Discussed and rank 8 Expected), Time with Partner (rank 3 and rank 13), and Finances (rank 4 and rank 16). Other categories rated low on discussion, but higher in the rankings for expectation. Those that fell into this low discussion/high expectation group included Positive Interaction (rank 11 for Discussed, rank 2 for Expected), Sharing and Equality (rank 12 and rank 3), Social Behaviour (rank 13 and rank 6), and Help and Support (rank 16 and rank 1).

From the data, it therefore appears that the categories of Sexual Behaviour, Self-Disclosure and Expression, Time with Partner and Finances are categories that tend to be discussed more than they are expected, while Positive Interaction, Sharing and Equality, Social Behaviour, and Help and Support are categories where individuals tend to expect certain standards of behaviour rather than discuss them with their partner. Interestingly, the categories of Negative Public Behaviour, Negative Private Behaviour, Ritual Obligations, Time with Others, Roles, Time in Tasks and Self-Presentation did not clearly move from one end of the ranking to another for discussion and expectation, while the Loyalty/Fidelity Category was ranked similarly – in 5th place for discussed, and ranked 4th for expected, which suggests it may be equally discussed and expected.

The frequencies for whether rules were discussed and expected were then looked at for each gender.

Table 12
Frequency and Percentage of Rule Establishment Strategy for Male Respondents

Category	Discussed		Expected	
	frequency[a]	%	frequency[b]	%
Sexual Behaviour	18	69.2	5	20.8
Self-Disclosure and Expression	17	65.4	8	33.3
Finances	16	61.5	2	8.3
Negative Private Behaviour	15	57.7	5	20.8
Time with Partner	14	53.8	8	33.3
Positive Interaction	14	53.8	10	41.7
Loyalty and Fidelity	12	46.2	13	54.2
Time with Others	12	46.2	7	29.2
Negative Public Behaviour	11	42.3	11	45.8
Time in Tasks	10	38.5	4	16.7
Roles	10	38.5	6	25.0
Self-Presentation	10	38.5	10	41.7
Social Behaviour	9	34.6	11	45.8
Ritual Obligations	9	34.6	14	58.3
Sharing and Equality	7	26.9	17	70.8
Help and Support	6	23.1	18	75.0

[a] Valid number of respondents n=26
[b] Valid number of respondents n=24
Note. Categories are presented in descending order of frequency for Discussed.

Table 12 shows that for men, the categories most discussed are Sexual Behaviour, Self-Disclosure and Expression, Finances, and Negative Private Behaviour, while the least discussed are Help/Support, Sharing/Equality, Social Behaviour, and Ritual Obligations. The most expected categories were Help/Support, Sharing/Equality, Ritual Obligations, and Loyalty Fidelity. The least expected categories were Finances, Sexual Behaviour, Time in Tasks, and Negative Private Behaviour. These results are consistent with the overall sample results. Those categories listed as most discussed are generally consistent with those categories listed as least expected, with the exceptions of Self-Disclosure and Expression and Time in Tasks. Self-Disclosure and Expression was endorsed as one of the most discussed categories but not as one of the least expected, while Time in Tasks appeared as one of the least expected categories but did not appear as one of the most discussed.

Similarly those categories listed as mostly expected were generally consistent with those categories listed as least discussed. The two exceptions here were that Loyalty/Fidelity was listed as a mostly expected category, but was not one of the least discussed categories, and Social Behaviour, which did not appear as one of the most expected categories, but appeared as one of the least discussed.

In summary, for male respondents, the categories of Self-Disclosure and Expression, Sexual Behaviour, Negative Private Behaviour and Finances are categories that are more discussed than they are expected, and endorsed by a larger number of the male respondents as discussed, while the categories of Help/Support and Sharing/Equality are more clearly expected than discussed.

Table 13
Frequency and Percentage of Rule Establishment Strategy for Female Respondents

Category	Discussed		Expected	
	frequency[a]	%	frequency[b]	%
Sexual Behaviour	47	61.0	17	22.4
Time with Partner	47	61.0	17	22.4
Self-Disclosure and Expression	44	57.1	32	42.1
Loyalty and Fidelity	42	54.5	38	50.0
Finances	39	50.6	8	10.5
Negative Public Behaviour	36	46.8	32	42.1
Ritual Obligations	36	46.8	36	47.4
Time with Others	32	41.6	19	25.0
Negative Private Behaviour	31	40.3	29	38.2
Roles	30	39.0	20	26.3
Sharing and Equality	28	36.4	42	55.3
Positive Interaction	25	32.5	52	68.4
Social Behaviour	25	32.5	34	44.7
Help and Support	21	27.3	53	69.7
Time in Tasks	20	26.0	10	13.2
Self-Presentation	19	24.7	23	30.3

[a] Valid number of cases n=77
[b] Valid number of cases n=76
Note. Categories are presented in descending order of frequency for Discussed.

For the female respondents, Table 13 shows that the categories endorsed as most discussed were Sexual Behaviour, Time with Partner, Self-Disclosure and Expression and Loyalty Fidelity, while the least discussed categories were Self-Presentation, Time in Tasks, Help/Support and equally Social Behaviour and Positive Interaction. The categories most expected were Help/Support, Positive Interaction, Sharing/Equality, and Loyalty Fidelity, while the categories endorsed as least expected were Finances, Time in Tasks, Time with Partner, and Sexual Behaviour. These results are generally consistent with the overall results, as well as the results for the male participants.

In contrast to the male participants, of the four categories most discussed by females, only two were also the least expected – Time with Partner and Sexual Behaviour. The four categories most expected were not generally consistent with those categories endorsed as the least discussed. Only Help/Support and Positive Interaction appeared as both largely expected and least discussed.

Interestingly, consistent with the male participants for whom approximately the same number of respondents endorsed discussed as expected for the Loyalty/Fidelity category, for the female respondents, Loyalty/Fidelity was ranked as the 4th most discussed category and the 4th most expected category, thus was highly endorsed as both. The other categories appeared to be discussed as much as they were expected, reflected by their similar rankings.

Does rule establishment strategy differ across relationship types?

Chi square analyses were performed in order to determine if there were significant differences in rule establishment strategy, that is whether the rule was discussed or expected, across relationship types. In this instance there was over-representation of individuals who are in committed, exclusive dating relationships compared to other relationship types, therefore the chi-square results are unable to be interpreted.

For the committed, exclusive dating group however, the crosstabs results reveal that this group tend to discuss rules about Self-Disclosure and Expression, Sexual Behaviour, Time with Others, and Negative Private Behaviour, while rules about Help/Support, Sharing/Equality, Time with Partner, Negative Public Behaviour, Positive Interaction, Social Behaviour and Ritual Obligations tend to be expected. The Loyalty/Fidelity and Finances categories were evenly discussed and expected, while for time in Tasks, Roles and Self-Presentation, the highest count was for no rule existing.

Summary.

A number of rule/expectation categories could be identified as being more discussed than expected, others more expected than discussed, while still others did not appear to differ markedly. Those categories rated as most discussed were Sexual Behaviour, Self-Disclosure and Expression and Time with Partner. Those least discussed were Help and Support, Self-Presentation, and Time in Tasks. Those categories most expected were about Help and Support, Positive Interaction, and Sharing and Equality, while those least expected were Finances, Time in Tasks and Sexual Behaviour. Those categories ranked highly on one of discussed or expected, however, did not necessarily rank low on the other. Those that can be defined as clearly discussed, represented by high discussion/low expectation were Sexual Behaviour, Self-Disclosure and Expression, Time with Partner and Finances. Those that can be defined as clearly discussed, represented by high expectation/low discussion were Positive Interaction, Sharing and Equality, Social Behaviour, and Help and Support. For male respondents, overall, Self-Disclosure and Expression, Sexual Behaviour, Negative Private Behaviour and Finances are categories that are more discussed than they are expected, while females reported Sexual Behaviour, Time with Partner, Self-Disclosure and Expression and Loyalty Fidelity as more discussed. Males reported Help/Support and Sharing/Equality were more expected than discussed, while females reported Help/Support, Positive Interaction, Sharing/Equality, and Loyalty Fidelity as being largely expected. Loyalty/Fidelity, for both males and females, was ranked almost equally discussed as it is expected. Chi-square results between rule establishment strategy and relationship type were unable to be interpreted due to over-representation of one relationship type.

Commonality, Importance, Threat and (Un) Forgivability.

To further investigate endorsement of the categories, ratings of commonality (how common rules or expectation in a particular category are perceived to be), importance, threat and (un) forgivability were examined. Ratings of commonality were used to further establish endorsement, and to ensure that the sample or categories under consideration are not unique. As such, the commonality ratings acted as a validity check, and as a result, do not appear in all analyses.

Which rules are rated as most common, most important, most threatening, and most unforgivable?

Commonality.

Table 14 contains the mean ratings for commonality, which describes participants' perceptions of how common to most relationships, the rules and expectations in each category are perceived to be. The results show that Loyalty/Fidelity is the rule category that participants saw as being most common in most relationships, closely followed by Help/Support, Positive Interaction and Ritual Obligations. These first four ranked categories all have mean scores above 4.0, which reflect ratings of *'fairly common'* which was rated as 4, to *'very common',* rated as 5 on a 5 point Likert scale. The mean scores for all the other categories reflect ratings falling between *'half/half'* '(rated as 3) and *'fairly common'* (rated as 4).

Table 14
Ranks and Mean Ratings for Perceived Commonality of Rule Categories

Rank	Rule Category	*M*	*SD*
1	Loyalty/Fidelity	4.40	.90
2	Help/Support	4.30	.92
3	Positive Interaction	4.13	.80
4	Ritual Obligations	4.09	.91
5	Self-Disclosure and Expression	3.93	.87
6	Finances	3.87	.89
7	Negative Public Behaviour	3.73	1.01
8	Sexual Behaviour	3.72	1.00
9	Time with Partner	3.71	.93
10.5	Social Behaviour	3.65	.92
10.5	Roles	3.65	.99
12	Sharing/Equality	3.62	.97
13	Negative Private Behaviour	3.56	1.02
14	Time with Others	3.47	.97
15	Time in Tasks	3.37	.99
16	Self-Presentation	3.31	.91

Commonality was quite heavily endorsed, with 61.5% of respondents rating Loyalty/Fidelity as *'very common'*, and 51% rating Help/Support as *very common*. Positive Interaction was rated as *'very common'* by 37.4% of respondents, and Ritual Obligation by 37%. Self-Presentation, Time in Tasks and Time with Others were the categories respondents saw as being the least common to most relationships, with only 6.8%, 11.7% and 14.5% of participants respectively, rating these categories as *'very common'*.

In general, the results demonstrate that respondents endorsed the rule categories as being common to most relationships. For female respondents, the four rule and expectation categories rated most common and the four least common were the same as for the overall sample. Male respondents followed a similar pattern.

Importance.

Table 15 displays the means for ratings of importance; that is, how important participants considered having rules and expectations about each of the categories is to the relationship.

Table 15

Ranks and Mean Ratings for Perceived Importance of Rule Categories

Rank	Rule Category	*M*	*SD*
1	Loyalty/Fidelity	4.85	.41
2	Help/Support	4.79	.41
3	Self-Disclosure and Expression	4.70	.64
4	Positive Interaction	4.50	.72
5	Time with Partner	4.13	.72
6	Sharing/Equality	4.09	.74
7	Sexual Behaviour	3.85	.78
8	Ritual Obligations	3.76	.79
9	Social Behaviour	3.75	.85
10	Negative Public Behaviour	3.60	1.46
11	Time with Others	3.58	.88
12	Negative Private Behaviour	3.53	1.32
13	Finances	3.38	.88
14	Time in Tasks	3.25	.78
15	Roles	3.23	.93
16	Self-Presentation	3.22	.89

Consistent with ratings of commonality, the mean ratings for importance show that Loyalty/Fidelity and Help/Support, followed by Self-Disclosure and Expression, are rated as the rule categories participants see as most important to relationships. The means for these four categories reflect ratings above 4, on a 5 point Likert scale, with a rating of 4 being *'very important'*, and 5 being *'extremely important/necessary to the relationship'*. A number of other categories also had mean scores reflecting these ratings, suggesting that a number of categories are seen as very important to the functioning and maintenance of a relationship. Interestingly, these categories seem to reflect the more emotional aspects of a relationship, with perhaps the exception of aspects of Positive Interaction and Time with Partner, while those categories seen as least important appear to deal with the more pragmatic, day-to-day aspects of a relationship, such as Roles and Time in Tasks.

The categories seen as least important to a relationship were Self-Presentation and Time in Tasks, which is consistent with ratings of commonality. Roles was the other category rated least important. The mean ratings of these categories reflect ratings between *'somewhat important'* (rated as 3), and *'very important'* (rated as 4). Therefore, even those categories that were endorsed as being least important of all the 16 categories were still seen as somewhat important in a relationship.

Overall, participants heavily endorsed importance of the rule and expectation categories. For the top three categories, Loyalty/Fidelity, Help/Support and Self-Disclosure and Expression, 98.1%, 100% and 97.2% of respondents respectively, rated the importance of having rules and expectations about those categories in the top two ratings on the Likert scale. For those categories seen as least important, a large number of participants still rated these categories at the top end of the rating scale, with 27.7% still rating Self-Presentation as *'very'* or *'extremely important'*, 34% giving these ratings for Time in Tasks, and 39.6% rating *'very'* or *'extremely important'* for Roles. Overall, respondents tended to rate the rule categories as important to their relationships, and relationships in general, with rules and expectations about the emotional aspects of a relationship being generally seen as more important to the relationship than the more pragmatic aspects that are more likely to guide day to day tasks.

Threat.

Table 16 presents the mean ratings for the level of threat any violation of the rules/expectations in each category would present to the relationship. Thus, the higher the rating, the greater the threat presented to the relationship by violated rules and expectations in each category.

Table 16

Ranks and Mean Ratings for Perceived Threat of Rule Categories

Rank	Rule Category	*M*	*SD*
1	Loyalty/Fidelity	4.76	.49
2	Negative Public Behaviour	3.78	1.02
3	Negative Private Behaviour	3.67	1.20
4	Help/Support	3.32	1.14
5	Self-Disclosure and Expression	3.10	1.09
6	Positive Interaction	3.05	1.17
7	Sharing/Equality	2.93	.94
8	Time with Partner	2.86	.98
9	Sexual Behaviour	2.63	1.04
10	Social Behaviour	2.62	1.09
11	Finances	2.44	1.00
12	Time with Others	2.43	.90
13	Ritual Obligations	2.30	1.07
14	Time in Tasks	2.17	.88
15	Self-Presentation	2.06	1.03
16	Roles	2.03	.88

Examination of the mean ratings shows that violation of rules or expectations regarding Loyalty/Fidelity, Negative Public Behaviour and Negative Private Behaviour present the greatest threat to a relationship, as evidenced by the highest mean ratings. Violated Loyalty/Fidelity rules present a serious threat to a relationship, with a mean rating that lies between '*presents a threat but relationship would continue'* (rated 4) and the maximum rating of 5, *'serious threat, relationship would likely end'*. Most people, therefore, see violations of Loyalty/Fidelity rules as having severe consequences for their relationships, including relationship dissolution. The mean ratings for the categories of Negative Public Behaviour, Negative Private Behaviour, Help/Support, Self-Disclosure and Expression and Positive Interaction reflect ratings of *'undecided'* (rated 3) to

'presents a threat but relationship would continue' (rated 4), while the means of the other ten categories reflect ratings of *'little threat'* (rated 2) to *'undecided'* (rated 3).

Perceived threat was highly endorsed, and for those categories where violations present the greatest threat, a large number of respondents rated threat as high. For Loyalty/Fidelity, almost the entire sample, 97.1% rated the threat as a 4 or 5, the top two ratings on the Likert scale. The only other category that was rated for Loyalty/Fidelity was the *'undecided'* rating, with 2.9% of the sample unsure of the threat their relationship would face. For Negative Private Behaviour, 62.9% of respondents rated the threat in the top two ratings, while for Negative Public Behaviour, 72.4% of respondents rated in the top two ratings.

The categories for which violations present the least threat are Roles, Self-Presentation and Time in Tasks, whose mean ratings reflect a position of *'little threat'* on the rating scale. Only 4.8% of respondents rated the threat of violations of Time in Tasks as high, while 5.8% and 11.4% of respondents for violations of Roles and Self-Presentation respectively, rated the threat as high. Consistent with previous ratings of importance, it is these categories that appear to reflect the day to day tasks in relationships that are rated as presenting the lowest threat.

Overall, it appears that violations of the majority of categories appear to present little threat, or participants are undecided about the level of threat their relationships might face as a result of rule and expectation violations. For those categories where a violation presents a threat, it seems that for the most part, the relationships would likely continue, with the exception of Loyalty/Fidelity. Where the earlier results for commonality and importance clearly had the categories reflecting the emotional aspects of relationships appearing in the top ranked categories, for ratings of threat, Negative Public Behaviour and Negative Private Behaviour have appeared as two of the three categories. It may be that the category of Negative Private Behaviour ranks highly because it contains overtly abusive and harmful behaviour in its description, however this does not account for the category Negative Public Behaviour, unless participants assumed that the same behaviours are occurring, but in a public arena. One difficulty with drawing conclusions about the categories and how they are ranked is that the different behaviours within each category may differ in their levels of threat, and fall on a continuum from not at all threatening to relationship dissolution, but this is masked by an overall global assessment of all the behaviours within a given category.

(Un)forgivability.

Participants were asked to rate the level of (un)forgivability of rule violations, or how forgivable/unforgivable violations of the rules and expectations in each category are. This was rated on a scale where higher ratings reflect a higher degree of 'unforgivability', or less forgivability.

Table 17

Ranks and Mean Ratings for (Un)Forgivability of Rule Violations

Rank	Rule Category	*M*	*SD*
1	Loyalty/Fidelity	4.58	.65
2	Negative Public Behaviour	3.71	.98
3	Negative Private Behaviour	3.44	1.10
4	Positive Interaction	3.01	1.06
5	Help/Support	3.00	.98
6	Self-Disclosure and Expression	2.72	.98
7	Sharing/Equality	2.65	.85
8	Ritual Obligations	2.52	1.10
9	Social Behaviour	2.51	1.02
10	Sexual Behaviour	2.42	.89
11	Time with Partner	2.40	.90
12	Finances	2.33	1.01
13	Time with Others	2.14	.82
14	Roles	2.01	.85
15	Self-Presentation	1.98	.87
16	Time in Tasks	1.97	.75

As with the threat ratings, the mean ratings for (un)forgivability, shown in Table 17, reveal that violated Loyalty/Fidelity, Negative Public Behaviour and Negative Private Behaviour rules are the most unforgivable as reflected by their high means. The mean rating for Loyalty/Fidelity, at 4.58, reflects a rating between '*difficult to forgive*' (rated 4 on a 5 point Likert scale) and '*unforgivable'* (rated 5), while Negative Public Behaviour, Negative Private Behaviour, Positive Interaction, and Help/Support have means that reflect ratings of '*undecided'* (rated 3) to '*difficult to forgive'* (rated 4). Interestingly, Negative Private Behaviour, which includes in its description overtly abusive behaviours such as physical and sexual abuse and harm, did not rate as highly as Negative Public Behaviour; Negative Public Behaviour violations were seen as less forgivable. It may be that for Negative Private Behaviour, the (un)forgivability rating is

moderated by the inclusion of behaviours other than those overtly abusive behaviours, or it could be that for an individual to engage in negative behaviour towards a partner in public not only involves the potential harm of the behaviour, but its severity is increased due to the public display of such behaviour and the potential associated disrespect, humiliation and embarrassment. Most respondents gave one of the top two ratings on the Likert scale for these three categories, with 95.3% of respondents rating the (un)forgivability of violations of Loyalty/Fidelity rules in the as *'difficult to forgive'* or *'unforgivable'*, 73.6% of respondents for Negative Public Behaviour, and 55.7% for Negative Private Behaviour.

Again, consistent with the ratings for threat, Time in Tasks, Self-Presentation and Roles violations were rated as categories whose violations are easiest to forgive. Self-Presentation and Time in Tasks had mean scores that reflected ratings of *'very easy to forgive'* (rated 1) and *'reasonably easy to forgive'* (rated 2). For Time in Tasks, no respondents rated violations as *'unforgivable'*, and only 2.8% rated violations as *'difficult to forgive'*. For Self-Presentation, only 4.7% rated violations in the top two ratings, as either *'difficult to forgive* or *unforgivable'*, and for Roles, only 3.7%.

For a clearer comparison of the above results, that is how common, important, threatening and (un)forgivable respondents viewed the rule/expectation categories and their violations, Table 18 displays the rankings for each. Overall, the results in Table 18 show that rules and expectations about Loyalty/Fidelity are highly endorsed as common to most relationships, most important to a relationship, most threatening if violated, and most unforgivable when violated. Help/Support is second ranked for its being seen as common in most relationships and second most important, yet this is not reflected in its ratings for threat and forgivability, for which it is rated 4th and 5th respectively. In contrast, Negative Public Behaviour and Negative Private Behaviour are the 2nd and 3rd most unforgivable and threatening to the relationship respectively, yet respondents only see them as moderately common and moderately important. Sharing/Equality interestingly is not seen as common as other rules in relationships, but ranks highly as important, and violations rank reasonably high on threat and (un)forgivability.

Table 18

Rankings of Commonality, Importance Threat and (Un)Forgivability for all Rule Categories

Category	Commonality	Importance	Threat	(Un)Forgivability
Loyalty/Fidelity	1	1	1	1
Help/Support	2	2	4	5
Positive Interaction	3	4	6	4
Ritual Obligations	4	8	13	8
Self-Disclosure and Expression	5	3	5	6
Finances	6	13	11	12
Negative Public Behaviour	7	10	2	2
Sexual Behaviour	8	7	9	10
Time with Partner	9	5	8	11
Social Behaviour	10.5	9	10	9
Roles	10.5	15	16	14
Sharing/Equality	12	6	7	7
Negative Private Behaviour	13	12	3	3
Time with Others	14	11	12	13
Time in Tasks	15	14	14	16
Self-Presentation	16	16	15	15

Note. Categories are presented in order of ranking for commonality.

Table 18 demonstrates that it is those categories that reflect the emotional aspects of a relationship, so the provision of support, affection, emotional investment, and loyalty, are considered to be integral to the functioning of a relationship as reflected by their high rankings on commonality, importance, threat and (un)forgivability. Rule categories that guide the more pragmatic aspects of a relationship, such as how time is spent and how partners present themselves to the world and to each other, are less central to a relationship's functioning, reflected by their consistently low rankings.

Negative Public Behaviour and Negative Private Behaviour follow an interesting pattern, rating quite differently across commonality, importance, threat and (un)forgivability. Participants did not rank these categories highly on commonality or importance – that is they thought having rules or expectations about these categories was not that common to most relationships, and was not that important to the relationship. When violations of these categories occur, however, they appear to present a very serious threat to the relationship, and are deemed to be very difficult to forgive, if not

unforgivable. This discrepancy in ratings may be for a couple of reasons. The definition of the Negative Private Behaviour category encompasses a wide rage of behaviours from nagging, criticism and teasing, to overt harm through to physical and sexual abuse. The inclusion of such a wide range of behaviours in terms of their severity may be distorting the true picture of how participants see these behaviours. It may well be that they view behaviours such as nagging, criticism and teasing very differently from the explicitly abusive behaviours, yet were required to provide a global assessment of all behaviours in that category. Another possibility is that overtly abusive behaviours do not characterise the majority of romantic relationships, therefore most participants may not be basing their ratings of commonality and importance on the presence/absence of those abusive behaviours, as they do not fall within their relationship experience. However, when they come to rating violations or potential violations of these categories, participants may then take these behaviours into consideration, and rate them accordingly as presenting a serious threat to the relationship, as well as being unforgivable.

Summary.

Overall, participants' ratings showed that the rule and expectation categories are generally seen as common to most relationships, and are important to the functioning of relationships. Regarding commonality and importance, the rankings showed that participants rate commonality and importance as reasonably similar. Whether commonality and importance are distinct separate variables, or whether they tap similar concepts remains unclear. The results demonstrated that the categories of Loyalty/Fidelity, Help/Support, Positive Interaction, Ritual Obligations and Self-Disclosure and Expression are perceived to be common topics to have rules and expectations about, and are the most important rules and expectations to have. Rules and expectations about time allocation, specifically in tasks and with others outside the relationship, and Self-Presentation are generally seen as the least common, and are of comparatively lesser importance than other categories of rules and expectations.

Regarding threat and (un)forgivability, the rankings of each are reasonably similar, and the results showed that violations of Loyalty/Fidelity, Negative Private Behaviour and Negative Public Behaviour present the greatest threat to a relationship, as well as being more unforgivable (or less forgivable) than violations of other rule or expectation categories. Violations of Time in Tasks, Time with Others, Self-Presentation and Roles

were generally seen as presenting the least threat, and were relatively easy to forgive when compared with violations of other rules and expectations. The results demonstrated a consistent pattern thus far, in terms of the types of rules and expectations that are seen as common and important, and threatening and unforgivable when violated. The categories that appear to represent emotional aspects of a relationship, and reflect more abstract concepts such as loyalty, support and respect, are seen as the most fundamental to a relationship and its functioning. Those categories that tended to be endorsed the least, appear to reflect rules and expectations that perhaps function more to regulate everyday tasks, and the procedural elements of a relationship. These would be consistent with what have been termed regulative or procedural rules in the research literature, which define how an interaction is conducted, and ensures co-ordination of behaviour (Cushman & Whiting, 1972; Metts, 1989; Searle, 1969).

Are ratings of commonality, importance, threat, and (un)forgivability related? Specifically, is greater importance related to greater threat? Is greater importance associated with being more unforgivable/less forgivable? Is greater threat related to greater (un)forgivability?

To address these questions, Spearman's rank order correlations were manually calculated between the rankings of each of commonality, importance, threat and forgivability. Pearson's correlations were then run between the commonality, importance, threat and (un)forgivability ratings for each rule category.

Given the similarities and differences between rankings of various rule categories, Spearman's rank correlations were calculated between the ranks to further investigate how commonality, importance, threat and (un)forgivability might be related. The rankings of all of the variables were positively and significantly related at the $p<.05$ level, with coefficients reflecting moderate to very strong associations. These are shown in Table 19.

Table 19
Spearman's Rank Correlations for Commonality, Importance, Threat and (Un)forgivablity

	Commonality	Importance	Threat	(Un)forgivability
Commonality	-			
Importance	.76**	-		
Threat	.55*	.70**	-	
(Un)forgivability	.65*	.68*	.92**	-

* p<.05
** p<.01

Such a high Spearman's rank correlation between threat and (un)forgivability makes intuitive sense; the worse you perceive a partner's behaviour (in terms of violating your expectations), the more damage is done to your relationship, and the more likely it is to have dire consequences for that relationship. When a partner acts in way that is hurtful, then those actions are going to be more unforgivable the worse those actions are perceived to be.

In addition to the Spearman's correlations that were calculated for the rankings, Pearson's correlations were run between the ratings of each of importance, threat and (un)forgivability. Commonality was dropped from these analyses, on the basis that it had been used prior in order to establish that the sample was not unique in their ratings of commonality, and on the basis of its strong positive correlation with rankings of importance. Notable Pearson's' correlations are described below, while the correlation matrices for Importance and Threat, and Importance and Forgivability, are contained in Appendices H1 and H2.

Importance and Threat.

Pearson's correlations revealed a number of significant positive associations, albeit low in strength, between importance rating and level of threat, so that the greater the perceived importance, the greater the perceived threat any violation presents to the relationship. The rules for which the rating of importance was significantly associated with the level of threat were Self-Disclosure and Expression (r = .22, p=.02), Loyalty/Fidelity (r =.25, p=.01), Sexual Behaviour (r =.33, p<.001), Social Behaviour (r = .38, p<.001), Roles (r =.35, p<.001), Finances (r =.29, p<.001), Ritual Obligations (r = .37, p<.001) and Self-Presentation (r = .34, p<.001) (See Appendix Ii).

Importance and Forgivability.

There were a number of low to moderate, but significant, positive correlations between ratings of importance and ratings of forgivability, such that the greater the importance rating, the more unforgivable a violation of that same rule is. The rules for which importance was significantly positively related to forgivability were Self-Disclosure and Expression (r =.23, p=.02), Help and Support (r =.26, p=.01), Loyalty/Fidelity (r =.55, p<.001), Sharing/Equality (r =.21, p=.04), Sexual Behaviour (r =.34, p<.001), Social Behaviour (r =.27, p=.01), Roles (r =.34, p<.001), and Ritual Obligations (r =.53, p<.001) (See Appendix Iii).

Threat and Forgivability.

Pearson's correlations between ratings of threat and (un)forgivability revealed a large number of significant correlations, not only between threat and forgivability for each rule, but between the ratings for other rules also. These are displayed in Table 20.

Unlike the correlations between importance and threat, and importance and forgivability, which only produced significant correlations between ratings for some rules but not others, there were moderate to strong, positive significant correlations between threat and (un)forgivability for every rule, ranging in value from r =.39 (p<.001) for Sharing/Equality to r =.71 (p<.001) for both Negative Private and Negative Public Behaviour. The correlations for the categories of Self-Presentation (r =0.63, p<.001), Time in Tasks (r =0.42, p<.001), Roles (r =0.51, p<.001) and Time with Others (r =0.50, p<.001) were moderate and positive, but these were all categories whose (un)forgivability and threat were rated as low, as defined by their ranks and means for those ratings. Conversely, Self-Disclosure and Expression (r =0.43, p<.001), Positive Interaction (r =0.53, p<.001), Help/Support (r =0.41, p<.001) and Loyalty/Fidelity (r =0.43, p<.001) were also moderately positively correlated, but were categories whose ratings on both (un)forgivability and threat were high, as defined by their rankings and means. Interestingly, the two categories with the strongest correlations between threat and forgivability, Negative Private Behaviour (r =0.71, p<.001) and Negative Public Behaviour (r =0.71, p<.001), were the two categories whose rankings on threat and (un)forgivability differed the most.

Table 20

Pearson's Correlations Between Threat and (Un)Forgivability for each Rule Category

Forgivability / Threat	SDE	Help/ Support	Loyalty Fidelity	Sharing Equality	Sexual Behaviour	Time Partner	Time Others	Time Tasks	Negative Private	Negative Public	Positive Interaction	Social Behaviour	Roles	Finances	Ritual Oblig.	Self Present
SDE	.43**	.32**			.26**	.24*		.24*	.23*	.26**	.25*					
Help/ Support	.35**	.41**		.22*	.30**	.21*				.21*	.39**					
Loyalty/ Fidelity			.43**										-.20*	-.23*		
Sharing/ Equality		.30**		.39**	.31**	.20*					.24*		.25**	.42**	.22*	.22*
Sexual Behaviour	.24*				.66**	.31**					.20*		.27**	.24*		
Time with Partner	.25*				.20*	.53**	.30**	.23*			.30**	.27**		.26**		.22*
Time with Others					.23*	.50**	.50**	.33*				.20*	.22*	.30**	.27**	.23*
Time in Tasks	.29**	.23*			.23*	.37**	.44**	.42**			.25*	.34**	.34**	.26**	.25**	.39**
Negative Private Behaviour	.21*	.20*		.31**		.23*			.71**	.64**	.23*					
Negative Public Behaviour				.22*		.29**			.57**	.71**		.27**	.23*	.23*		
Positive Interaction	.37**	.29**		.32**		.26**	.21*	.22*	.35**	.29**	.53**	.22*				
Social Behaviour				.26**	.24*	.29**	.37**	.39**	.23*		.33**	.57**	.40**	.26**		.44**
Roles	.25**			.19*	.31**	.37**	.34**	.39**	.21*		.27**	.29**	.51**	.44**	.20*	.41**
Finances		.21*		.33**	.25*	.31**	.26**	.26**	.28**		.20*		.44**	.58**		.36**
Ritual Obligations		.32**		.31**		.30**	.22*		.26**		.46**	.27**	.27**	.34**	.60**	.29**
Self Presentation					.32**	.35**					.34**	.22*	.35**	.31**		.63**

Note. SDE denotes Self-Disclosure and Expression

*$p<.05$; **$p<.01$

Summary.

Consistent with the earlier comparisons of ratings of commonality, importance, threat and (un)forgivability, the Spearman's rank correlations demonstrated that the ranks of these ratings were moderate to strongly correlated. This makes intuitive sense, in that if rules or expectations are perceived to be common to most relationships, then this fact alone means there is an important function served by their existence. If rules or expectations are common and important, this is likely to have implications for how violations of rules and expectations are perceived. Perceptions of threat are likely to be relative to the perceived importance of a rule or expectation, such that more important rules/expectations, if broken, will present a greater threat. Further, the greater the threat is perceived to be, the more difficult violations will be to forgive.

While there were a number of significant correlations between ratings of importance and threat, importance and (un)forgivability, and threat and (un)forgivability for a number of the rule/expectation categories, the categories that were significantly positively correlated for each comparison were Self-Disclosure and Expression, Loyalty/Fidelity, Sexual Behaviour, Social Behaviour, Roles and Ritual Obligations. Perhaps the consistent results for these categories are related to the definitions provided, or to the popular understanding of the labels used. It may be that the labels of these categories are similarly understood by participants. Another reason may be that the behaviours contained in each of the descriptive categories, or at least in the descriptions presented to participants, were more similar to each other than the behaviours listed in some of the other categories, fore example in the category of Negative Private Behaviour. Within this category, a wide range of behaviours was indicated, from criticism, nagging and teasing, through to harmful and abusive behaviours such as various types of abuse.

Do the ratings of importance and (un)forgivability, importance and threat, and threat and (un)forgivability differ?

Examining the associations between the ratings of commonality, importance, threat and (un)forgivability using Pearson's correlations did not reveal many strong associations, with the exception of threat with forgivability. Therefore, a repeated measures one-way ANOVA for each rule category was run, with ratings of importance, threat and (un)forgivability as the within-subjects factor, to determine if the ratings significantly differed for each rule category.

While univariate normality testing revealed a number of outliers and non-normal distributions, normality testing at the multivariate level, using Mahalanobis Distance (with degrees of freedom 3 and a critical value of 16.27, $p<.001$) revealed only a small number of outliers, which, as a result were not removed from the analysis. Examination of the variances for each of the variables shows that the assumption of homogeneity has been satisfied for all rule categories except Help/Support, therefore the results of any analysis of Help/Support must be interpreted with this in mind.

Table 21
Repeated Measures ANOVA Results for Importance, Threat and (Un)Forgivablity for each Rule Category

Category	Importance	Threat	Forgivability	df	F-ratio	Sig.
Self-Disclosure and Expression	4.69	3.10	2.71	2, 206	188.77	<.001
Help/Support†	4.79[a]	3.32[a]	3.00	1.91, 198.50	155.11	<.001
Loyalty/ Fidelity	4.85	4.76	4.57	2, 208	12.66	<.001
Sharing/ Equality	4.10	2.93	2.66	2, 208	112.54	<.001
Sexual Behaviour†	3.85	2.63	2.41	1.85, 192.26	137.65	<.001
Time with Partner†	4.13	2.86	2.39	1.93, 200.18	158.17	<.001
Time with Others†	3.57	2.43	2.14	1.76, 183.05	99.57	<.001
Time in Tasks	3.25	2.17	1.97	2, 204	97.91	<.001
Negative Private Behaviour†	3.53[a b]	3.70[a]	3.45[b]	1.49, 151.79	1.80	.18
Negative Public Behaviour†	3.60[a]	3.77[a]	3.71[a]	1.33, 137.28	.798	.41
Positive Interaction	4.50	3.05[a]	3.01[a]	2, 208	103.48	<.001
Social Behaviour	3.77	2.63[a]	2.51[a]	2, 204	84.74	<.001
Roles	3.23	2.03[a]	2.01[a]	2, 208	107.70	<.001
Finances†	3.38	2.44[a]	2.33[a]	1.85, 192.46	58.28	<.001
Ritual Obligations	3.76	2.30	2.51	2, 208	130.75	<.001
Self-presentation†	3.22	2.06[a]	1.98[a]	1.83, 190.71	105.61	<.001

†Denotes the use of the Huynh-Feldt epsilon corrected measure due to violated sphericity assumption.
[a] Means do not differ significantly
[b] Means do not differ significantly

For clarity, the mean ratings of importance, threat and (un)forgivability are presented in Table 21 with the F-ratio, degrees of freedom and significance level. For those analyses for which the assumption of sphericity was violated, the adjusted Huynh-Feldt statistic is reported.

With the exceptions of Negative Private Behaviour and Negative Public Behaviour, there was a significant main effect for rating for each rule/expectation category, the results of which can be seen in Table 21. Thus, there are significant differences between ratings of importance, threat and forgivability, for all but two rule categories. Pairwise comparisons revealed where these differences existed, and Table 21 displays these. Table 22 displays the pattern of significant pairwise comparisons in a different way.

Table 22
Pattern of Significant Differences Between Importance, Threat and (Un)Forgivability

Rule category	Importance > threat	Importance > forgivability	Threat > forgivability
Self-Disclosure and Expression	yes	yes	yes
Help/Support	yes	yes	yes
Loyalty/Fidelity	x	yes	yes
Sharing/Equality	yes	yes	yes
Sexual Behaviour	yes	yes	yes
Time with Partner	yes	yes	yes
Time with Others	yes	yes	yes
Time in Tasks	yes	yes	yes
Negative Public Behaviour	x	x	x
Negative Private Behaviour	x	x	yes
Positive Interaction	yes	yes	x
Social Behaviour	yes	yes	x
Finances	yes	yes	x
Ritual Obligations	yes	yes	forgivability > threat
Self-Presentation	yes	yes	x

Note. All pairwise comparisons significant at $p<.05$ level. 'x' denotes non-significant results; 'Yes' denotes the existence of a significant difference in the direction stated.

Looking at the means from Table 21, and the pattern of results from Table 22, importance received the highest mean ratings, for the most part significantly, for 14 of the

16 categories, the exceptions being the Negative Public Behaviour and Negative Private Behaviour. Overall, ratings of importance were highest, followed by threat, then forgivability, however there were a few exceptions to this pattern. The two categories Negative Private and Negative Public Behaviour showed only one significant difference, and that was higher ratings of threat than forgivability for Negative Private Behaviour. Loyalty/Fidelity did not reveal significant differences between ratings of importance and threat, with mean scores of 4.85 and 4.76 respectively. Results did not demonstrate any significant differences between threat and forgivability for Positive Interaction, Social Behaviour, Finances and Self-Presentation. There was a significant difference between threat and (un)forgivability for Ritual Obligations, but the difference was in the opposite direction to the majority of the other categories, with (un)forgivability rating significantly higher than threat.

Do ratings of importance, threat and (un)forgivability differ between males and females?

In order to determine whether males and females differed in their ratings of commonality, importance, threat and (un)forgivability, a series of MANOVAs were run. A MANOVA was run for each rule, between gender and importance, threat and (un)forgivability. The results revealed that only three of the rule categories showed a multivariate effect for gender: Self-Disclosure and Expression, Sexual Behaviour, and Negative Public Behaviour.

For Self-Disclosure and Expression, the Box's M test for homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices indicates that this assumption was violated, as it was significant at the $p<.001$ level. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant at the $p<.001$ level. The Levene test of equality for each of the dependent measures indicates that at the $p<.01$ level, Forgivability, and Threat of Self-Disclosure and Expression did not violate this assumption, while Importance did. As a result, the Pillai's Trace statistic will be reported for all analyses in this section due to its robustness in the face of violated assumptions. For Self-Disclosure and Expression, MANOVA results revealed a significant multivariate effect for gender, meaning that there are significant differences between men and women in their ratings of importance threat and forgivability ($F(4,95) = 2.79$, $p<.03$) for Self-Disclosure and Expression rules and expectations. Partial eta squared showed that 10.5% of the variance in ratings for Self-Disclosure and Expression was accounted for by gender. Examination of the univariate tests reveals that Importance

was the only variable to differ significantly between men and women (F (1,98) = 8.43, p=.01), with the means showing that female respondents had significantly higher importance ratings than the males.

For Sexual Behaviour, the Box's M statistic was non-significant at p<.001, therefore the assumption of homogeneity of variance was satisfied. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant at p<.001. Levene's tests for each of the dependent variables showed that they did not violate this assumption at the .05 level. MANOVA results showed that there are significant differences between the ratings of importance, threat and (un)forgivability between men and women (F (4,86) = 3.36, p=.01). Approximately 13.5% of the variance in ratings for Sexual Behaviour was accounted for by gender. The univariate tests revealed that Threat was the only variable that differed significantly between men and women (F (1.89) = 11.72, p<.001), and accounted for approximately 11.6% of the variance.

For Negative Public Behaviour, the Box's M statistic was non-significant at the .05 level, satisfying the assumption of homogeneity. Bartlett's test of sphericity was also satisfied. Levene's test for each of the dependent measures showed that (un)forgivability was the only measure that violated this assumption at the .05 level. MANOVA results revealed a multivariate effect for gender (F (4,85) = 3.33, p=.01). Partial eta squared showed that approximately 13.5% of the variance in ratings for this category was accounted for by gender. Univariate results revealed that (un)forgivability was the only dependent measure that differed significantly between men and women (F (1,88) = 7.62, p=.01), and accounted for approximately 8% of the variance.

For those analyses that did not reveal significant multivariate effects, there were still some significant univariate results. Results showed that for Loyalty/Fidelity, ratings of Importance differed significantly between men and women (F (1,101) = 5.44, p=.02, partial η^2=.05), with women having significantly higher scores on importance than men.

The multivariate results for Negative Private Behaviour were just outside the alpha level of .05. At the univariate level, ratings of forgivability differed significantly between men and women (F (1,79) = 7.15, p=.01, partial η^2=.08), with women rating (un)forgivability significantly higher than men. At the univariate level, for Positive Interaction, (un)forgivability differed significantly between men and women (F (1, 96) = 4.27, p=.04, partial η^2 =.04), with women rating (un)forgivability significantly higher than men.

For Ritual Obligations, univariate results revealed that both Importance (F (1,1,89) = 5.12, p=.03, partial η^2=.05) and (un)forgivability (F (1,89) = 7.26, p=.01, partial η^2=.08) ratings differed significantly between men and women, with the women's ratings significantly higher than men on both Importance and (un)forgivability.

Are importance, threat and forgivability ratings different across rule establishment strategies?

A series of MANOVAs were run for each rule/expectation category, using rule establishment strategy (whether the rule was discussed versus expected) as the independent variable, and importance, threat, and forgivability as the dependent variables. There were no significant multivariate effects for rule establishment strategy for any of the rule categories, therefore there were no significant differences between ratings of importance, threat and (un)forgivability as a result of rule establishment strategy.

Summary.

Examination of the significant differences between the ratings of the rule/expectation categories helps to clarify the relationships that exist. The results showed that there are significant differences in ratings of importance, threat and forgivability for the rule categories, with the exception of Negative Private and Negative Public Behaviour. Further examination of these differences revealed that in general, the categories were seen as more important than they are threatening (if violated), more important than they are unforgivable (when violated) and more important than they are unforgivable when violated. This may help to explain some anomalies in the results, and why some rules may be considered important, but are not as threatening or unforgivable as other violations. The significant differences that exist, did not tend to account for a large proportion of the variance. While females tended to rate importance, threat and (un)forgivability more highly than males, this may be a product of the gender imbalance in the sample.

Ratings of importance, threat and (un)forgivability were not found to be significantly different between those rules/expectations that were discussed and those that were expected. Thus, if there are differences between the types of rules and expectations that are discussed versus those that are expected, such differences either are not related to features such as importance, threat and (un)forgivability, or it may be that a larger, or more gender-balanced sample is required to elucidate any differences that do exist.

Sources.

What sources do people attribute their rules and expectations to?

Part of the analysis of relationship rules and how they are defined and serve to function within relationships, included asking participants about the sources of their rules and expectations, and who or what they may be influenced by. A list of 17 possible influences was presented to the participants, and Table 23 displays the sources with their mean scores, standard deviations and ranking.

Table 23
Means and Rankings of Influence for Rule/Expectation Sources

Rank	Source	*M*	*SD*
1	Own Thoughts	6.28	0.83
2	Partner	5.34	1.53
3	Parents	5.18	1.52
4	Gender	4.48	1.59
5	Best Same Sex Friend	3.92	1.80
6	Ethnicity	3.86	1.92
7	Other Same Sex Friends	3.69	1.64
8	Brothers and Sisters	3.25	1.85
9	Other Individuals	3.22	1.47
10	Media	3.17	1.53
11	Best Opposite Sex Friend	3.03	1.63
12	Social Class	2.97	1.72
13	Other Opposite Sex Friends	2.96	1.37
14	Religion	2.80	2.04
15	Occupation	2.78	1.68
16	Other Relatives	2.70	1.58
17	Politics	1.77	1.28

Overall, participants rated their own thoughts, partners, and parents, as the top three influences or sources for their own relationship rules and expectations, with gender being seen as the next greatest influence. The source considered least influential was Politics, while Other relatives and one's Occupation also had scores close to the bottom of the scale. Ratings were on a 7 point Likert scale from 1 (*not at all influential*) through 4 (*moderately influential*) to 7 (*greatly influential*). For men and women, the means, standard deviations and ranks are presented in Table 24.

Table 24
Means and Rankings of Influence for Various Rule/Expectation Sources for Males and Females

	Males			Females		
Source	*M*	*SD*	Rank	*M*	*SD*	Rank
Own Thoughts	6.19	1.02	1	6.31	0.76	1
Partner	5.23	1.31	2	5.38	1.60	2
Parents	4.85	1.69	3	5.29	1.46	3
Gender	4.00	1.52	4	4.64	1.59	4
Ethnicity	3.65	1.20	5	3.93	1.93	6
Best Same Sex Friend	3.19	1.83	6	4.15	1.73	5
Other Same Sex Friends	3.12	1.63	7	3.88	1.61	7
Brothers and Sisters	2.96	1.93	8	3.34	1.82	9
Religion	2.96	2.16	9	2.75	2.02	15
Occupation	2.92	1.77	10	2.74	1.66	16
Best Opposite Sex Friend	2.88	1.33	11	3.08	1.71	11
Social Class	2.81	1.81	12	3.03	1.70	12
Other Opposite Sex Friends	2.81	1.23	13	3.01	1.42	13
Media	2.76	1.59	14	3.31	1.50	10
Other Individuals	2.58	1.27	15	3.43	1.48	8
Other Relatives	2.46	1.30	16	2.78	1.66	14
Politics	2.00	1.27	17	1.70	1.29	17

Table 24 shows that both men and women consider their own thoughts, their partners, and their parents as the sources with the greatest influence. The top eight categories are the same for both genders, despite minor differences in ranking. There are some differences after this, however the differences that are appearing may be a result of the gender imbalance in the sample.

To further investigate gender differences regarding sources of rules and expectations, a multivariate ANOVA was run with gender as the independent variable and the sources as the dependent variables. The Box's M statistic satisfied the assumption of homogeneity of variance, with a non-significant result at the .05 level. There was no significant multivariate effect, therefore there do not appear to be significant differences between the rule sources on the basis of gender.

Levene's test for each of the dependent measures revealed that assumptions were satisfied at the .05 level for each measure with the exception of Other Relatives as a source. Univariate results revealed that there were significant differences between men

and women for three of the sources. Gender, as a source of rules, differed significantly between men and women (F (1,98) = 4.18, p=.04, partial η^2=.04), with women rating the influence of gender greater than men. Best Same Sex Friend differed significantly between men and women as a source of rules (F (1,98) = 4.48. p=.04, partial η^2=.04), with women again rating the influence of this source as greater than men. Other individuals as a source of rules also differed significantly between men and women (F (1,98) = 7.84, p=.01, partial η^2=.07), again with women rating the influence of this source as greater than men.

Summary.

It appears that both men and women are influenced by the same sources in developing their rules and expectations about how relationships function, and the behaviours and attitudes that are important within a relationship. The gender differences that were found between ratings, in particular the higher endorsement of some sources by the female respondents, need to be cautiously interpreted, keeping in mind the gender imbalance in the sample.

Adjustment.

Overall, the sample was low on the Distress dimension of the Weinberger Adjustment Inventory (Weinberger, et al., 1989) (M=2.43, SD=0.69), and moderate on the Restraint dimension (M=3.92, SD=0.44). The means and standard deviations for the eight subscales of the WAI are presented in Table 25.

Table 25

Means and Standard Deviations for WAI Subscales

Subscale	*M*	*SD*
Anxiety	3.04	0.82
Depression	2.35	0.98
Low Self-esteem	2.23	0.72
Low Well-being	2.03	0.64
Impulse Control	3.70	0.69
Suppression of Aggression	3.92	0.69
Consideration of Others	3.70	0.57
Responsibility	4.33	0.56

Overall, the sample showed low levels of depression, moderate levels of anxiety, and showed reasonable self-esteem and well-being (reflected by low means for Low Self-Esteem and Low Well-Being) which make up the Distress dimension of the WAI. The sample showed moderate to high levels of ability to control their impulses, suppress aggression, consider others, and responsibility, which make up the Restraint dimension.

Adjustment and gender.

A MANOVA between gender and the WAI subscales was run to determine whether there were any gender differences in participant's WAI profiles. Normality and outliers were assessed, and, using Mahalanobis Distance (with 8 degrees of freedom, an alpha level of .001, and critical value 26.13) one outlier was detected, which was retained in the data set. Box's M statistic for homogeneity of variance was satisfied with a non-significant result at the .05 level. Levene's statistics for homogeneity of variance for each of the dependent measures were also satisfactory.

The MANOVA results revealed that there were significant differences between men and women on the WAI subscales (F (8,97) = 3.03, p=.01, partial η^2=.20), with approximately 20% of the variance in the subscales accounted for by gender. Univariate results showed that the Anxiety, Depression and Low Self-esteem subscales were the subscales having the strongest influence. Univariate results showed a significant difference between men and women on the Anxiety subscale (F (1,104) = 12.50, p=.01, partial η^2=.11), with women (M= 3.19, SD=0.81) scoring significantly higher than men (M=2.57, SD=0.68). Men and women showed significant differences on their Depression scores also (F (1,104) = 4.49, p=.03, partial η^2=.04), with the women (M=2.46, SD=0.99) again scoring higher than the men (M=2.00, SD=0.90). On the Low Self-esteem subscale, men and women differed significantly (F (1,104) = 5.21, p=.04, partial η^2=.05), with women (M=2.32, SD=0.74) again scoring higher than the men (M=1.96, SD=0.57). Women, therefore, appear to be more anxious and depressed than the male respondents, with lower self-esteem.

Are the rules that are endorsed versus not endorsed, differentially related to subscales of the WAI?

This question was asked to determine whether those with higher or lower restraint demonstrated less or more endorsement of rules and expectations. A series of MANOVAs between rule endorsement and the WAI subscales and dimensions were run for each rule

category. There were no significant multivariate effects for endorsement, therefore there were no significant differences on the WAI measures between those that endorsed rules versus those that did not. There were, however, a number of significant univariate differences.

For Self-Disclosure and Expression, those that did not endorse this rule category scored significantly higher on well-being than those that did endorse the category (F (1,104) = 5.65, p=.03, partial η^2=.05). This was also true for the Help/Support, with those that did not endorse this category scoring significantly higher on the Well-being subscale than those that did (F (1,104) = 4.02, p=.03, partial η^2 = .04). For Social Behaviour, there was a significant difference between those who endorsed this category and those who did not (F (1,104) = 4.43, p=.04, partial η^2=.04), with those who did not endorse this category scoring significantly higher on Suppression of Aggression. Lastly, for the Finances category, there were also significant differences between those who endorsed this category and those who did not (F (1,104) = 4.34, p=.03, partial η^2=.04), with those who did not endorse this category scoring significantly higher on the Depression subscale than those who did. Despite these significant univariate results, the partial η^2 values show that they did not account for much of the variance. Further, while it was the subscales that make up the Restraint dimension of the WAI that were of interest here, Suppression of Aggression was the only one to obtain a significant univariate result.

Are those rules that are discussed versus expected, differentially related to subscales of the WAI?

To determine whether there were differences in participant's WAI profiles between those rules participants discussed versus expected, a series of MANOVAs between the discussed/expected variable for each rule, and the WAI subscales, were run. Of particular interest was the Restraint dimension and its subscales.

Only one rule category produced a multivariate effect for discussed/expected, and this was for the Time in Tasks category. There were significant differences between whether a rule was discussed or expected on the WAI scores (F (8, 35) = 3.09, p=.01, partial η^2=.41), with approximately 41% of the variance in the WAI scores accounted for by discussion/ expectation. The Box's M statistic for this test was just significant at the .05 level, which violates the assumption of homogeneity of variance, so the result must be interpreted cautiously, although the multivariate result is significant at the .01 level.

Further examination revealed univariate effects for three subscales: Anxiety, Depression and Well-being. Levene's test of homogeneity for each of the dependent measures revealed that this assumption was violated for the subscales Depression, Low Self-esteem and Well-being. There were significant differences between the discussed and expected groups in their Anxiety scores ($F(1,42)=6.61$, $p=.02$, partial $\eta^2=.14$), with those that discussed Time in Tasks rules ($M=3.18$, $SD=0.83$) scoring higher than those in the expected group ($M=2.52$, $SD=0.71$). There were significant differences between the discussed and expected groups on Depression ($F(1,42)=10.63$, $p=.01$, partial $\eta^2=.20$), with the discussed group ($M=2.53$, $SD=1.15$) scoring significantly higher than the expected group ($M=1.49$, $SD=0.44$). A similar pattern was found for the Well-being scores, where those who discussed Time in Tasks rules ($M=2.19$, $SD=0.74$) scored significantly higher on Well-being than those who expected them ($M=1.72$, $SD=0.36$, $F(1,42)=4.94$, $p.03$, partial $\eta^2=.11$).

No other multivariate effects were found, however there were a number of other significant univariate results: for Help/Support on Well-being; for Negative Private Behaviour on Responsibility; and for Finances on Depression. For Help/Support, there was a significant difference between the discussed and expected groups on Well-being ($F(1,96)=4.93$, $p=.02$, partial $\eta^2=.05$), with those in the discussed group ($M=2.22$, $SD=0.81$) scoring significantly higher on Well-being than those in the expected group ($M=1.91$, $SD=0.54$). The significant Levene's statistic for this dependent measure, however, violates the assumption of homogeneity.

There was a significant difference between those who discussed and those who expected rules for the Negative Private Behaviour category ($F(1,78)=7.64$, $p=.01$, partial $\eta^2=.09$), with those in the expected group ($M=4.54$, $SD=0.34$) scoring significantly higher on Responsibility than those in the discussed group ($M=4.20$, $SD=0.66$). Lastly, for the Finances rule category, there was a significant difference between the discussed and expected groups on their Depression scores ($F(1,63)=7.89$, $p=.01$, partial $\eta^2=.11$), with those in the discussed group ($M=2.33$, $SD=0.95$) scoring significantly higher than those in the expected group ($M=1.46$, $SD=0.51$).

Again, what was of interest was how subscales of the restraint dimension might relate to whether rules and expectations are discussed or expected, yet for the most part, it was subscales of the Distress dimension that showed significant univariate results.

Are WAI scores related to ratings of Importance, Threat, and (Un)forgivability?

Pearson's correlations were run to determine whether there were any associations between the WAI dimensions and subscales, and ratings of importance, threat and (un)forgivability. Specifically, the restraint subscales and their associations with the ratings were of interest, to see whether restraint was inversely related to importance, threat and (un)forgivability. Only the notable significant correlations are discussed below.

For ratings of importance, the Restraint dimension was positively significantly related to a number of rules: Self-Disclosure and Expression (r = .26, p<.001), Loyalty/Fidelity (r = .26, p=.01), Sharing/Equality (r = .19, p=.02), Time with Partner, (r = .19, p=.03), Positive Interaction (r = .22, p=.02), and Ritual Obligations (r = .23, p=.03). All correlations were positive, and in the low range. The Distress dimension was significantly negatively related to Negative Private Behaviour (r = -.23, p=.03) and Negative Public Behaviour (r = -.29, p=.01), meaning that higher ratings of the importance of Negative Private and Negative Public Behaviours are associated with lower levels of Distress. Correlations between importance and the individual subscales range from r = .19 (p=.03) for to r = .30, (p=.01).

For ratings of threat, the Restraint dimension was significantly and positively related to a number of rule categories, albeit the strength of the associations were low to moderate. Restraint was significantly positively related to Negative Private Behaviour (r = .26, p=.01), Negative Public Behaviour (r = .23, p=.03), Positive Interaction (r = .31, p=.01), Social Behaviour, (r = .24, p=.04), and Ritual Obligations (r = .28, p<.001). The Distress dimension was significantly positively related to Time with Partner (r = .29, p<.001), Time with Other (r = .25, p=.01), and Ritual Obligations (r = .23, p=.03). Correlations between importance and the individual subscales range from r = .19 (p=.04) to r = .35 (p=.01).

For ratings of (un)forgivability, the Restraint dimension was significantly and positively related to only two rule categories: Negative Private Behaviour (r = .26, p<.001) and Negative Public Behaviour (r = .27, p<.001). The Distress dimension was significantly and positively related to Help/Support (r = .24, p=.02), Time with Partner (r =.30, p=.01), Finances (r = .19, p=.03), and Ritual Obligations (r = .26, p=.03). Correlations between importance and the individual subscales range from r = .19 (p=.04) to r = .30 (p=.01).

Do those with low, medium and high restraint differ with regard to rule endorsement or rule establishment strategy?

Consistent with previous use of the WAI (Weinberger & Schwartz, 1990), cut-off points for the 33rd and 66th percentiles were obtained using SPSS to create three groups. This meant that the group falling below the 33rd percentile, with a value <3.81 was the low Restraint group, those with values falling between the 33rd percentile (3.81) and the 66th percentile (4.10) were the moderate Restraint group, and those above the 66th percentile, with scores above 4.10 were the high Restraint group.

In order to determine whether there were significant differences between those low, moderate, and high on Restraint with regard to the number of rules they endorse, a one-way ANOVA was run. The mean number of rules for levels of Restraint are listed in Table 26.

Table 26
Means and Standards Deviations for Number of Rules for Low, Moderate and High Restraint

Restraint	*M*	*SD*
Low	11.49	3.04
Moderate	12.53	3.05
High	12.38	3.38

The Moderate Restraint group had the highest mean number of rules, followed by the High Restraint group, then the Low Restraint group. ANOVA results revealed no significant differences between those with low, moderate or high Restraint in the number of rules they endorse.

Table 27
Means and Standard Deviations of Rules Discussed and Expected for Low, Moderate and High Restraint

	Discussed		Expected	
Restraint	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Low	6.94	3.72	5.23	3.49
Moderate	6.58	3.33	6.17	2.67
High	6.71	4.25	5.85	3.69

Note. Discussed and Expected reflect frequency count variables of the number of categories endorsed as discussed, and number expected.

Table 27 displays the means and standard deviations for number of rules discussed and number of rules expected for each of the Restraint groups. Those low in Restraint had the highest mean number of discussed rules, and the lowest mean number of expected rules. Those moderate in Restraint had the lowest number of discussed rules and the highest number of expected rules, while those high in Restraint had means falling between the low and high Restraint groups for both discussed rules and expected rules. To determine whether there were any differences between the restraint groups with regards to rules discussed and rules expected, MANOVA was run using Restraint as the fixed factor and discussed and expected variables as dependent variables. MANOVA results revealed no significant differences in the number of rules discussed or number of rules expected between those who were low, moderate and high on Restraint.

Given that no significant differences were revealed, Pearson's correlations were run between low, moderate and high restraint, and number of rules endorsed, number discussed and number expected. The results revealed no significant correlations between the levels of restraint and number of rules endorsed, discussed or expected.

Summary.

With regard to social-emotional adjustment, both dimensions of the WAI, Distress and Restraint, were considered. Restraint was the dimension of primary interest in the analyses, due to its subscales of Impulse Control, Suppression of Aggression, Consideration of Others and Responsibility. It was thought that the Restraint dimension, particularly Consideration of Others and Responsibility, may be related to the form and function of rules and expectations in relationships, given that rules are a way to define what is acceptable and what is prohibited. Overall, the sample was low on the Depression subscale of the WAI, moderate on Anxiety, and moderate to high on Self-esteem and Well-being, which make up the Distress dimension. The sample showed high overall levels of restraint, with moderate to high means for Impulse Control, Suppression of Aggression, Consideration of Others, and a high score for Responsibility. Multivariate analyses revealed no significant differences between those that endorsed certain rules and those that did not on their WAI scores. The univariate results that were significant, mostly reflected differences on the Distress dimension, and do not appear, at this stage, to follow a consistent interpretable pattern. Regarding how rules and expectations are established, again multivariate analyses revealed, for the most part, no significant differences between those rules that were discussed and those that were expected on the

WAI scores. Time in Tasks showed the only significant result, and again, this was related to the Distress dimension of the WAI, and demonstrated that those who discussed rules/expectations about Time in Tasks scored higher on the Anxiety, Depression and Well-being subscales than those who had expectations. Univariate results showed that with the exception of responsibility, those who discussed certain rules scored higher on a number of variables than did those who had expectations. Further analysis of the WAI, based on groups low, moderate and high in Restraint revealed no significant differences these groups in the number of rules they endorse, or the number of rules they discuss or expect. Perhaps further exploration and analyses would reveal that those who are less well adjusted and more distressed tend to discuss their relationship rules more, as a function of this distress.

Qualitative and Quantitative Results

Together, the qualitative and quantitative results have been able to elucidate the form and function that rules and expectations take in romantic relationships, in particular the rules that tend to govern some of the most salient topics in relationships. The qualitative results in this study, regarding the worst behaviour that partners can enact towards each other, provide some interesting depth to the understanding of rules and expectations thus far. Participants identified a wide range of behaviours that they considered to be the worst thing a partner could do, or that they could do to a partner. These responses, like the quantitative results, followed a pattern, and themes were identified, based on the offence type, which were subsequently confirmed by the quantitative analyses. The quantitative results consistently showed that violations of Loyalty/Fidelity, Negative Public and Negative Private Behaviour rules and expectations were the most serious and the least forgivable. This was consistent with the qualitative data. While the categorisation was different, the qualitative results showed that infidelity and deception tended to be the worst offences one could commit in romantic relationships. In addition to these, the other themes appear to reflect the various behaviours contained in the Negative Private and Negative Public Behaviour categories. Examination of these other themes: violence, harm and abuse; neglect; disrespect and disregard; and demandingness or possessiveness, suggests that this is the case. These themes would appear to be ways that describe the various types of negative behaviour that might occur in public and private. The qualitative and quantitative data were consistent in

another way. The participant's qualitative responses were sorted to determine whether they could be categorised according to the 16 rule/expectation categories developed in Study 2 of the current research program. The majority of the responses were sorted into categories that reflected the emotional aspects of a relationship. The categories that reflect the emotional aspects of a relationship were those consistently rated as most important, most threatening when violated, and least forgivable when violated, which is consistent with the fact that participants were providing information about the worst offences than can be committed against a partner.

Is there a Hierarchy of Rules and Expectations?

Participant responses from the previous qualitative study (see Chapter 8 page 111) suggested that rules and expectations exist as a hierarchy, that may be based on their importance to the relationship. Examination of the ratings of commonality, importance, threat and forgivability, and the similarities and differences between these ratings, suggests that there are some categories that are clearly more fundamental to a relationship than others. Equally, there appear to be some categories that are consistently seen as least important to a relationship's functioning. Taking all the results together, there exists a consistent pattern, whereby the rule/ expectation categories that tend to reflect the emotional aspects of a relationship, or that represent more abstract concepts, such as trust, loyalty, support and regard, are rated as most important and fundamental to a relationship. Not only is their importance rated highly, but their violation presents a serious threat to a relationship, and forgiveness of such a violation may be difficult. In addition, the pattern of results suggests that those rule/expectation categories that reflect the more procedural aspects of a relationship, or the day-to-day functioning of who does what, are consistently seen as comparatively less important, and therefore less integral to the relationship. This is evidenced by their lower ratings of importance, and the fact that violations of these rules and expectations do not appear to present a serious threat to the relationship and are not difficult to forgive. Previous research has suggested that relational transgressions, and by implication relational standards, are not equally important or serious (Metts, 1994), however has not elaborated on which standards may be more important than others.

In terms of a hierarchy, and the identification of primary, secondary and tertiary relational standards, the primary and tertiary standards are reasonably clear, based on the discussion above. That is, rules and expectations that reflect the emotional components of

a relationship would tend to be classified as primary, while those reflecting the procedural side of a relationship would tend to be tertiary. Using only the ratings of importance as a guide (based on the suggestions that the hierarchy is based on importance of rules and expectations to the relationship), primary standards may be those that are about Loyalty/Fidelity, Help/Support, Positive Interaction, and Self-Disclosure and Expression, given that these categories were listed as the five most important. Those that may be seen to be tertiary standards, on the basis of importance, may be those regarding Self-Presentation, Time in Tasks, Finances and Roles, which were the categories rated as least important. Looking at the overall ratings of commonality, importance, threat and (un)forgivability, these categories that may be identified as primary and tertiary stay mostly the same. The difficulty in forming a hierarchy, however, is how to identify the secondary category. The results have demonstrated clear patterns about which rules are most and least important, but it is unclear how a secondary might be established, and where the cut-offs for such a category would be – whether to arbitrarily identify the top, middle and bottom third as primary, secondary and tertiary, or whether to attach some sort of meaning to the mean ratings of importance, and attempt to differentiate between levels of importance. Whichever method is used must be able to be justified so that important qualitative information about the differential importance of rule and expectation categories is not lost. The results of the current study has provided some understanding of how a hierarchy might be structured, but further research would help address the potential problems that may be encountered.

Relational Standards and Individual Factors

The current study explored whether relational standards were in any way related to individual factors, in this case, a self-restraint measure of adjustment. It was thought that self-restraint, which reflects the ability to inhibit impulses and aggression, and be considerate and responsible, may be related to either the number of rules and expectations that individuals have in their relationship, whether they are discussed or expected, or to ratings of importance, threat and (un)forgivability. Speculation of the potential relationship considered one of two possibilities. Firstly, that individuals with high levels of self-restraint may not feel the need to establish lots of rules or explicitly discuss them due to their sound ability to control impulsiveness, and be responsible and considerate. On the other hand, those with high levels of self-restraint may have a high number of

rules and expectations in their relationship, and may feel the need to discuss them. The results revealed no differences in the overall adjustment, or specific restraint scores between those that endorsed rules and those that did not, or between those that discussed rules and those that did not. Further analysis of restraint, based on establishing categories of low, moderate and high restraint, also revealed no significant differences between levels of restraint in their endorsement of rules. It appears then that individual factors, in this case adjustment and self-restraint, are not related to the presence or absence of rules and expectations in romantic relationships, nor are they related to the way that relational standards are developed. Despite the fact that previous research has established associations between individual factors and relational standards in the form of violations of standards (Feldman et al., 2000), the current study was unable to do so.

Chapter 10

STUDY 4: A COUPLE STUDY OF RULES AND EXPECTATIONS AND THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH RELATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL VARIABLES.

Introduction and Rationale

The final study in the current research program was developed from the previous study, in an attempt to answer a number of questions and address a number of issues. The present research program has provided a level of understanding of the relational standards that exist in romantic relationship. The previous study, Study 3, obtain endorsement for the 16 rule/expectation categories, and revealed a number of interesting results. Rules about the emotional functioning of a relationship were the most heavily endorsed, were seen as the most important, and were considered the greatest threat and difficult to forgive when violated. Rules regarding the more procedural aspects of a relationship were seen as least important, and presented the least threat ad were easily forgiven when violated. This pattern was consistent throughout the results, and supports the proposition that a rule hierarchy exists. From a hierarchical perspective, rules about the emotional aspects of a relationship could be seen as primary relational standards, while those regulating the day-to-day functioning of the relationship might be considered tertiary relational standards. It is unclear however, where to draw the line with regards to secondary standards, or even whether secondary standards exist. One of the aims of the final study then, was to obtain endorsement, and ratings of importance, threat and (un)forgivablity for the rule/expectation categories in order to further validate the results obtained in Study 3. A romantic relationship, however, consists of two people who are interdependent, and who act in ways that reciprocate and accommodate a partner's behaviour. A structure of relational standards exists between partners, and discussion and negotiation are often part and parcel of this rule structure. Consequently, the final study used dyadic data in order to provide a couple perspective on the endorsement, form and function of rules and expectations.

While the previous study did not find any association between individual adjustment and relational standards, that is not to say that no relationship exists.

Adjustment is not the only individual variable that may have a potential relationship with relational standards. The measure of adjustment that was used in the previous study, the Weinberger Adjustment Inventory is reflective of the Big Five personality factors, and has demonstrated associations with a number of personality measures (Weinberger & Schwartz, 1990). The field of personality has generated a wealth of empirical literature that has established associations between dimensions of personality and relational functioning. The most consistent and strongest predictor of marital quality is neuroticism, or negative emotionality. Individuals with high levels of neuroticism tend to be prone to experiencing negative emotions such as anxiety and depression, and have labile emotions (McCrae & Costa, 1994). Research has demonstrated that high levels of neuroticism have a negative influence on marital satisfaction and stability (Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Gattis et al., 2004). Gattis et al. (2004) examined the similarity between partner's responses, but did not find any association between similarity of response and relationship quality. Cook et al. (1995) proposed that marital instability may be due to partners' mismatched influence styles. Partners' interactions are then affected by this discrepancy in what are essentially rules and expectations – discrepancy in how to argue, how to express emotion and how to balance independence with closeness (Cook et al., 1995).

In addition to personality and adjustment, researchers have developed a measure that specifically addresses the likelihood that an individual will betray their partner, or, using the terminology of the present research program, violate their relational standards (Jones & Burdette, 1994). Betrayal is higher in white people than those in minority groups, higher in divorced individuals, and less frequent in older individuals, and those who are better educated and religious. Psychological and relationship characteristics have also been associated with the tendency to betray. Importantly, repeated betrayal of others is associated with unhappiness and maladjustment. The tendency to betray has demonstrated associations with self-reported shame, suspiciousness and resentment, and jealousy (Jones and Burdette, 1994). Montgomery and Brown (1988, cited in Jones & Burdette, 1994) found that the higher one's tendency to betray, the lower their scores on personality dimensions such as responsibility, well-being, self-control and tolerance, which are similar to the dimensions reflected by the restraint dimension of the WAI. Barta and Kiene (2005) suggested that there are individual differences in the propensity to engage in betrayal, but specifically infidelity, and researchers such as Buunk and van Driel (1989) have demonstrated that characteristics such as low frustration tolerance and

narcissism are associated with the tendency to engage in infidelity. Given the numerous associations between aspects of individual functioning and the tendency to violate one's relational standards, and the influence on marital quality, a further aim of the current study was to clarify whether an association does exist between individual factors, specifically adjustment, personality and the tendency to betray, and the number and importance of relational standards, as well as how they are established.

A study of rules and expectations and their endorsement, and the potential links with individual factors would not be complete without consideration of factors specific to the relationship. The previous discussion has already established that personality features have consistently associated with marital quality, specifically satisfaction. Previous discussion of deception and infidelity (see Chapter 3) have also established that the violation of relational standards, inn the form of specific transgressions and betrayals, have negative outcomes for relationships, such as decreased commitment and satisfaction. Given that some of the rule categories inherently reflect elements of trust and honesty, and that adherence to relational standards is likely to require commitment to one's relationship, a final aim of the current study was to determine whether relational standards were in any way related to self-reported levels of trust, satisfaction and commitment.

To summarise, the aims of the current study were to use dyadic data to explore and validate the endorsement of the rule/expectation categories, and to explore whether partner's were similar in their responses; to determine whether a relationship exists between individual factors of adjustment, personality, the tendency to betray and relational standards; and finally, to determine whether relational standards are related to relationship variables of trust, satisfaction and commitment.

Method

Participants

Participants were 45 couples (45 males and 45 females). Overall, participants' ages ranged from 18 to 78 years, with a mean age of 34.21 (*SD*=11.39). For male partners, the mean age was 34.64 (*SD*=11.77), while the mean age for female partners was 33.80 (*SD*=11.11).

Relationship length ranged from 6 months to 576 months or 48 years, with a mean length of relationship was 133.19 months, or 11.10 years (*SD*=126.34 months or 10.53 years). Given the large range, the mode and median may be more appropriate to interpret. The median value was 99 months (8.25 years), while the mode was 96 months (8 years). Twenty-four percent of the couples reported being in a committed and exclusive dating relationship, 2% reported being engaged, and 64% reported being married.

Materials

The questionnaire given to participants included an instruction page and demographics page, followed by questions about rules and expectations in romantic relationships and their sources, and measures of commitment, trust, satisfaction, personality, adjustment, and betrayal (see Appendix J for a copy of the questionnaire and Information letter). A single order of presentation was used for the components of the questionnaire.

Demographics.

The first section of the questionnaire contained questions regarding the participant's age and sex, relationship type (casual dating, committed exclusive dating, engaged, married) and length, whether the participant lives with his or her partner and length of time living together, and country of birth.

Commitment.

Commitment was measured using Kurdek's (1995) Multiple Determinants of Relationship Commitment Inventory (MDRCI). The MDRCI is a multidimensional measure that proposes six theoretical determinants of commitment. It is an integration of the Investment Model by Rusbult (1980), from which the rewards, costs, investments and alternatives scales are taken, and interdependence theory, from which the match to ideal comparison level and barriers scare were derived (Kurdek, 1995).

The MDRCI assesses each of the six determinants: rewards (e.g. "*One advantage of my relationship is having someone to count on"*), costs (e.g. "*I give up a lot to be in my relationship*"), match to ideal comparison level (e.g. "*My current relationship comes close to matching what I would consider to be my ideal relationship*"), alternatives (e.g. "*As an alternative to my current relationship, I would like to date someone else*"), investments (e.g. "*I've put a lot of energy and effort into my relationship*"), and barriers

(e.g. "*Overall, there are many things that prevent me from ending my relationship*") by four items, rated on a five-point Likert scale (1=*strongly disagree*, 5=*strongly agree*). Three of the four items for each scale are phrased specifically, with the final question being a general, overall assessment about that determinant.

Kurdek's (1995) analysis indicated that the six-factor model of commitment was a significantly better fit to his data than a one-factor model. Summary scores for rewards, costs, match to ideal, alternatives, investments and barriers were obtained for each partner. Respective Cronbach's alphas were .80, .77, .85, .80, .82 and .67 for first partners, and .80, .77, .87, .75, .69 and .68 for second partners (Kurdek, 1995). Across all partners, respective Cronbach alphas were .84, .75, .89, .79, .68, and .66 (Kurdek, 1995). Kurdek (1995) also obtained correlations between each of the six determinants and an independent measure of commitment by Sternberg (1988). Rewards, match to ideal, investments and barriers were positively correlated with the independent measure of commitment, while costs and alternatives were negatively correlated (Kurdek, 1995).

In the present study, reliability analysis produced overall Cronbach alphas for rewards, costs, match to ideal, alternatives, investments and barriers of .72, .77, .65, .68, .52, and .62 respectively. For male partners, Cronbach alphas were .71, .78, .56, .60, .49, and .69 for rewards, costs, match to ideal, alternatives, investments and barriers respectively with an overall Cronbach alpha of .69 for commitment. For females partner, Cronbach alphas were .74, .76, .76, .75, .53, and .57 for rewards, costs, match to ideal, alternatives, investments and barriers respectively, with a Cronbach alpha of .56 for overall commitment.

Satisfaction.

The Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS) (Schumm, et al., 1986) has been widely used in the measurement of satisfaction. It is a three-item measure, rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1=*extremely dissatisfied*, 7=*extremely satisfied*). The three items are "*How satisfied are you with your relationship?*", "*How satisfied are you with your partner?*", and "*How satisfied are you with your relationship with your partner?*" The KMSS was found to have a Cronbach alpha of .93, and previous research has shown that the KMSS possesses concurrent, discriminant and criterion-related validity (Schumm et al., 1986). In the present study, the overall Cronbach alpha for the KMSS was .91. For both male and female partners the Cronbach alpha was .91.

Trust.

The Trust scale, developed by Rempel et al. (1985), is a 26-item scale, representing three components of trust: predictability (e.g. *"My partner behaves in a very consistent manner*"), dependability (e.g. *"I can rely on my partner to keep the promises he/she makes to me*") and faith (e.g. *"When I am with my partner, I feel secure in facing unknown new situations").* It is rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1=*strongly disagree*, 4=*neutral*, 7=*strongly agree*). Rempel et al. (1985) refined the scale by excluding items 3, 5 and 26 because these items did not correlate with any subscale. Items 1, 2, 13, 17, 19 and 23 were also eliminated as they failed to discriminate adequately between subscales. Item 10 was moved as it more accurately represented the subscale of predictability. Items 3, 8, 9, 10, 12 and 21 are reverse-scored. The overall Cronbach alpha obtained by Rempel et al. (1985) was .81, whilst the subscale reliabilities were .80, .72 and .70 for faith, dependability and predictability respectively. The three subscales were also found to be moderately correlated.

In the present study, the above-mentioned exclusions were followed in order to remain consistent with the use of the scale. The overall Cronbach alpha was .75 while the subscale reliabilities were .82, .30 and .60 for faith, dependability and predictability respectively. For male partners, overall trust had a Cronbach alpha of .79, with subscale reliabilities of .87, .23, and .60 for faith, predictability and dependability respectively. For female partners, overall trust had a Cronbach alpha of .69, with faith, predictability and dependability having reliabilities of .75, .40 and .60 respectively. The subscale of predictability had low reliability, despite previous research demonstrating acceptable reliability. Recoding of variables and subscale construction was checked and the low reliability was ascertained not to be due to coding errors. Results for the subscale of predictability should be interpreted with caution.

Weinberger Adjustment Inventory (WAI).

The Weinberger Adjustment Inventory (Weinberger, et al., 1989) is a 62-item measure of social-emotional adjustment that is made up of two dimensions: Distress and Restraint. Distress comprises of four subscales: Anxiety, Depression, Low Self-Esteem, and Low Well-Being, and this dimension measures distress in interactions between an individual and his or her world. The Restraint dimension comprises four subscales: Impulse Control, Suppression of Aggression, Consideration of Others and Responsibility, and measures an individual's tendency to consider immediate gratification relative to

long-term consequences. The measure was used in the previous study, and its full description appears on pages 126 to 128.

In the current study, the overall Cronbach alpha of the Distress dimension was .92, while for male partners it was .91 and for female partners .94. The overall Cronbach alpha of the Restraint dimension was .89, with a Cronbach alpha of .90 for male partners, and .86 for female partners.

Tendency to betray.

Tendency to betray was measured by the Interpersonal Betrayal Scale (IBS), developed by Jones (1988, cited in Jones & Burdette, 1994). The scale reflects betrayal of general events applicable to most relationships, thus is not specific to romantic relationships. The measure consists of 15 statements about a betrayal in a specific type of relationship, for example "*Snubbing a friend when with a group you want to impress*", and "*Lying to parents/spouse about activities*". Each statement is rated on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1=*I have never done this*, 2=*I have done this once,* 3=*I have done this a few times,* 4=*I have done this several times,* and 5=*I have done this many times.* Scores are summed to produce a total score in the range of 15 to 75, with higher scores reflecting a higher tendency to betray. Jones and Burdette (1994) reported that in a sample of college students, the mean score was 35.91. For non-college students, the mean score for males was 35.04 and for females 34.96.

Jones and Burdette (1994) discussed the validity of the IBS, and reported IBS scores were inversely related to measures of moral standards. They also reported that the scale was moderately correlated with social desirability. Other research has supported the internal reliability of the scale, with alpha values greater than .75. The available evidence suggests validity of the interpretation of the scale, and that scores are not reflective of antisocial personality or psychopathy (Couch & Jones, 1997).

Personality.

The Five-Factor Model Brief Adjective Checklist (FFM-BACL40, McLennan, 1998) was used to measure personality. It is a 40-item measure consisting of a list of adjectives, such as helpful, disorganised, fearful, unimaginative, and sociable, describing the five personality factors of Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotionality (or Neuroticism), Openness and Extroversion respectively. Participants are instructed to rate each personality adjective with a number from 1 to 7, where 1=*never or almost never*

characteristic of me, 4=*sometimes characteristic of me,* and 7=*always or almost always characteristic of me* (see Appendix I for the questionnaire containing this measure).

The FFM-BACL, originally developed as a 30-item measure, was developed in an attempt to produce a brief measure (less than 60 items) of the Five Factor Model of personality. McLennan (1998) used Goldberg's (1990) factor analytic studies as a basis on which to construct five six-item scales representing Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotionality (or Neuroticism), Openness and Extroversion. A five-factor model was shown to be the most parsimonious. A 30-item version demonstrated acceptable internal consistencies, in the range of .70 for Agreeableness to .85 for Extroversion. Concurrent validity was also acceptable. Intercorrelations demonstrated that the scales of the FFM-BACL measured self-report disposition constructs similar to those measured by the corresponding scales of the NEO-FFI (Costa & McCrae, 1992). A 40-item version was also created, using additional items from Costa and McCrae (1992), which demonstrated improved reliabilities over the 30-item version, ranging from .79 for Openness to .93 for Extraversion. The 40-item version was used in the current study. Cronbach alpha scores for the overall sample were .74, .72, .86, .74, and .85 for Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotionality, Openness and Extroversion respectively. For male partners, Cronbach alphas were obtained for Agreeableness (.76), Conscientiousness (.74), Emotionality (.85), Openness (.62) and Extroversion (.82). Cronbach alphas for female partners were .73, .69, .82, .82, and .88 for Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotionality, Openness and Extroversion respectively.

Procedure

Approval was sought and obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University (see Appendix K). Couples were recruited through advertisements placed in volunteer registers, advertisements around the university, undergraduate and postgraduate classes at the University, and via the snowball technique through individuals known to the researcher. Questionnaire packs, which included two information letters, two questionnaires and two reply-paid envelopes were distributed to 250 heterosexual couples over the age of eighteen years who had been involved in a romantic relationship for a minimum of six months. The six month minimum was consistent with previous studies in the current research program, and with previous research on the basis that six months as a minimum would allow couples to develop relationship rules and

expectations, and commitment and trust to develop. A copy of the information letter is included in Appendix I. Of those, complete data – data for both partners on all variables – was obtained for 45 couples, indicating a 16% return rate.

Both couple members were instructed to complete the questionnaires wherever they felt most comfortable, and were directed to respond privately, with no discussion or collaboration with their partner. Participants were able to return their individual questionnaire in a reply-paid envelope separately from their partner to avoid discussion or viewing of a partner's questionnaire. A couple identification code based on the birth dates of the couple members was used to identify and match partner's questionnaires. The research fulfilled university requirements of a mass distribution questionnaire, and no consent forms were used as completion of the questionnaire was taken as an indication of voluntary consent. Individuals could not be identified by name in any way. Participants were informed that completion of the questionnaire indicated consent and that they could withdraw their consent at any time with no explanation.

Results and Discussion

Data screening

All analyses were conducted using SPSS version 14.0. Data screening of variables and scales revealed a number of outliers with standardised scores of >3.29 (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2001), however for sample sizes greater than 80, the standard scores can acceptably range from 3 to 4. The current sample size was 90, and the majority of outliers remained within the acceptable range of 3 to 4 (Hair et al., 1995), with only a small number of outliers having standard scores above 4. Those variables that had outliers with a standardised score greater than 4 included importance of Help/Support, importance of Positive Interaction, threat of Loyalty/Fidelity, (un)forgivability of Loyalty/Fidelity, the Responsibility subscale of the Weinberger Adjustment Inventory (WAI), and the WAI Restraint dimension. For the variables with outliers greater than a standardised score of 4, the mean was compared with the 5% trimmed mean. Examination of the 5% trimmed means for these variables revealed that the outliers did not have a strong influence on the mean. Due to the small number, outliers were not removed.

Normality was assessed through histograms, normal Q-Q plots, detrended Q-Q plots, and skewness and kurtosis. As in the previous study, the normality plots revealed a

number of the variables were not normally distributed. Overall the sample endorsed the rule/expectation categories as important, with the violation of some rule categories presenting a serious threat to the relationship, and considered unforgivable. This resulted in a number of negatively skewed distributions. As noted in the previous study, an observation should be retained in the data set unless there is information that may discount it as a valid observation in the sample. The non-normal distributions obtained in the current study were expected and can be explained by the characteristics of the sample, thus they are considered to reflect characteristics of the sample rather than problems in the data set.

The statistics for skewness and kurtosis were mostly within the accepted -1 to +1 range. There were a number of variables for which one statistic was within acceptable limits and one was outside. The skewness statistic for importance of Negative Public Behaviour was -1.38, however kurtosis was just acceptable (0.94); for (un)forgivability of broken Negative Public Behaviour rules, the skewness statistic was -1.04, but the kurtosis statistic was acceptable at -.18. The skewness statistic for (un)forgivability of Self-Presentation was 1.15, while kurtosis was acceptable at .60.

A number of the scales and subscales also differed in their skewness and kurtosis statistics. The skewness statistic for overall Trust was just acceptable at -0.99, while kurtosis was 1.56. For the Barriers subscale of Commitment, the skewness statistic was -1.01, while kurtosis was 0.86. For the WAI Restraint dimension, skewness was just acceptable at -0.96, while kurtosis was outside the acceptable range at 2.13. Skewness and kurtosis for these variables was assessed in conjunction with the normality plots, and on the basis of these, it was decided not to transform these variables.

Appropriate transformations of the variables whose skewness and kurtosis were outside the accepted -1 to +1 range were attempted, but transformations did not approach normality, therefore the variables were not transformed. The variables with skewness and kurtosis outside the acceptable range were importance of Help and Support, importance of Loyalty and Fidelity, importance of Time with Partner, importance of Positive Interaction, threat of Loyalty/Fidelity, (un)forgivability of Loyalty/Fidelity, the Dependability subscale of the Trust scale, the Alternatives subscale of the MDRCI, and the WAI subscales of Low Self-esteem, Suppression of Aggression, and Responsibility. Again, as previously noted, if variables are moderately skewed to approximately the same extent, any improvements from transformations are often minimal (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2001). It was expected that some variables, such as the importance, threat and

forgivability of Loyalty/Fidelity would be negatively skewed, consequently, by transforming the data, fundamental features of the data would be compromised.

There was a minimal number of missing data across analyses, with the largest being N=2 for a number of variables. The missing values were not estimated in order to avoid inflating the explanatory power of the analysis (Hair et. al., 1995).

Overview of Analyses

Individuals who are members of a dyad mutually influence each other. As a result, partner's scores are unlikely to be independent (Kenny, 1996). Dyadic data requires consideration of the issue of non-independence, and subsequent actor and partner effects. Dyadic data analysis must therefore begin with analysis of non-independence. If data are independent, then the individual can be the unit of analysis, however if the data are interdependent, the dyad should be used as the unit of analysis (Kenny, 1996).

Despite the fact that dyadic data was gathered in the current study, of interest was whether partners responses matched, with regard to the rules they endorsed, and whether they discussed or expected them. In order to answer the research questions regarding whether partner's responses matched, a couple data file was created where partners were matched by an identification number. To determine whether partners endorsed, discussed and expected the same rules, new variables were created that counted the instances of agreement for both partners. Predictive models of couple and individual variables were not the focus of the research questions in the current study, therefore the use of dyadic data analysis methods such as the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM; Kashy & Kenny, 2000) was unnecessary.

Analysis of Non-Independence

The current data set contains dyads that are distinguishable, and gender was chosen as the variable on which to distinguish partners. In order to test for non-independence in the data set, Pearson's correlations were run between male and female partner's scores on all main variables. The cross-couple correlations for the main variables are reported in Table 28.

Table 28
Cross-Couple Correlations on all Major Variables

Variable	Correlation coefficient
Trust	.51**
Satisfaction	.56**
Commitment (overall)	.20
Rewards	.20
Costs	.22
Match to Ideal	.52**
Alternatives	.13
Investments	.17
Barriers	-.12
Betrayal	.26
WAIDistress	.30*
Anxiety subscale	.10
Depression subscale	.31*
Low Self-Esteem subscale	.42**
Low Well-Being subscale	.22
WAIRestraint	.30*
Impulse Control subscale	.43**
Suppression of Aggression subscale	.16
Consideration of Others subscale	.15
Responsibility subscale	.36*
Extraversion	.35*
Emotionality (Neuroticism)	.07

$^{*}p<.05$; $^{**}p<.01$.

Examination of the cross-couple correlations showed that partner's scores for trust and satisfaction were moderately and positively correlated at the $p<.01$ level, confirming that partners' scores on these variables are in fact interdependent. Partners' scores were significantly correlated only for the match to ideal subscale of commitment, however. There were only a small number of other significant correlations, and these were low to moderate.

Couple correlations were also calculated for ratings of importance, threat and (un)forgivability for each of the rule/expectation categories. They are presented in Table 29.

Table 29

Cross-couple Correlations for Importance, Threat and (Un) forgivablity of Rule/Expectation Categories

Rule/Expectation Category	Importance	Threat	(Un)forgivability
Self-Disclosure and Expression	.43**	-.02	.13
Help/Support	.34*	.22	.49**
Loyalty/Fidelity	.45**	.10	.31*
Sharing/Equality	.34*	.05	.29
Sexual Behaviour	-.06	.11	.03
Time with Partner	.21	-.18	.31*
Time with Others	.16	-.07	.36*
Time in Tasks	.27	.06	.19
Negative Private Behaviour	.02	.31*	.34*
Negative Public Behaviour	.24	.20	.43**
Positive Interaction	.34*	.25	.12
Social Behaviour	.31*	.17	.11
Roles	.15	.26	.03
Finances	.22	.11	.13
Ritual Obligations	.09	.15	.13
Self-Presentation	.42**	.16	.29

*$p<.05$; *$p<.01$.

Examination of the cross-couple correlations for ratings of importance, threat and (un)forgivability showed that partners scores were significantly correlated for a number of rule/expectation categories. For ratings of importance, consistent with the results of other studies in this research program thus far, it is largely the categories that represent the emotional aspects of a relationship that have significant cross-couple correlations. It would be expected that for rules about Self-Disclosure and Expression, Help and Support and Loyalty/Fidelity, for example, that partner's negotiations and expectations are perhaps more interdependent and equitable than rules and expectations about how time is spent in tasks or with others, for example. With regard to threat ratings, partner's scores were significantly correlated only for Negative Private Behaviour. For (un)forgivability ratings, partner's scores were significantly correlated for Help and Support, Loyalty/Fidelity, Time with Partner, Time with Others, Negative Private and Negative Public Behaviour. Overall there was more interdependence between partners' scores on importance and (un)forgivablity than for ratings of threat.

Descriptive Statistics and Characteristics of the Sample

Table 30 presents the mean scores of the overall sample, male partners and female partners on the major variables of trust, satisfaction, commitment, betrayal, the two dimensions of adjustment and the extroversion and neuroticism dimensions of personality. Statistics are reported for overall trust due to the low reliability of the predictability subscale.

Table 30
Means and Standard Deviations for Overall Sample, and Male and Female Partners on Major Variables

	Overall		Male partners		Female partners	
Variable Label	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Trust	5.60	.67	5.61	.76	5.60	.58
Satisfaction	6.40	.66	6.37	.71	6.42	.61
Commitment (overall)	3.45	.30	3.43	.33	3.47	.27
Rewards	4.57	.47	4.51	.50	4.63	.43
Costs	2.01	.79	2.08	.80	1.94	.78
Match to Ideal	4.33	.55	4.28	.54	4.38	.57
Alternatives	1.71	.68	1.68	.63	1.73	.73
Investments	4.08	.62	3.98	.65	4.18	.57
Barriers	4.02	.80	4.08	.87	3.95	.74
Betrayal	31.02	7.67	29.91	8.18	32.13	7.04
WAIDistress	2.08	.56	1.97	.50	2.20	.59
Anxiety	2.63	.78	2.41	.72	2.84	.79
Depression	1.91	.73	1.78	.62	2.05	.80
Low Self-esteem	1.91	.65	1.79	.51	2.04	.74
Low Well-being	1.79	.49	1.82	.53	1.76	.46
WAIRestraint	4.05	.45	3.99	.50	4.12	.39
Impulse Control	3.74	.65	3.70	.75	3.78	.54
Suppression of Aggression	3.97	.72	3.93	.72	4.01	.72
Consideration of Others	3.98	.55	3.90	.59	4.06	.49
Responsibility	4.48	.49	4.38	.53	4.59	.42
Extraversion	39.53	7.18	38.44	7.01	40.62	7.26
Emotionality (Neuroticism)	23.73	6.82	21.18	6.63	26.29	6.06

Overall, the sample reported reasonably high levels of trust, satisfaction and commitment, with mean scores near the top end of the rating scale. For the individual components of commitment, participants generally characterised their relationships as having high levels of rewards, low costs, as being a good match to their ideal, having few alternatives, and with many investments, and many barriers to leaving.

With regard to the tendency to betray, Jones and Burdette (1994) reported that in a college sample, the average score on the Interpersonal Betrayal Scale (IBS) was 35.91, while in a non-college sample males' mean score was 35.04, and females' score was 34.96. In comparison with these mean scores, the current sample has a mean score of 31.02, which is lower than the means reported by Jones and Burdette, however the standard deviation is large.

With regard individual adjustment, the sample reported low levels of overall distress, and high levels of self-restraint. For the associated subscales, participants reported low Anxiety and Depression, and good Self-esteem and Well-being. Participants also reported moderate to high levels of the ability to control their impulses, suppress aggression, consider others, and showed high levels of responsibility. Means for Extraverison and Emotionality demonstrated that the sample is more extraverted than they are emotional or neurotic.

The mean scores for female and male partners show that male partners scored higher than female partners on the costs and barriers components of commitment. Female partners reported higher levels of rewards, match to ideal and investments regarding their commitment. In addition, they reported higher levels of the tendency to betray, more distress and restraint, and higher levels of extraversion and emotionality.

The following results are displayed according to the research questions that formed the rationale for this study.

Rule Endorsement and Rule Establishment Strategies

Do partners endorse the same rules and expectations?

The mean number of rules and expectations that partners agreed upon was 10.69 (*SD*=4.02). Of the sample, 20.0% of couples agreed on having rules/expectations in 12 categories; 15.6% agreed on having rules and expectations in all 16 categories; and 13.3% agreed on having rules and expectations in 13 categories. Less than 10% of the sample

demonstrated agreement for any other number of categories. Descriptive crosstabs results indicated how many couples agreed in their endorsement of each rule/expectation category. These results are shown in Table 31.

Table 31
Number and Percentage of Couples where both Partners Agree they Endorse Rule and Expectation Categories

Rule/Expectation Category	Number of couples with partners in agreement	% of couples with partners in agreement
Loyalty/Fidelity	43	95.6
Help/Support	41	91.1
Sharing/Equality	37	82.2
Self-Disclosure and Expression	36	80.0
Positive Interaction	36	80.0
Sexual Behaviour	31	68.9
Negative Public Behaviour	31	68.9
Finances	30	66.7
Ritual Obligations	29	64.4
Time with Partner	28	62.2
Roles	27	60.0
Negative Private Behaviour	25	55.6
Social Behaviour	25	55.6
Time with Others	20	44.4
Self-Presentation	19	42.2
Time in Tasks	3	6.7

Note. Categories are presented in descending order of number of couples where both partners endorse the category.

The results in Table 31 demonstrate that Loyalty/Fidelity and Help/Support are the two categories with the highest agreement of endorsement between partners. That is, in 43 of 45 couples, or in 95.6% of couples, partners agreed that they have rules and expectations about Loyalty/Fidelity, while 91.1% agreed that they have rules and expectations about Help and Support. Over half the couples in the sample agreed in their endorsement of 13 of the 16 rule/expectation categories. Partners agreed on having rules and expectations about Time with Others and Self-Presentation for just under half the sample. Only 3 couples agreed that they had rules or expectations about Time in Tasks.

Do partners report that they discuss and expect the same rules/expectations?

The mean number of rules and expectations that partners agreed they discussed is 3.98 (*SD*=2.92). Of the sample, 20.0% of couples agreed on discussing three of the rule/expectation categories; 17.8% agreed on discussing one category; 13.3% agreed on discussing two categories, and 11.1% agreed on discussing four categories. Less than 10% of the sample demonstrated agreement in their discussion for any other number of categories.

The mean number of rules and expectations that partners agreed they expected is 2.82 (*SD*=2.35). Of the sample, 22.2% of couples agreed they had expectations about two categories; 20.0% agreed they had expectations about four categories; 20.0% agreed they had expectations about no categories; and 15.6% agreed they had expectations about three categories. Less than 10% of the sample demonstrated agreement in their expectations of any other number of categories.

Descriptive crosstabs results indicated the number of couples where both partners agreed that they discussed or expected rules/expectations in each category. The percentages shown are proportionate to the number of couples where there was agreement between partners on endorsement. These results are shown in Table 32.

Table 32

Number and Percentage of Couples where both Partners Agree they Discuss or Expect Rules and Expectations in each Category.

Rule/Expectation Category	Couples who agreed categories were **Discussed**		Couples who agreed categories were **Expected**	
	Number	% of couples who endorsed the category that discussed rules	Number	% of couples who endorsed the category that had expectations
Finances	22	73.3	0	0
Time in Tasks	16	69.6	1	4.3
Sexual Behaviour	15	48.4	7	22.6
Time with Partner	15	53.6	6	21.4
Roles	15	55.6	2	7.4
Time with Others	12	60.0	2	3.2
Positive Interaction	11	30.6	16	44.4
Loyalty/Fidelity	10	23.3	18	41.9
Sharing/Equality	10	27.0	12	32.4
Ritual Obligations	10	34.5	6	20.7
Self-Disclosure and Expression	9	25.0	12	33.3
Negative Public Behaviour	9	29.0	11	35.5
Help/Support	7	17.1	14	34.1
Negative Private Behaviour	7	28.0	6	24.0
Social Behaviour	7	28.0	8	32.0
Self-Presentation	4	21.1	6	31.6

Note. Categories are presented in descending order of number of couples who endorsed discussing the category. Percentages represent proportion of couples who discussed or expected rules relative to the total number of couples where both partners endorsed the rules.

Examining the figures for the discussion of rules, there were 22 couples who agreed that that had discussed rules regarding Finances, which had the highest agreement, followed by Time in Tasks, Sexual Behaviour, Time with Partner and Roles. The category that there was least agreement on was Self-Presentation, with only 4 couples in agreement they discussed rules. Few couples were in agreement about discussing rules regarding Social Behaviour, Negative Private Behaviour and Help/Support also. While the number of couples whose partners are in agreement that they discussed their rules in a given category gives an index of agreement that can be compared across the different rule/expectation categories, the total number of couples who endorsed the category needs

to be taken into account. For instance, partners from 22 couples agreed that they had discussed Finances out of 30 couples that initially endorsed having rules or expectations about Finances. Therefore, 73.3% of those who agreed they had rules or expectations about Finances discussed them. Four couples agreed that they discussed rules about Self-Presentation out of 19 couples who endorsed the existence of rules in this category, thus 21.1% of those who endorsed rules about Self-Presentation discussed them.

The categories where the number of couples who discussed them was high relative to the total number of couples who endorsed the categories were: Finances (73.3%), Time in Tasks (69.6%), Time with Others (60.0%), Roles (55.6%), and Time with Partner (53.6%), with over half the sample agreeing they discussed these rules. Help/Support was the category with the lowest number of couples who discussed rules relative to the number of couples who endorsed these rules (17.1%).

With regards to the couples that reported having expectations about certain topics or categories rather than discussing them, partners were in agreement most for the categories of Loyalty/Fidelity, Positive Interaction, Help/Support, and Sharing/Equality. Relative to the total number of couples who endorsed the presence of rules and expectations about each category, those that had the highest agreement on expectations were Positive Interaction (44.4%) and Loyalty/Fidelity (41.9%), while those with the lowest agreement were Finances (0%) and Time with Others (3.2%). Unlike the rules that were discussed, less than half the sample agreed that they had expectations about any of the categories.

Importance, Threat and (Un)forgivability

Do partners differ in their ratings of importance, threat and (un)forgivability?

Given that the dyads in the current study are distinguishable on the basis of gender, paired t-tests were used to determine whether partners differ in their ratings of importance, threat and (un)forgivability. Table 33 shows the results of the t-tests for importance.

Table 33

Means and T-test Results for Paired t-tests between Gender and Importance

Category	*M* Males	*M* Females	*t*	df	Sig.
Self-Disclosure and Expression	4.07	4.59	-4.22	43	<.001
Help/Support	4.44	4.80	-3.35	44	<.001
Time with Partner	3.86	4.41	-3.39	43	<.001
Positive Interaction	4.18	4.58	-3.21	44	<.001
Ritual Obligations	3.00	4.04	-5.01	44	<.001
Time with Others	3.00	3.56	-2.54	44	.02
Social Behaviour	3.61	4.02	-2.41	43	.02
Roles	3.00	3.56	-2.48	44	.02
Sexual Behaviour	4.27	3.98	1.64	44	.11
Negative Public Behaviour	3.84	4.22	-1.64	44	.11
Self-Presentation	3.44	3.73	-1.62	44	.11
Negative Private Behaviour	3.62	4.00	-1.45	44	.15
Sharing/Equality	3.95	4.18	-1.35	43	.18
Finances	3.60	3.79	-.93	42	.36
Time in Tasks	3.44	3.47	-.12	42	.91
Loyalty/Fidelity	4.91	4.91	.00	44	1.00

Note. Categories are presented in ascending order of significance.

There were significant differences between male and female partners in their ratings of importance for a number of rule/expectation categories. Female partners rated significantly higher on importance than did male partners for the categories of Self-Disclosure and Expression, Help/Support, Time with Partner, Time with Others, Positive Interaction, Social Behaviour, Roles and Ritual Obligations. For the category of Loyalty/Fidelity, both male and female partners recorded the same mean score.

Table 34
Means and T-test Results for Paired t-tests between Gender and Threat

Category	*M* Males	*M* Females	*t*	df	Sig.
Negative Private Behaviour	2.89	3.56	-3.45	44	<.001
Social Behaviour	2.16	2.95	-3.99	43	<.001
Ritual Obligations	1.84	2.31	-2.70	44	.01
Self-Presentation	1.73	2.27	-2.70	44	.01
Help/Support	3.18	3.59	-2.09	43	.04
Time with Others	2.11	2.58	-2.12	44	.04
Loyalty/Fidelity	4.64	4.82	-1.60	44	.12
Roles	2.11	2.38	-1.50	44	.14
Finances	2.32	2.61	-1.35	43	.19
Time with Partner	2.77	3.07	-1.11	43	.28
Negative Public Behaviour	3.18	3.42	-1.07	44	.29
Positive Interaction	3.09	3.31	-1.03	44	.31
Time in Tasks	2.23	2.42	-.85	42	.40
Self-Disclosure and Expression	2.76	2.91	-.73	44	.47
Sharing/Equality	2.91	3.04	-.64	44	.53
Sexual Behaviour	3.00	3.02	-.10	44	.92

Note. Categories are presented in ascending order of significance.

Table 34 displays the paired t-test results for ratings of threat between male and female partners. Again there were a number of significant results, and in each case, female partners rated the threat as higher than males. Female partners rated threat significantly higher than male partners for the categories of Help/Support, Time with Others, Negative Private Behaviour, Social Behaviour, Ritual Obligations and Self-Presentation. Unlike ratings of importance, male and female partners rated the threat of Loyalty/Fidelity violations differently, even though the difference was not significant.

Table 35

Means and T-test Results for Paired t-tests between Gender and (Un)forgivability

Category	*M* Males	*M* Females	*t*	df	Sig.
Ritual Obligations	1.68	2.32	-3.13	44	<.001
Loyalty/Fidelity	4.25	4.64	-2.64	44	.01
Negative Private Behaviour	2.50	3.00	-2.58	44	.01
Help/Support	2.60	3.00	-2.32	44	.03
Time with Partner	2.00	2.36	-2.23	43	.03
Time with Others	1.86	2.16	-1.96	44	.06
Finances	1.93	2.28	-1.68	42	.10
Sharing/Equality	2.16	2.42	-1.54	43	.13
Self-Presentation	1.73	2.02	-1.55	44	.13
Time in Tasks	1.68	1.93	-1.50	42	.14
Sexual Behaviour	2.66	2.32	1.49	44	.15
Roles	1.77	2.02	-1.28	44	.21
Negative Public Behaviour	2.82	3.05	-1.20	44	.24
Social Behaviour	2.16	2.40	-1.20	43	.24
Self-Disclosure and Expression	2.21	2.40	-.94	43	.35
Positive Interaction	2.43	2.57	-.67	44	.51

Note. Categories are presented in ascending order of significance.

Table 35 displays the paired t-test results for ratings of (un)forgivability between male and female partners. Results revealed a number of significant results. Consistent with the ratings of importance and threat, female partners rated violations of Help/Support, Loyalty/Fidelity, Time with Partner, Negative Private Behaviour and Ritual Obligations significantly more unforgivable than male partners.

Overall, there were a number of categories that male and female partners rated differently in terms of their importance, threat and unforgivability. Help/Support and Ritual Obligations were rated differently by male and female partners across all three of importance, thereat and forgivablity. Where the significant differences existed, it was female partners that rated the rules/expectations as more important, and more threatening and unforgivable when violated. While the dyads in the current study are distinguishable on the basis of gender, Kenny (1994) has cautioned that individual analysis of partners based on gender can be misleading, and carries the implicit assumption that the significant results are due to gender differences, when, in fact, they may not be. Suffice to

say that the results above demonstrated that differences exist between first and second partners in their ratings of importance, threat and unforgivability on a number of categories. Further analyses that are outside the aims of the current study would be able to determine whether the differences were gender-related.

Is the number of rules/expectations that partners agree exist in their relationship, that are discussed, and that are expected, related to partner's individual variables of tendency to betray, personality, and adjustment, and couple variables trust, satisfaction and commitment?

Pearson's correlations were run between the variables that reflect agreement between partners on rule endorsement, discussion and expectation, and both partner's individual variables of tendency to betray, personality (specifically Extraversion and Emotionality) and adjustment. Pearson's correlations were run due to the interest in associations rather than predictive models, but were also chose as an appropriate method on the basis of the low cross-couple correlations on betrayal, personality and adjustment.

For rule endorsement, the number of rules agreed upon was not significantly correlated with any of the individual variables (tendency to betray, adjustment, or the personality dimensions of Extraversion and Emotionality) for male or female partners. The number of rules agreed upon was also not significantly related to any of the male or female partner's ratings of trust, satisfaction or commitment. For rules that were discussed, there were no significant correlations between the number of rules discussed and the individual variables (tendency to betray, adjustment, Extraversion and Emotionality) for either male or female partners. There were no significant correlations between number of rules discussed and either partner's ratings of trust, satisfaction, and commitment. For rules that were expected, there were no significant correlations between the number of rules expected and the individual variables for male or female partners. Further, there were no significant correlations between number of rules expected and male and female partner's ratings of trust, satisfaction and commitment. Given the lack of any strong or significant correlations between the variables of interest, no predictive models were investigated.

The following research questions were posed at the individual level rather than at the couple level of data, therefore data analyses were run with individuals as the unit of analysis.

Personality

At the individual level, are the personality dimensions Extraversion and Emotionality related to the number of rules individuals endorse?

Pearson's correlations showed no significant associations between the personality dimensions of Extraversion and Emotionality, and the number of rules endorsed.

Is personality (Extraversion and Emotionality) related to trust, satisfaction and commitment?

Pearson's correlations revealed no significant correlations between Extraversion and Emotionality, and trust, satisfaction, and commitment.

Is personality (Extraversion and Emotionality) related to individual adjustment or the tendency to betray?

Pearson's' correlations showed there was no significant association between Extraversion and the tendency to betray. With regard to adjustment, there were a number of significant correlations. Extraversion was significantly negatively correlated with the Distress dimension of the Weinberger Adjustment Inventory (WAI) (r = -.34, p<.001), therefore the more extraverted an individual is the less overall distress they report. Further investigation revealed Extraversion was significantly correlated with three of the four Distress subscales: Depression (r = -.34, p<.001); Low Self-esteem (r = -.35, p<.001); and Low Well-being (r = -.55, p<.001). Extraversion was not significantly correlated with the Restraint dimension of the WAI, but was significantly negatively correlated with the Restraint subscale Impulse Control (r = -.25, p=.02). Therefore, the more extraverted an individual reported they were, the less depressed they were, the better their self-esteem and well-being, and the less impulse control they have.

Correlation results showed a significant positive correlation between Emotionality and the tendency to betray (r = .31, p<.001). With regard to adjustment, again there were a number of significant correlations. Emotionality was significantly strongly positively correlated with the Distress dimension of the WAI (r = .77, p<.001). It was also significantly related to all four of the Distress subscales: Anxiety (r = .74, p<.001); Depression (r = .71, p<.001); Low Self-esteem (r = .56, p<.001); and Low Well-being (r = .48, p<.001). Emotionality was significantly negatively related to the Restraint

dimension of the WAI (r = -.25, p=.02), and showed a significant negative correlation with only the Suppression of aggression subscale (r = -.42, p<.001). Therefore, the more emotional an individual reported they were, the more distressed they were, showing higher levels of anxiety, depression, and lower self-esteem and well-being. More emotional individuals also reported having lower levels of restraint, specifically, lower suppression of aggression.

Betrayal

Is the tendency to betray related to the number of rules individuals endorse?

Pearson's correlations showed no significant association between the tendency to betray and the number of rules individuals endorsed.

Is the tendency to betray related to individual ratings of trust, satisfaction and commitment?

Correlation results showed no significant relationships between the tendency to betray and ratings of trust, satisfaction or commitment.

Is the tendency to betray related to individual adjustment?

With regard to adjustment, correlation results showed that the tendency to betray was significantly associated to a number of subscales of the Weinberger Adjustment Inventory (WAI). Tendency to betray was significantly positively correlated with the Distress dimension of the WAI (r = .24, p=.02), but was only significantly correlated with two of the four subscales: Anxiety (r = .29, p=.01) and Depression (r = .22, p=.04). Therefore, the greater one's tendency to betray, the higher is one's distress, with increased anxiety and depression.

Tendency to betray was significantly negatively related to the Restraint dimension of the WAI (r = -.45, p<.001). Correlation results revealed that tendency to betray was associated with three of the four Restraint subscales: Impulse Control (r = -.44, p<.001); Suppression of Aggression (r = -.31, p<.001); and Responsibility (r = -.43, p<.001). Therefore, the higher one's tendency to betray, the lower their levels of restraint, demonstrated by lower impulse control, less suppression of aggression, and decreased responsibility.

Validation of Rule/Expectation Categories and their Endorsement

The final aim of the current study was to examine whether endorsement of rules and expectations, and ratings of importance, threat and (un)forgivability were consistent with the ratings obtained in Study 3. Frequency counts were obtained for endorsement, and for ratings of importance threat and (un)forgivability, and are presented in comparison with the results from Study 3.

Table 36
Frequency and Percentage of Endorsement of Rules and Expectations from Studies 3 and 4

Rule category	Study 3		Study 4	
	Count[a]	% of respondents who endorsed this category*	Count[b]	% respondents who endorsed this category*
Loyalty and Fidelity	105	99.1	88	97.8
Self disclosure and Expression	101	95.3	81	90.0
Positive Interaction	100	94.3	81	90.0
Help and Support	98	92.5	85	94.4
Ritual Obligations	95	89.6	71	78.9
Sharing and Equality	94	88.7	81	90.0
Negative Public Behaviour	90	84.9	71	78.9
Sexual Behaviour	87	82.1	72	90.0
Time with Partner	86	81.1	66	73.3
Negative Private Behaviour	81	76.4	65	72.2
Social Behaviour	80	75.5	67	74.4
Time with Others	70	66.0	55	61.1
Roles	67	63.2	67	74.4
Finances	65	61.3	70	77.8
Self-Presentation.	62	58.5	56	62.2
Time in Tasks	44	41.5	62	68.9

[a]Valid number of responses *n*=106
[b]Valid number of responses *n*=90
*Each respondent rated each item, so total percentages will exceed 100%
Note. Rule categories are in descending order of frequency obtained in Study 3.

Table 36 displays the frequency count and percentage for endorsement of the rule/expectation categories for both Study 3 and the current study, Study 4. In both studies, participants similarly endorsed three of the top four categories: Loyalty/Fidelity, Self-Disclosure and Expression, and Help/Support. Positive Interaction was the category that made up the top four for Study 3, while for the current study it was Sharing/Equality.

The categories that were endorsed least in Study 3 were Time in Tasks, Self-Presentation, Finances and Roles, while in the current study they were Time with Others, Self-Presentation, Time in Tasks, and Negative Private Behaviour, thus there were two categories in common. Despite these similarities, the rankings between Study 3 and the current study are quite different. This may reflect the different nature of the two samples, in that Study 3 sampled individuals, while the current study sampled both members of a couple, who are expected to produce similar responses and be interdependent.

Table 37
Ranks and Mean Ratings for Perceived Importance of Rule Categories from Studies 3 and 4

	Study 3			Study 4		
Rule Category	Rank	*M*	*SD*	Rank	*M*	*SD*
Loyalty/Fidelity	1	4.85	.41	1	4.91	.29
Help/Support	2	4.79	.41	2	4.62	.63
Self-Disclosure and Expression	3	4.70	.64	4	4.34	.80
Positive Interaction	4	4.50	.72	3	4.38	.74
Time with Partner	5	4.13	.72	5	4.13	.88
Sharing/Equality	6	4.09	.74	7	4.06	.97
Sexual Behaviour	7	3.85	.78	6	4.12	.82
Ritual Obligations	8	3.76	.79	13	3.52	1.15
Social Behaviour	9	3.75	.85	9.5	3.81	.98
Negative Public Behaviour	10	3.60	1.46	8	4.03	1.26
Time with Others	11	3.58	.88	15.5	3.28	1.16
Negative Private Behaviour	12	3.53	1.32	9.5	3.81	1.25
Finances	13	3.38	.88	11	3.66	1.08
Time in Tasks	14	3.25	.78	14	3.44	1.07
Roles	15	3.23	.93	15.5	3.28	1.18
Self-Presentation	16	3.22	.89	12	3.59	1.11

Note. Categories are presented in rank order obtained from Study 3.

Table 37 displays the ratings of importance of each rule/expectation category for Study 3 as well as the current study. Examination of the rankings shows that participants rated the same categories as being the seven most important rules/expectations, although there was some variation in the rankings. The categories rated the least important were also ranked similarly, with Self-Presentation, Roles and Time in Tasks being the least important categories in Study 3, while for the current study Time with Others, Roles and Time in Tasks were the least important.

Table 38
Ranks and Mean Ratings for Perceived Threat of Rule Categories from Studies 3 and 4

	Study 3			Study 4		
Rule Category	Rank	*M*	*SD*	Rank	*M*	*SD*
Loyalty/Fidelity	1	4.76	.49	1	4.73	.56
Negative Public Behaviour	2	3.78	1.02	3	3.30	1.21
Negative Private Behaviour	3	3.67	1.20	4	3.22	1.15
Help/Support	4	3.32	1.14	2	3.39	1.05
Self-Disclosure and Expression	5	3.10	1.09	10	2.83	1.00
Positive Interaction	6	3.05	1.17	5	3.20	1.17
Sharing/Equality	7	2.93	.94	7	2.98	1.02
Time with Partner	8	2.86	.98	8	2.92	1.15
Sexual Behaviour	9	2.63	1.04	6	3.01	1.13
Social Behaviour	10	2.62	1.09	9	2.87	1.04
Finances	11	2.44	1.00	11	2.45	1.10
Time with Others	12	2.43	.90	12	2.34	1.02
Ritual Obligations	13	2.30	1.07	16	2.08	.92
Time in Tasks	14	2.17	.88	13	2.33	1.04
Self-Presentation	15	2.06	1.03	15	2.14	1.03
Roles	16	2.03	.88	14	2.24	.99

Note. Categories are presented in rank order obtained from Study 3.

Table 38 shows the comparative ranks and mean scores for threat ratings from both studies. The results reveal that the rankings of threat are very similar between the studies, and more similar than the rankings for importance. The notable exception is Self-Disclosure and Expression, whose violation was rated as quite serious in Study 3, with a rank of 5, while in the current study it was ranked tenth. Its lower position in the current study may reflect the nature of the current sample. The current sample consisted of

couples who were high on satisfaction, trust and commitment, thus the lower ranking of Self-Disclosure and Expression may reflect the accommodation process that highly committed couples enact in order to ensure the smooth functioning of the relationship. It may also be that this category is one where partners are better able to display their accommodative behaviour when compared to other categories, which results in a lower ranking. It may be more difficult to be accommodating regarding deviations from Negative Private Behaviour or Loyalty/Fidelity rules and expectations.

Table 39
Ranks and Mean Ratings for Perceived (Un)forgivability of Rule Categories from Studies 3 and 4

	Study 3			Study 4		
Rule Category	Rank	*M*	*SD*	Rank	*M*	*SD*
Loyalty/Fidelity	1	4.58	.65	1	4.44	.81
Negative Public Behaviour	2	3.71	.98	2	2.93	1.17
Negative Private Behaviour	3	3.44	1.10	4	2.76	1.14
Positive Interaction	4	3.01	1.06	5.5	2.52	1.02
Help/Support	5	3.00	.98	3	2.81	1.11
Self-Disclosure and Expression	6	2.72	.98	8	2.30	.97
Sharing/Equality	7	2.65	.85	7	2.31	.91
Ritual Obligations	8	2.52	1.10	12.5	2.00	1.06
Social Behaviour	9	2.51	1.02	9	2.28	.95
Sexual Behaviour	10	2.42	.89	5.5	2.52	1.13
Time with Partner	11	2.40	.90	10	2.18	.92
Finances	12	2.33	1.01	11	2.09	1.04
Time with Others	13	2.14	.82	12.5	2.00	.89
Roles	14	2.01	.85	14	1.89	.94
Self-Presentation	15	1.98	.87	15	1.88	1.05
Time in Tasks	16	1.97	.75	16	1.80	.87

Table 39 displays the results from Study 3 and the current study for ratings of (un)forgivability. There are some similarities in the rankings of the categories at the top and bottom ends, that is, in the rankings of what is most and least forgivable. Both studies ranked the same categories as the top five most unforgivable violations, although the current study has the inclusion of Sexual Behaviour, which was ranked equal fifth with

Positive Interaction. Similarly, both studies ranked the same three categories as the most easily forgiven if violated: Time in Tasks, Self-Presentation, and Roles. To determine whether in fact the ranks from Study 3 and Study 4 were related, Spearman's rank order correlations were manually calculated. The ranks were positively significantly related with a correlation of $r_s = 0.92$, significant at the $p<.01$ level. Such a high correlation between the rankings from the two studies provides support for the assertion that there are certain categories that can be commonly identified as being highly important to relationships, and there are categories that are commonly and consistently seen as relatively unimportant. This provides validation for the classification of categories, and helps support the proposition that rules and expectations exist in a hierarchy.

By comparing the results from Study 3 with those obtained in the current study, similarities and differences in the ratings can be observed. Despite the differences in the samples from the two studies, the same categories appear to be consistently rated at the top and bottom ends of the scales for importance, threat and (un)forgivability, while rankings through the middle tended to vary between the studies, and this is supported by the Spearman's rank correlation. The fact that there are similarities between the studies in the categories that are rated as most and least important, threatening and (un)forgivable is an important point, and will be discussed further in Chapter 11.

Summary and Conclusions

Overall, the sample reported high levels of trust, satisfaction with, and commitment to their relationships. Regarding individual attributes of the participants, they showed relatively low levels of distress and high levels of self-restraint, with an average tendency to betray others. Overall, the sample was more extraverted than emotional or neurotic.

Partners' responses showed some interesting results regarding rule endorsement, and rule establishment strategy, that is, whether rules were discussed or expected. With regard to endorsement, dyad partners agreed on having rules/expectations about approximately ten of the 16 categories. The categories that received the highest levels of agreement between dyad members were Loyalty/Fidelity and Help/Support, followed by Sharing/Equality. This is consistent with previous results, which have consistently demonstrated the presence and importance of rules and expectations about issues of loyalty, fidelity, help and support. Also consistent with previously obtained results was

the finding that Self-Presentation and Time in Tasks received the least agreement between dyad members.

In terms of whether dyad members were in agreement about whether the different categories were discussed, the highest level of agreement was regarding rules and expectations about Finances. The category with the least agreement between partners was Self-Presentation. Of the total number of couples where both partners initially endorsed the rule, discussion seemed to be the rule-setting method of choice for rules and expectation about Finances, Time in Tasks, Time with Partner, Roles, and Time with Others. It appears that the more procedural aspects of a relationship, and who does what in the day to day functioning of the relationship requires more discussion between partners than other areas.

Regarding whether partners just had expectations of their partner, as opposed to discussing specific categories, couples were in agreement less of the time than they were when they discussed their rules. The category with the highest level of agreement was Loyalty/Fidelity, and that was for 18 of 43 couples. Consistent with the results above, the categories where there was least agreement were Finances and Time in Tasks, suggesting that these are really areas that need discussion and interaction in order for relationship goals to be achieved. Loyalty/Fidelity received the highest agreement for expectation with 18 of 43 couples, but fell further down the list of categories discussed, with only 10 of the 43 couples in agreement that they discussed Loyalty/Fidelity rules. Whether Loyalty/Fidelity is discussed or expected does not appear to matter to the relationship. It is consistently rated as the most important category, and the one that presents the most threat and is most difficult to forgive when violated. The reason it does not appear high in the list of discussed categories is perhaps not that rules about Loyalty/Fidelity are not important enough to discuss, but that there are rules in other categories that require more discussion. For example, the day to day co-ordination of the relationship, such as making sure bills get paid, organising finances to make purchases, where partners will be during the day or at night, and who they will be with, is dependent on discussion of these issues. If these are not discussed, then the relationship's daily functioning is threatened, and relationship goals are not achieved. It would appear that regular discussion of these issues would be more salient than discussion of issues of loyalty and fidelity. The appearance of Loyalty/Fidelity high on the list of categories that couples agree they expect may also reflect the suggestion made by Metts (1989), that some relational standards are so obvious and taken for granted that they in fact never come up for discussion.

Partners differed in their ratings of importance, threat and (un)forgivablity for a number of categories. Help/Support, and Ritual Obligations were the only two categories that partners rated significantly differently across each of importance, threat and (un)forgivablity. Where there existed significant differences, interestingly it was the female partners that consistently gave higher ratings than male partners, rating categories as more important, and their violations as more threatening and more unforgivable. The fact that these differences exist between male and female partners must be treated with caution however. Gender was the variable used in the current study to distinguish dyads, and further investigation is required to establish whether the differences are gender-related, or whether they are differences that exist between first and second partners.

Agreement between partners on rule endorsement and rule establishment strategy (discussed and expected) was not related to either partner's levels of trust, satisfaction or commitment, which was a suprising finding. It may be, however, that trust, satisfaction and commitment are related to specific rules and expectations, or the violations thereof, such as in the case of infidelity and deception. These relationship variables may in fact not be associated with the number of rules that exist, and the way that they are established, but instead are related to specific demonstrations of particular rules and expectations or the violations thereof.

Agreement between partners on rule endorsement and rule establishment strategy (discussed and expected) was also not related to a partner's tendency to betray, personality, or adjustment. At the individual level, no associations were found between the number of rules endorsed, levels of trust, levels of satisfaction and levels of commitment, and an individual's personality dimensions. It appears that the individual attributes of participants were not related to the rules and expectations they have in their relationships with their partners, and how these are established. On the basis of previous literature that has explored the links between personality (specifically Neuroticism) and relationship variables, it was thought that one's personality might be related to the number of rules that exist, and whether these rules are discussed or whether they exist as expectations. Given the correlations between the measures of personality, adjustment and tendency to betray, it was thought that individuals who are Emotional may set more rules in their relationships as a function of their distress and anxiety. This did not appear to be the case. Further, it was thought that adjustment, particularly self-restraint and an individual's ability to control their impulses, consider others and be responsible, might be related to the number of rules that exist, and how these are established. For instance it was

thought that perhaps restraint would be positively related to the number of rules endorsed, such that those individuals who have good impulse control, responsibility and are considerate of others may tend to set more rules in their relationship. Equally, however, there may have been an inverse relationship, whereby the more restrained an individual is, the less need there is to establish a formal set of rules. Neither of these seems to be the case, however. If personality or adjustment is indeed somehow related to the rules and expectations that individuals have in their romantic relationships, then the relationships may exist elsewhere.

Personality, Adjustment and Betrayal

Perhaps not suprisingly, there were a number of associations between the Extraversion and Emotionality personality dimensions and adjustment. In fact Weinberger and Schwartz (1990) stated that together, the distress and restraint dimensions of the WAI incorporate most of the Big Five factors, and that the WAI is conceptually compatible with other formulations of personality dimensions. Personality was not related to the tendency to betray, however adjustment and the tendency to betray were related. The higher one's tendency to betray, the more distressed and less restrained an individual is. Specifically, the tendency to betray appears to be positively related to anxiety and depression, and inversely related to the ability to control one's impulses, one's ability to manage aggression, and the ability or capacity to act responsibly. One would expect these features in an individual who tended to betray those around him or her.

In summary, it appears the an individual's rating of their relationship, as well as agreement between relational partners, about the form and function of rules and expectations in their relationship, are not related to levels of relational trust, satisfaction or commitment, and are not related to individual dispositional variables, such as personality, adjustment and the tendency to betray.

Chapter 11
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Social behaviour is structured and guided by norms and rules that function to structure and organise social interactions. Individuals in social interactions hold expectations about the way that their interaction partners will behave. Similarly, individuals enter romantic relationships with beliefs and ideas about what the relationship will be like, what should happen, and how each partner should act (Fitness, 2001). Repeated interactions between romantic partners allows for the development of a dyad-specific structure of relationship rules and expectations, whose main function is to co-ordinate and regulate behaviour by defining what is prohibited and what is obligated, and as a result, maintain relational cohesion (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Relational standards exist as explicitly discussed or known rules, or implicit expectations, and may differ in their importance to the relationship. Relationship partners do not always act in accordance with relational standards, however. When this happens, relational standards are violated, and this can have subsequent consequences for one or both partners, as well as the future of the relationship.

A review of the available literature revealed that limited research has addressed the form, function and development of relationship rules and expectations, with the notable exceptions of studies by Argyle and Henderson (1985) and Baxter (1986). There exists a wealth of literature, however, on rule and expectation violations, which usually appear under the labels of betrayal and transgressions. Research in this area largely focuses on the two prototypical examples of rule and expectation violations: infidelity and deception. While limited research into rules and expectations exists, research into betrayal and transgressions assumes that relational standards do exist by virtue of the fact that acts such as deception and infidelity are considered a betrayal and major violations of relational standards, often with negative consequences for a relationship.

Social exchange theories were used as the framework for the current research program. Interdependence theory (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) has long been used as a theoretical framework in the field of relationship research, and has demonstrated its

applicability by the development of further exchange theories such as Equity theory (Hatfield et al., 1979) and Rusbult's (1980; 1983) Investment Model. While it may be argued that social exchange theories focus too much on transactions and the desire for an individual to maximise their outcomes, they account for the interdependence and reciprocity that are such fundamental aspects of romantic relationships, and acknowledge that individuals prefer not to be in debt to their relational partners. Given that rules and expectations affect and guide the behaviour of both relational partners, Interdependence theory was seen as an appropriate framework in which to base the current research program. Further, Equity theory and the Investment Model are also able to contribute to the understanding of relationship rules and expectations in terms of investigating whether partners agree on their relational standards, and also the relationship between relational standards and couple functioning.

The research program consisted of four cross-sectional studies that combined qualitative and quantitative methods. The first study was based on previous work by the author, and was designed to explore the deceptive strategies individuals use in their romantic relationships, and how these are related to the motivations provided for the use of deception, and the perceived seriousness of using deception. On the basis of the results from the first study, and the motivations given for the use of deception, it was clear that the use of deception violated beliefs and expectations about trust and honesty in relationships. As a result, the second study adopted a broader perspective, and aimed to explore what other relational rules and expectations exist. Using qualitative methods, the second study resulted in the development of 16 categories about which rules and expectations exist. It established that some relational standards are explicit, and develop through discussion and negotiation, while others are implicit, and remain as expectations. The results of the second study raised further questions about how rules and expectations come to exist, and whether a hierarchy or rules and expectations can be identified. A third study provided validation for the 16 categories through participants' endorsement and ratings of importance of the rules and expectations, and ratings of threat and (un)forgivablity of violations of rules/expectations within each category. It also explored the possible relationship between relational standards and individual factors, specifically social-emotional adjustment. A final study used couple data to examine whether relationship partners were in agreement about the rules/expectations they endorsed, and whether those categories they endorsed were discussed or expected. It also further investigated the potential associations between the endorsement and important ratings of

the rule/expectation categories, and individual factors such as adjustment, personality and the tendency to betray, and relationship variables such as trust, satisfaction and commitment. The results provided further validation for the rule/expectation categories, but found few relationships between relational standards and individual and relationship factors, suggesting that the structure of relational standards, and the way they come to exist, are largely unrelated to individual dispositional factors, and relationship variables.

Study 1

A study on the use of deception in romantic relationships developed out of previous work by the author (West, 2001), and was important for a couple of reasons. Firstly, research in the area of deception and romantic relationships, despite investigations into who deceives whom, what individuals lie about, whether one can detect a partner's deceit, and the effects of deception on relationships, the use of deception between relationship partners is still not well understood. In addition, previous literature had not combined the investigation of the various types of deceptive strategies that individuals use and examined them in the context of whether people tend to use multiple strategies when they deceive, and has also not investigated how deceptive strategies are differentially related to the motivations for deception.

Participants were presented with a measure of deception (Cole, 2001), deceptive strategies (Boon & McLeod, 2001), and were asked about perceptions of seriousness of the deception they engaged in as well as their motivations for deceiving their partner. Results were obtained from a gender-balanced sample of 152 individuals. Individuals tend to use a variety of deceptive strategies when they deceive, rather than relying on one strategy, and the number of strategies used was related to levels of reported use of deception. Further, individuals appeared to prefer the use of more subtle deceptive strategies, rather than overtly lying to a partner. Seven categories of motivations for deception were identified: Conflict Avoidance, Protecting Self, Protecting Relationship, Protecting Partner, Maintaining Impressions, Provoking Partner, and Manipulation. Protection, whether of partners or relationship, appeared to be the main theme in participants' responses. There were mixed results regarding how deceptive strategies were related to the reasons provided for the deception, however. Individuals who favoured lying, exaggeration and omission as deceptive strategies did not identify

protecting themselves as the reason for their deception. In addition, those who used omission reported they were not protecting their relationship, nor being manipulative. The use of non-verbal communication of an untrue message was related to the motivation of protecting one's partner. When asked about how serious their deception was, in terms of the potential threat to the relationship, participants tended to think that their partners would view the deception as more serious than they would.

Overall, it appears when individuals engage in deception, they use a variety of strategies to do so, and tend to prefer strategies that are more subtle, rather than overtly lying to a partner. Altruism, in the form of protecting one's partner appeared to be the main motive for engaging in deception, however it appears that, consistent with victim and perpetrator accounts in the research literature, individuals view their use of deception than they think their partners would.

Study 2

Study 2 adopted a broader perspective, and aimed to explore the rules and expectations that exist in relationships, and how they come to exist. A qualitative study was designed, utilising focus groups and interviews with couples in order to address the aims. It was disappointing that despite exhaustive efforts at recruitment, numbers enabled only one focus group to be run. As a result, the same semi-structured question schedule was applied to both the focus group and to the five couples who were interviewed. Despite the low numbers, a strength of this study was that the focus group consisted of six males. In a field where female participants usually outnumber male participants, the contribution of a focus group consisting of males helps to provide a unique perspective, and provided rich qualitative data. Participants were asked how they defined 'relationship boundaries', the term that was initially used by the researcher so as not to define the concept for participants. Participants were also asked about the kinds of relationship boundaries that exist in relationships, how they are developed or set, the function they serve, and what happens when they are violated. Thematic analysis of the transcripts from the focus group and couple interviews, resulted in relationship boundaries being defined as rules or expectations that exist between relationship partners, that. They help to set the limits of conduct within the relationship, in that they guide and define what is acceptable behaviour within the relationship, in order to maintain its unity and ensure that the

relationship continues. Some relational standards are explicit, and are arrived at through discussion or negotiation, while others are implicit, and are assumed, or exist as expectations. Some relational standards come to exist through a process of trial and error, whereby a violation occurs, and a standard is subsequently negotiated. Participants also proposed the idea that rules and expectations may exist as a hierarchy, with some standards being more important to the relationship than others. Thematic analysis of the qualitative data resulted in the identification of 16 categories about which rules and expectations exist in romantic relationships. These were developed by integrating the existing research, specifically work by Argyle and Henderson (1984) and Baxter (1986), with the qualitative results. The 16 categories identified were: Self-Disclosure and Expression, Help/Support, Loyalty/Fidelity, Sharing/Equality, Sexual Behaviour, Time with Partner, Time with Others, Time in Tasks, Negative Private Behaviour, Negative Public Behaviour, Positive Interaction, Social Behaviour, Roles, Finances, Ritual Obligations, and Self-Presentation. These represent both emotional aspects of relationships, provision of resources, time allocation, and the procedural components of a relationship. The identification of themes and the development of these categories suggests that, despite the idiosyncratic nature of couples' rules and expectations, there may be some common topics about which rules and expectations exist.

Study 3

Using the information obtained in the qualitative study, the third study aimed to validate the 16 categories of rules and expectations, explore their function in a relationship and whether they form an identifiable hierarchy, and the potential associations with individual factors. One hundred and six participants were asked whether they had ever had rules or expectations about each of the 16 categories in their relationship, and were asked whether these had been discussed, or were just expectations they held of their partner's behaviour. Participants were also asked about the importance of having rules and expectations about each category, and how threatening and (un)forgivable violations of rules and expectations would be. In order to provide additional information about these ratings, participants were asked to identify the worst offence that they could commit against a partner, or that a partner could commit against them.

A review of the research literature found that couple functioning, and relational outcomes, have been associated with individual dispositional factors such as social-emotional adjustment (Feldman et al. 2000) and aspects of personality (for example Kurdek, 1997). On the basis of this area of research, a measure of adjustment, the Weinberger Adjustment Inventory (Weinberger, et al., 1989) was used to investigate whether the number of rules/expectations participants endorsed, and whether they discussed or expect their rules, was related to adjustment. Of particular interest was the self-restraint dimension of the WAI, which reflects the ability to control one's impulses, inhibit aggression, be considerate of others, and act responsibly. It was thought that greater restraint might be associated with greater endorsement of relationship rules.

The results provided validation of the 16 rule/expectation categories, through heavy endorsement of the categories, and generally high ratings of importance. The categories most endorsed were Loyalty/Fidelity and Help/Support, while the least endorsed were Time in Tasks, Finances and Roles. The most discussed categories were Sexual Behaviour, Self-Disclosure and Expression, and Time with Partner, while the least discussed were Help/Support, Self-Presentation and Time in Tasks. The most expected categories were Help/Support, Positive Interaction and Sharing/Equality, and the least expected were Finances, Time in Tasks, and Sexual Behaviour. The categories rated as most discussed were generally consistent with those that were least expected, and similarly the categories rated as most expected were generally consistent with those rated as least discussed. The rest of the categories, it appears, are discussed and expected relatively equally.

Overall, the majority of the categories were seen as common to most relationships, and important. Loyalty/Fidelity, Help/Support, Positive Interaction, Ritual Obligations and Self-Disclosure and Expression rules and expectations were rated as most common and most important. Rules and expectations about time allocation, particularly in tasks and with others outside the relationship, and Self-Presentation, were least common and comparatively the least important. Loyalty/Fidelity, Negative Private Behaviour and Negative Public Behaviour rule/expectation violations were seen as the most threatening to a relationship, and the most difficult to forgive. Violations of Time in Tasks, Time with Others, Self-Presentation and Roles were considered the least threatening and easiest violations to forgive. A relatively consistent pattern was evident in participants' responses. In general, categories that represent the emotional functioning of the relationship were generally considered fundamental to the relationship in terms of their

importance and the threat presented by violations of those rules/expectations. Categories endorsed the least, and considered least important, least threatening, and most forgivable when violated, tended to reflect the more procedural aspects of the relationship that regulate everyday tasks. This suggests that a hierarchy might exist, with rules and expectations regarding the emotional side of the relationship being primary rules/expectations, and those about the procedural side of the relationship being tertiary rules/expectations.

Participants were asked about the sources of their relational standards, and identified their own thoughts, partners and parents, as having the greatest influence. With regard to adjustment, suprisingly, there were no significant differences in adjustment scores between those that did and did not endorse certain rules, or between the rules that were discussed and those that were expected.

The results supported the existence of the 16 categories, and the presence of a hierarchy of rules, with rules/expectations that reflect the emotional aspects of a relationship seen as more important to the relationship than rules and expectations that govern the relationship's day to day schedule. It appears though, that social-emotional adjustment, in this case, was not related to one's relationship rules and expectations.

Study 4

The last study extended the previous study, Study 3, in a number of ways. Firstly, considering the importance of obtaining both partners' accounts when researching romantic relationships, data was obtained from 45 heterosexual couples, rather than individuals. The main aim of this study was to determine whether partners were matched in their responses regarding the endorsement of rules and expectations, and the couple data allowed this to be examined. Secondly, information about the endorsement of the 16 categories would provide support for the results obtained in Study 3, regarding the existence of a hierarchy of rules. Lastly, individual dispositional factors, as well as relationship factors, played a larger role in the final study. In an extension of Study 3, adjustment was again included as an individual variable, along with personality, and a measure of the tendency to betray. The inclusion of adjustment in a second study would determine whether any relationship existed, or whether it might have been the nature of the previous sample that resulted in no relationship being evident. In this final study, a

number of relational variables were also included. Trust, satisfaction and commitment have been shown to demonstrate relationships with aspects of individual and couple attributes and functioning, and it was on this basis that they were included.

Generally there was moderate to high agreement between partners in their endorsement of rules, and whether they reported discussing or expecting their rules. Partners had the highest levels of agreement regarding their endorsement, for Loyalty/Fidelity and Help/Support, followed by Sharing/Equality. This is consistent with results from the previous study, which have consistently demonstrated the presence and importance of rules and expectations about issues of loyalty, fidelity, help and advice, and support. Also consistent with previously obtained results was the finding that Self-Presentation and Time in Tasks received the least agreement between dyad members. While Loyalty/Fidelity is the one category to consistently appear high in ratings of endorsement, importance, threat and unforgivability, partners did not highly agree that it was discussed. Rather, rules and expectations about the more procedural aspects of a relationship, such as Finances, were those that had the highest rate of agreement between partners. This is thought to be due to the need to discuss issues such as finances, who will undertake certain tasks, and individual partner's plans and schedules, in order to co-ordinate partners' behaviour, and to achieve goals, such as paying the bills, feeding the dog and taking children to school. It is less likely that a couple would need to regularly address issues of loyalty, fidelity, sharing or support, as discussion of these does not ensure the bills are paid.

Interestingly, agreement between partners on rule endorsement and rule establishment strategy (discussed or expected) was not related to either partner's levels of trust, satisfaction or commitment. Given that associations have been found between specific rule and expectation violations, such as deception and infidelity, and measures of relational functioning (e.g. Cole, 2001), it might be that trust, satisfaction and commitment are related to specific rules and expectations, or the violations thereof, rather than to the rule/expectation structure or hierarchy per se.

Agreement between partners on rule endorsement and rule establishment strategy (discussed and expected) was also not related to a partner's tendency to betray, personality, or adjustment. It appears that individual dispositional factors, or at least the ones studied here, are not related to a couple's relational standards and how they come to exist, or ratings of their importance. While previous literature has found some associations between individual factors and relationship variables, for example between

neuroticism and commitment (Kurdek, 1997), in this research program, individual and relationship variables appear to be unrelated to relational standards. It may be that if associations exist, they exist in different areas. The relational standards presented here describe a structure or hierarchy, rather than a process, attribution, or outcome, which may explain the apparent lack of associations with other variables.

Similarities and differences in the endorsement and ratings of the rule categories were observed by comparing the results from Study 3 with those obtained in the current study. Despite the differences in the samples, the same categories were endorsed at the top and bottom ends of the rating scales for importance, threat and (un)forgivability. That is, the same categories tended to appear in ratings of most important, most threatening, and most difficult to forgive, as well as endorsements for the least important, threatening and most easily forgiven. The rankings through the middle tended to vary between the studies. The fact that there are similarities for most endorsed and least endorsed across the two studies is an important point. The consistent appearance of categories such as Loyalty/Fidelity and Help/Support as most endorsed, and Time in Tasks and Self-Presentation for example as least endorsed suggests that there are common relational standards that exist across couples, and that they are valued similarly. It also suggests that the categories seen as most important serve an important relational function due to the fact that their violations are generally seen as highly threatening and difficult to forgive. Recognising the rules and expectations that are the most endorsed, and to some extent the least endorsed is easier, of course, than identifying those that lie between. From a hierarchical perspective, there exist clear primary and tertiary rules and expectations, but those that make up secondary rules/expectations are unclear. It may be that secondary rules are more fluid than primary or tertiary rules, acting as primary rules for some couples and tertiary rules for others, or perhaps to use the term secondary is a misnomer, and there exists only two levels of rules, only some of which can be clearly identified as being primary or tertiary.

Limitations of the Research Program

There are a number of methodological limitations that need to be taken into account in the present research program. The use of self-report measures is especially noteworthy in this investigation as participants were asked about sensitive topics regarding their relationships, and socially undesirable constructs such as deception, the tendency to betray, and violations of relationship rules and expectations. Some might suggest that asking participants about sensitive aspects of their romantic relationships might impact upon the validity of responses due to social desirability biases. De Paulo and Kashy (1998) in their research into deception in intimate relationship, asked whether those that lie in their intimate relationships also lie in their self-reports. It would certainly be logical to expect that those who use deception in their relationships would provide deceptive answers when questioned about their behaviour, either due to social desirability, the risk that one's partner may observe their responses (in the case of couples completing surveys), or because if one deceives their partner, they would be likely to be deceptive in an area of their life that was comparatively unimportant (for example filling in a questionnaire). However there is no methodological alternative to asking people about such topics. Despite some of the criticism of self-report measures, particularly with regard to sensitive topics, such measures are practical for measuring social attitudes, beliefs and other characteristics. The individual is considered the most reliable source of his or her feelings and beliefs, when asked about attributes that they are willing to report on. Because of this, self-reports have been shown to be just as effective, if not more so, than other methods of evaluation in predicting a variety of criteria (Judd, et al., 1991). By using a combination of research methods in the present research program, it was anticipated that there would be some convergence in the data that would help account for any anomalies in the results obtained by one method or another (Ickes, 1994). There does appear to be convergence in the data, as the results across three of the studies have shown consistent patterns.

A second limitation of the present study program is that potentially, only well-established and secure couples participate in research into intimate relationships (Surra & Hughes, 1997; Rempel et al., 1985). In order to account for this, Rempel et al. (1985) suggested that research needs to target couples in distress, as there are some relational processes that may not come into play until they are questioned. For example, with

regard to commitment, individuals may not necessarily evaluate their barriers to leaving a relationship, or their alternatives, until they are called into question by circumstance. Therefore to include couples whose relationships are in a state of distress or separation, may elucidate any differences in responding, or differences in the salience of different rules and expectations, and factors such as the tendency to betray, deception, trust, satisfaction and commitment.

Fife-Schaw (2000) suggested that cross-sectional surveys are vulnerable to the effects of the time in which they are measured. Montgomery (1994) partly addressed this issue, noting the change in societal standards over the years. In the 1950s, for example, great importance was placed on being able to fulfill the tasks associated with one's role as wife, husband, mother, father, sister, brother or friend. A good relationship was exemplified by how well people fulfilled the tasks that were attached their role, and these tasks were dictated by social norms. Since the late 1970s happiness has been thought to rely more on interpersonal or interactional sources. The differences in social norms has implications for roles in relationships, and the rule/expectation categories that are most heavily endorsed may be time-bound historically. In fact in the present research program, it seems this may be the case. The specific rule category of Roles, one that may have been heavily endorsed in the 1950s, commonly appeared as one of the categories that was rated the least common, least important, least threatening, and easily forgiven when violated.

A further potential limitation in the research program was the sample size, particularly in the qualitative study. The low participation rate was despite extensive and exhaustive attempts at recruitment. The reasons for the low participation rate are unclear, but may include the time investment, lack of compensation, or not wanting to discuss personal features of one's relationship. Further research with larger samples, or replication of the qualitative study would help address this limitation. Despite the small sample, by the end of the final couple interview, there was no new information coming to light, although it is not claimed that theoretical saturation was reached. Further, additional studies provided endorsement of the qualitative results. A particular issue with qualitative methods such as focus groups and interviews are interviewer effects, whereby characteristics of the interviewer can inadvertently affect participants and how they respond. In an attempt to minimise interviewer effects, the author carried out the focus group and all interviews, and a semi-structured schedule of questions was used. There was also an issue with regards to the quantitative methods, specifically the questionnaire used in Study 3. As previously discussed, participants were asked whether they endorsed

or did not endorse each of the 16 rule categories presented. In the same table, participants were then asked how common they thought rules and expectations in each category were to other relationships. There was a substantial amount of missing data in the ratings of commonality, presumably because participants that did not endorse certain rules did not then rate its commonness in other relationships. This was attended to in the final study where the questions about endorsement and commonality were clearly separated, so as to emphasise the need to answer both. Instructions were also piloted in the final study for ease of understanding.

Clinical Relevance and Implications

The current program of research demonstrates clinical relevance and implications in two important ways. Firstly, interpersonal difficulties are one of the main reasons individuals seek therapy (Kowalski, 2003). A survey of couple therapists by Whisman, Dixon and Johnson (1997) found that clinicians regarded infidelity as one of the most difficult relationship problems to treat in therapy, and one of the most detrimental to a relationship. Some have suggested that infidelity is the reason for more than half the couples seen in their clinical practices attending therapy (Glass & Wright, 1988).

With high divorce rates in countries such as Australia and the US, in an attempt to better prepare couples for marriage, a number of structured premarital counseling programs have been developed, such as the Couples Communication Program (CCP), Premarital Relationship Improvement by Maximizing Empathy and Self-disclosure (PRIMES), and the Premarital Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP). Many of these have a focus on being aware of thoughts and feelings, improving communication skills empathic responding, and learning what behaviours please or displease a partner (Brehm et al., 2002).

The current research program has identified that some relational standards are explicit, and develop through discussion and negotiation. Others, however, remain implicit, as assumptions or expectations that a partner will behave in a certain way in certain situations. The current research, as well as much research in the field of intimate relationships, demonstrates that our relationship partners do not always act in ways that are expected, which can have negative consequences for the relationship, such as decreased trust, satisfaction and commitment. Implicit expectations that are held by one

partner and unknown by the other present a potential source of conflict for relationship partners. Indeed, participants in the current study program suggested that some relational standards are set through a process of trial and error, whereby one partner unwittingly violates expectations the second partner was not aware they held, resulting in the negotiation of a formal relational standard. Given that implicit expectations carry an associated risk of conflict due to their implicitness, making such implicit expectations explicit may help to reduce the areas of potential for conflict before it occurs. The identification and development of 16 rule categories in the present research program provides a tangible and usable guide regarding the typical areas about which many couples have rules and expectations. Using this typology would allow couples to identify the similarities or differences in the expectations they have of themselves and their partners about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within the relationship in a range of areas. Further, an important aspect of this research program has been the suggestion of a hierarchy of rules and expectations, based on their importance to the relationship. It may be useful for couples to identify and address not only the standards and expectations that both partners have, but also the importance attached to various standards. Identifying the standards that are most important to the relationship, and whose violation would present the greatest threat to the relationship if violated would make the limits of behaviour clear to both partners, thereby avoiding ambiguity regarding a partner's motivation if and when a violation occurs. Given the associations between some rule violations such as infidelity and deception, and relational variables such as commitment and satisfaction, Drigotas et al. (1999) suggested that monitoring one partner's commitment might be a diagnostic tool in predicting infidelity. Monitoring commitment levels and satisfaction may indeed be one way to prevent violations of major relational standards, thereby avoiding the damaging effects of betrayal. Understanding of the relational standards that exist can also help to understand how they come to be violated, and how rules and expectations may be re-negotiated.

Another way in which the current research program demonstrates applicability and clinical relevance relates to the inclusion use of individual dispositional factors. Researchers have demonstrated that a number of individual factors can influence relationships individuals have with those around them, particularly their romantic partners. Asendorpf and Wilpers (1998) suggested that in general, an individual's personality affects their relationships, but relationships do not affect personality. For example, individuals that are more extraverted, agreeable and conscientious, tend to have

more pleasant and satisfying relationships than those who are less so (Asendorpf & Wilpers, 1998; Bouchard, Lussier, & Sabourin, 1999). Those who score highly on neuroticism however, are less satisfied than those who are lower in neuroticism (Karney & Bradbury, 1997). Brehm et al. (2002) suggested that one reason personality traits are influential is that they can affect moods, the way individuals approach others, and the ways in which individuals perceive things. By implication, personality may then affect how an individual thinks a partner should behave, as well as perceptions about which standards are important within a relationship, and perceptions of rule/expectation violations. Further research would be able to determine whether this is in fact the case.

Others have found links between individual factors and factors that may be relevant to rule and expectation violations, such as the tendency to, and acceptability of betrayal. Feldman et al. (2000) reported that an individual's lack of self-restraint, tolerance of deviation and behavioural betrayal was related to a greater acceptance of betrayal, while Montgomery and Brown (1988, cited in Jones & Burdette, 1994) reported that one's tendency to betray their relational partner was related to lower scores on personality dimensions such as responsibility, self-control and tolerance. Therefore, some individual dispositions may put individuals at risk of violating major relational standards that might result in negative consequences for the relationship.

Bagwell et al. (2005) investigated the association between friendship quality and clinical symptomatology, and found that high levels of negative features in a friendship were associated with higher levels of clinical symptoms, while positive features were associated with self-esteem. Given that many psychiatric disorders in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR; American Psychiatric Association, 2000) cite disturbances in social relationships as a criterion for diagnosis, the importance of positive and functional relationships for mental health cannot be underestimated. As a result, any way in which relationships, particularly those with our romantic partners, can be improved, or any way in which the potential for conflict reduced, should be seen as important for not only relational functioning, but also for mental health and self-esteem.

Suggestions for Future Research

The current research program used both qualitative and quantitative methods to explore the types of rules and expectations that exist in romantic relationships. The development of 16 categories about which rules and expectations has provided a typology of relational standards that can be used as a basis for future research. Future research should allow for refinement of the categories, and provide a clearer understanding of, or differentiation between categories, by specifying the behaviours involved. It was clear from the current research program that, at times, certain behaviours could be classified into more than one category.

Another avenue for future research is to explore the differences in behavioural indicators of the different rule/expectation categories for males and females. While both males and females endorsed rules and expectations about loyalty and fidelity, and help and support, it is unclear whether there may be differences between the genders in how these are displayed. A man and woman may follow their relationship rules about providing each other with help and support, but they may enact different behaviours to do so.

Further validation of endorsement and importance with different samples that display different characteristics from those reported here may help further clarify the existence of a hierarchy of relational standards. The samples in the current research program tended to be satisfied and committed in their romantic relationships, with good social-emotional adjustment. Information from less satisfied couples, and less well-adjusted individuals would elucidate whether individuals with a range of relationship and individual experiences endorse the same rules and expectations.

In attempting to understand the structure of rules and expectation in romantic relationships, consideration was give to the way in which couples develop their relational standards. Despite exploration of the rules that tend to be discussed versus those that are expected, the process by which negotiation of standards occurs is still not well understood, and would provide fertile ground for further research.

Similarly, the process by which rules and expectations come to be violated has only been hinted at in the current study. While participants identified a trial and error process that occurs when an expectation is unwittingly violated, recognised, and a subsequent rule is set, it is unclear what factors precipitate the violation of a relational

standard, whether they are individual, such as the tendency to betray, or factors at the couple level, such as levels of commitment, or conflict patterns. Further elaboration of these areas would provide information about the processes involved, and add to the typology developed in the current research program. The development of 16 identifiable areas about which rules and expectations exist provides a good starting point for further research into the form and function of relational standards at a broader level than infidelity and deception.

Conclusions

The present research program provided a systematic investigation of the types of rules and expectations that exist in romantic relationships and how they come to exist, as well as their characteristics and correlates. The main outcomes have been the identification and development of 16 categories about which rules and expectations exist, and information about how these are structured, and related to individual and relationship variables.

The present research program developed out of work that investigated a specific rule violation, deception, and resulted in questions regarding what other relational standards might exist, and how they are structured in terms of their importance, the threat that violations present, and how easy or difficult violations are to forgive. The studies in the research program used both qualitative and quantitative methods in an attempt to not only answer these questions, but to promote a broader understanding of the topic. Despite the idiosyncratic nature of a couple's relational standards, it appears that there are common themes in the types of rules and expectations that exist in romantic relationship, and these are developed or arrived at in a number of ways, including negotiation, through trial and error, or they might exist as expectations that are never articulated.

Social exchange theories, particularly interdependence theory, has been a valuable framework in the investigation of rules and expectations, and highlights the need for consideration of reciprocity when examining structures and standards that relate to a couple's functioning. Some of the categories of rules and expectations that were developed directly acknowledge the need for sharing, reciprocity and equity in one's relationship, for example the category of Sharing/Equality. While some of the categories that were developed were guided by two early studies, the lack of literature in the area

and the findings from the studies in the present research program should prompt further research. The identification of rules and expectations beyond those of honesty and fidelity, whose violations in the form of deception and infidelity are a common research focus, is a valuable addition to the scant research in the area, and to the broader field of relational functioning.

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Appendix A. Highly Endorsed Rules from Argyle and Henderson (1984)

Rules receiving high endorsement from a study by Argyle and Henderson (1984).

1. Should address the other person by their first name
2. Should not disclose to the other person one's feelings and personal problems*
3. Should not ask the other person for personal advice*
4. Should not criticize the other person publicly
5. Should stand up for the other person in their absence
6. Should not discuss that which is said in confidence with the other person
7. Should not indulge in sexual activity with the other person
8. Should seek to repay debts, favour or compliments no matter how small
9. Should not engage in joking or teasing with the other person*
10. Should share news of success with the other person
11. Should respect the other's privacy
12. Should look the other person in the eye during conversation
13. Should be emotionally supportive
14. Should not nag the other person
15. Should look after the other person when they are ill
16. Should be tolerant of each other's friends
17. Should not criticize each other in public
18. Should trust and confide in one another
19. Should volunteer help in time of need
20. Should not be jealous of critical of other's relationships
21. Should strive to make the other happy while in their company

* Received high mean ratings, which means the opposite of the stated rule is classified by respondents as fairly to very important.

Appendix B. Study 1 Information Letter and Survey Instrument

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne

ACU National

Australian Catholic University Limited
ABN 15 050 192 660
Melbourne Campus (St Patrick's)
115 Victoria Parade Fitzroy Vic 3065
Locked Bag 4115 Fitzroy MCD VIC 3065
Telephone 03 9953 3000
Facsimile 03 9953 3005
www.acu.edu.au

INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE PSYC 101 STUDENTS

TITLE OF PROJECT: Deceptive Communication in Romantic Relationships

STAFF SUPERVISOR: Professor Barry J. Fallon

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Miss Alexandra West

Master of Psychology/Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical)

LECTURER-IN-CHARGE OF TAUGHT UNIT: Dr Peter Rendell

TAUGHT UNIT: PSYC 101 Psychology B

OTHER ACU STAFF RESEARCHERS: Dr Eric Marx and Dr Robert Paddle

Dear PSYC 101 Psychology B student

You are invited to participate in some research on deceptive communication in romantic relationships. Deceptive communication can take many forms, for example exaggerating, omitting, or falsifying information. These types of deception are used in everyday social interactions, as they help us to form impressions, and maintain social relationships. In this project we are interested in how these different types of deception are used within people's romantic relationships. This project is primarily a student activity that forms part of an assessment task for first year psychology students in PSYC101 Psychology B. The secondary aim of this project is to collect data that forms part of ongoing research investigating how deception is used in romantic relationships, which will be conducted as part of the research for Alex West's PhD, supervised by Professor Barry Fallon.

We need individuals above the age of 18 years who are either currently in a romantic relationship, or who have had a prior relationship, as the questionnaires are based on your experiences within a relationship. Each PSYC 101 student will have two possible roles in the data collection phase of this project, firstly as a participant, and secondly as a researcher.

As a participant, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire booklet that includes questions regarding different aspects of communication in romantic relationships. These will be distributed during class time, and take approximately 20 minutes to complete. After completing the questionnaires, you will be briefed thoroughly on your role as a researcher, in particular the ethical requirements that include ensuring voluntary participation by any participant you recruit. As a researcher, you are to recruit one member of the opposite sex, and of a similar age, to participate in the activity. You will provide them with a questionnaire booklet, an information letter, and two consent forms (one for them to keep, the other to return with the questionnaire).

You will be required to submit to your tutor both your own and your participant's consent forms and questionnaires. In order to identify those students who have completed the activity, these consent forms and questionnaires will need to be shown to your lab tutor. Please do not put your name anywhere on the questionnaires and also inform any participant you recruit to do the same. To further

CRIOCOS registered provider:
00004G, 00112C, 00873F, 00885B

help maintain confidentiality, consent forms and questionnaires will be submitted to your tutors separately. The consent forms and questionnaires will then be stored separately in locked cabinets in the School of Psychology at St Patrick's Campus. If you are not able to be a participant then you are asked to still submit two sets of data, by recruiting one man and one woman. They can be between 18 and 50 years old but must be both of similar age.

Your participation in the data collection phase is voluntary. You can withdraw from the data collection phase at any stage without giving a reason, and without jeopardising your academic progress. In the event that you choose to withdraw, you are able to complete an alternate activity in order to gain course credit. This alternate activity involves writing a two-page review of the methodological issues in this study focusing on the methods used in one of the key articles related to this project.

Confidentiality will be maintained during the study and in any report of the study. The group results of this project will form the basis of the laboratory report you are required to submit for assessment in PSYC 101 Psychology B. The group results will be given to you in a form that will not allow individual participants to be identified. You will be given mostly aggregated data. You may be given some raw data in order to practice analysing results, however this raw data will not contain any identifying biographical information. The results of this study may be used in future publications by Alex West, and the ACU staff researchers. Individual participants will not be able to be identified in any reports of the study, as only aggregated data will be reported.

If you have any questions about the project, before or after participating, please contact Alex West (tel. 03 9953 3127), the Staff Supervisor, Professor Barry Fallon (tel. 03 9953 3108), or Dr. Peter Rendell (tel. 03 9953 3126) in the School of Psychology, St Patrick's Campus at the Australian Catholic University, 115 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy, Victoria 3065. Before commencing, you will have the opportunity to ask any questions about the project. You will also have the opportunity to discuss your participation and the project in general after completing the experiment.

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University. In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during the study, or if you have any query that the Student Researcher and Staff Supervisor have not been able to satisfy, you may write to:

Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee
C/o Research Services
Australian Catholic University
Locked Bag 4115
FITZROY VIC 3065 Tel: 03 9953 3157 Fax: 03 9953 3315

Any complaint will be treated in confidence and fully investigated fully. The participants will be informed of the outcome.

If you are willing to participate please sign the attached informed consent forms. You should sign both copies of the consent form and keep one copy for your records and return the other copy to the Principal Investigator. Your support for the research project will be most appreciated.

Alexandra West	Professor Barry Fallon	Dr Peter Rendell
Student Researcher	Staff Supervisor	Lecturer-In-Charge of PSYC101

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne

ACU National

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Telephone 03 9953 3000
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INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS RECRUITED BY STUDENTS IN PSYC 101

TITLE OF PROJECT: Deceptive Communication in Romantic Relationships

STAFF SUPERVISOR: Professor Barry J. Fallon

STUDENT RESEARCHER: Miss Alexandra West
Master of Psychology/Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical)

LECTURER-IN-CHARGE OF TAUGHT UNIT: Dr Peter Rendell (Vic)

TAUGHT UNIT: PSYC 101 Psychology B

OTHER ACU STAFF RESEARCHERS: Dr Eric Marx and Dr Robert Paddle

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in some research on deceptive communication in romantic relationships. Deceptive communication can take many forms, for example exaggerating, omitting, or falsifying information. These types of deception are used in everyday social interactions, as they help us to form impressions, and maintain social relationships. In this project we are interested in how these different types of deception are used within people's romantic relationships. This project is primarily a student activity that forms part of an assessment task for first year psychology students in PSYC101 Psychology B. The secondary aim of this project is to collect data that forms part of ongoing research investigating how deception is used in romantic relationships, which will be conducted as part of the research for Alex West's PhD, supervised by Professor Barry Fallon.

We need individuals above the age of 18 years who are either currently in a romantic relationship, or who have had a prior relationship, as the questionnaires are based on your experiences within a relationship. Each PSYC 101 student is requires to find another person to participate in the project, someone who is of similar age to them and of the opposite sex. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire booklet that includes questions regarding different aspects of communication in romantic relationships, and it will take about 20 minutes to complete. The student that invited you to participate will submit your completed consent form and questionnaires to their tutors. In order to identify those students who have completed the activity, the completed consent forms and questionnaires will need to be shown to the lab tutor. Please do not put your name on the questionnaire. To further help maintain confidentiality, consent forms and questionnaires will be submitted to the tutors separately. The consent forms and questionnaires will then be stored separately in locked cabinets in the School of Psychology at St Patrick's Campus.

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Your participation in the data collection phase is voluntary. You can withdraw from the data collection phase at any stage without giving a reason. If you are a student at ACU, then you are able to withdraw from the research project at any stage without jeopardising your academic progress. Any withdrawal from the research by students at ACU will not prejudice their academic progress.

Confidentiality will be maintained during the study and in any report of the study. The group results of this project will form the basis of the laboratory report that students in PSYC 101 Psychology B are required to submit for assessment. The group results will be given to the students in a form that will not allow individual participants to be identified. They will be given mostly aggregated data. They may be given some raw data in order to practice analysing results, however this raw data will not contain any identifying biographical information. The results of this study may be used in future publications by Alex West, and the ACU staff researchers. Individual participants will not be able to be identified in any reports of the study, as only aggregated data will be reported.

If you have any questions about the project, before or after participating, please contact Alex West (tel. 03 9953 3127), the Staff Supervisor, Professor Barry Fallon (tel. 03 9953 3108), or Dr. Peter Rendell (tel. 03 9953 3126) in the School of Psychology, St Patrick's Campus at the Australian Catholic University, 115 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy, Victoria 3065. Before commencing, you will have the opportunity to ask any questions about the project. You will also have the opportunity to discuss your participation and the project in general after completing the experiment.

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University. In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during the study, or if you have any query that the Student Researcher and Staff Supervisor have not been able to satisfy, you may write to:

Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee
C/o Research Services
Australian Catholic University
Locked Bag 4115
FITZROY VIC 3065 Tel: 03 9953 3157 Fax: 03 9953 3315

Any complaint will be treated in confidence and fully investigated fully. The participants will be informed of the outcome.

If you are willing to participate please sign the attached informed consent forms. You should sign both copies of the consent form and keep one copy for your records and return the other copy to the Principal Investigator. Your support for the research project will be most appreciated.

Alexandra West	Professor Barry Fallon	Dr Peter Rendell
Student Researcher	Staff Supervisor	Lecturer-In-Charge of PSYC101

TITLE OF PROJECT: Deceptive Communication in Romantic Relationships

DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please fill in the following details as accurately as possible (Fill in, circle or tick).

1. What is your sex?

   [ ] Male
   [ ] Female

2. My age is _____ years

You will be asked a series of questions about your communication within a romantic relationship that you have had, or are currently in.

3. I am currently in a relationship

   Yes [ ] (Go to question 4)
   No [ ] (Go to question 6)

   IF **YES**

4. I have been in a relationship with my present partner for ____ years ____ months.

5. The type of relationship is:

   [ ] Exclusive Dating [ ] Defacto
   [ ] Engaged [ ] Marriage
   [ ] Other (Please specify) ___________________________

   IF **NO**

6. If you are not in a relationship, you may complete the questionnaire about a previous relationship that you have had.

   6.a. How long was that relationship?

   6.b. How long ago did that relationship end?

   6.c. What was the type of relationship?

   [ ] Exclusive Dating [ ] Defacto
   [ ] Engaged [ ] Marriage
   [ ] Other (Please specify) ___________________________

7. Do you have any children? [ ] Yes [ ] No

   If **YES**
   How many children do you have? _________________________

8. What country were you born in? _____________________________

Relationships have many different aspects which are important in determining how partners feel about their relationship overall. In answering the following questions, please consider all areas of your relationship carefully, and how you feel about it overall.

Please respond to the following questions by circling the number that most closely reflects how you feel about your relationship with your partner.

1. How satisfied are you with your relationship?	1 Extremely dissatisfied	2	3	4	5	6	7 Extremely satisfied
2. How satisfied are you with your partner as a partner?	1 Extremely dissatisfied	2	3	4	5	6	7 Extremely satisfied
3. How satisfied are you with your relationship with your partner?	1 Extremely dissatisfied	2	3	4	5	6	7 Extremely satisfied

Think about your relationship with your partner. Below there are 17 statements that apply to relationships between couples. In responding to the statements below, please circle the number that best describes how you feel about your relationship with your partner.
On the scales below, 1 = *strongly disagree,* 4 = *neutral* and 7 = *strongly agree.*
The only correct answer is the one that you feel best describes your own relationship.

1.	My partner has proven to be trustworthy and I am willing to let him/her engage in activities which other partners find too threatening.	1 strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 strongly agree
2.	Even when I don't know how my partner will react, I feel comfortable telling him/her anything about myself, even those things of which I am ashamed.	1 strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 strongly agree
3.	Though times change and the future is uncertain, I know my partner will always be ready and willing to offer me strength and support.	1 strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 strongly agree
4.	I am never certain that my partner won't do something that I dislike or will embarrass me.	1 strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 strongly agree
5.	My partner is very unpredictable. I never know how he/she is going to act from one day to the next.	1 strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 strongly agree
6.	I feel very uncomfortable when my partner has to	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

make decisions which will affect me personally. — strongly disagree … strongly agree

7. I have found that my partner is usually dependable, especially when it comes to things which are important to me. — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (strongly disagree … strongly agree)

8. My partner behaves in a very consistent manner. — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (strongly disagree … strongly agree)

9. Whenever we have to make an important decision in a situation we have never encountered before, I know my partner will be concerned about my welfare. — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (strongly disagree … strongly agree)

10. Even if I have no reason to expect my partner to share things with me, I still feel certain that he/she will. — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (strongly disagree … strongly agree)

11. I can rely on my partner to react in a positive way when I expose my weaknesses to him/her. — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (strongly disagree … strongly agree)

12. When I share my problems with my partner, I know he/she will respond in a loving way even before I say anything. — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (strongly disagree … strongly agree)

13. I am certain that my partner would not cheat on me, even if the opportunity arose and there was no chance that he/she would get caught. — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (strongly disagree … strongly agree)

14. I sometimes avoid my partner because he/she is unpredictable and I fear saying or doing something which might create conflict. — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (strongly disagree … strongly agree)

15. I can rely on my partner to keep the promises he/she makes to me. — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (strongly disagree … strongly agree)

16. When I am with my partner, I feel secure in facing unknown new situations. — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (strongly disagree … strongly agree)

17. Even when my partner makes excuses which sound rather unlikely, I am confident that he/she is telling the truth. — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (strongly disagree … strongly agree)

Below there are four questions that ask how you feel about your relationship. In responding to these statements, please circle the number that best describes how you feel about your relationship with your partner. For these statements, 1 = *not at all*, while 6 = *extremely.*

I am likely to end my relationship in the near future	1	2	3	4	5	6
I would like this relationship to last a lifetime	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am attached to my partner	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am committed to my relationship	1	2	3	4	5	6

Again, think about your relationship with your partner. Below are 15 statements about the role that misleading communication plays in close relationships. Please ensure you provide complete and accurate answers to all the questions, in order to gain a better understanding of this type of communication. For each statement please respond by circling the number which best describes you and your relationship. On the scales below, 1 = *strongly disagree*, 4 = *neutral*, 7 = *strongly agree*. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers. The following definition may be useful when answering some of the questions.

"Deceptive communication is any verbal or nonverbal message that one partner sends with the intent of leading the other partner to a belief or conclusion that the sender considers to be less than absolutely true or less than totally complete. A deceptive or misleading message may involve providing information that is either untrue or has been exaggerated or distorted in some manner, or may involve deliberately omitting information such that the partner is led to an incorrect conclusion or belief" (Boon & McLeod, 2001, p.468).

1. I disclose everything to my partner, both good and bad. — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = neutral, 7 = strongly agree)

2. I sometimes find myself lying to my partner about things I have done. — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (1 = Strongly disagree, 4 = neutral, 7 = strongly agree)

3. I tell my partner the complete truth, even things he/she does not want to hear. — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = neutral, 7 = strongly agree)

4. Please estimate the number of times you think your partner lies to you during the course of a week. __________

5. I sometimes lie to my partner. — 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = neutral, 7 = strongly agree)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I believe my partner knows when I am not being truthful with him/her.	strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
7. I think my partner is very honest with me.	strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
8. I try to hides certain things that I have done from my partner.	strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

9. Please estimate the number of times you lie to your partner during the course of a week. ____________

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I think that my partner tries to mislead me.	strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
11. I can tell when my partner is not being truthful.	strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
12. There are certain issues I try to conceal from partner.	strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
13. I think that my partner withholds important information from me.	strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
14. There are certain things I try to mislead my partner about.	strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree
15. When I don't live up to my partner's expectations, I always tell him/her what I've done.	strongly disagree			neutral			strongly agree

The following is a list of different strategies you may use or have used at some stage in communication with your partner. Tick all those strategies that you have used in your relationship.

State something as true that isn't true	[ ]
Make a true statement but say it in a way to make your partner believe it is not true (such as saying it in a joking or sarcastic way)	[ ]
Communicate an untrue message nonverbally (e.g., looked happy when you were not)	[ ]
Deliberately omit information or fail to mention something so as to lead your partner to a false belief	[ ]
Exaggerate or distort information so as to lead your partner to a false belief	[ ]

What would be the main reason/s that you used any of the above strategies?

____

____

____

____

Think about any of these strategies you have used in the last week, and how serious they were in terms of the implications they might have for your relationship. From ***your*** point of view, choose the category that best describes the seriousness of the strategies you used:

- All were serious ☐
- Mostly serious, few trivial ☐
- Half serious, half trivial ☐
- Mostly trivial, few serious ☐
- All were trivial ☐

Now think about those same strategies, but this time, from ***your partner's*** point of view, choose the category that you think best describes how they would view your use of such strategies:

- All were serious ☐
- Mostly serious, few trivial ☐
- Half serious, half trivial ☐
- Mostly trivial, few serious ☐
- All were trivial ☐

Appendix C. Study 1 Ethics Approval

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne

ACU National

Human Research Ethics Committee

Committee Approval Form

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: A/Prof Barry Fallon Melbourne Campus

Co-Investigators: Dr Peter Rendell, Dr Eric Marx, Dr Robert Paddle, Melbourne Campus

Student Researcher: Alexandra West Melbourne Campus

Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:
Deceptive Communication in Romantic Relationships

for the period: 1.9.2003 - 30.9.2003

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number: V2003.04-29

The following standard conditions as stipulated in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* (1999) apply:

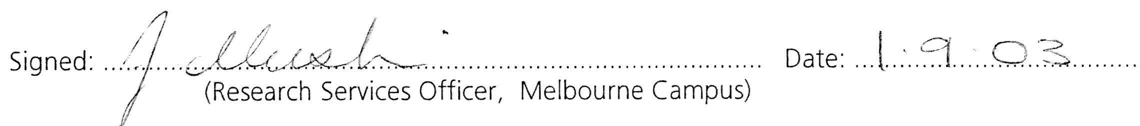
(i) that Principal Investigators / Supervisors provide, on the form supplied by the Human Research Ethics Committee, annual reports on matters such as:
- security of records
- compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
- compliance with special conditions, and

(ii) that researchers report to the HREC immediately any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol, such as:
- proposed changes to the protocol
- unforeseen circumstances or events
- adverse effects on participants

The HREC will conduct an audit each year of all projects deemed to be of more than minimum risk. There will also be random audits of a sample of projects considered to be of minimum risk on all campuses each year.

Within one month of the conclusion of the project, researchers are required to complete a *Final Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer.

If the project continues for more than one year, researchers are required to complete an *Annual Progress Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer within one month of the anniversary date of the ethics approval.



Signed: .... Date: 1.9.03
(Research Services Officer, Melbourne Campus)

Appendix D. Study 2 Ethics Approval

ACU National

Human Research Ethics Committee

Committee Approval Form

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: Prof. Barry Fallon Melbourne Campus

Co-Investigators: n/a

Student Researcher: Ms Alexandra West Melbourne Campus

Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:
Boundaries and expectations in romantic relationships

for the period: 15/06/04 - 30/09/04

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number: V2003.04-109

The following standard conditions as stipulated in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* (1999) apply:

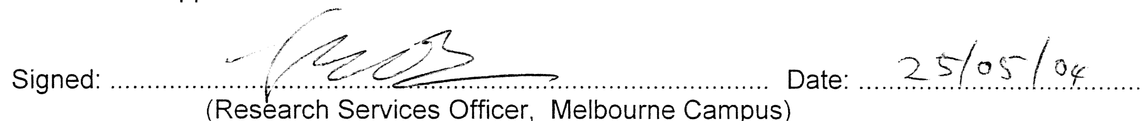
(i) that Principal Investigators / Supervisors provide, on the form supplied by the Human Research Ethics Committee, annual reports on matters such as:
- security of records
- compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
- compliance with special conditions, and

(ii) that researchers report to the HREC immediately any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol, such as:
- proposed changes to the protocol
- unforeseen circumstances or events
- adverse effects on participants

The HREC will conduct an audit each year of all projects deemed to be of more than minimum risk. There will also be random audits of a sample of projects considered to be of minimum risk on all campuses each year.

Within one month of the conclusion of the project, researchers are required to complete a *Final Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer.

If the project continues for more than one year, researchers are required to complete an *Annual Progress Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer within one month of the anniversary date of the ethics approval.



Signed: .... Date: 25/05/04
(Research Services Officer, Melbourne Campus)

Appendix E. Study 2 Information Letter and Schedule of Interview Questions

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne

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INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

TITLE OF PROJECT: Boundaries in Romantic Relationships

STAFF SUPERVISOR: Professor Barry Fallon

STUDENT RESEARCHERS: Miss Alexandra West

COURSE: Master of Psychology/Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical)

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in some research on boundaries in romantic relationships. Boundaries exist between partners in all types of relationships, in terms of what is acceptable behaviour within that relationship, and what is expected of you as a relationship partner. Sometimes they exist as expectations you have of your partner, and sometimes they are negotiated. This project is part of ongoing research investigating how boundaries come to exist in relationships, what types of boundaries exist, and how they are violated. This project aims to explore people's perspectives and opinions about what the definition of a boundary is, what types of boundaries exist in relationships, how these boundaries come to exist, and the ways in which they might be violated.

We need three groups of adults, aged above 25 years, who have been in a relationship (either currently or previously), that was *at least* 12 months in duration. All participants are invited to participate in a focus group consisting of approximately six to eight people. The focus group will take approximately one-and-a-half to two hours, and participation will involve discussing aspects of boundary-setting and boundary-breaking in relationships in a group facilitated by a researcher. The focus groups will be held at Australian Catholic University, and will be audio-taped.

Participation in this research project is voluntary. Participants can withdraw from the study at any stage without giving a reason. Confidentiality will be maintained during the study and in any report of the study. It may, however, at times be necessary to report individual responses of participants, or to report biographical details, in order to maintain the integrity and accuracy of the data. Names will not be retained with the data. In any report of the data, all participants will be given a pseudonym, so that it will not be possible to identify participants by name. It is unlikely that participants will be able to be identified by their biographical details, as only age, sex and marital status will be reported. Even though it is unlikely you will be able to identified from this biographical data, you will be asked to consent to having such details included in any written report.

CRIOCOS registered provider:
00004G, 00112C, 00873F, 00885B

If you have any questions about the project, before or after participating, please contact the Principal Investigator, Professor Barry Fallon, on telephone number 03 9953 3108 in the School of Psychology, St Patrick's Campus at the Australian Catholic University, 115 Victoria Parade, FITZROY 3065.

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University. In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during the study, or if you have any query that the Principal Investigator has not been able to satisfy, you may write to:

Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee
C/o Research Services
Australian Catholic University
Locked Bag 4115
FITZROY VIC 3065 Tel: 03 9953 3157 Fax: 03 9953 3315

Any complaint will be treated in confidence and fully investigated fully. The participant will be informed of the outcome.

If you are willing to participate please sign the attached informed consent forms. You should sign both copies of the consent form and return one copy for your records and return the other copy to the principal investigator. Your support for the research project will be most appreciated.

Alexandra West
Student Researcher

Professor Barry Fallon
Staff Supervisor

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne

ACU National

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INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

TITLE OF PROJECT: Boundaries in Romantic Relationships

STAFF SUPERVISOR: Professor Barry Fallon

STUDENT RESEARCHERS: Miss Alexandra West

COURSE: Master of Psychology/Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical)

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in some research on boundaries and expectations in romantic relationships. Boundaries and expectations exist between partners in all types of relationships, in terms of what is acceptable behaviour within that relationship, and what is expected of you as a relationship partner. Sometimes they exist as expectations you have of your partner, and sometimes they are negotiated. This project is part of ongoing research investigating how boundaries come to exist in relationships, what types of boundaries exist, and how they are violated. This project aims to explore people's perspectives and opinions about what the definition of a boundary is, what types of boundaries exist in relationships, how these boundaries come to exist, and the ways in which they might be violated.

We need six to ten couples who have been in their relationship for at least 12 months, and who are aged above 25 years. All couples are invited to participate in an interview conducted by the student researcher, which will be audio-taped. The interview will involve answering questions and discussing boundaries in the context of the current relationship. This study is not designed as an intervention or counselling session, rather as an opportunity to present your opinions and thoughts about a specific topic. Those couples wishing to undertake counselling should contact the Australia Psychological Society. The interview will take approximately one-and-a-half hours, and will take place at a mutually convenient time. You can choose to undertake the interview at Australian Catholic University, have the researcher visit you in your own home, or at a mutually convenient location.

Participation in this research project is voluntary. Participants can withdraw from the study at any stage without giving a reason. Confidentiality will be maintained during the study and in any report of the study. It may at times be necessary to report individual responses of participants, or to report biographical details, in order to maintain the integrity and accuracy of the data. Names will not be retained with the data. In any report of the data, all participants will be given a pseudonym, so that it will not be possible to identify participants by name.

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It is unlikely that participants will be able to be identified by their biographical details, as only age, sex and marital status will be reported. Even though it is unlikely you will be able to identified from this biographical data, you will be asked to consent to having such details included in any written report.

If you have any questions about the project, before or after participating, please contact the Principal Investigator, Professor Barry Fallon, on telephone number 03 9953 3108 in the School of Psychology, St Patrick's Campus at the Australian Catholic University, 115 Victoria Parade, FITZROY 3065.

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University. In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during the study, or if you have any query that the Principal Investigator has not been able to satisfy, you may write to:

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Any complaint will be treated in confidence and fully investigated fully. The participant will be informed of the outcome.

If you are willing to participate please sign the attached informed consent forms. You should sign both copies of the consent form and return one copy for your records and return the other copy to the principal investigator. Your support for the research project will be most appreciated.

Alexandra West
Student Researcher

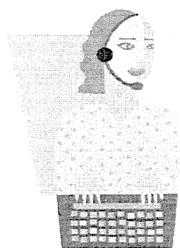
Professor Barry Fallon
Staff Supervisor

Appendix E. Study 2 Schedule of Interview Questions.

1. What is a boundary?
2. What boundaries exist in relationships?
3. About which topics/behaviours?
4. How do boundaries come to exist?
5. How do boundaries help or hurt a relationship?
6. What is a boundary violation?
7. Under what conditions do you think someone violates a relationship boundary?
8. What effects does boundary violation have?

Appendix F. Study 2 Excerpt from Focus Group Transcript

Appendix F: Excerpt of Focus Group Transcript



Focus Group (6): Length: 101 mins Time: 10. 35 hrs

INTERVIEWER: So I guess the first question that I'd like to open up the discussion is, what is your perception about what is a boundary, or what is a relationship rule? How do you yourselves define that sort of thing?

ONE: Mm. Polite behaviour.

INTERVIEWER: Acceptable behaviour.

SIX: It's something that you would, a hypothetical line I guess, over which one or two people agree not to go.

FIVE: In expectation.

SIX: Yes, unless it's discussed and reviewed or something but normally it would be, you wouldn't go there. You wouldn't go past there.

Mm. [Agreement]

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

FIVE: Well I think a boundary is what you said. A boundary is a rule or boundaries are a set of rules…

SIX: Yes.

FIVE: …under which let's say two people, myself and my wife, have negotiated, that these are the rules by which we will conduct our relationship and if, for whatever reason, one goes beyond those rules, either accidentally or on purpose, then that's discussed and, you know, you move forward from there.

FOUR: Boundaries would also be non-agreed.

ONE: Yes, it's interesting you say that actually.

SIX: I think they're either agreed…

FOUR: Roles. Male and female roles.

SIX: …or implied.

Appendix F: Excerpt of Focus Group Transcript

FOUR: Yep, implied.

FIVE: I think that…

FOUR: They may not be spoken of.

FIVE: I guess there are moral things, acceptable behaviour…acceptable moral expectations…

FOUR: Mm, part of expectations.

FIVE: …of human behaviour sort of stuff.

FOUR: You know, and part of that would be, well men are brought up this way, women are brought up this way, and that's just the way it is…

FIVE: Mm. Yes.

FOUR: …and you sort of expect to work within that framework and not necessarily question it. So you expect…a lot of guys would expect their partners to do this because that's kind of what women do, and vice versa.

THREE: Well that's what his mother did.

FOUR: Mm?

THREE: Well that's what his mother did.

FOUR: Yeah.

THREE: He expects his wife to [act accordingly].

ONE: Inherited.

THREE: Yes.

SIX: But also if you take…there are different levels of boundaries so if you're taking the physical ones, okay they're probably easier to define but the emotional ones than the implicit ones or the unconscious ones.

FOUR: Yeah the big ones, yes.

SIX: Yeah.

THREE: If you're talking about a relationship I would think that also there are boundaries that you have as an individual that you've grown up with. They then become

values. And so what then attracts you to the opposite person, the partner in your life, are sharing values that I guess have common boundaries.

FIVE: Sharing, accepting or respecting.

THREE: Yeah. There might be some adaptation that you then go through to sort of say you don't have to set up boundaries to get really pissed at the pub. But now I'm in a married relationship I don't see her or I've lost my license while I've been drink-driving so I changed the boundary, because I don't want to get pissed anymore. So you become more responsible or whatever so… and the big boundaries in the first instance are what attracted you to that person.

SIX: I guess though if you had an agreement to actually go to that…crossing the boundary presumably is getting pissed at the pub once a month with the boys.

THREE: With the boys.

SIX: And then if your wife or your partner has agreed with that, that's within the boundaries of the relationship so it's okay.

THREE: Mm. [Agreement]

SIX: So like…

FOUR: So something beyond those rules.

THREE: Yes, yes.

SIX: So it's sort of like…ah yes. Yes so those ugly situations might be within the boundary too, if it's agreed.

FOUR: That's right so what's acceptable is the boundary.

SIX: Yes.

FOUR: I don't know how well you define that acceptability.

THREE: In a relationship I also see boundaries where the two people can trust each other to be – to stay in that boundary, either if they're together or they're at the pub with the boys, so individually, and still say, "I can trust him on a Thursday night to go out with the boys and I know…because he knows the boundary.

SIX: Because he's not crossing it.

THREE: He knows I know his boundary, he knows my boundary."

Appendix F: Excerpt of Focus Group Transcript

TWO: Which is one of the first things to go when a boundary is crossed, isn't it, is trust?

THREE: Well yes it will be, and…

ONE: Yes.

THREE: Without there being a power thing in there as well, sort of saying, "Don't you come home like this" you know, some sort of threatening sort of way.

FIVE: I guess the question is, what is that boundary?

THREE: Oh yes.

FIVE: And so that boundary is that rule or that agreement or that understanding or that common ground where you say, "Well here is the way I will conduct myself or how I agree to conduct myself within this relationship." Whether it be the pub, or another woman, or taking the kids to school or cooking a meal or…

THREE: Being late.

FIVE: Being whatever. You know, some, you know agreed-to, negotiated, understood, spoken or non-spoken.

FOUR: In most cases I would expect though that the boundaries or the agreements are not written down and agreed.

ONE: Oh no.

FOUR: No I think it's just implied.

ONE: They're implied.

SIX: They develop over time.

FIVE: It's interesting because Jill and I when we got together, we did put together a set of…

FOUR: Did you?

FIVE: Yes we did put a contact together, virtually a contract and it was not an all-encompassing contract, it was the start of a contract. You know, that there are certain things in that that we agreed to.

FOUR: A relationship agreement.

FIVE: Yes, which formed the basis of the set of rules.

Appendix F: Excerpt of Focus Group Transcript

FOUR: Mm. Mm. But you know, you're mature people doing that.

FIVE: Yes. It's different I guess, yes.

SIX: It's not static though, is it?

FIVE: Oh absolutely not static.

SIX: No but Di and Robert sit down at the end of every year.

THREE: Every New Year's Eve, yes, together.

SIX: Every year and rejig the rules and the boundaries.

FOUR: The goals, mm.

SIX: Or the goals or the aspirations or whatever.

THREE: Yes, again.

ONE: You're not saying much.

INTERVIEWER: I'm not supposed to say much.

FOUR: No, we're supposed to be talking.

INTERVIEWER: I guess one thing I'm hearing is the words, you know, agreement and negotiation.

SPEAKERS: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: But as you pointed out, a lot of them may not be listed, yet are implied.

FOUR: Well in a mature relationship, or in some sound and mature relationships you might have that maturity to set that agreement up formally, but in most cases they would be implied I would have thought.

THREE: I would have thought they were being implied, depending on the level I guess of your experience you have with relationships. The other…one person may think that in the implication there is a certain boundary line, without having confirmed it and reaffirmed it with the other person. So all of a sudden the boundary gets crossed without him knowing about it…

FOUR: Yes.

THREE: …and one person gets upset so now you have one person going "Hang on".

Appendix G. Study 3 Information Letters (for Hard Copy and Web-based Questionnaires) and Survey Instrument

Australian Catholic University
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Telephone 03 9953 3000
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INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

TITLE OF PROJECT: Rule-setting and rule-breaking in Romantic Relationships

STAFF SUPERVISOR: Professor Barry J. Fallon

STUDENT RESEARCHERS: Miss Alexandra West

COURSE: Master of Psychology/Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical)

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in some research on rules in romantic relationships. Rules about behaviour exist between partners in all types of relationships; they define and guide what is acceptable behaviour within that relationship, and what is expected of you as a relationship partner. Sometimes they exist as expectations you have of your partner, and sometimes they are negotiated through discussion. This student project, being completed as part of a PhD, is part of ongoing research investigating how rules come to exist in relationships, what types of rules exist, and how they are violated. This project aims to establish what types of rules exist, how important having rules is, and how rules come to be broken.

All participants are invited to participate in this research by completing a questionnaire booklet. We need individuals who are aged above 18 years, who have been in a relationship (either current *or* past), that was *at least* 6 months in duration, as the questionnaires are based on your experiences within a relationship. Completion of the questionnaire booklet should take approximately 20 to 30 minutes. Upon completion, questionnaires can be returned to the principal investigator by using the reply paid envelope provided, or by returning them to the collection box in the School of Psychology, Level 2, Australian Catholic University, 115 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy, Victoria.

The information gathered from this investigation will contribute to further understanding about how relationships work. It may provide you with a better understanding of your own relationship and your expectations, and will contribute to the wider understanding of how to improve relationships in a therapeutic environment.

Although not expected, answering questions about your relationship may cause some slight discomfort or embarrassment. Should you feel distressed as a result of participating in the project, please contact Dr. Terry Bowles, Senior Lecturer in the School of Psychology, Australian Catholic University National, 115 Victoria Pde, Fitzroy, Victoria, 3065, on (03) 9953 3117.

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Participation in this research project is voluntary. The completion and return of the questionnaire will be taken as an indication of your voluntary consent to participate. As such, there will be no names collected that might be able to identify you. You can withdraw from the study at any stage without giving a reason. Confidentiality will be maintained during the study and in any report of the study, as no names of participants will be collected. Individual participants will not be able to be identified in any reports of the study, as only aggregated data will be reported.

If you have any questions about the project, before or after participating, please contact the Staff Supervisor, Professor Barry Fallon, on telephone number 03 9953 3108 in the School of Psychology, St Patrick's Campus at the Australian Catholic University, 115 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy, Victoria 3065.

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University. In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during the study, or if you have any query that the Student Researcher and Staff Supervisor have not been able to satisfy, you may write to:

Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee
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FITZROY VIC 3065 Tel: 03 9953 3157 Fax: 03 9953 3315

Any complaint will be treated in confidence and fully investigated fully. The participants will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project, you should complete the questionnaire booklet, and return it to the Student Researcher using the envelope provided. Your support for the research project will be most appreciated.

Alexandra West
Student Researcher

Professor Barry Fallon
Staff Supervisor

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INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS – WEB-BASED QUESTIONNAIRE

TITLE OF PROJECT: Rule-setting and rule-breaking in Romantic Relationships

STAFF SUPERVISOR: Professor Barry J. Fallon

STUDENT RESEARCHERS: Miss Alexandra West

COURSE: Master of Psychology/Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical)

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in some research on rules in romantic relationships. Rules about behaviour exist between partners in all types of relationships; they define and guide what is acceptable behaviour within that relationship, and what is expected of you as a relationship partner. Sometimes they exist as expectations you have of your partner, and sometimes they are negotiated through discussion. This student project, being completed as part of a PhD, is part of ongoing research investigating how rules come to exist in relationships, what types of rules exist, and how they are violated. This project aims to establish what types of rules exist, how important having rules is, and how rules come to be broken.

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Participation in this research project is voluntary. The completion and submission of the questionnaire will be taken as an indication of your voluntary consent to participate. As such, there will be no names collected that might be able to identify you. You can withdraw from the study at any stage without giving a reason by not submitting the questionnaire and exiting the site. Confidentiality will be maintained during the study and in any report of the study, as no names will be collected. Individual participants will not be able to be identified in any reports of the study, as only aggregated data will be reported.

CRIOCOS registered provider:
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If you have any questions about the project, before or after participating, please contact the Staff Supervisor, Professor Barry Fallon, on telephone number 03 9953 3108 in the School of Psychology, St Patrick's Campus at the Australian Catholic University, 115 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy, Victoria 3065, Australia, or on email at b.fallon@patrick.acu.edu.au.

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VIC 3065
AUSTRALIA Tel: 03 9953 3157 Fax: 03 9953 3315

Any complaint will be treated in confidence and fully investigated fully. The participant will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project, you should complete and submit the questionnaire. Your support for the research project will be most appreciated.

Alexandra West
Student Researcher

Professor Barry Fallon
Staff Supervisor

Appendix G: Study 3 Survey Instrument

RELATIONSHIPS

Rule-setting and Rule-breaking

This study aims to gather information about aspects of relationships in order to better understand some of the processes involved in how they work. Information is sought from individuals of a heterosexual orientation who are either currently in a relationship, or who have had a prior relationship of at least 6 months duration. Some demographic details are required in order to better understand how demographic variables may be related to relationship variables. Please answer all questions and do not leave items blank.

---

1. What is your age? ___________

2. I am Male / Female

3. Are you currently in a relationship? Yes / No

IF YES

a) What type of relationship is it?

A casual relationship ☐
A committed, exclusive, dating relationship ☐
An engaged relationship ☐
A married relationship ☐

b) How long have you been with your partner? ___________

c) If you **do** live with your partner, how long have you been living together? ________________________

4. What country were you born in? _____________________

Appendix G: Study 3 Survey Instrument

Relationship boundaries are rules or expectations that exist between relationship partners, which set the limits of conduct within a given relationship, and that guide and define what is acceptable behaviour within that relationship in order to maintain its unity and ensures that the relationship continues.

Please think about romantic relationships ***in general***, and answer the following questions:

1.a) What is the worst thing your ***partner*** could do to ***you if you were in***:

A casual relationship?	
A committed, exclusive, dating relationship?	
An engaged relationship?	
A married relationship?	

1.b) What is the worst thing ***you*** could do to your ***partner if you were in***:

A casual relationship?	
A committed, exclusive, dating relationship?	
An engaged relationship?	
A married relationship?	

2. What is the worst thing a ***partner*** ***<u>has done</u>*** to ***you*** in a relationship?

____

____

____

(Please answer the following questions based on this 'worst thing')

a) Is this from a past or current relationship?

Past ☐ If past, was this the reason you broke up? Yes ☐ No ☐
Current ☐

b) When this *worst thing* happened, I was in a:

Casual relationship ☐
Serious, committed dating relationship ☐
Engaged relationship ☐
Married relationship ☐

c) This relationship lasted/has been going for how long? ________________

3. What is the worst thing ***you have done*** to a ***partner***?

____
____
____

(Please answer the following questions based on this 'worst thing')

a) Is this from a past or current relationship?

Past ☐ If past, was this the reason you broke up? Yes ☐ No ☐
Current ☐

b) When this *worst thing* happened, I was in a:

Casual relationship ☐
Serious, committed dating relationship ☐
Engaged relationship ☐
Married relationship ☐

c) This relationship lasted/has been going for how long? _______________

IF YOU ARE NOT CURRENTLY IN A RELATIONSHIP, PLEASE TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE.

FOR THOSE CURRENTLY IN A RELATIONSHIP.

In your current relationship:

4. a) What do you think ***your partner would think*** is the worst thing ***you*** could do to ***him/her***?

____
____

b) What is the worst thing ***he/she could*** do to ***you***?

____
____

c) What kind of thing would you find easy to forgive, if done by your partner?

____
____

d) What kind of thing would you find unforgivable, if done by your partner?

____
____

Appendix G: Study 3 Survey Instrument

The following questions focus on heterosexual, romantic, committed, exclusive relationships (such as dating, engaged, married, de facto/common law).

Below is a list of some different types of rules, or topics about which rules or expectations might exist in romantic relationships. In regard to each, please think about whether you have ever had a rule or expectation about that particular topic in any past ***or*** current relationship you have had, and indicate Yes or No. E.G. For the first item, if you have had rules or expectations about the way you share information with your partner, or how much you share with each other, you would indicate ***Yes*** in the first column.

If you respond yes, in the second column please indicate whether it is something you and your partner discussed, or whether you just expect/ed the behaviour without having discussed it. If you respond ***No***, leave the second and third columns blank. E.G. If you have been in a relationship where you had discussed fidelity with a partner, you would indicate ***Yes*** in the first column, and ***Discussed*** in the second column.

Next, in the third column, please rate how common or typical of ***most*** relationships, or relationships ***in general*** you think each rule/expectation category is, where *1=very uncommon, 2=fairly uncommon, 3=half/half, 4=fairly common, 5=very common.* E.G. If you thought that having rules or expectations about fidelity would be common to most or all relationships, you would circle number 5.

Rules about:	Have you/do you had a rule or expectation about this in your relationship/s?	If **Yes**, was it discussed with your partner, or just expected of them?	Do you think this rule is common to most relationships?
Self-disclosure and Expression: Confiding in each other, disclosing information to each other; sharing information and opinions; the ways views and emotions are expressed	Yes No	Discussed Expected	1 2 3 4 5
Help and Support: Giving/ receiving emotional support; respect; trust; provision of help and advice	Yes No	Discussed Expected	1 2 3 4 5
Loyalty/Fidelity: Being loyal and faithful to each other; about intimate involvement with others outside relationship; loyalty to relationship	Yes No	Discussed Expected	1 2 3 4 5
Sharing and Equality: Getting out what you put into the relationship, relative to your partner; repayment of debts (emotional or tasks, etc).	Yes No	Discussed Expected	1 2 3 4 5
Sexual Behaviour: The sexual relationship with your partner; frequency; having needs met/ meeting needs; types of sexual behaviour.	Yes No	Discussed Expected	1 2 3 4 5
Time with Partner: Amount of time with partner; how this time is spent.	Yes No	Discussed Expected	1 2 3 4 5
Time with others: Amount of time spent with others outside relationship; types of activities done with others.	Yes No	Discussed Expected	1 2 3 4 5

Appendix G: Study 3 Survey Instrument

Rules about:	Have you/do you had a rule or expectation about this in your relationship/s?	If **Yes**, was it discussed with your partner, or just expected of them?	Do you think this rule is common to most relationships?
Time in tasks: Amount of time spent in work, hobbies or tasks; types of activities or tasks.	Yes No	Discussed Expected	1 2 3 4 5
Negative Behaviour in Private: Nagging; teasing; criticism; conflict; emotional and physical abuse.	Yes No	Discussed Expected	1 2 3 4 5
Negative Behaviour in Public: Public criticism and teasing; disclosing confidences to others; ignoring partner.	Yes No	Discussed Expected	1 2 3 4 5
Positive Interaction: respect; positive regard; showing consideration; affection; keeping each other informed of schedules and events.	Yes No	Discussed Expected	1 2 3 4 5
Social Behaviour: Behaviour in settings outside the relationship: with family, friends, social events, etc.	Yes No	Discussed Expected	1 2 3 4 5
Roles: Who does what within the relationship; may be physical tasks, tasks around daily living; emotional roles, gender roles.	Yes No	Discussed Expected	1 2 3 4 5
Finances: How money is managed and spent, either individual or joint money or both.	Yes No	Discussed Expected	1 2 3 4 5
Ritual Obligations: Acknowledging or celebrating birthdays, anniversaries and other events.	Yes No	Discussed Expected	1 2 3 4 5
Self-presentation: How each person presents themselves to their partner and to the world; consistency of appearance and behaviour over time.	Yes No	Discussed Expected	1 2 3 4 5

Please Turn the Page

Appendix G: Study 3 Survey Instrument

Next, please consider each rule/expectation category, and rate (by circling the appropriate number) how important each rule is in an exclusive, committed, romantic relationship (whether it is dating, engaged, de factor or married), with 1 being *not at all important*, 2 = *not very important*, 3 = *somewhat important*, 4=*very important*, 5 = *extremely important/necessary to the relationship*.

	Not at all Important				Extremely Important
Self-disclosure and Expression: Confiding in each other, disclosing information to each other; sharing information and opinions; the ways views and emotions are expressed	1	2	3	4	5
Help and Support: Giving/ receiving emotional support; respect; trust; provision of help and advice	1	2	3	4	5
Loyalty/Fidelity: Being loyal and faithful to each other; about intimate involvement with others outside relationship; loyalty to relationship	1	2	3	4	5
Sharing and Equality: Getting out what you put into the relationship, relative to your partner; repayment of debts (emotional or tasks, etc).	1	2	3	4	5
Sexual Behaviour: The sexual relationship with your partner; frequency; having needs met/ meeting needs; types of sexual behaviour.	1	2	3	4	5
Time with Partner: Amount of time with partner; how this time is spent.	1	2	3	4	5
Time with others: Amount of time spent with others outside relationship; types of activities done with others.	1	2	3	4	5
Time in tasks: Amount of time spent in work, hobbies or tasks; types of activities or tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
Negative Behaviour in Private: Nagging; teasing; criticism; conflict; emotional and physical abuse.	1	2	3	4	5
Negative Behaviour in Public: Public criticism and teasing; disclosing confidences to others; ignoring partner.	1	2	3	4	5
Positive Interaction: respect; positive regard; showing consideration; affection; keeping each other informed of schedules and events.	1	2	3	4	5
Social Behaviour: Behaviour in settings outside the relationship: with family, friends, social events, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
Roles: Who does what within the relationship; may be physical tasks, tasks around daily living; emotional roles, gender roles.	1	2	3	4	5
Finances: How money is managed and spent, either individual or joint money or both.	1	2	3	4	5
Ritual Obligations: Acknowledging or celebrating birthdays, anniversaries and other events.	1	2	3	4	5
Self-presentation: How each person presents themselves to their partner and to the world; consistency of appearance and behaviour over time.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix G: Study 3 Survey Instrument

When relationship rules are broken, there may be different consequences for different rules. Violations of some rules might be unimportant while others present a serious threat to the relationship. Some may be easily forgiven, while others may result in relationship breakdown.

Please consider each rule/expectation category. If your partner broke that rule or expectation, ***how easy would it be*** for you to forgive? Please circle the appropriate number from 1 to 5, where 1=*very easy to forgive*, 2= *reasonably easy to forgive*, 3=*undecided*, 4=*difficult to forgive*, 5=*unforgivable*.

	Very easy to forgive				Unforgivable
Self-disclosure and Expression: Confiding in each other, disclosing information to each other; sharing information and opinions; the ways views and emotions are expressed	1	2	3	4	5
Help and Support: Giving/ receiving emotional support; respect; trust; provision of help and advice	1	2	3	4	5
Loyalty/Fidelity: Being loyal and faithful to each other; about intimate involvement with others outside relationship; loyalty to relationship	1	2	3	4	5
Sharing and Equality: Getting out what you put into the relationship, relative to your partner; repayment of debts (emotional or tasks, etc).	1	2	3	4	5
Sexual Behaviour: The sexual relationship with your partner; frequency; having needs met/ meeting needs; types of sexual behaviour.	1	2	3	4	5
Time with Partner: Amount of time with partner; how this time is spent.	1	2	3	4	5
Time with others: Amount of time spent with others outside relationship; types of activities done with others.	1	2	3	4	5
Time in tasks: Amount of time spent in work, hobbies or tasks; types of activities or tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
Negative Behaviour in Private: Nagging; teasing; criticism; conflict; emotional and physical abuse.	1	2	3	4	5
Negative Behaviour in Public: Public criticism and teasing; disclosing confidences to others; ignoring partner.	1	2	3	4	5
Positive Interaction: respect; positive regard; showing consideration; affection; keeping each other informed of schedules and events.	1	2	3	4	5
Social Behaviour: Behaviour in settings outside the relationship: with family, friends, social events, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
Roles: Who does what within the relationship; may be physical tasks, tasks around daily living; emotional roles, gender roles.	1	2	3	4	5
Finances: How money is managed and spent, either individual or joint money or both.	1	2	3	4	5
Ritual Obligations: Acknowledging or celebrating birthdays, anniversaries and other events.	1	2	3	4	5
Self-presentation: How each person presents themselves to their partner and to the world; consistency of appearance and behaviour over time.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix G: Study 3 Survey Instrument

Again, consider each category. If your partner broke that rule or expectation, ***how much of a threat*** would it be to the relationship continuing? Please circle the appropriate number from 1 to 5, where 1=*no threat to the relationship at all*, 2=*little threat to the relationship*, 3=*undecided*, 4=*presents a threat but relationship would continue*, 5=*serious threat, relationship would likely end.*

	No threat				Serious, Relationship likely ends
Self-disclosure and Expression: Confiding in each other, disclosing information to each other; sharing information and opinions; the ways views and emotions are expressed	1	2	3	4	5
Help and Support: Giving/ receiving emotional support; respect; trust; provision of help and advice	1	2	3	4	5
Loyalty/Fidelity: Being loyal and faithful to each other; about intimate involvement with others outside relationship; loyalty to relationship	1	2	3	4	5
Sharing and Equality: Getting out what you put into the relationship, relative to your partner; repayment of debts (emotional or tasks, etc).	1	2	3	4	5
Sexual Behaviour: The sexual relationship with your partner; frequency; having needs met/ meeting needs; types of sexual behaviour.	1	2	3	4	5
Time with Partner: Amount of time with partner; how this time is spent.	1	2	3	4	5
Time with others: Amount of time spent with others outside relationship; types of activities done with others.	1	2	3	4	5
Time in tasks: Amount of time spent in work, hobbies or tasks; types of activities or tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
Negative Behaviour in Private: Nagging; teasing; criticism; conflict; emotional and physical abuse.	1	2	3	4	5
Negative Behaviour in Public: Public criticism and teasing; disclosing confidences to others; ignoring partner.	1	2	3	4	5
Positive Interaction: respect; positive regard; showing consideration; affection; keeping each other informed of schedules and events.	1	2	3	4	5
Social Behaviour: Behaviour in settings outside the relationship: with family, friends, social events, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
Roles: Who does what within the relationship; may be physical tasks, tasks around daily living; emotional roles, gender roles.	1	2	3	4	5
Finances: How money is managed and spent, either individual or joint money or both.	1	2	3	4	5
Ritual Obligations: Acknowledging or celebrating birthdays, anniversaries and other events.	1	2	3	4	5
Self-presentation: How each person presents themselves to their partner and to the world; consistency of appearance and behaviour over time.	1	2	3	4	5

Are there any rules or expectations that you might have, or have had in your relationships, that have not appeared in the lists above?

____

____

____

____

____

Appendix G: Study 3 Survey Instrument

The types of rules or expectations that we carry into our relationships are often influenced by other things. For this question, please think about ***where*** your expectations and rules come from, and how you came to see them as particularly important to you.

Below is a list of possible sources that might influence which particular expectations or rules that we have in our relationships. On a scale from 1 = *Not at all*, to 7 = *Greatly*, please identify the extent to which your relationship rules and expectations (either those you have in a current relationship or those from a past relationship) are influenced by, or come from these sources.

	Not at all			Moderately			Greatly
Ethnicity/Culture	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gender	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Media	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My best opposite sex friend	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My best same sex friend	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My brothers/sisters	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My own thoughts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My parents	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My partner	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Occupation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other individuals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other opposite sex friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other relatives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Other same sex friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Politics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Religion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Social Class	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix G: Study 3 Survey Instrument

Please respond to each statement by thinking about how you ***usually*** feel/felt or act/acted ***in the past year*** by circling one of the 5 numbers. If the statement is false, then circle "1". If it is somewhat false, circle a "2". If you are not sure, then circle a "3". If the statement is somewhat true, then circle a "4". If it is true, then circle a "5". Please do not leave any items blank.

	False	Somewhat False	Not Sure	Somewhat True	True
1. I enjoy most of the things I do during the week.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I spend a lot of time thinking about things that might go wrong.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I often feel that nobody really cares about me the way I want them to.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I really don't like myself very much.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Doing things to help other people is more important to me than almost anything else.	1	2	3	4	5
6. No matter what I'm doing, I usually have a good time.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I'm the kind of person who will try anything once, even if it's not that safe.	1	2	3	4	5
8. I'm not very sure of myself.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I am answering these questions truthfully.	1	2	3	4	5
10. In recent years, there have been a lot of times when I've felt unhappy or down about things.	1	2	3	4	5
11. People who get me angry better watch out.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I usually think of myself as a happy person.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I usually don't let things upset me too much.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I should try harder to control myself when I'm having fun.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I do things that are against the law more often then most people.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I worry too much about things that aren't important.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I often go out of my way to do things for other people.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I sometimes feel so bad about myself that I wish I were someone else.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I'm the kind of person who has a lot of fun.	1	2	3	4	5

20. I'm the kind of person who smiles and laughs a lot.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Most of the time, I really don't worry about things very much.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Everyone makes mistakes at least once in a while.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I often feel like not trying any more because I can't seem to make things better.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I often feel sad or unhappy.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I usually feel I'm the kind of person I want to be.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I usually have a great time when I do things with other people.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I have never met anyone younger than I am.	1	2	3	4	5

Now think about how *often* you think, feel, or act in a certain way ***during the past year even if it hasn't happened in the past few days or weeks***. After you read each statement, please *circle* how often it is true: If almost never, then circle "1". If not often, circle a "2". If sometimes, then circle a "3". If often, then circle a "4". If almost always, then circle a "5". Please do not leave any items blank.

	Almost Never	Not Often	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
28. I feel I can do things as well as other people can.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I do things without giving them enough thought.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I enjoy doing things for other people, even when I don't receive anything in return.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I do things that are really not fair to people I don't care about.	1	2	3	4	5
32. When I have the chance, I take things I want that don't really belong to me.	1	2	3	4	5
33. If someone tries to hurt me, I make sure I get even with them.	1	2	3	4	5
34. I break laws and rules I don't agree with.	1	2	3	4	5
35. I feel nervous or afraid that things won't work out the way I would like.	1	2	3	4	5
36. I feel that I am a special or important person.	1	2	3	4	5
37. I like to do new and different things that many people would consider weird or not really safe.	1	2	3	4	5

38. I get nervous when I know I need to do my best (on a job, team, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
39. I become "wild and crazy" and do things other people might not like.	1	2	3	4	5
40. If someone does something I really don't like, I yell at them about it.	1	2	3	4	5
41. People can depend on me to do what I know I should.	1	2	3	4	5
42. I feel lonely.	1	2	3	4	5
43. Before I do something, I think about how it will affect people around me.	1	2	3	4	5
44. I feel so down and unhappy that nothing makes me feel much better.	1	2	3	4	5
45. In recent years, I have felt more nervous or worried about things than I have needed to.	1	2	3	4	5
46. I will cheat on something if I know no one will find out.	1	2	3	4	5
47. When I'm doing something fun (like partying or acting silly), I tend to get carried away and go too far.	1	2	3	4	5
48. I say the first thing that comes into my mind without thinking enough about it.	1	2	3	4	5
49. I pick on people I don't like.	1	2	3	4	5
50. I feel afraid something terrible might happen to me or somebody I care about.	1	2	3	4	5
51. I do things that I know really aren't right.	1	2	3	4	5
52. I get into such a bad mood that I just feel like sitting around and doing nothing.	1	2	3	4	5
53. I try very hard not to hurt other people's feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
54. I lose my temper and "let people have it" when I'm angry.	1	2	3	4	5
55. I make sure that doing what I want will not cause problems for others.	1	2	3	4	5
56. I stop and think things through before I act.	1	2	3	4	5
57. I say something mean to someone who has upset me.	1	2	3	4	5
58. I make sure I stay out of trouble.	1	2	3	4	5

59. I feel very happy.	1	2	3	4	5
60. I think about other people's feelings before I do something they might not like.	1	2	3	4	5
61. I feel that I am really good at things I try to do.	1	2	3	4	5
62. When someone tries to start a fight with me, I fight back.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.
Your participation is appreciated.

Appendix H. Study 3 Ethics Approval

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne

ACU National

Human Research Ethics Committee

Committee Approval Form

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: Prof. Barry Fallon Melbourne Campus
Co-Investigators: Melbourne Campus
Student Researcher: Alexandra West Melbourne Campus

Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:
Rules and Expectations in Romantic Relationships.

for the period: 30.06.05 to 30.12.05

Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number: V200405 94

The following standard conditions as stipulated in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* (1999) apply:

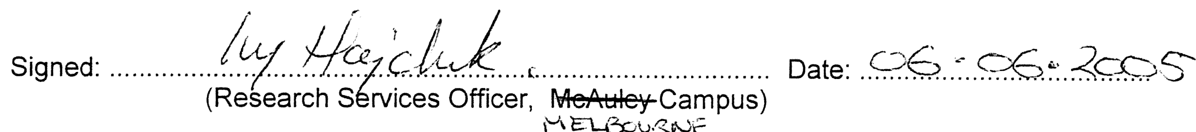
(i) that Principal Investigators / Supervisors provide, on the form supplied by the Human Research Ethics Committee, annual reports on matters such as:
- security of records
- compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
- compliance with special conditions, and

(ii) that researchers report to the HREC immediately any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol, such as:
- proposed changes to the protocol
- unforeseen circumstances or events
- adverse effects on participants

The HREC will conduct an audit each year of all projects deemed to be of more than minimum risk. There will also be random audits of a sample of projects considered to be of minimum risk on all campuses each year.

Within one month of the conclusion of the project, researchers are required to complete a *Final Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer.

If the project continues for more than one year, researchers are required to complete an *Annual Progress Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer within one month of the anniversary date of the ethics approval.



Signed: .... Date: 06.06.2005
(Research Services Officer, ~~McAuley~~ MELBOURNE Campus)

Appendix Ii. Study 3 Correlation Matrix of Ratings of Importance and Threat

Table 1

Correlations between Ratings of Importance and Threat for each Rule Category

Forgivability / Threat	SDE	Help/ Support	Loyalty Fidelity	Sharing Equality	Sexual Behaviour	Time Partner	Time Others	Time Tasks	Negative Private	Negative Public	Positive Interaction	Social Behaviour	Roles	Finances	Ritual Oblig.	Self Present
SDE	.223*					.213*			.268**							
Help/ Support																
Loyalty/ Fidelity			.247*													
Sharing/ Equality																
Sexual Behaviour					.332**											
Time with Partner																
Time with Others												.217*				
Time in Tasks												.20*				
Negative Private Behaviour		.269**		.196*							.198*					
Negative Public Behaviour		.286**														
Positive Interaction									.207*							
Social Behaviour											-.259**	.38**				
Roles							.215*	.250*					.35**	.27**		
Finances		-.220*						.270**					.23*	.29**		
Ritual Obligations															.37**	
Self Presentation								.215*				.24*		.24*		.34**

*$p<.05$; **$p<.01$; ***$p<.001$

SDE denotes Self-dislcosure and Expression

Appendix Iii. Study 3 Correlation Matrix of Ratings of Importance and (Un) forgivability

Table 2

Correlations between Ratings of Importance and (Un) forgivability for each Rule Category

Threat \ Forgivability	SDE	Help/ Support	Loyalty Fidelity	Sharing Equality	Sexual Behaviour	Time Partner	Time Others	Time Tasks	Negative Private	Negative Public	Positive Interaction	Social Behaviour	Roles	Finances	Ritual Oblig.	Self Present
SDE	.23*															
Help/ Support	.30**	.26**														
Loyalty/ Fidelity			.55**													
Sharing/ Equality				.21*												
Sexual Behaviour					.34**											
Time with Partner																
Time with Others																
Time in Tasks																
Negative Private Behaviour	.24*										.24*					
Negative Public Behaviour	.21*															
Positive Interaction																
Social Behaviour												.27**				
Roles													.34**			
Finances																
Ritual Obligations															.53**	
Self Presentation											-.26**					

*$p<.05$; **$p<.01$; ***$p<.001$

SDE denotes Self-disclosure and Expressions

Appendix J. Study 4 Information Letter and Survey Instrument

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne

ACU National

Australian Catholic University Limited
ABN 15 050 192 660
Melbourne Campus (St Patrick's)
115 Victoria Parade Fitzroy Vic 3065
Locked Bag 4115 Fitzroy MCD VIC 3065
Telephone 03 9953 3000
Facsimile 03 9953 3005
www.acu.edu.au

INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

TITLE OF PROJECT: Rule-setting and rule-breaking in Romantic Relationships

STAFF SUPERVISOR: Professor Barry J. Fallon

STUDENT RESEARCHERS: Miss Alexandra West

COURSE: Master of Psychology/Doctor of Philosophy (Clinical)

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in some research on rules and expectations in romantic relationships. Rules and expectations about behaviour exist between partners in all types of relationships; they define and guide what is acceptable behaviour within that relationship, and what is expected of you as a relationship partner. Sometimes they exist as expectations you have of your partner, and sometimes they are negotiated through discussion. This student project, being completed as part of a PhD, is part of ongoing research investigating how rules come to exist in relationships, what types of rules exist, and how they are violated.

This project aims to investigate what kinds of rules and expectations are important in relationships, how they are arrived at, and what happens when they are violated. The study also looks at individual and couple characteristics and how these might relate to the types of rules and expectations you have in your relationships.

All participants are invited to participate in this research by completing a questionnaire booklet. We need couples (both partners) who are aged above 18 years, who have been in a relationship for at least 6 months, as the questionnaires are based on your experiences within your relationship. Completion of the questionnaire booklet should take approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Each partner is to complete the questionnaire separately from their partner, without discussion. Upon completion, questionnaires should be sealed in the reply-paid envelopes provided and returned to the principal investigator, or by returning them to the collection box in the School of Psychology, Level 2, Australian Catholic University, 115 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy, Victoria.

The information gathered from this investigation will contribute to further understanding about how relationships work. It may provide you with a better understanding of your own relationship and your expectations, and will contribute to the wider understanding of how to improve relationships in a therapeutic environment.

Although not expected, answering questions about your relationship may cause some slight discomfort or embarrassment. Should you feel distressed as a result of participating in the project, please contact Dr. Lisa Eisen, Lecturer in the School of Psychology, Australian Catholic University National, 115 Victoria Pde, Fitzroy, Victoria, 3065, on (03) 9953 3117.

Participation in this research project is voluntary. The completion and return of the questionnaire will be taken as an indication of your voluntary consent to participate. As such, there will be no names collected that might be able to identify you. You can withdraw from the study at any stage without giving a reason. Confidentiality will be maintained during the study and in any report of the study, as no names of participants will be collected. Individual participants will not be able to be identified in any reports of the study, as only aggregated data will be reported.

If you have any questions about the project, before or after participating, please contact the Staff Supervisor, Professor Barry Fallon, on telephone number 03 9953 3108 in the School of Psychology, St Patrick's Campus at the Australian Catholic University, 115 Victoria Parade, Fitzroy, Victoria 3065.

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University. In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during the study, or if you have any query that the Student Researcher and Staff Supervisor have not been able to satisfy, you may write to:

Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee
C/o Research Services
Australian Catholic University
Locked Bag 4115
FITZROY VIC 3065 Tel: 03 9953 3157 Fax: 03 9953 3315

Any complaint will be treated in confidence and fully investigated fully. The participants will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this project, you should complete the questionnaire booklet, and return it to the Principal Investigator using the envelope provided. Your support for the research project will be most appreciated.

Alexandra West
Student Researcher

Professor Barry Fallon
Principal Investigator

RELATIONSHIPS

Rule-setting and Rule-breaking

This study aims to gather information about aspects of individuals and their relationships in order to better understand some of the processes involved in how relationships work. Information is sought from individuals of a heterosexual orientation who are currently in a relationship of at least 6 months duration. Some demographic details are required in order to better understand how these variables may be related to relationship variables. You will also be asked a series of questions about yourself as an individual and about your relationship with your partner. Please answer all questions and do not leave items blank.

Completion of the questionnaires will be taken as an indication of voluntary consent.

Questionnaire packs consist of two questionnaire sets and two reply-paid envelopes addressed to the Principal Investigator. Each person is to complete the questionnaires separately from their partner, without any discussion. On completion, the questionnaires from each partner are to be sealed in the reply-paid envelopes provided and returned to the School of Psychology at the St Patrick's Campus of Australian Catholic University.

It is anticipated that completion of the questionnaire pack should take approximately 30-40 minutes.

To enable us to match your response with that of your partner, please write in the spaces provided, the female partner's day and month of birth followed by the male partner's day and month of birth. E.g. if the female was born on June 10 and the male on September 1, the number would be 10619.

___ ___ day month female	___ ___ day month male

Demographic Information

What is your age? __________

I am: Male / Female

What type of relationship are you in?

- A casual relationship ☐
- A committed, exclusive, dating relationship ☐
- An engaged relationship ☐
- A married relationship ☐

How long have you been with your partner? ___________

Do you live with your partner? Yes/No

How long have you been living together? ___________

What country were you born in? ___________

Relationship boundaries are **rules** or **expectations** that exist between relationship partners. They help set the limits of conduct within the relationship; they guide and define what is acceptable behaviour within the relationship in order to maintain its unity and ensures that the relationship continues. Sometimes they are discussed and negotiated; sometimes they just exist as something you expect of your partner.

Below is a list of categories or topics about which couples typically have rules or expectations. Each category has a title, then a description of the things that category covers. For example look at the first category, "Self-disclosure and Expression". Many couples have certain agreements or expectations about what they do and don't confide or share with each other, the way this is done, and how emotions are expressed towards each other. For the category "Negative Behaviour in Private" for example, many couples have rules and expectations that they will not be subjected to certain behaviours such as teasing, or abuse.

You will be asked a series of questions about these categories on the following pages, so feel free to remove this sheet and use it and the explanations to refer back to. Following this page, questions will appear on **BOTH** sides of the page. Please complete all questions.

Self-disclosure and Expression: Confiding in each other, disclosing information to each other; sharing information and opinions; the ways views and emotions are expressed

Help and Support: Giving/ receiving emotional support; respect; trust; provision of help and advice

Loyalty/Fidelity: Being loyal and faithful to each other; about intimate involvement with others outside relationship; loyalty to relationship

Sharing and Equality: Getting out what you put into the relationship, relative to your partner; repayment of debts (emotional or tasks, etc).

Sexual Behaviour: The sexual relationship with your partner; frequency; having needs met/ meeting needs; types of sexual behaviour.

Time with Partner: Amount of time with partner; how this time is spent.

Time with others: Amount of time spent with others outside relationship; types of activities done with others.

Time in tasks: Amount of time spent in work, hobbies or tasks; types of activities or tasks.

Negative Behaviour in Private: Nagging; teasing; criticism; conflict; emotional and physical abuse.

Negative Behaviour in Public: Public criticism and teasing; disclosing confidences to others; ignoring partner.

Positive Interaction: Respect; positive regard; showing consideration; affection; keeping each other informed of schedules and events.

Social Behaviour: Behaviour in settings outside the relationship: with family, friends, social events, etc.

Roles: Who does what within the relationship; may be physical tasks, tasks around daily living; emotional roles, gender roles.

Finances: How money is managed and spent, either individual or joint money or both.

Ritual Obligations: Acknowledging or celebrating birthdays, anniversaries and other events.

Self-presentation: How each person presents themselves to their partner and to the world; consistency of appearance and behaviour over time.

Below is the same list of rules/expectations as on the previous page. Please consider each category and your own relationship.

In the first column, please indicate whether you have ever had a rule/expectation about that particular topic in your relationship with your partner. Circle ***Yes*** or ***No.***

If you respond ***Yes,*** then in the second column please indicate whether it is something you and your partner discussed, or whether you just expect/ed the behaviour without having discussed it.
If you respond ***No***, leave the second column blank.

> E.G. If you have been in a relationship where you had discussed fidelity with a partner, you would indicate ***Yes*** in the first column, and ***Discussed*** in the second column. If you just expect that your partner will be faithful, then indicate ***Yes*** in the first column (this is an expectation), and ***Expected*** in the second column.

Please answer all questions.

Rules about:	Do you have a rule or expectation about this in your relationship/s?			If **Yes**, was it discussed with your partner, or just expected of them?	
Self-disclosure and Expression	Yes	No		Discussed	Expected
Help and Support	Yes	No		Discussed	Expected
Loyalty/Fidelity	Yes	No		Discussed	Expected
Sharing and Equality	Yes	No		Discussed	Expected
Sexual Behaviour	Yes	No		Discussed	Expected
Time with Partner	Yes	No		Discussed	Expected
Time with others	Yes	No		Discussed	Expected
Time in tasks	Yes	No		Discussed	Expected
Negative Behaviour in Private	Yes	No		Discussed	Expected
Negative Behaviour in Public	Yes	No		Discussed	Expected
Positive Interaction	Yes	No		Discussed	Expected
Social Behaviour	Yes	No		Discussed	Expected
Roles	Yes	No		Discussed	Expected
Finances	Yes	No		Discussed	Expected
Ritual Obligations	Yes	No		Discussed	Expected
Self-presentation	Yes	No		Discussed	Expected

Again, please consider each rule/expectation category and your own relationship.

In the first column, rate how **IMPORTANT** having rules/expectations about each topic is to ***your*** relationship with your partner (E.G. how important to ***your*** relationship is having rules and expectations about how you give each other Help/Support?). For each category, circle the number that best describes how you feel, from 1 = *not at all important*, 2 = *not very important*, 3 = *somewhat important*, 4=*very important*, 5 = *extremely important/necessary to the relationship.*

In the second column, consider how **YOUR PARTNER** would rate the importance of having rules/expectations about a given topic. For each category, circle the number that best describes how you think your partner would feel, from 1 = *not at all important*, 2 = *not very important*, 3 = *somewhat important*, 4=*very important*, 5 = *extremely important/necessary to the relationship.*

	YOU		**YOUR PARTNER**
	Not at all important ... Extremely		Not at all important ... Extremely
Self-disclosure and Expression	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Help and Support	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Loyalty/Fidelity	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Sharing and Equality	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Sexual Behaviour	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Time with Partner	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Time with others	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Time in tasks	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Negative Behaviour in Private	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Negative Behaviour in Public	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Positive Interaction	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Social Behaviour	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Roles	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Finances	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Ritual Obligations	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Self-presentation	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5

When relationship rules are broken, there may be different consequences for different rules. Violations of some rules might be unimportant while others present a serious threat to the relationship. Some may be easily forgiven, while others may result in relationship breakdown.

Again, consider each category and your relationship.

In the first column, rate **HOW MUCH OF A THREAT** to the relationship it would be if your partner broke or violated a rule or expectation in each category. For each category, circle the number that best describes how you feel, from 1= *no threat to the relationship at all*, 2=*little threat to the relationship*, 3=*undecided*, 4=*presents a threat but relationship would continue*, 5=*serious threat, relationship would likely end.*

In the second column, consider how **YOUR PARTNER** would rate the level of threat to the relationship. For each category, circle the number that best describes how you think your partner would feel, from 1=*no threat to the relationship at all*, 2=*little threat to the relationship*, 3=*undecided*, 4=*presents a threat but relationship would continue*, 5=*serious threat, relationship would likely end.*

	YOU	**YOUR PARTNER**
	No threat ... Serious, Relationship likely ends	No threat ... Serious, Relationship likely ends
Self-disclosure and Expression	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Help and Support	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Loyalty/Fidelity	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Sharing and Equality	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Sexual Behaviour	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Time with Partner	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Time with others	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Time in tasks	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Negative Behaviour in Private	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Negative Behaviour in Public	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Positive Interaction	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Social Behaviour	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Roles	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Finances	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Ritual Obligations	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Self-presentation	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5

Again, consider each category and your relationship.

In the first column, rate **HOW EASY IT WOULD BE FOR YOU TO FORGIVE,** if your partner broke a rule or expectation in each category. For each category, circle the number that best describes how you feel, from 1=*very easy to forgive*, 2= *reasonably easy to forgive*, 3=*undecided*, 4=*difficult to forgive*, 5=*unforgivable*.

In the second column, consider how **YOUR PARTNER** would rate how forgivable a broken rule is in each category. For each category, circle the number that best describes how you think your partner would feel, from 1=*very easy to forgive*, 2= *reasonably easy to forgive*, 3=*undecided*, 4=*difficult to forgive*, 5=*unforgivable*.

	YOU Very easy to forgive — Unforgivable		**YOUR PARTNER** Very easy to forgive — Unforgivable
Self-disclosure and Expression	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Help and Support	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Loyalty/Fidelity	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Sharing and Equality	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Sexual Behaviour	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Time with Partner	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Time with others	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Time in tasks	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Negative Behaviour in Private	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Negative Behaviour in Public	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Positive Interaction	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Social Behaviour	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Roles	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Finances	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Ritual Obligations	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5
Self-presentation	1 2 3 4 5		1 2 3 4 5

Consider each of the 16 categories presented over the previous pages and your relationship.

Please indicate below whether you have ever broken any of the rules or expectations in each category, in your relationship, no matter how minor or major, by circling **Y (Yes)** or **N (No).**

Self-disclosure and Expression	Y	N	Negative Behaviour in Private	Y	N
Help and Support	Y	N	Negative Behaviour in Public	Y	N
Loyalty/Fidelity	Y	N	Positive Interaction	Y	N
Sharing and Equality	Y	N	Social Behaviour	Y	N
Sexual Behaviour	Y	N	Roles	Y	N
Time with Partner	Y	N	Finances	Y	N
Time with others	Y	N	Ritual Obligations	Y	N
Time in tasks	Y	N	Self-presentation	Y	N

Think about your relationship with your partner.

Below there are 26 statements that apply to relationships between couples. In responding to the statements below, please circle the number that best describes how you feel about your relationship with your partner. On the scales below, 1 = *strongly disagree,* 2 = *disagree,* 3 = *somewhat disagree,* 4 = *neutral,* 5 = *somewhat agree,* 6 = *agree* and 7 = *strongly agree*.
The only correct answer is the one that you feel best describes your own relationship.

	Strongly Disagree			Neutral			Strongly Agree
When we encounter difficult and unfamiliar new circumstances I would not feel worried or threatened by letting my partner do what he/she wanted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can count on my partner to be concerned about my welfare.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In general, my partner does things in a variety of different ways. He/she almost never sticks to one way of doing things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My partner has proven to be trustworthy and I am willing to let him/her engage in activities which other partners find too threatening.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am familiar with patterns of behaviour my partner has established and I can rely on him/her to behave in certain ways.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Though times change and the future is uncertain, I know my partner will always be ready and willing to offer me strength and support.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Even when I don't know how my partner will react, I feel comfortable telling him/her anything about myself, even those things of which I am ashamed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am never certain that my partner won't do something that I dislike or will embarrass me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My partner is very unpredictable. I never know how he/she is going to act from one day to the next.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel very uncomfortable when my partner has to make decisions which will affect me personally.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Strongly Disagree			Neutral			Strongly Agree
I have found that my partner is usually dependable, especially when it comes to things which are important to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My partner behaves in a very consistent manner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In my relationship with my partner, the future is an unknown which I worry about.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Whenever we have to make an important decision in a situation we have never encountered before, I know my partner will be concerned about my welfare.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Even if I have no reason to expect my partner to share things with me, I still feel certain that he/she will.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can rely on my partner to react in a positive way when I expose my weaknesses to him/her.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I usually know how my partner is going to act. He/she can be counted on.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I share my problems with my partner, I know he/she will respond in a loving way even before I say anything.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In our relationship I have to keep alert or my partner might take advantage of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am certain that my partner would not cheat on me, even if the opportunity arose and there was no chance that he/she would get caught.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I sometimes avoid my partner because he/she is unpredictable and I fear saying or doing something which might create conflict	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I can rely on my partner to keep the promises he/she makes to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would never guarantee that my partner and I will still be together and not have decided to end our relationship 10 years from now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I am with my partner, I feel secure in facing unknown new situations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Even when my partner makes excuses which sound rather unlikely, I am confident that he/she is telling the truth	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am willing to let my partner make decisions for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Relationships have many different aspects which are important in determining how partners feel about their relationship overall. In answering the following questions, please consider all areas of your relationship carefully, and how you feel about it overall.

Please respond to the following 3 questions by circling the number that most closely reflects how you feel about your relationship with your partner.

	Extremely dissatisfied						Extremely satisfied
How satisfied are you with your relationship?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How satisfied are you with your partner as a partner?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How satisfied are you with your relationship with your partner?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Think about your relationship with your partner.

Below there are 24 statements that apply to relationships between couples. In responding to the statements below, please circle the number that best describes how you feel about your relationship with your partner. On the scales below, 1 = *strongly disagree,* 3 = *neutral* and 5 = *strongly agree*.
The only correct answer is the one that best describes how you feel about your relationship.

	Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree
One advantage to my relationship is having someone to count on.	1	2	3	4	5
I give up a lot to be in my relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
My current relationship comes close to matching what I would consider to be my ideal relationship	1	2	3	4	5
As an alternative to my current relationship, I would like the freedom to do what I want to do whenever I want to do it.	1	2	3	4	5
I've put a lot of energy and effort into my relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
It would be difficult to leave my partner because of the emotional pain involved.	1	2	3	4	5
One advantage of my relationship is that it provides me with companionship.	1	2	3	4	5
I have to sacrifice a lot to be in my relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
My current relationship provides me with an ideal amount of affection and companionship.	1	2	3	4	5
As an alternative to my current relationship, I would like to date someone else.	1	2	3	4	5
A part of me is tied up in my relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
It would be difficult to leave my partner because I would still feel attached to him/her.	1	2	3	4	5
One advantage to my relationship is being able to share affection.	1	2	3	4	5
It takes a lot for me to be in my relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
My current relationship provides me with an ideal amount of equality in the relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
As an alternative to my current relationship, I would like to find other ways to occupy my time.	1	2	3	4	5
I have invested a part of myself in my relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
I would find it difficult to leave my partner because I would feel obligated to keep the relationship together.	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, I derive a lot of rewards and advantages from being in my relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, there are a lot of personal costs involved in being in my relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, there is not much difference between my current relationship and my ideal relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, alternatives to being in my relationship are appealing.	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, I'd say I have a lot invested in my relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, there are many things that prevent me from ending my relationship	1	2	3	4	5

Please respond to each statement by thinking about how you ***usually*** feel or act ***in the past year*** by circling one of the 5 numbers. If the statement is false, then circle "1". If it is somewhat false, circle a "2". If you are not sure, then circle a "3". If the statement is somewhat true, then circle a "4". If it is true, then circle a "5".

	FALSE	Somewhat False	Not Sure	Somewhat True	TRUE
I enjoy most of the things I do during the week	1	2	3	4	5
I spend a lot of time thinking about things that might go wrong	1	2	3	4	5
I often feel that nobody really cares about me the way I want them to	1	2	3	4	5
I really don't like myself very much	1	2	3	4	5
Doing things to help other people is more important to me than almost anything else	1	2	3	4	5
No matter what I'm doing, I usually have a good time	1	2	3	4	5
I'm the kind of person who will try anything once, even if it's not that safe	1	2	3	4	5
I'm not very sure of myself	1	2	3	4	5
I am answering these questions truthfully	1	2	3	4	5
In recent years, there have been a lot of times when I've felt unhappy or down about things	1	2	3	4	5
People who get me angry better watch out	1	2	3	4	5
I usually think of myself as a happy person	1	2	3	4	5
I usually don't let things upset me too much	1	2	3	4	5
I should try harder to control myself when I'm having fun	1	2	3	4	5
I do things that are against the law more often then most people	1	2	3	4	5
I worry too much about things that aren't important	1	2	3	4	5
I often go out of my way to do things for other people	1	2	3	4	5
I sometimes feel so bad about myself that I wish I were someone else	1	2	3	4	5
I'm the kind of person who has a lot of fun.	1	2	3	4	5
I'm the kind of person who smiles and laughs a lot.	1	2	3	4	5
Most of the time, I really don't worry about things very much	1	2	3	4	5
Everyone makes mistakes at least once in a while	1	2	3	4	5
I often feel like not trying any more because I can't seem to make things better	1	2	3	4	5
I often feel sad or unhappy	1	2	3	4	5
I usually feel I'm the kind of person I want to be	1	2	3	4	5
I usually have a great time when I do things with other people	1	2	3	4	5
I have never met anyone younger than I am	1	2	3	4	5

Now think about how *often* you think, feel, or act in a certain way ***during the past year even if it hasn't happened in the past few days or weeks***. After you read each statement, please *circle* **HOW OFTEN** it is true: If almost never, then circle "1". If not often, circle a "2". If sometimes, then circle a "3". If often, then circle a "4". If almost always, then circle a "5".

	Almost Never	Not Often	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
I feel I can do things as well as other people can	1	2	3	4	5
I do things without giving them enough thought	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy doing things for other people, even when I don't receive anything in return	1	2	3	4	5
I do things that are really not fair to people I don't care about.	1	2	3	4	5
When I have the chance, I take things I want that don't really belong to me	1	2	3	4	5
If someone tries to hurt me, I make sure I get even with them	1	2	3	4	5
I break laws and rules I don't agree with	1	2	3	4	5
I feel nervous or afraid that things won't work out the way I would like.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that I am a special or important person	1	2	3	4	5
I like to do new and different things that many people would consider weird or not really safe	1	2	3	4	5
I get nervous when I know I need to do my best (on a job, team, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
I become "wild and crazy" and do things other people might not like	1	2	3	4	5
If someone does something I really don't like, I yell at them about it	1	2	3	4	5
People can depend on me to do what I know I should	1	2	3	4	5
I feel lonely	1	2	3	4	5
Before I do something, I think about how it will affect people around me	1	2	3	4	5
I feel so down and unhappy that nothing makes me feel much better	1	2	3	4	5
In recent years, I have felt more nervous or worried about things than I have needed to	1	2	3	4	5
I will cheat on something if I know no one will find out.	1	2	3	4	5
When I'm doing something fun (like partying or acting silly), I tend to get carried away and go too far	1	2	3	4	5
I say the first thing that comes into my mind without thinking enough about it	1	2	3	4	5
I pick on people I don't like	1	2	3	4	5
I feel afraid something terrible might happen to me or somebody I care about	1	2	3	4	5
I do things that I know really aren't right	1	2	3	4	5
I get into such a bad mood that I just feel like sitting around and doing nothing	1	2	3	4	5
I try very hard not to hurt other people's feelings	1	2	3	4	5
I lose my temper and "let people have it" when I'm angry	1	2	3	4	5
I make sure that doing what I want will not cause problems for others	1	2	3	4	5
I stop and think things through before I act	1	2	3	4	5
I say something mean to someone who has upset me	1	2	3	4	5
I make sure I stay out of trouble	1	2	3	4	5

I feel very happy	1	2	3	4	5
I think about other people's feelings before I do something they might not like	1	2	3	4	5
I feel that I am really good at things I try to do	1	2	3	4	5
When someone tries to start a fight with me, I fight back	1	2	3	4	5

The following questions are about you as an individual.

Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal attitudes and traits. Read each item and decide whether the statement is ***True*** or ***False*** as it pertains to you personally. Circle **T (True)** or **F (False).**

I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.	T	F	There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.	T	F
I have never intensely disliked anyone.	T	F	I am always courteous, even to people who are disagreeable.	T	F
There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.	T	F	When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it.	T	F
I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrong doings.	T	F	I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.	T	F
I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.	T	F	I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favours of me.	T	F

Below is a list of personal characteristics.

Please look at each one in turn, and indicate the extent to which you believe each is a characteristic of you generally, by writing a number from 1 to 7 next to the word, using the rating scale 1=*never/almost never,* 2=*rarely,* 3=*seldom,* 4=*sometimes,* 5=*often,* 6=*usually,* 7=*always.*:

Uncharacteristic				Characteristic		
Never/ Almost never	Rarely	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Usually	Always
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

___ Helpful	___ Courteous	___ Uncooperative	___ Demanding
___ Disorganised	___ Hard-working	___ Conscientious	___ Careless
___ Calm	___ Relaxed	___ Anxious	___ Worried
___ Creative	___ Insightful	___ Artistic	___ Inventive
___ Silent	___ Shy	___ Withdrawn	___ Energetic
___ Selfish	___ Understanding	___ Agreeable	___ Pleasant
___ Efficient	___ Forgetful	___ Lazy	___ Competent
___ Fearful	___ Depressed	___ Moody	___ Stable
___ Idealistic	___ Unimaginative	___ Intelligent	___ Curious
___ Sociable	___ Talkative	___ Extroverted	___ Quiet

Below are a number of statements about the way you act as an individual.

Read each statement and indicate how often have you done each of them. Circle the number that best describes how often you have behaved this way, where 1 = *I have never done this*, 2 = *I have done this once*, 3 = *I have done this a few times*, 4 = *I have done this several times*, 5 = *I have done this many times.*

	Never	Once	A few	Several	Many times
Snubbing a friend when you are with a group you want to impress	1	2	3	4	5
Breaking a promise without good reason	1	2	3	4	5
Agreeing with people you really disagree with so that they will accept you	1	2	3	4	5
Pretending to like someone you detest	1	2	3	4	5
Gossiping about a friend behind his or her back	1	2	3	4	5
Making a promise to a friend with no intention of keeping it	1	2	3	4	5
Failing to stand up for what you believe in because you want to be accepted by the "in" crowd	1	2	3	4	5
Complaining to others about your friends or family members	1	2	3	4	5
Telling others information given to you in confidence	1	2	3	4	5
Lying to a friend	1	2	3	4	5
Making a promise to a family member with no intention of keeping it	1	2	3	4	5
Failing to stand up for a friend when he or she is being criticised or belittled by others	1	2	3	4	5
Taking family members for granted	1	2	3	4	5
Lying to your parents or spouse about your activities	1	2	3	4	5
Wishing that something bad would happen to someone you dislike	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you
For your participation.

Appendix K. Study 4 Ethics Approval

Australian Catholic University
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne

Human Research Ethics Committee

Committee Approval Form

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: Prof. Barry Fallon Melbourne Campus
Co-Investigators: Melbourne Campus
Student Researcher: Alexandra West Melbourne Campus

Ethics approval has been granted for the following project: Rules and Expectations in Romantic Relationships.
for the period: 30.06.05 to 30.12.05
Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number: V200405 94

The following standard conditions as stipulated in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* (1999) apply:

(i) that Principal Investigators / Supervisors provide, on the form supplied by the Human Research Ethics Committee, annual reports on matters such as:
- security of records
- compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
- compliance with special conditions, and

(ii) that researchers report to the HREC immediately any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol, such as:
- proposed changes to the protocol
- unforeseen circumstances or events
- adverse effects on participants

The HREC will conduct an audit each year of all projects deemed to be of more than minimum risk. There will also be random audits of a sample of projects considered to be of minimum risk on all campuses each year.

Within one month of the conclusion of the project, researchers are required to complete a *Final Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer.

If the project continues for more than one year, researchers are required to complete an *Annual Progress Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer within one month of the anniversary date of the ethics approval.

Signed: ....Ly Hajchuk.... Date: 06.06.2005
(Research Services Officer, ~~McAuley~~ MELBOURNE Campus)