To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewtih a thesis written by Justin Dean Smith entitled “How Relational Views Influence Adolescents’ Subjective Understanding of Romantic Relationship Interactions.” I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Psychology.

Deborah P. Welsh, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance:

Todd Moore

Robert G. Wahler

Acceptance for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges
Vice Provost and Dean of the
Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records)

HOW RELATIONAL VIEWS INFLUENCE ADOELSCENTS' SUBJECTIVE UNDERSTANDING OF ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP INTERACTIONS

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Arts

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Justin Dean Smith

December 2007

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank all those who helped me to complete my Master of Arts in Psychology. I would like to thank Dr. Deborah Welsh for her guidance and effort in illuminating to me the field of adolescent romantic relationships and for guiding me through the research process. In addition, I would like to thank NICHD for supporting the STARR project (Grant No. RO1 HD39931). I would also like to thank Dr. Paula Fite for her efforts in guiding me through Structural Equation Modeling for this paper. I would also like to thank Drs. Robert Wahler and Todd Moore for serving on my committee.

I would also like to thank my family without whose support this work would not have been possible.

Abstract

The purpose of the current study is to examine the influence of relational views on adolescents' subjective understanding of interactions in the context of their romantic relationships. Relational view is an attachment system construct comprised of three specific measures of attachment: attachment style, rejection sensitivity and self-silencing. To examine the influence of relational views on individual's subjective understanding, we are employing an innovative multimodal methodology: The video-recall system (Welsh & Dickson, 2005). This system assesses adolescent participants' subjective understanding of their feelings and behaviors during a video-taped interaction with their romantic partner as well as trained observers' interpretations of the interaction. In order to isolate the pathway between relational views and the interpretation of the interaction, we control for the observer coding which provides a more objective and consistent interpretation of the interaction. This study is unique in our inclusion of both adolescent participants' perspectives of their interactions with their romantic partner as well as the perspectives of trained coders. 209 adolescent couple's were examined who completed the video-recall procedure as well as a series of questionnaires. We examine two outcomes: Power and Negative Affect.

Our hypothesis that adolescents who hold more vulnerable relational views will interpret their interactions more negatively was supported. Structural Equation Modeling in AMOS, which allowed for the use of latent variables, indicated that relational views directly influence interpretations of Power and Negative Affect in adolescents above and beyond what was expected based on the observers' ratings. This finding has important implications because it supports the tenets of general attachment theory in that it shows

that attachment not only influences the behaviors in an interaction but also the way those behaviors are interpreted. Possible explanations for the influence of relational views and their implications are discussed in further depth.

CONTENTS

Introduction and Background Research	1
Elements of the Relational View	2
The Current Study	7
Method	9
Participants	9
Procedure	10
Measures	10
Data Analysis	14
Results	15
Preliminary Analysis	17
Table 1	17
Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Relational View Construct	18
Figure 1	18
Hybrid Models	19
Figure 2	20
Discussion	21
Limitations and Future Directions	23
References	26
Vita	33

Adolescent romantic relationships can be very exciting or very stressful given the numerous challenges of relating in romantic contexts and the expectation of mastering romantic relationships (Larson, Clore, & Wood, 1999). One cause of such intense emotion and challenge in these relationships is the inherent need to make sense of them. Despite being a domain not yet encountered, adolescents do not enter the romantic arena devoid of previous experience in intimate relationships. The attachment system provides a lens through which the current situation may be viewed and then interpreted based on previous experiences (Bowlby, 1982). This lens through which we view and make sense of relationships has been termed a "relational view" (Furman & Wehner, 1994). Relational views refer to the preconceptions, expectations, and perceptions held by each individual about certain relationships. Relational views are intended to apply more generally and less rigidly than the internal working models typically thought of in relation to attachment theory (Furman & Simon, 2006). In addition, specific relational views are formed regarding different types of relationships, which are continuously reworked with each new experience. Furman and Wehner (1994) propose that relational views influence adolescents' behaviors during interactions and their interpretations of those interactions. The purpose of the current study is to examine the influence of adolescents' relational views on their interpretations of interactions with their romantic partner. Our study employs a multimodal measurement that allows for trained observers' interpretations to be controlled for, allowing for direct examination of the influence of the relational view on adolescents' subjective understanding of their interaction.

This study includes two outcomes: an affective and a behavioral outcome. The two outcomes are comprised of two measures each of related dimensions. Power, the behavioral outcome, is a composite of persuasion and conceding. Persuasion was seen as an attempt to gain power from the partner during the interaction while conceding was seen as relinquishing power to the partner. Discomfort, the affect outcome, is comprised of two affective dimensions of frustration and discomfort. These are two different yet highly related experiences of negative emotion. These four dimensions that make up the two outcomes were selected because of their conceptual link and because they are thought to be more ambiguous dimensions, and thus, would be more susceptible to the influence of relational views in order to make sense of them. The two dimensions of the Power outcome are persuasion (an attempt to gain power) and conceding (relinquishing power). The two dimensions of the Discomfort outcome are frustration and uncomfort, both of which are negative affective reactions to the interaction. It was on this conceptual basis that the two outcomes were derived from the four original dimensions.

Elements of the Relational View

We chose three interrelated elements that assess the global and specific nature of the relational view construct: attachment style, rejection sensitivity, and self-silencing. Despite their interrelatedness, each of the three aspects of our relational view provides a unique contribution to the construct as a whole, and when combined, provides both global views of relationships and views specific to romantic relationships.

Attachment styles are associated with interactions in romantic relationships and the interpretations each individual makes about that interaction. Attachment styles have

been shown to influence interactions of adolescent dating couples (Creasey & Hesson-McInnis, 2001; Furman & Simon, 2006) and young adult dating couples (Campbell, Simpson, Kashy, & Rholes, 2001; Furman & Simon, 2006; Treboux, Crowell, & Waters, 2004). A number of studies have also shown that the attachment system affects how individuals interpret interactions (Bradford, Feeney, & Campbell, 2002; Campbell, Simpson, Boldry, & Kashy, 2005; Collins, 1996; Creasey, Kershaw, & Boston, 1999; Roisman, Collins, Sroufe, & Egeland, 2005; Simpson, Rholes, & Phillips, 1996). Studies of adolescents' conflictual interactions found that insecure attachment styles predicted greater negativity in both behavior and perception of the interaction (Creasey & Hesson-McInnis, 2001; Creasey et al., 1999). In comparison, secure attachment has been associated with a host of positive relationship characteristics. For example, late adolescents with secure representations were more likely to be involved in an exclusive romantic relationship (Furman & Wehner, 1994), have higher relationship qualities (Simpson, 1990) and greater levels of intimacy (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Additionally, adolescence marks a time of attachment transition, which suggests that peer attachment is a more salient measure compared to parent-adolescent attachment. As parental relationships deteriorate in the eyes of adolescents, they move toward peers and away from parents as the primary attachment source, particularly in proximity-seeking and safe haven aspects of attachment (Allen & Land, 1999; Nickerson & Nagle, 2005).

Rejection sensitivity is a more specific element that provides a unique contribution to the relational view construct. Rejection sensitivity theory posits that previous experiences of caregiver, peer, or romantic partner rejection lead to activation of

a cognitive-affective processing system sensitive to cues of possible further rejection (Downey & Feldman, 1996). Rejection sensitive individuals may behave in ways that confirm their rejection expectancy or they may exhibit compliant behaviors aimed at thwarting rejection (Downey, Bonica, & Rincon, 1999; Downey & Feldman, 1996; Downey, Freitas, Michaelis, & Khouri, 1998; Purdie & Downey, 2000). These highly anxious individuals may be more sensitive to negative cues that signify changes in the level of possible rejection because they place greater importance on the negative aspects of their interactions (Gaelik, Bodenhausen, & Wyer, 1985). This anticipatory anxiety causes a rejection-sensitive individual to overreact to negative and ambiguous cues by the significant other, interpreting benign events as more negative than they actually are. Downey and Feldman's initial study (1996) with this construct indicated that young adults higher in rejection sensitivity were more likely to interpret their partner's ambiguous behaviors as being intentionally rejecting. Rejection sensitivity in the context of young adult dating couples has been linked to post-conflict anger and negativity (Downey et al., 1998) and greater hostility and conflict (Ayduk, Downey, Testa, Yen, & Shoda, 1999). Although not specific to romantic relationships, rejection sensitivity lends itself well to inclusion as an element of the relational view because of its influence on behavior and interpretation of interpersonal events.

The third element of relational views, self-silencing, is the only one posited to be specific to romantic relationships. Jack and Dill (1992) explicitly identify self-silencing as a specific cognitive schema primarily based on phenomenological experience of reality in the context of romantic relationships. Silencing the self theory posits that individuals

tend to suppress the expression of thoughts and opinions to their partner due to the perception that this self-expression would lead to a dissolution of the relationship and a loss of the romantic partner (Jack, 1991). Self-silencing can be adaptive, often serving to prolong the relationship, however, constant suppression of one's opinions and beliefs in the context of an intimate relationship can lead to loss of voice coinciding with a loss of one's unique sense of self and a lack of trust in the accuracy of one's opinions (Jack, 1991). Research with romantic couples shows links between high self-silencers and poorer marital adjustment (Thompson, 1995), higher levels of spouse intolerance and increased spousal criticism following a conflict (Thompson, 1995; Thompson, Whiffen, & Aube, 2001) and higher levels of depression attributed to the effects of self-silencing in a romantic relationship (Harper, Dickson, & Welsh, 2006; Thompson, 1995; Thompson et al., 2001). Self-silencing research with adult individuals has found similar results in regards to depression (Duarte & Thompson, 1999; Hart & Thompson, 1996; Jack & Dill, 1992; Page, Stevens, & Galvin, 1996) as well as leading to a decrease in achievement motivation (Spratt, Sherman, & Gilroy, 1998). Like couples' samples, a study of adolescent individuals also supports a relationship between higher self-silencing and increases in depression (Hart & Thompson, 1996). Harper, Dickson and Welsh (2006) found that self-silencing partially mediated the link between rejection sensitivity and depression in adolescent dating couples.

Self-silencing, like rejection sensitivity, lends itself well to relational view theory due to its influence on behaviors and interpretations of relationships. Further support for its inclusion in the measurement of relational views in the context of adolescent romantic

relationships comes from its origin as a construct specific to romantic dyads. Evidence supports the use of these three elements because they are each a part of the attachment system, but together they encompass far more than just attachment style or security/insecurity dimensions and should provide a more complete picture of the lens used to view romantic relationships than any one element alone.

Relational views are similar to overall attachment security or insecurity but relational views encompass more than just security. Thus, we have chosen language that is less polarizing to describe relational views even though relational views may be seen as being in a continuum. A person who scores high in rejection sensitivity (more sensitive to rejection) and self-silencing (more self-silencing behaviors) as well as having a more insecure attachment style is classified as possessing a more vulnerable relational view. The opposing, healthier classification is a less vulnerable relational view. We have chosen this language due to the overarching nature of relational views as lenses through which relationships are viewed and because adolescents' are thought to be more or less vulnerable to the negative influence of the relational view based on their overall attachment security.

Empirical research in this area has used videotaped interactions of couples involved in a conflictual conversation to activate the attachment system. Feeney (1999) theorized a strong connection between working models of attachment and their activation during times of conflict, especially when there is a perceived threat to the future of the relationship. Previous studies examining romantic couple interactions support the link between a general insecure attachment and negative behaviors during a laboratory-based

conflictual interaction (Campbell et al., 2005; Creasey & Hesson-McInnis, 2001; Creasey et al., 1999; Murray, Bellavia, Rose, & Griffin, 2003; Murray, Griffin, Rose, & Bellavia, 2003). These studies have relied on one of two sources of information, that coming from trained observers or coming from the study participants themselves. Campbell et al., (2005) and Furman and Simon (2006) each noted that one limitation of their study was the absence of independent observers that could have confirmed how each partner was affected during the interaction. The current study addresses these issues using a multimodal methodology that includes multiple perspectives of the interaction.

Previous research has shown that attachment is related to both behavior and interpretations in a variety of age groups as well as in and out of romantic dyads. These studies have employed the use of a conflictual situation and observational methodology to examine this relationship. Our study seeks to add to the current literature on this topic as well as address some of the limitations of previous studies. Understanding of the influence of relational views on how adolescents' make sense of their romantic relationships has implications in the developmental and social domains as well as the clinical field.

The Current Study

The purpose of the current study is to examine the influence of relational views on adolescents' subjective understanding of interactions in the context of their romantic relationships. We hypothesize that adolescents who hold more vulnerable relational views will interpret their interactions more negatively. To examine the influence of relational views on individual's subjective understanding, we are employing an

innovative multimodal methodology: The video-recall system (Welsh & Dickson, 2005). This system assesses adolescent participants' subjective understanding of their feelings and behaviors during a video-taped interaction with their romantic partner as well as trained observers' interpretations of the interaction. In order to isolate the pathway between relational views and the interpretation of the interaction, we control for the observer coding which provides a more objective and consistent interpretation of the interaction. This study is unique in our inclusion of both adolescent participants' perspectives of their interactions with their romantic partner as well as the perspectives of trained coders. This study's innovative methodology will also inform general attachment theory because the influence on interpretations can be examined independently while controlling for the influence of the behaviors during the interaction.

Method

Participants

Data for the current study came from the Study of Tennessee Adolescent Romantic Relationships (STARR; Welsh, 1999), an NICHD funded project (Grant No. RO1 HD39931). Couples for the STARR Project were recruited from a previous study of adolescent dating behaviors that consisted of 2201 students who attended seventeen East Tennessee High Schools. The selected schools represented rural, suburban, and urban demography as well as socioeconomic diversity. Adolescents who were in a romantic relationship and met the age and dating requirements were mailed consent forms and contacted one week later regarding their willingness to participate. Participants were 209 male-female dating couples (418 individuals) that had been dating for at least four weeks. Ages ranged from 14-21 at the time of data collection. Couples were paid $60.00 for their participation in approximately three hours of data collection. The University Institutional Review Board approved all procedures and informed consent was obtained from all participants and parents of participants under the age of 18.

The mean age of the participants in the study at the time of data collection was 17 years of age, with a range from 14 to 21 years of age. The majority of the sample identified themselves as Caucasian (90.5%), with the remainder of the sample identifying themselves as African-American (6.2%), Asian (1.2%), Hispanic (0.7%), Native American (0.5%) and "Other" (0.7%). Approximately half of the sample identified their neighborhoods as suburban (46.7%), with the rest of the sample reporting rural (20.6%) and urban (31.8%). At the time of data collection, couples in the study had been dating

for an average of 44.54 weeks (approximately 10 months) with a range of 4 weeks (the minimum criteria for participation in the study) to 260 weeks (exactly 5 years).

Procedure

Couples came to the laboratory for a total of three hours of data collection. Initially, couples completed a number of questionnaires including a demographic questionnaire and the Adolescent Couple's Issues Checklist (Deborah P. Welsh, Grello, Dickson, & Harper, 2001) which includes 21 issues of disagreement common to adolescent dating couples. Couples then completed the Video-recall Procedure. Immediately following the recorded conversations, one couple member viewed the interaction using the video-recall system (Deborah P. Welsh & Dickson, 2005) while their partner completed a series of questionnaires. Participants first rated their own affect and behavior during the two conversations and then watched the conversations a second time to rate their partner's affect and behavior. The couple members then switched tasks.

Measures

Demographic Questionnaire. A demographic questionnaire was used to obtain background information on the couples for statistical control to provide a description of the sample. Questions relevant to the current study included sex, age, length of relationship, and parent's education level.

Interaction task and Video-Recall Procedure (Welsh & Dickson, 2005). Adolescent couples participated in an interaction session consisting of three recorded conversations (Capaldi & Crosby, 1997). First, couple members were asked to plan a party together for five minutes. This conversation topic was chosen as a warm-up to allow the couple to

become more comfortable with the situation. In the second and third conversations (8 min 40 sec for each conversation), couples discussed issues of disagreement previously selected independently by each partner from the Adolescent Couples' Issues Checklist (Welsh, Grello, Dickson, & Harper, 2001). The second and third conversations were counterbalanced for whether the couple discussed the male or female issue first. Videotaped instructions were given to the couples at the beginning of the interaction task and at the beginning and end of each conversation topic. The instruction clips ensured standardization and ensured the privacy of the participants while also lessening disruption by the researchers.

The video-recall procedure consists of each couple member separately viewing and rating the middle 6 min 40 sec of each conflictual issues conversations twice. In the first viewing, participants rated their own affect and behavior in 20-s segments. After each segment, the computer paused the video for the participants to rate themselves on seven different affective and behavioral dimensions selected to represent significant affective and cognitive constructs linked with developmental and marital literature. Each of the dimensions appeared on the computer monitor as a statement. For example, "I was feeling FRUSTRATED by my partner" and "I was trying to PERSUADE my partner," etc. Using a 5-point rating scale, where 0 = Not At All and 4 = Very Much, this process was repeated for all seven codes every 20 seconds of the interaction. The seven dimensions addressed the degree to which the individual being rated was conceding, connected, conflictual, frustrated, persuasive, sarcastic, or uncomfortable. After the participant rated their own feelings and behaviors for the two conversations, they then

watched the conversations again rating their partner's feelings and behaviors. For the current study, conflict, connection, and sarcasm were not included. Psychometrically, sarcasm was unable to be included due to low inter-rater reliability for observer's ratings of girl's sarcasm ($\alpha = 0.42$). Conflict and Connection were not included on conceptual grounds. We felt that they were too easily interpreted and would not be subject to influence of relational views.

In addition, three trained clinical psychology graduate student coders, two females (aged 22 and 25) and one male (age 27), rated the videotapes. The coders spent 12 months (at 3 hours per week) learning the coding system and obtained adequate levels of inter-rater reliability. Meetings were held as coding began to discuss coding problems. Coders rated the conversations in much the same way as the participants. Coders separately viewed the latter two conversations in 20-sec segments and were automatically prompted by the computer to rate each of the seven dimensions following each segment. The dimensions rated appeared as statements on the computer screen similar to those statements given to couple members (e.g., "The male was being conlfictual (or challenging) with his partner). The same 0-4 scale was used for the observers as well. Like each couple member, coders also viewed and rated the interaction twice, focusing on the male partner or the female partner the first time and the other the second viewing. The order of which partner was rated first, male or female, was counterbalanced. To determine inter-rater reliability of the behavioral/affective dimensions, trained coders' ratings were separately aggregated, and a mean score was calculated for each dimension. Intra-class correlation coefficients for the aggregated mean ratings were satisfactory: Power ($\alpha = 0.76$) and Discomfort ($\alpha = 0.80$).

Attachment Style. Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment *(IPPA; Armsden & Greenberg, 1987)* was used to assess perceptions of current friendships. The adolescents rated 25 5-point Likert scale items related to peer trust, peer communication, and peer alienation. Sample items included: "My friends respect my feelings" and "my friends understand me." The 25 items were then summed, reversing the peer alienation items, to generate a composite score of peer attachment quality. This composite measure has shown satisfactory test-retest reliability and has been related to other measures of family environment and adolescent psychosocial functioning (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). Scores showed satisfactory internal consistency in the current sample for males ($\alpha = 0.86$) and for females ($\alpha = 0.90$).

Rejection Sensitivity. The Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (RSQ; *Downey & Feldman, 1996*) is comprised of 18 situations designed to assess rejection anxiety and expectation of rejection (e.g. "You ask your boyfriend/girlfriend to move in with you"). Each situation is rated by participants on a six-point scale of their level of anxiety for each situation (1=unconcerned, 6=very concerned) and the likelihood that their partner would answer in a compliant manner (1= very unlikely, 6= very likely). Overall scores are calculated using the sum of the products of the level of anxiety and the rejection expectancy scores. In the present sample, scores were high in internal consistency for males ($\alpha = 0.86$) and for females ($\alpha = 0.90$).

Self-silencing. The Silencing the Self Subscale (STSS; *Jack & Dill, 1992*) includes nine-items and measures the extent to which self-silencing occurs in order to prolong the intimate relationship or avoid conflict (e.g. "I try to bury my feelings when I

think they will cause trouble in my close relationships"). Empirical evidence suggests acceptable reliability and construct validity exist in the Silencing the Self subscale for both males and females (Remen, Chambless, & Rodebaugh, 2002; Stevens & Galvin, 1995), Respondents rate how strongly they agree with a statement on a five-point scale regarding their current dating relationship (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Scores on this subscale ranged from 0 to 45, with higher scores indicating stronger beliefs and behaviors of self-silencing. The internal reliability was acceptable for this sample (males: $\alpha = 0.77$; females $\alpha = 0.77$).

Data Analysis

Of the original 209, three couple dyads were not able to complete the Video-recall procedure due to issues with the technology as data was collected. Accordingly, these couples were removed from the dataset. Additionally, sixteen individuals were deleted because they had missing data for one or more of the measures comprising the relational view construct. The total number of participants included in the final analysis was 390, which accounted for a 5% loss of the total study sample suggesting that list-wise deletion was an appropriate strategy for handling missing data (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998).

Preliminary analysis indicated high correlations between couple members' rating of their own feelings and behaviors and their ratings of their partners' feelings and behaviors: conceding $r = 0.74$, persuading $r = 0.85$, frustration $r = 0.84$, and uncomfort to $r = 0.76$. This finding indicates that our adolescent couple members viewed their partners in a similar way as they viewed themselves during the interaction (Welsh & Dickson,

2005). Because of this high correlation, a mean was taken between adolescents' interpretations of their own feelings and behaviors and the interpretations they made regarding their partner, which comprise the adolescents' interpretation outcome. Observers' ratings were also combined in this way in order to be consistent.

Data analysis was conducted using AMOS 7.0 (Arbuckle, 2006). Model fit was examined using chi-square statistic, Comparative Fit Index (Bentler, 1990), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (Steiger, 1990). Chi-square statistics measure the amount of discrepancy between the unrestricted sample covariance matrix and the restricted covariance matrix. Small chi-squares correspond to better fit to the data. CFI provides a measure of complete covariation of a hypothesized model with the independence model. A value greater than .95 indicates a good fit to the data (Bentler, 1992). RMSEA values less than .05 indicate good model fit and values up to .08 represent reasonable errors of approximation (Browne & Cudeck, 1993).

First, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to determine the measurement of the relational view latent variable. Once the analysis of the measurement model was complete and acceptable fit was found, the model testing the influence of the relational view on the interpretations made by each partner was estimated using hybrid structural equation modeling (SEM;Hoyle, 1991). The hybrid SEM model technique was used for a number of reasons. First, SEM allows for the simultaneous estimation of all the paths in the model, providing estimates of each path that control for all other variables in the model. Second, SEM can address latent variables so that the paths between elements in a model can be estimated without the biasing effects of measurement error associated with

particular instruments (Hoyle, 1991). Third, hybrid models in SEM simultaneously perform confirmatory factor analysis on all latent variables in the model as well as estimating the parameters of the path analysis.

Results

Preliminary Analysis

Two outcomes were examined in this analysis, Power and Discomfort, which were derived from four coded affective/behavioral dimensions. The Power outcome combines two of the dimensions: conceding and persuading behaviors, r=0.73. The Discomfort outcome combines two other dimensions: feelings of uncomfort and frustration, r=0.75. Ideally, latent variables would have been used to combine the two dimensions into a latent construct for each outcome. However, models with factors that only have two indicators are prone to estimation problems and can lead to

Table 1
Intercorrelations Between Measures and Potential Moderators

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
						Participants (n = 390)						
1. Gender	-	.01	-.20**	.04	.06	-.31**	-.07	-.29**	-.11*	-.04	-.05	-.11*
2. Weeks Dating		-	.41**	.09	.05	-.06	-.10*	-.15**	-.04	.06	-.01	-.10
3. Age			-	.18**	.02	.08	-.01	-.06	.01	.03	.03	-.01
4. Father's Education				-	.53**	-.18**	-.17**	-.19**	-.08	-.05	-.14**	-.11*
5. Mother's Education					-	-.15**	-.15**	-.11*	-.02	.05	-.08	-.12*
6. Attachment Style						-	.28**	.33**	.23**	.14**	.23**	.25**
7. Rejection Sensitivity							-	.26**	.18**	.09	.14**	.16**
8. Self-Silencing								-	.19**	.08	.13**	.19**
9. Conceding									-	.73**	.63**	.63**
10. Persuasion										-	.64**	.46**
11. Frustration											-	.75**
12. Uncomfort												-
Mean	1.50	46.19	17.07	3.35	3.50	-4.10	8.05	2.54	0.72	1.25	0.90	0.83
Standard Deviation	0.50	47.44	1.64	1.69	1.58	0.55	3.03	0.75	0.72	0.92	0.92	0.89

Note. Correlations were calculated using a Pearson's r. p-values are based on a two-tailed test of significance.
* indicates a p-value less than .05. ** indicates a p-value less than .01.

underidentification (Kline, 2005), which was the case in this analysis. Alternatively, *z*-scores were calculated for the four affective/behavioral dimensions. A mean was taken between conceding and persuading to form the Power outcome variable and a mean was taken between uncomfort and frustration to form the Discomfort outcome variable. The same process was applied to the observers' ratings and the adolescents' ratings.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Relational View Construct

The relational view construct was estimated as a latent variable with three indicators. The inclusion of the three indicators resulted in a fully saturated model. A fully saturated model has zero degrees of freedom, which results in a perfect fit to the data. Therefore, model fit indices are

not reported (Kline, 2005). Standardized regression weights were statistically significant and greater than .40, indicating that all factors contributed to the latent construct.

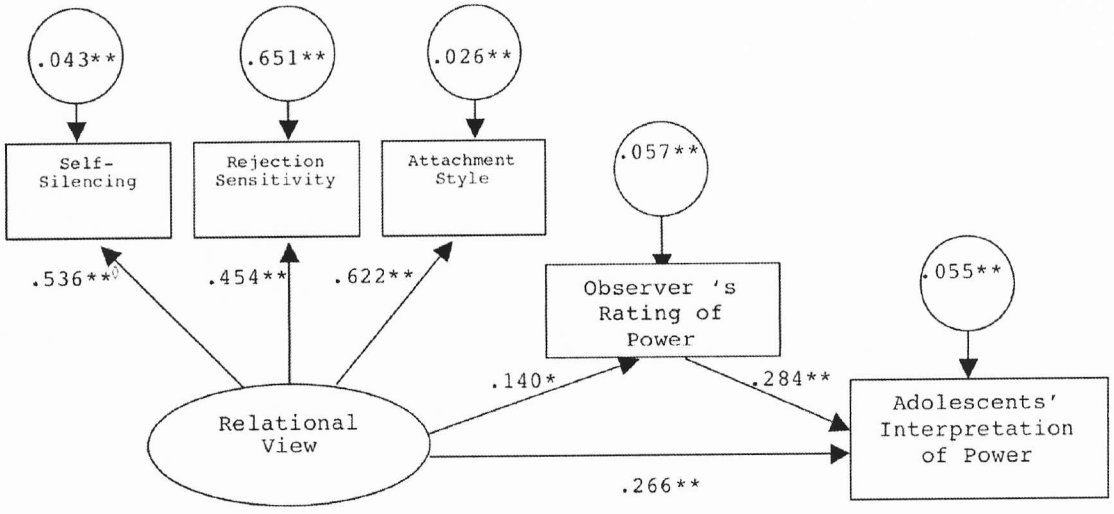


Figure 1.

NOTE: ◊ indicates factor loading of the reference variable were set to 1.00. Standardized weights are reported. *indicates *p*-values less than .05. **indicates *p*-values less than .001.

Variance of the factors was also significant indicating individual scores vary on the construct.

Hybrid Models

Power Model. The hybrid model for the Power outcome is represented in Figure 1. The model provided a good fit to the data: χ^2 (4)=3.2, CFI=1.00 and RMSEA< .000. Relational view was significantly related to the observers' ratings of Power, and observers' ratings of Power were significantly related to adolescents' interpretations. Even after accounting for the observers' ratings, the direct effect between relational view and the adolescents' interpretation of power was significant. Confidence limits of the indirect effects were calculated using the *M* test described in MacKinnon, Lockwood, and Williams (2004). The *M* test has been found to be less biased than other strategies used to test for indirect effects (MacKinnon et al., 2004). The 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect (0.092) was -1.03 to 1.49, suggesting that the indirect effect was not significant.

Discomfort Model. The hybrid model for the Discomfort outcome is represented in Figure 2. The model provided good fit to the data: χ^2(4)=2.2, CFI=1.00 and RMSEA< .000. There was a significant direct effect between relational view and the adolescents' interpretations of Discomfort. Additionally, the pathway between observers' ratings of Discomfort and adolescents' interpretations was significant. However, the pathway between relational view and the observers' ratings of Discomfort was only marginally significant (p=.068). The *M* test was again used to evaluate the indirect effect (0.085) and results indicate a non-significant effect (95% CI = 0.10 to -0.07).

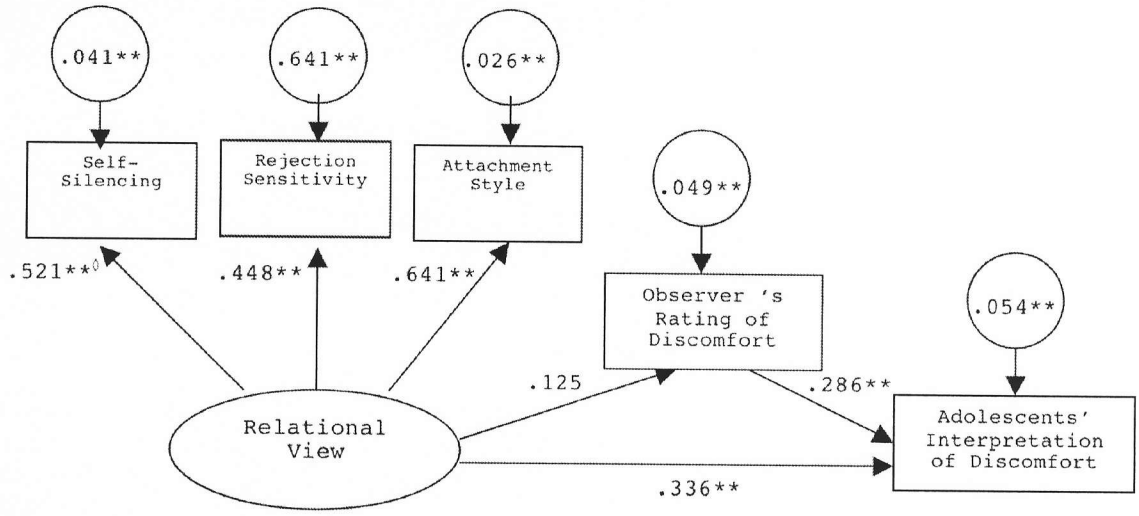


Figure 2.

NOTE: ◊ indicates factor loadings of the reference variable were set to 1.00. Standardized weights are reported. *indicates *p*-values less than .05. **indicates *p*-values less than .001.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the influence of relational views on the interpretations adolescents' make regarding interactions with their romantic partners. We employed an innovative, multimodal methodology to examine the couple members' subjective understanding of their relationship as well as the perspective of trained coders. The inclusion of three separate perspectives of the same interaction is unique in this area of research and addresses the limitations recognized in other studies. Our hypothesis that possessing a more vulnerable relational view would be associated with greater negativity in adolescents' interpretations was supported. Relational views, an attachment system construct, significantly influence the way in which adolescent romantic couple members make sense of their interactions. This result supports general tenets of attachment theory and confirms the importance of the role of relational views in understanding adolescent romantic relationships.

This study has a number of important implications. First, our findings support two important tenets of general attachment theory. The assertion that attachment influences behaviors during interactions (Bowlby, 1982) has been widely supported (Campbell et al., 2001; Furman & Simon, 2006; Treboux et al., 2004). The direct influence of relational views on behavior can be seen in the observers' ratings of the interaction. The Power outcome showed a stronger influence on observer's ratings of behavior than did the Discomfort outcome, which was only marginally significant. The significance of the Power outcome may be due to the more behavioral and objective nature compared with the Discomfort outcome despite similar inter-rater correlations for each outcome. Our

findings also reveal that relational views effect not only the way adolescents interact with their partner but also how they *interpret* those interactions – a key component of attachment theory that has yet to be demonstrated in empirical research.

The results also contribute to the literature on relational views and adolescent romantic relationships. Relational views influence how adolescents perceive discomfort and power struggles. Adolescents' who hold more vulnerable relational views are more likely to perceive more negatively above and beyond the ratings of the observers. This finding could inform clinical work with adolescents in romantic relationships in that both the behaviors and the interpretations need to be targeted for change. Relational views are linked to behaviors but the influence goes above and beyond behavior alone and also influences the interpretations adolescents make about the behavior. In addition, this study shows that affect is more open to the influence of relational views than behaviors. Relational views exerted greater influence on the interpretation of Discomfort than Power, which we believe is because affect is more subjective and ambiguous causing the adolescent to rely on their relational view to make sense of those feelings.

We believe that relational views are activated during interactions between adolescent romantic partners for a number of reasons. First, adolescents enter into romantic relationships with preconceptions of how the relationship will be that is based on previous experiences in relationship. Second, adolescents' have certain expectations regarding the relationship and their partner, which includes explanations of their partner's feelings and behaviors. Third, the novelty of this domain provides little previous experience from which to draw conclusions about the current situation. Adolescents'

must instead rely on their previous experiences of similar relationships (adolescent-parent, adolescent-peer) to make sense of the current interaction. We believe that relational views provide the lens through which the relationship is viewed because the relational view comes from previous experiences in other close relationships. When confronted with a situation that the adolescent is not familiar with, relational views are activated which provides a background from which to interpret their interaction. Fourth, we believe that the ambiguous nature of the dimensions examined in this study also play a role in the influence of the relational view. Because the four dimensions used to form the outcome measures are not always clear-cut and straightforward, the adolescent is forced to make an interpretation that is based on their own subjective view. We believe that this understanding is directly related to their relational view. For example, in line with our hypothesis, an adolescent whose relational view is more vulnerable will more likely interpret ambiguous cues from their partner as more negative than they actually are. This finding supports previous research that found that insecure attachment styles predicted greater perception of negativity by adolescents' during conflictual interactions (Creasey & Hesson-McInnis, 2001; Creasey et al., 1999).

Limitations and Future Directions

Our study has a number of limitations that need to be addressed. Despite being an accurate representation of the region from which the data was collected, our sample lacks ethnic and racial diversity. Our sample is also only comprised of male-female dyads. Gender roles in regards to the perception and interpretation of Power may be especially sensitive to male-female couples (Welsh, Galliher, Kawaguchi, & Rostosky, 1999).

Examination of same sex couples warrants further examination. On the other hand, our sample has good geographic diversity represented by a good distribution between rural, suburban, and urban locations. Socioeconomic status is widely represented as well.

The influence of relational views may be more pronounced in romantic relationships during the adolescent years when this domain is still relatively new. A longitudinal methodology examining changes through and after the adolescent years would address this concern and also shed light on the mechanisms driving the influence of the relational view. Subsequent analysis examined potential moderation of age and length of relationship using a step-wise, multiple group approach. Neither were found to moderate the relationship between relational view and interpretation. The absence of age and length of relationship moderation may indicate that this is not a developmental issue or it may simply mean that the influence is salient throughout the age range of this sample and length of relationship cannot compensate for lack of development.

Future directions of this area of research include an examination of how the relational view may predict other aspects of the relationship such as satisfaction, depression, or break-up. It seems that the overall quality of attachment and the relational view one brings into romantic relationships during adolescence is an important aspect and may be related to much more than just interpretations of the interaction itself.

References

References

Allen, J. P., & Land, D. (1999). Attachment in Adolescence. In J. C. P. R. Shaver (Ed.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (pp. 319-335). New York: Guilford.

Arbuckle, J. L. (2006). Amos (Version 7.0). Chicago: SPSS.

Armsden, G. C., & Greenberg, M. T. (1987). The inventory of parent and peer attachmnent: Individual differences and their relationship to psychological well-being in adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 16*, 427-454.

Ayduk, O., Downey, G., Testa, A., Yen, Y., & Shoda, Y. (1999). Does rejection elicit hostility in rejection sensitive women? *Social Cognition, 17*(2), 245-271.

Bartholomew, K., & Horowitz, L. (1991). Attachment styles among young adults: A test of the four-category model. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 61*, 226-244.

Bentler, P. M. (1990). Comparative fit indexes in structural models. *Psychological Bulletin, 107*, 238-246.

Bentler, P. M. (1992). On the fit of models to covariances and methodology to the *Bulletin. Psychological Bulletin, 112*, 400-404.

Bowlby, J. (1982). Attachment and loss: Retrospect and prospect. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 52*(4), 664-678.

Bradford, S. A., Feeney, J. A., & Campbell, L. (2002). Links between attachment orientations and dispositional and diary-based measures of disclosure in dating

couples: A study of actor and partner effects. *Personal Relationships, 9*(4), 491-506.

Browne, W. M., & Cudeck, R. (1993). Alternative ways of assessing model fit. In K. A. B. a. J. S. Long (Ed.), *Testing structural equation models* (pp. 136-162). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Campbell, L., Simpson, J. A., Boldry, J., & Kashy, D. A. (2005). Perceptions of Conflict and Support in Romantic Relationships: The Role of Attachment Anxiety. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 88*(3), 510-531.

Campbell, L., Simpson, J. A., Kashy, D. A., & Rholes, W. S. (2001). Attachment orientations, dependence, and behavior in a stressful situation: An application of the actor-partner interdependence model. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*(6), 821-843.

Capaldi, D. M., & Crosby, L. (1997). Observed and reported psychological and physical aggression in young, at-risk couples. *Social Development, 6*(2), 184-206.

Collins, N. L. (1996). Working models of attachment: Implications for explanation, emotion, and behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 71*(4), 810-832.

Creasey, G., & Hesson-McInnis, M. (2001). Affective responses, cognitive appraisals, and conflict tactics in late adolescent romantic relationships: Associations with attachment orientations. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 48*(1), 85-96.

Creasey, G., Kershaw, K., & Boston, A. (1999). Conflict management with friends and romantic partners: The role of attachment and negative mmod regulation expectations. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 28*, 523-543.

Downey, G., Bonica, C., & Rincon, C. (1999). Rejection sensitivity and adolescent romantic relationships. In W. B. Furman, Bradford; Fiering, Candice (Ed.), *The development fo romantic relationships in adolescence* (pp. 148-174). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Downey, G., & Feldman, S. I. (1996). Implications of rejection sensitivity for intimate relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 70*(6), 1327-1343.

Downey, G., Freitas, A. L., Michaelis, B., & Khouri, H. (1998). The self-fulfilling prophecy in close relationships: Rejection sensitivity and rejection by romantic partners. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 75*(2), 545-560.

Duarte, L. M., & Thompson, J. M. (1999). Sex differences in self-silencing. *Psychological Reports, 85*(1), 145-161.

Furman, W., & Simon, V. A. (2006). Actor and Partner Effects of Adolescents' Romantic Working Models and Styles on Interactions with Romantic Partners. *Child Development, 77*(3), 588-604.

Furman, W., & Wehner, E. A. (1994). Romantic views: Toward a theory of adolescent romantic relationships. In R. Montemayor, Adams, G., & Gullotta, T.P. (Ed.), *Advances in adolescent development; An annual book series* (Vol. 6, pp. 168-195). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Gaelik, K., Bodenhausen, G. V., & Wyer, R. S. (1985). Emotional communication in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 49*(1246-1265).

Hair, J., Anderson, R., Tatham, R., & Black, W. (1998). *Multivariate data analysis* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.

Harper, M. S., Dickson, J. W., & Welsh, D. P. (2006). Self-Silencing and Rejection Sensitivity in Adolescent Romantic Relationships. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 35*(3), 459-467.

Hart, B. I., & Thompson, J. M. (1996). Gender role characteristics and depressive symptomatology among adolescents. *Journal of Early Adolescence, 16*(4), 407-426.

Hoyle, R.-H. (1991). Evaluating measurement models in clinical research: Covariance structure analysis of latent variable models of self-conception. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 59*(1), 67-76.

Jack, D. C. (1991). Silencing the self: Women and depression.

Jack, D. C., & Dill, D. (1992). The Silencing the Self Scale: Schemas of intimacy associated with depression in women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 16*(1), 97-106.

Kline, R. B. (2005). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford.

Larson, R. W., Clore, G. L., & Wood, G. A. (1999). The emotions of romantic relationships: Do they wreak havoc on adolescents? , 19-49.

MacKinnon, D.-P., Lockwood, C.-M., & Williams, J. (2004). Confidence Limits for the Indirect Effect: Distribution of the Product and Resampling Methods. *Multivariate Behavioral Research, 39*(1), 99-128.

Murray, S. L., Bellavia, G. M., Rose, P., & Griffin, D. W. (2003). Once hurt, twice hurtful: How perceived regard regulates daily marital interactions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*(1), 126-147.

Murray, S. L., Griffin, D. W., Rose, P., & Bellavia, G. M. (2003). Calibrating the sociometer: The relational contingencies of self-esteem. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 85*(1), 63-84.

Nickerson, A. B., & Nagle, R. J. (2005). Parent and Peer Attachment in Late Childhood and Early Adolescence (Vol. 25, pp. 223-249).

Page, J. R., Stevens, H. B., & Galvin, S. L. (1996). Relationships between depression, self-esteem, and self-silencing behavior. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 15*(4), 381-396.

Purdie, V., & Downey, G. (2000). Rejection sensitivity and adolescent girls' vulnerability to relationship-centered difficulties. *Child Maltreatment: Journal of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, 5*(4), 338-349.

Remen, A. L., Chambless, D. L., & Rodebaugh, T. L. (2002). Gender differences in the construct validity of the Silencing the Self Scale. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 26*(2), 151-159.

Roisman, G. I., Collins, W. A., Sroufe, L. A., & Egeland, B. (2005). Predictors of young adults' representations of and behavior in their current romantic relationship:

Prospective tests of the prototype hypothesis. *Attachment and Human Development, 7*(2), 105-121.

Simpson, J. A. (1990). Influence of attachment styles on romantic relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 59*, 971-980.

Simpson, J. A., Rholes, W. S., & Phillips, D. (1996). Conflict in close relationships: An attachment perspective. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 71*(5), 899-914.

Spratt, C. L., Sherman, M. F., & Gilroy, F. D. (1998). Silencing the self and sex as predictors of achievement motivation. *Psychological Reports, 82*(1), 259-263.

Steiger, J. H. (1990). Structural model evaluation and modification: An interval estimation approach. *Multivariate Behavioral Research, 25*, 173-180.

Stevens, H. B., & Galvin, S. L. (1995). Structural findings regarding the Silencing the Self Scale. *Psychological Reports, 77*(1), 11-17.

Thompson, J. M. (1995). Silencing the self: Depressive symptomatology and close relationships. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 19*(3), 337-353.

Thompson, J. M., Whiffen, V. E., & Aube, J. A. (2001). Does self-silencing link perceptions of care from parents and partners with depressive symptoms? *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 18*(4), 503-516.

Treboux, D., Crowell, J. A., & Waters, E. (2004). When "New" Meets "Old": Configurations of Adult Attachment Representations and Their Implications for Marital Functioning. *Developmental Psychology, 40*(2), 295-314.

Welsh, D. P., & Dickson, J. W. (2005). Video-Recall Procedures for Examining Subjective Understanding in Observational Data. *Journal of Family Psychology, 19*(1), 62-71.

Welsh, D. P., Galliher, R. V., Kawaguchi, M. C., & Rostosky, S. S. (1999). Discrepancies in adolescent romantic couples' and observers' perceptions of couple interaction and their relationship to depressive symptoms. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 28*(6), 645-666.

Welsh, D. P., Grello, C. M., Dickson, J. W., & Harper, M. S. (2001). The adolescent couples' issues checklist. Department of Psychology, University of Tennessee.

Vita

Justin D. Smith was born in Kalispell, MT on February 3rd, 1983 and was raised in Kalispell as well. He went to Edgerton Elementary School until seventh grade when he went to Linderman School. He went to Kalispell Junior High School in eighth and ninth grades. He then graduated from Flathead High School in 2002. From there, he spent one semester at Montana State University in Bozeman, MT. He then transferred to Whitoworth College in Spokane, WA and graduated magna cum laude with a B.A. in Psychology in the Spring of 2005. He then completed a clinical psychology internship at Montana Academy in the Summer of 2005, after which he worked in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Washington in Seattle, WA.

Justin is currently pursuing a doctorate in clinical psychology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.