

The Association Between Satisfaction and Commitment Differs Across Marital Couple Types

Michelle Givertz

California State University, Chico

Chris Segrin

University of Arizona

Alesia Hanzal

University of Kansas

Research and theory indicate that satisfaction is a key determinant of commitment. Because some marriages are defined by a traditional ideology that anchors commitment in a value system rather than inherent rewards of the relationship, the association between satisfaction and commitment was expected to vary by couple type. Participants completed self-report measures of relational ideology, autonomy, communication, satisfaction, and several types of commitment. Results indicated that separate couples reported the lowest marital satisfaction and personal commitment of all the couple types. Separate couples also reported the lowest dedication commitment of all the couple types, whereas traditional couples reported the highest. The opposite pattern emerged for constraint commitment; separate couples reported the highest and traditional couples reported the lowest. Finally, actor-partner interdependence models revealed strong and positive associations between satisfaction and commitment for separate couples, as well as for wives in independent couples, but no such association among traditional couples.

Keywords: marital couple types; satisfaction; personal commitment; dedication commitment; constraint commitment

One of the more noteworthy findings to emerge from the social scientific study of marriage over the past 30 years is that there is substantial heterogeneity in marital processes and that this heterogeneity is far from random. It is now well established that there are distinct types of marriages, identifiable by such variables as ideology, communication patterns, and expression of affect (e.g., Fitzpatrick, 1984, 1988a; Gottman, 1993, 1994). What is particularly remarkable about these findings is that different researchers using vastly different methods have produced results that generally converge on a similar profile of the different types of naturally occurring marriages. However, as Fitzpatrick (1983) observed, "Placing couples into

relational types is an elegant but useless exercise unless membership within a type can predict other variables of theoretical interest" (p. 57). Since that time, a number of variables important to marital satisfaction and success have been explored among different types of marriage (Fitzpatrick & Best, 1979). However, one variable that has not received any attention in this context is commitment.

Commitment

Relational commitment plays a vital role in the success or failure of marriage. Recognizing that some dissatisfied spouses will stay in their marriages and that some reasonably satisfied spouses will occasionally leave their marriages, researchers have focused their attention on commitment as equally important to satisfaction for the understanding and explanation of marital quality and stability (Amato, 2007; Rusbult, Coolsen, Kirchner, & Clarke, 2006). The continual high rate of divorce, or more generally speaking of marital failure, is usefully investigated through the lens of commitment processes.

Although measures of satisfaction are frequently used to assess couple well-being (Berscheid & Regan, 2005), this focus fails to address marital persistence in the face of dissatisfying relationship experiences. All relationships go through periods of ups and downs, but the question remains, why do some relationships persist whereas others terminate? Theories of commitment suggest that relationship persistence is a function not only of the satisfying experiences that unite partners but also of the factors that make it difficult to exit a relationship (e.g., availability of alternative partners, social pressure to continue, difficult termination procedures, and irretrievable investments; Rusbult et al., 2006). The current investigation examines the relationship between satisfaction and commitment across couple types, with the prediction that the association between satisfaction and commitment varies as a function of couple type.

Commitment is largely a cognitive activity (Sternberg, 1986, 1988), reflective of the decisions people make with regard to their partner and relationship. Its formation, however, as well as its maintenance and change across time, is best conceived as being affected by emotional and behavioral aspects of relational life as well. Early theorizing on commitment adopted an exchange perspective, whereby commitment could be understood as a function of the profitability of a relationship. For example, interdependence theory (Kelley, 1979; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Rusbult & Van Lange, 1996; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959) is based on the notion that people act to maximize rewards and minimize costs and that rewarding relationships are also more satisfying. This theoretical perspective would suggest that dependence on and commitment to a relationship are largely a function of how satisfying the relationship is (Rusbult, 1983; Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). The theory also contains the concept of quality of alternatives in explaining dependence, recognizing that perceptions of low-quality alternatives are likely to have the effect of increasing dependence on a relationship.

Although satisfaction continues to be an important concept in understanding commitment processes (Givertz & Segrin, 2005), recent theorizing on commitment has incorporated a wider range of cognitive, affective, and behavioral variables. Surra, Hughes, and Jacquet (1999) suggest that commitment results from cultural, moral, social, and dyadic causes, originating from two different sources. One source is social-psychological (i.e., conditions that exist within the structure of the relationship and its environment), the other source is phenomenological (i.e., an individual's subjective reasons for being committed to a partner and relationship). Both sources work together and separately to affect commitment processes. Research emanating from this perspective has identified distinct commitment processes rooted in qualities of the relationship versus external events (Surra & Hughes, 1997). The key distinction between the two types of commitment processes is a function of whether relational partners rely on global or episodic assessments of relational events (Surra et al., 1999).

Other models of commitment processes have focused on the reciprocal nature of commitment and relational communication patterns (Ballard-Reisch & Weigel, 1999; Wieselquist, Rusbult, Foster, & Agnew, 1999). Building on principles of interdependence theory, Rusbult (1980, 1983) developed the investment model of commitment and added the concept of investment size to satisfaction and alternatives as a way to more fully explain relational dependence. Specifically, the model examines prerelationship behavior and transformation of motivation on commitment processes (Rusbult, Wieselquist, Foster, & Witcher, 1999). Commitment emerges as a result of circumstances of interdependence situations that come to characterize the relationship. Accordingly, if a partner acts in the best interest of the relationship, foregoing self-interest, it is suggestive of a strong commitment to the relationship and provides both partners with commitment information. To the extent that individuals observe their partners putting the relationship first, they also are more likely to do so. Ultimately, this model suggests that strong commitments promote a variety of prerelationship behaviors and relationship maintenance acts and that these are the specific means by which partners manage to sustain long-term, well-functioning relationships (Rusbult, Madoka, Coolsen, & Kirchner, 2004). Collectively, these approaches to commitment suggest that commitment processes are varied and complex.

Another important aspect of commitment research lies in the multidimensionality of the construct. As Surra's research suggests, commitment originates from both internal and external sources, and both sources work together and separately to affect commitment processes. Other researchers, in further specifying the concept, have found that rather than representing a unitary phenomenon, commitment is best thought of as representing three distinct experiences (Adams & Jones, 1997; Johnson, Caughlin, & Huston, 1999; Stanley & Markman, 1992). Specifically, commitment to marriage involves personal, dedication, and constraint commitment. Personal commitment is the sense of wanting to stay in a relationship, dedication commitment reflects feelings of moral and personal obligation to stay in a

relationship, and constraint commitment reflects feelings of entrapment or barriers to exiting a relationship. The three types of commitment are experienced as either internal or external to the individual as well as being experienced as choice or constraint. Interestingly, although constraint commitment serves an important function, it may be largely unrecognized or irrelevant to decisions of relationship maintenance as long as personal and/or dedication commitment are high. If, however, personal and/or dedication commitment are low, the components of constraint commitment tend to increase in salience and contribute to a sense of being constrained to remain by the costs of dissolution, whether one wants to remain or not.

Within the tripartite approach, alternatives and investment size are assessed as components of dedication and constraint commitment. Specifically, dedication commitment includes the components of relationship agenda, alternative monitoring, and satisfaction with sacrifice. Relationship agenda reflects the extent to which an individual has a future orientation toward his or her relationship, and given that one alternative to remaining in a relationship is choosing instead to be alone, relationship agenda provides important information about alternatives. Alternative monitoring, on the other hand, assesses the extent to which an individual contemplates involvement with alternative partners. Satisfaction with sacrifice provides an assessment of investment size, as it reflects the costs an individual is willing to incur in order to receive the rewards associated with a relationship. Constraint commitment also assesses alternatives and investments through its inclusion of the components of availability of partners and structural investments. Availability of partners reflects an individual's perception of how difficult or easy it would be to find a new partner, and structural investments assess investments that have been made to the relationship that would be lost as a result of dissolution. Given the widespread agreement among researchers as to the tripartite nature of commitment, we assess all three types of commitment in this investigation.

Marital Types

Fitzpatrick's (1988a) typology places individuals into various types of marriage based on their definitions of important areas of relational life. She created the Relational Dimensions Instrument (RDI) that measures individuals' views on three important conceptual dimensions: conventional-unconventional ideology, interdependence-autonomy, and conflict engagement-avoidance (Fitzpatrick & Indvik, 1982). The distinction between conventional-unconventional ideology reflects whether the individual values an ideology of traditionalism or conversely of uncertainty and change. The dimension of interdependence-autonomy taps beliefs about companionship in marriage as well as how time and space are shared and used. As far as conflict engagement-avoidance, there is an implicit assumption that conflict is inevitable in marital relationships but that couples differ in terms of their approach-avoidance orientations to conflict. This dimension also taps level of assertiveness with one's partner.

Based on respondents' scores on the RDI, Fitzpatrick identified three distinct types of marriages: traditional, independent, and separate. The types are differentiated based on their orientations with regard to the three conceptual dimensions. Traditionals hold conventional ideologies, are highly interdependent, both behaviorally and psychologically, and engage in conflict, though only with regard to serious issues. Independents hold unconventional ideologies; they believe that relationships should not constrain individual freedom. They are behaviorally autonomous; however, they are psychologically interdependent. They engage in conflict, regardless of whether the issue is trivial or important. In other words, they are highly assertive with one another. Separates hold somewhat conventional ideologies; however, they demonstrate ambivalence about these values. Publicly, they espouse traditional values; privately, they espouse values that are similar to independents. In terms of interdependence-autonomy, they are psychologically autonomous; however, they display some behavioral interdependence, mostly in the form of maintaining a regular daily schedule (i.e., mealtime). The important thing to note about this couple type is their high degree of psychological autonomy. For the most part, they avoid conflict; however, when they do engage in conflict, it tends to be aggressive but momentary.

The RDI classifies the individual within the relationship as opposed to the relationship overall. As such, it is possible for marital partners to disagree on the major dimensions of relational life. Based on their scores on the RDI, husbands and wives are classified as traditional, independent, or separate. Pure couple types share the same relational definitions, whereas mixed couple types disagree on the major definitions of relational life. Early testing of the typology classified 60% of couples as pure types and 40% as mixed types (Fitzpatrick, 1988a).

Commitment and Couple Types

The purpose of the present investigation is twofold. First, we seek to examine differences in relationship quality, as indicated by marital satisfaction and commitment, among different types of marriages. Because variables such as communication, autonomy, and ideology are the basis for defining the marital couple types, and because some of these same variables have been found to be associated with commitment and satisfaction in close relationships (e.g., Rankin-Esquer, Burnett, Baucom, & Epstein, 1997; Schovanec & Lee, 2001; Stanley, Markman, & Whiton, 2002; Wieselquist et al., 1999), we predicted that the various couples would differ substantially in their levels of satisfaction and commitment. Second, this study was designed to test a key proposition from the investment model of commitment in different marital couple types. Specifically, interdependence theory predicts that satisfaction is one of the key determinants of commitment. However, because some of the couple types are exceptionally high in traditional ideology, the association between satisfaction and commitment was predicted to vary extensively among the couple types. Traditionals are expected to exhibit high levels of commitment

regardless of their level of satisfaction, whereas couples with more unconventional values that privilege autonomy and personal freedom (e.g., independents and separates) are expected to exhibit a much stronger association between satisfaction and commitment. In other words, the commitment of some couples is expected to be driven by ideology, whereas the commitment of others is expected to be driven more by the rewards that they experience as a result of their relationship.

Based on the above predictions, the following hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 1: There will be differences in marital quality (i.e., marital satisfaction, personal commitment, dedication commitment, and constraint commitment) among the different couple types.

Hypothesis 2: There will be different patterns of association between satisfaction and personal or dedication commitment among the different couple types.

Method

Participants

Married couples were solicited to participate in the study through classroom recruitment or by referral from students attending one of two large universities located in the Southwest and Northwest regions of the United States. Students were offered extra credit toward their course grade if they were married and wanted to participate in the study with their spouse or if they recruited a married couple from their social network to participate in the study. Students who recruited married couples to participate provided the married couple's names and address to the research staff. Married couples were then contacted through the mail. A total of 241 couples were contacted, and 210 couples plus nine individuals completed and returned the questionnaires, for a response rate of 89%.

Out of all the returned questionnaires, nine were discarded because only one spouse completed and returned the survey, and two couples' data were excluded for being unusable because of missing data. Consequently, the final sample included 208 married couples. Marital duration ranged from less than a year up to 57 years, with a mean duration of 14.58 years ($SD = 12.77$). In all, 37 women and 41 men had been previously married, composing 19% of the sample. Husbands' mean age was 43.03 ($SD = 13.72$) and wives' was 40.51 ($SD = 13.0$). Collectively, this sample was 84% White, 8% Hispanic, 3% Asian or Pacific Islander, 1% American Indian, and 1% African American, and the remaining 2% reported their race/ethnicity as other/unknown. Of the couples, 25% had no children, 13% had one child, 32% had two children, and 30% had three children or more. Husbands had on average 15.36 years of formal education ($SD = 2.54$), and 80% held a full-time job. For wives, the average number of years of formal education was 15.55 ($SD = 2.14$), and 46% were employed full-time.

Procedure

Once married couples had been identified for participation in the study, they were sent a packet in the mail. The packet contained a cover letter with instructions, consent forms, two questionnaires, and two prepaid envelopes. Questionnaires were identified only by code numbers, and participants were instructed not to write their names on any of the study materials. Participants were instructed to complete the questionnaires independently and to mail them back separately, using the prepaid envelopes provided. This procedure yielded data for 208 couples from 20 different states in the United States.

Measures

Couple types were determined by responses on the RDI (Fitzpatrick, 1988a; Fitzpatrick & Indvik, 1982). The RDI is a 77-item self-report measure that assesses the various components on which different types of marriages can be distinguished such as ideology, communication, and interdependence. The instrument has eight subscales. These scales, along with sample items and their respective reliabilities for husbands and wives, are Sharing (23 items; e.g., "My spouse/mate expresses his/her feelings and reactions to me"; husband $\alpha = .91$, wife $\alpha = .92$), Ideology of Traditionalism (12 items; e.g., "A woman should take her husband's last name when she marries"; husband $\alpha = .68$, wife $\alpha = .66$), Temporal Regularity (5 items; e.g., "In our house, we keep a fairly regular daily time schedule"; husband $\alpha = .82$, wife $\alpha = .81$), Assertiveness (6 items; e.g., "We are likely to argue in front of friends or in public places"; husband $\alpha = .65$, wife $\alpha = .64$), Autonomy (6 items; e.g., "I have taken separate vacations from my spouse/mate even if only for a day or two"; husband $\alpha = .72$, wife $\alpha = .66$), Ideology of Uncertainty and Change (8 items; e.g., "The ideal relationship is one which is marked by novelty, humor, and spontaneity"; husband $\alpha = .60$, wife $\alpha = .52$), Undifferentiated Space (8 items; e.g., "We share many of our personal belongings with each other"; husband $\alpha = .56$, wife $\alpha = .48$), and Conflict Avoidance (9 items; e.g., "It is better to hide one's true feelings in order to avoid hurting your spouse/mate"; husband $\alpha = .68$, wife $\alpha = .69$). Although measurement error was high on certain subscales, each was retained for analyses that classified couples in order to preserve comparability with past investigations.

Marital satisfaction was measured with the six-item Quality Marriage Index (QMI; Norton, 1983). The QMI is a global evaluative assessment of marital quality and happiness. The six items assess the nature of the marriage and quality of the relationship (e.g., "My relationship with my partner makes me happy"). All items were measured on a 10-point Likert-type scale, with five items anchored with 1 = *very strong disagreement* and 10 = *very strong agreement* and the sixth anchored with 1 = *very unhappy* and 10 = *perfectly happy*. High scores on all items indicated a quality marriage. Cronbach's α was .97 for husbands and .96 for wives.

Personal commitment was assessed with a subscale of the Global Investment Model scale (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998). The Personal Commitment subscale is composed of seven items that assess relationship commitment and perceptions of relationship longevity. Sample items include "I want our relationship to last for a very long time" and "I am oriented toward the long-term future of my relationship." Participants were asked to rate the degree to which they agreed with the statements using a 9-point Likert-type scale (1 = *do not agree at all* and 9 = *agree completely*). Cronbach's α was .79 for both husbands and wives.

Dedication commitment was assessed using Stanley and Markman's (1992) Commitment Inventory (CI). The CI is composed of several subscales that measure various aspects of dedication commitment. For purposes of this investigation, we combined the six subscales to create a global measure of dedication commitment. *Dedication commitment* refers to the desire individuals have to sustain or improve the nature of the relationship in order to benefit both people involved. This measure included CI subscales of Relationship Agenda (e.g., "I want to grow old with my partner"), Meta-Commitment (e.g., "I try hard to follow through on all of my commitments"), Couple Identity (e.g., "I am willing to have or develop a stronger sense of an identity as a couple with my partner"), Primacy of Relationship (e.g., "When push comes to shove, my relationship with my partner comes first"), Satisfaction With Sacrifice (e.g., "It makes me feel good to sacrifice for my partner"), and Alternative Monitoring (e.g., "I am not seriously attracted to anyone other than my partner"). Each of the six subscales contained six items, and all items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 7 = *strongly agree*) with high scores on all items reflecting higher levels of dedication commitment. Intercorrelations among the six subscales and their reliabilities appear in Table 1. Cronbach's alphas for the composite measure of dedication commitment for husbands and wives were .92 and .91, respectively.

Constraint commitment was also measured using subscales from Stanley and Markman's (1992) CI. *Constraint commitment* refers to the forces that constrain individuals to stay in relationships regardless of their dedication to them. In their original instrument, Stanley and Markman developed four subscales to measure constraint commitment. These subscales included Morality of Divorce (e.g., "If a couple works hard at making their marriage work but find themselves incompatible, divorce is the best thing they can do"), Availability of Partners (e.g., "It would be very difficult to find a new partner"), Social Pressure (e.g., "My family really wants this relationship to work"), and Structural Investments (e.g., "I would lose money, or feel like money had been wasted, if my partner and I broke up (divorced)"). Each of the four subscales contained six items, and all items were scored using a 7-point Likert-type scale with high scores indicating higher levels of constraint commitment. Because of its low and nonsignificant correlation with the remaining subscales, the Structural Investments subscale was dropped from further analysis. Correlations and reliabilities among the Morality of Divorce, Availability of Partners, and Social

Table 1
Intel-correlations Among Dedication Commitment Subscales
and Reliabilities for Husbands and Wives

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	α
1. Relationship Agenda	—	.26***	.51***	.46***	.41***	.51***	.84
2. Meta-Commitment	.36***	—	.34***	.36***	.19**	.36***	.69
3. Couple Identity	.34***	.45***	—	.63***	.47***	.50***	.74
4. Primacy of Relationship	.35***	.48***	.69***	—	.55***	.43***	.76
5. Satisfaction With Sacrifice	.34***	.42***	.67***	.62***	—	.34***	.87
6. Alternative Monitoring	.28***	.30***	.55***	.53***	.55***	—	.77
α	.75	.77	.79	.82	.86	.84	

Note: Correlations for wives are above and for husbands are below the diagonal.

** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 2
Intercorrelations Among Constraint Commitment Subscales
and Reliabilities for Husbands and Wives

Measure	1	2	3	α
1. Morality of Divorce	—	.21**	.30***	.88
2. Availability of Partners	.35***	—	.16*	.80
3. Social Pressure	.33***	.25***	—	.83
α	.88	.81	.83	

Note: Correlations for wives are above and for husbands are below the diagonal.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Pressure subscales are presented in Table 2. These three scales were combined to form a composite constraint commitment index with alpha reliabilities of .78 for husbands and .80 for wives.

Correlations among all of the marital quality variables appear in Table 3. In addition to these scales, participants completed a number of questions regarding demographics, such as sex, age, race/ethnicity, education, and employment, and several descriptive items not relevant to their marriage and relational history.

Results

Classification of Couple Types

Husbands' and wives' data from the RDI were analyzed in the SPSS K-Means Cluster program, which is equivalent to the Quick Cluster program used in the

Table 3
Intel-correlations Among Satisfaction and Commitment
Measures for Husbands and Wives

Measure	1	2	3	4
1. Dedication Commitment	—	.58***	.62***	.52***
2. Constraint Commitment	.60***	—	.37***	.34***
3. Personal Commitment	.65***	.41***	—	.57***
4. Marital Satisfaction	.57***	.39***	.53***	—

Note: Correlations for wives are above and for husbands are below the diagonal.

*** $p < .001$.

majority of analyses presented in Fitzpatrick (1988a). Because independent observations are an important assumption of cluster analyses, husbands' and wives' data were analyzed separately. For each, the number of clusters was set to three, and the initial cluster centers published by Fitzpatrick, derived from a database of over 1,600 married couples, were incorporated as initial values. In both cases, convergence was achieved in nine or less iterations. Once husbands and wives were classified as traditional, independent, or separate, the classifications of the two spouses were combined to categorize the couple. Results of these analyses yielded 40 traditional (19%), 36 independent (17%), 33 separate (16%), and 99 mixed couples (48%). There was no dominant pattern within the mixed couple types: 20% were wife-traditional, husband-separate, 20% were wife-independent, husband-traditional, 20% were wife-independent, husband-separate, and 20% were wife-traditional, husband-independent. The few remaining cases were separate wives paired with husbands of differing types. Means and standard deviations for each of the eight RDI dimensions for husbands and wives appear in Tables 4 and 5, respectively.

One-way ANOVAs for all eight RDI dimensions (e.g., autonomy, temporal regularity) by couple type were statistically significant $atp < .01$ for husbands' data. One-way ANOVAs for wives' data were also significant $at p < .01$ on all eight RDI dimensions by couple type. The patterns of means that appear in Tables 4 and 5 are virtually identical to those that were presented by Fitzpatrick (1983) based on 1,673 spouses accumulated from five different samples (e.g., traditionals having the highest means for sharing and traditional marital values, separates having the highest means for autonomy and lowest means for undifferentiated space). These findings provide some evidence for the validity of the classification of the various couple types and comparability to past samples.

Additional analyses of demographic and descriptive variables revealed few differences by couple type. For example, there were no significant differences in either husbands' or wives' race/ethnicity, employment status, education level, history of divorce, or age at first marriage. However, it was the case that both husbands and

Table 4
Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVAs for Husbands' Relational Dimensions Instrument (RDI) Dimensions by Couple Type

RDI Dimension	Couple Type						F
	Traditional		Independent		Separate		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Sharing	5.62 _a	0.55	5.06 _b	0.71	4.40 _c	0.78	56.40***
Traditionalism	5.42 _a	0.66	5.07 _b	0.73	5.05 _b	0.69	6.33**
Uncertainty	3.72 _a	0.72	4.18 _b	0.79	4.34 _b	0.72	13.33***
Temporal Reg.	4.97 _a	0.81	2.88 _b	0.68	4.70 _a	0.77	150.85***
Autonomy	2.84 _a	1.01	3.49 _b	1.01	4.51 _c	0.84	55.93***
Assertiveness	2.15 _a	0.77	2.57 _b	0.86	2.84 _b	0.86	12.74***
Space	4.82 _a	0.75	4.69 _a	0.78	4.00 _b	0.71	25.13***
Conflict Avoid.	3.18 _a	0.73	3.46 _a	0.78	3.92 _b	0.77	17.66***

Note: Means with different subscripts are significantly different at $p < .05$ as determined by Tukey's honestly significant difference post hoc test.

** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 5
Means, Standard Deviations, and ANOVAs for Wives' Relational Dimensions Instrument (RDI) Dimensions by Couple Type

RDI Dimension	Couple Type						F
	Traditional		Independent		Separate		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Sharing	5.50 _a	0.67	5.20 _b	0.84	4.70 _b	0.82	16.90***
Traditionalism	5.35 _a	0.66	4.97 _b	0.76	4.99 _b	0.77	6.76**
Uncertainty	3.65 _b	0.74	4.15 _b	0.70	4.15 _b	0.87	10.53***
Temporal Reg.	5.12 _b	0.84	3.25 _b	0.79	5.29 _a	0.75	141.84***
Autonomy	2.72 _a	0.75	3.73 _b	0.99	4.84 _c	0.82	95.70***
Assertiveness	1.86 _a	0.63	2.13 _b	0.78	2.23 _b	0.80	4.69**
Space	4.97 _a	0.75	4.95 _a	0.76	4.52 _b	0.83	6.17**
Conflict Avoid.	3.35 _a	0.84	3.05 _a	0.78	3.72 _b	0.91	9.89***

Note: Means with different subscripts are significantly different at $p < .05$ as determined by Tukey's honestly significant difference post hoc test.

** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

wives in the separate couples were significantly older than their counterparts in the other couple types, husbands' $F(3, 204) = 8.61, p < .001$, wives' $F(3, 204) = 8.87, p < .001$. Thus, aside from age, the different types of marriages do not appear to be mere expressions of demographic differences among the couples.

Differences in Marital Quality by Couple Type

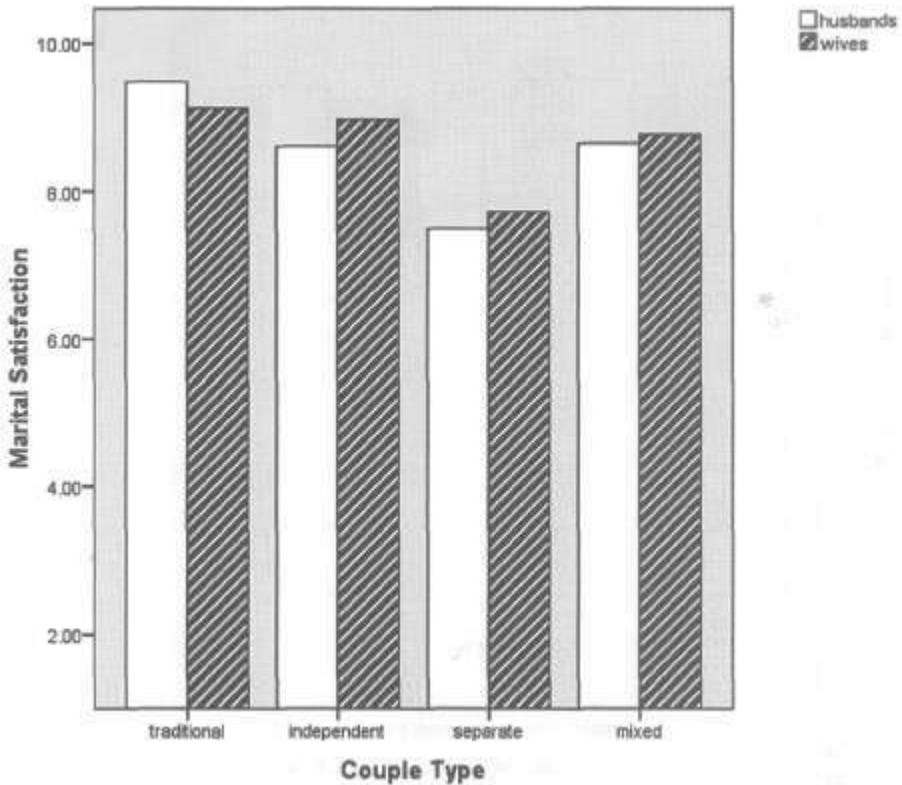
Hypothesis 1 predicted differences in marital quality among the different couple types (i.e., traditional, independent, separate, and mixed couple types). The analyses treated the dyad as the unit of analysis. Because there is one between-dyads variable (couple type) and one within-dyads variable (spouse: husband, wife), marital quality data were analyzed with mixed model ANOVAs as recommended by Kenny, Kashy, and Cook (2006, pp. 67-68). Along with each analysis, dyadic interdependence on the dependent variable was calculated with partial correlation, whereby the dependent variable was correlated for husbands and wives, controlling for the between dyads variable (couple type, dummy coded into three variables: one for each of the three pure types).

The first analysis treated marital satisfaction as the dependent variable, couple type as the between dyads variable, and spouse as the within dyads variable. There was significant nonindependence on the marital satisfaction dependent variable, $r(202)_{\text{satisfaction.type}} = .21, p = .002$. Results of the mixed model ANOVA revealed a significant main effect for couple type, $F(3, 203) = 9.70, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .13$, but no main effect for spouse, $F(1, 203) = 0.24, ns$, or couple type by spouse interaction, $F(3, 203) = 0.79, ns$. Plots of couple type by spouse mean levels of marital satisfaction appear in Figure 1. Post hoc honestly significant difference (HSD) tests indicated that the separate couples had significantly lower marital satisfaction than any of the other three couple types who did not differ from each other.

The next analysis involved a mixed model ANOVA identical to the first, but in this instance personal commitment was the dependent variable. Once again there was evidence of nonindependence within the dyad on personal commitment, $r(201)_{\text{personal commit.type}} = .22, p = .002$. There was a significant main effect for couple type, $F(3, 202) = 7.90, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .11$, but no main effect for spouse, $F(1, 202) = 1.56, ns$, or couple type by spouse interaction, $F(3, 202) = 0.59, ns$. The mean levels of personal commitment by couple type and spouse are plotted in Figure 2, and the corresponding post hoc Tukey's HSD tests indicated that the separates had significantly lower personal commitment than any of the other three couple types that did not differ significantly from each other.

Another mixed model ANOVA was conducted on couples' dedication commitment scores. There was substantial dyadic interdependence on dedication commitment, $r(196)_{\text{dedication commit.type}} = .39, p < .001$. The results revealed a significant main effect for couple type, $F(3, 197) = 11.94, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .15$, and a significant main effect for spouse, $F(1, 197) = 7.40, p = .036$, partial $\eta^2 = .04$, but no couple type by spouse interaction, $F(3, 197) = 0.51, ns$. Mean levels of dedication commitment by couple type and spouse are plotted in Figure 3. Tukey's HSD post hoc tests by couple type revealed that traditional couples had significantly higher dedication commitment than any of the three other couple types. Also, separates had significantly lower dedication commitment than those in the independent or mixed couple types. The

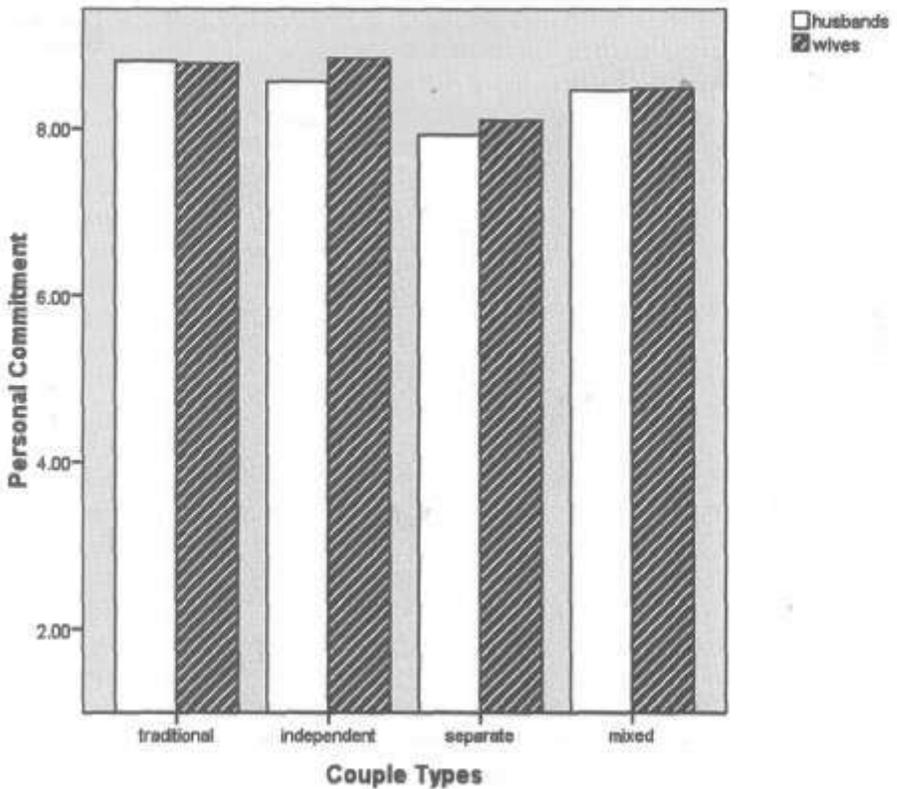
Figure 1
Mean Levels of Marital Satisfaction by Spouse Within Couple Type



within dyads main effect reflects the fact that across all couple types wives reported significantly higher dedication commitment than husbands did.

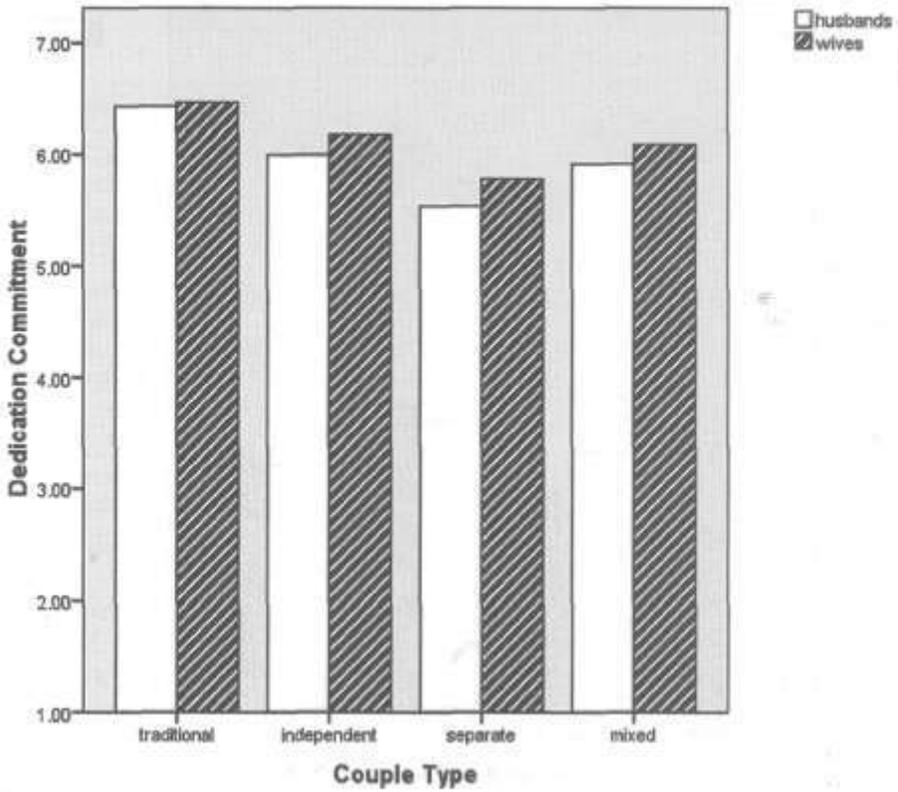
The final mixed model ANOVA was conducted on constraint commitment scores. There was again substantial nonindependence on constraint commitment, $r(200)_{\text{constraint commtt.ctype}} = .48, p < .001$. The results indicated a significant main effect for couple type, $F(3, 201) = 10.07, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .13$, but no main effect for spouse, $F(1, 201) = 0.01, ns$. Also, there' was no significant couple type by spouse interaction for constraint commitment, $F(3, 201) = 1.59, ns$. Mean levels of constraint commitment by couple type and spouse are plotted in Figure 4. Post hoc HSD tests indicated that the main effect for couple type is because of traditionals reporting significantly lower constraint commitment than all other couple types and separates reporting significantly higher constraint commitment than traditional and mixed couple types.

Figure 2
Mean Levels of Personal Commitment by Spouse Within Couple Type



A different way to illustrate varying levels of commitment among couple types can be found in husbands' and wives' responses to the question, "Since you got married, has the thought of divorce ever seriously crossed your mind?" For husbands, the proportion of each couple type who answered in the affirmative was 10% for traditionals, 22% for independents, 52% for separates, and 27% for mixed. This is a statistically significant difference, $\chi^2 = 18.46$, $df = 3$, $p < .001$. The corresponding proportions for wives were 23% for traditionals, 25% for independents, 61% for separates, and 28% for mixed. This was also a significant difference, $\chi^2 = 15.57$, $df = 3$, $p = .001$.

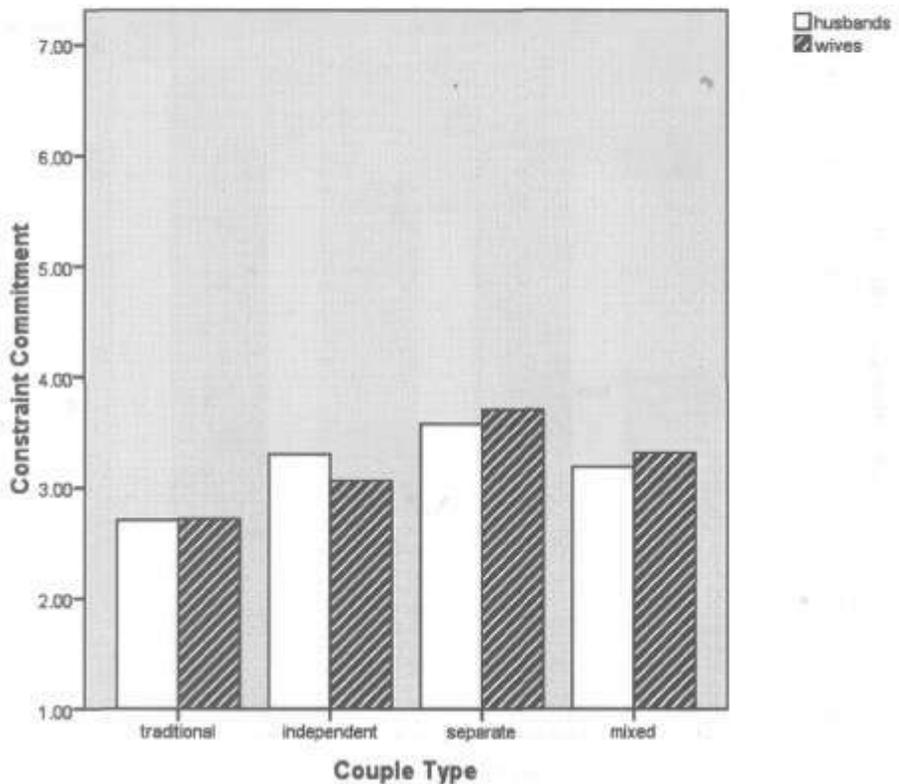
Figure 3
Mean Levels of Dedication Commitment by Spouse Within Couple Type



Dyadic Interdependence in Satisfaction and Commitment by Couple Type

Hypothesis 2 predicted that there would be a differential pattern of associations between satisfaction and personal or dedication commitment among the different couple types. To evaluate this hypothesis, a series of actor-partner interdependence models were analyzed, as described by Kenny et al. (2006). In short, these analyses treat the dyad as the unit of analysis and estimate both actor effects (e.g., wife satisfaction \rightarrow wife commitment) and partner effects (e.g., wife satisfaction \rightarrow husband commitment) while simultaneously accounting for the couples' non-independence on marital satisfaction. Error terms for the various commitment dependent variables were correlated as recommended by Kenny et al., in recognition of the fact that variables other than marital satisfaction could contribute to each

Figure 4
Mean Levels of Constraint Commitment by Spouse Within Couple Type



spouse's level of commitment. AMOS 7.0 was used to estimate the various regression coefficients from each path model. These analyses focused on the marital satisfaction-commitment relationship only among the pure couple types because of the lack of conceptual distinction between the mixed and pure types and extensive heterogeneity within the mixed types. For each analysis, statistical power was estimated using formulas described by Kenny et al. (2006, pp. 179-181). These analyses represent the statistical power to detect a medium-sized effect (i.e., $d = .50$ or $r = .30$), assuming an $\alpha = .05$, based on the number of dyads, correcting for their non-independence and the multicollinearity of the actor and partner effects. Results of these analyses appear in Table 6.

There are several features apparent in the pattern of regression coefficients in Table 6. First, there are very few partner effects for any type of commitment within

Table 6
Actor and Partner Effects for Satisfaction and Commitment by Couple Type

Couple Type	Interdependence	Actor Effects		Partner Effects		Power
	hus sat → wife sat (<i>r</i>)	hus sat → hus commit	wife sat → wife commit	hus sat → wife commit	wife sat → hus commit	
DV = Personal commitment						
Traditionals	.06	-.04	-.03	-.01	-.07	.60
Independents	.56*	-.08	.32*	.43**	.64***	.59
Separates	.12	.73***	.79***	.16	.08	.52
DV = Dedication commitment						
Traditionals	.06	.39**	.22	.04	-.09	.65
Independents	.56***	.11	.47**	.03	.33	.54
Separates	.12	.69***	.62***	.19	.07	.57

Note: Table values are standardized regression coefficients, unless otherwise indicated. Power is calculated assuming a medium effect of $d = .50$ or $r = .30$ at $\alpha = .05$, correcting for the degree of nonindependence between dyad members' scores and multicollinearity between the actor and partner effects.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

any type of couple, with the exception of the husband satisfaction → wife personal commitment and wife satisfaction → husband personal commitment within the independent couples ($P = .43, p < .01$; $p = .64, p < .001$, respectively). For the most part, spouses' commitment was unrelated to their partner's level of marital satisfaction. Second, both husbands and wives in separate marriages exhibited significant and relatively strong actor effects, that is, their satisfaction was positively associated with their personal and dedication commitment. However, within traditional marriages, spouses' satisfaction was generally unrelated to their own commitment level, with the exception of traditional husbands' satisfaction and dedication commitment. Finally, independent wives' level of satisfaction was significantly associated with their own personal commitment ($B = .32, p < .05$) and their own dedication commitment ($p = .47, p < .01$). However, the corresponding actor effects for independent husbands were not statistically significant ($B = -.08$ and $.11, ns$, respectively).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate previously untested differences among marital couple types in various types of marital commitment as well as to assess the association between satisfaction and commitment for the different couple types. Although interdependence theory predicts that rewards (i.e., satisfaction) are a

strong predictor of commitment, some couples are defined by a compelling adherence to a conventional ideology that could potentially override the effects of satisfaction, or lack thereof, on commitment to marriage. Using the RDI, couples were classified into different marital types. In support of Hypothesis 1, the results of this study demonstrated the predicted differences in satisfaction and commitment among the different types of marriage. Specifically, separate couples reported the lowest marital satisfaction and personal commitment of all of the couple types. Separate couples also reported the lowest dedication commitment of all of the couple types, whereas traditional couples reported the highest. Finally, across the four couple types, separate couples reported the highest constraint commitment and traditional couples reported the lowest. In support of Hypothesis 2, associations between marital satisfaction and commitment varied considerably across the different types of couples. Analyses via actor-partner interdependence models revealed strong actor effects for the association between satisfaction and personal and dedication commitment for separate couples. These analyses also revealed significant actor effects for the association between satisfaction and both personal and dedication commitment for wives in independent marriages and for the association between satisfaction and dedication commitment for husbands in traditional marriages. Overall, and contrary to what is predicted in the investment model, there were very limited actor effects for the satisfaction-commitment relationship among spouses in traditional marriages. With the exception of the significant association between satisfaction and personal commitment for independent husbands and wives, there were very few partner effects, suggesting that commitment is a construct based more on one's own thoughts and feelings about a relationship rather than one's partner's thoughts and feelings. These results further suggest that there are different determinants of commitment for different types of couples. For traditional couples, commitment to marriage appears to be yoked to a traditional value system and driven by ideology rather than rewards. Conversely, for separate couples, personal and dedication commitment appear to be largely a function of the satisfaction they derive from their marriage, with constraint commitment likely playing an important role in stabilizing the relationship.

Marital Quality in Different Types of Marriages

The results of this investigation are consistent with past studies indicating that traditional couples are remarkable for their high levels of satisfaction and cohesion (Fitzpatrick & Indvik, 1982). The traditional marriages in the present investigation reported high marital satisfaction and had significantly higher dedication commitment than the other types of couples. In contrast, the separate couples had the lowest satisfaction and personal and dedication commitment while simultaneously reporting the highest constraint commitment. This too fits with past findings showing that separate couples are highest among the various types on phenomena such as verbal aggressiveness and depression and low on talk time and conversational involvement

(Fitzpatrick, 1984; Segrin & Fitzpatrick, 1992). Separate couples in this investigation were also noteworthy for indicating that they had seriously thought of divorce in more than 50% of the cases in this sample. Given that consideration of divorce was so prevalent among separate couples in this study, it is likely that the constraints they perceive to terminating the relationship play an important role in stabilizing it. Constraint commitment reflects beliefs about the morality of divorce, the availability of alternative partners, social pressures from family and friends to maintain the relationship, and investments that would be lost if the relationship were to end. Because satisfaction was a strong predictor of commitment for individuals in separate couples, it is probably highly functional that these couples also experience high levels of constraint commitment to facilitate the continuation of the relationship during periods of low satisfaction.

Associations Between Satisfaction and Commitment by Couple Type

According to the investment model of commitment (Rusbult, 1980, 1983), one of the primary determinants of commitment is satisfaction with the relationship. This postulate is an outgrowth of interdependence theory, which predicts that people will remain in relationships to the extent that they are experienced as rewarding and fulfilling. Generally, there is considerable empirical evidence to support the strong and positive association between relationship satisfaction and commitment (e.g., Givertz & Segrin, 2005; Impett, Beals, & Pepalu, 2001; Stanley et al., 2002). We anticipated that this effect would hold for most types of couples, in cases where the commitment was of a type that is based on the individual's own volition and personal desires, such as personal or dedication commitment (Rusbult et al., 2006). The findings that show no appreciable association between satisfaction and commitment for traditional husbands and wives affirm Fitzpatrick's (1988b) observation that "a Traditional places greater emphasis on stability than on satisfaction in marriage" (p. 101). The findings of the present study clearly show that the commitment of a traditional husband or wife is driven by factors other than his or her satisfaction with the marriage.

Among traditional wives, associations between satisfaction and commitment were quite weak and nonsignificant. The same could be said of the satisfaction-personal commitment relationship for traditional husbands, although there was a significant association between satisfaction and dedication commitment among these same husbands. Traditional couples are driven by an ideology that puts greater emphasis on stability than satisfaction (Fitzpatrick, 1988b). In essence, their belief in the permanence of marriage, the importance of caring for their spouse, and the value of companionship appears to trump their expectations for satisfaction. Accordingly, these couples appear able to exhibit high levels of commitment without regard for the actual rewards (i.e., satisfaction) they are obtaining from the marriage. At the same time, it bears mentioning that these were also among the most satisfied spouses in the sample.

In contrast to the traditionals, the separates present a strikingly different picture of the association between satisfaction and commitment. For spouses in separate marriages, there were strong and significant positive associations between satisfaction and personal as well as dedication commitment. The same could also be said of wives in independent marriages. Recall that spouses in these marriages do not hold the same conventional values toward marriage as traditionals. Rather, these spouses value spontaneity and individual freedom. Of all of the couple types, separates are the least emotionally and behaviorally invested in their marriage. The investment model would therefore explain that when investments are low, levels of commitment will be more dependent on satisfaction with the relationship (Rusbult, 1980). Although the commitment of spouses in traditional marriages appears driven by value and ideology, commitment in the separates and among the independent wives is driven instead by satisfaction. One might extrapolate from these findings the prediction that if satisfaction is low, spouses in separate marriages might be particularly inclined to leave the relationship, as there are no traditional or conventional values compelling them to stay in it. Recall, however, that separates in this study experienced high levels of constraint commitment, which serves as a barrier to relationship termination and can function to stabilize a relationship.

Recently, there have been discussions in the literature about whether spouses' commitment might in some way be driven by their partners' satisfaction and performance in the marriage (Weigel, Bennett, & Ballard-Reisch, 2006). We tested this possibility through evaluation of partner effects in the actor-partner interdependence model. Specifically, these analyses examined whether husbands' and wives' commitment was in any way associated with their partner's level of satisfaction, after controlling for initial interdependence in satisfaction. The results across all couple types were generally negative. Aside from a significant satisfaction → personal commitment effect for independent couples, all of the remaining partner effects were nonsignificant. Although spouses in certain types of marriages might have been committed to the extent that they felt satisfied with the marriage, there was very little evidence to indicate that the relational satisfaction of one's partner contributed in a significant way to one's own level of commitment. For the most part, feelings of commitment appeared to be driven by internal satisfaction or perhaps ideologies, but not partner satisfaction. This finding stands in contrast to those presented by Weigel et al. (2006), who found that spouses' commitment was predicted by both their own and their partner's satisfaction with their roles in the marriage. It is important to note role satisfaction in the Weigel et al. study was assessed after participants were presented with some sample roles that had an inherently interpersonal quality such as helping each other with problems and expressing physical affection. It is therefore understandable that they documented both actor and partner effects on each spouse's level of commitment. This is because performance of some of the roles that Weigel et al. listed to prime their participants, such as expressing affection, would almost by necessity be associated with partners'

satisfaction as well as actors' satisfaction because the partner is the recipient of the behavior associated with the role.

Limitations

There are several important limitations inherent in this investigation that must be considered when interpreting its results. First, the married couples who participated in this investigation do not constitute a random sample. Even though these couples were widely dispersed throughout the United States, all were recruited by a university student or were university students themselves. Although we do not have data on the relationship between the recruiter and the participant, it is reasonable to assume that a sample of people in the social network of a university student might be somewhat skewed toward a middle or upper socioeconomic status. Comparison with the most recently available U.S. census data suggests that the participants in this study were more highly educated than the general population and that Whites were over-represented. Another implication of a nonrandom sample is the potential for a selection bias. It is likely that the most distressed or noncommitted couples in the population are underrepresented in this sample by virtue of either not being asked to participate by the recruiter or declining participation when asked. Another limitation is inherent in the measurement that ultimately classified the married couples. Two of the RDI dimensions (ideology of uncertainty and change, undifferentiated space) had internal consistency reliabilities of $\alpha = .60$ or less, and two others (traditional ideology, assertiveness) had reliabilities of $\alpha = .64$ to $.68$ for both husbands and wives. Even though similar problems with reliability are evident in some other studies that utilized the RDI (e.g., Fitzpatrick & Indvik, 1982), this level of measurement error could potentially have deleterious effects on the proper classification of the marriages. That could, in turn, mask potential differences between couple types that might exist in a context unencumbered by measurement error. Another limitation of this study has to do with the nature of the data and how it affects interpretation of the results. Specifically, the data are cross-sectional, and although we have presented our discussion of the results in a way that attempts to provide a conceptual understanding of the relationship between variables, we caution readers not to infer causality, as it is not possible to determine the direction of the relationship among variables. A final measurement issue concerns the commitment variables. Even though commitment is often conceptualized as containing distinct elements (e.g., personal, dedication, constraint), the different elements of commitment were moderately correlated in this investigation. As several other studies have shown, the theoretical distinctions between different elements of commitment are not always reflected in people's actual feelings about commitment to their relationships (Givertz & Segrin, 2005; Johnson et al., 1999; Stanley & Markman, 1992).

Conclusion

This investigation examined the relationship between different marital couple types and different types of commitment, and the findings support the notion that different types of commitment are more or less salient for different couple types. The biggest difference across the couple types was between traditional and separate couples, with traditionals demonstrating high levels of personal and dedication commitment and low levels of constraint commitment, in contrast to separates who demonstrated the lowest levels of personal and dedication commitment and high levels of constraint commitment. In addition, this study assessed the association between satisfaction and commitment across couple types, and again the association differs for different types of couples. The most striking differences were between traditional and separate couples. The traditional couples in this study were highly satisfied, but their commitment to marriage is best understood as rooted in a traditional value system that reflects beliefs about the sanctity of marriage. This finding contradicts prevailing theory that suggests that satisfaction is a key determinant of relationship commitment. Separate couples in this study were the least satisfied of all of the couple types, and as the investment model would predict their commitment to marriage is largely a function of their own satisfaction. In contrast to traditional couples, whose marital commitment is stabilized by conventional views of marriage, constraint commitment likely stabilizes the marital commitment of separate couples. Finally, this study assessed whether husbands' and wives' commitment was in any way associated with their partner's level of satisfaction. Across couple types, the results indicated that the relational satisfaction of one's partner is not an important determinant of one's own level of commitment. Rather, the findings suggest that feelings of commitment are a function of one's own satisfaction or a traditional ideology, as opposed to partner satisfaction. In all, these results suggest that commitment processes are not uniform across couple types; the determinants of commitment are different for different types of couples.

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Michelle Givertz is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication Arts and Sciences at California State University, Chico. Her research focuses mainly on communication processes in close relationships, with a specific interest in how commitment is communicated.

Chris Segrin is a professor and head of the Department of Communication at the University of Arizona. His research focuses on marriage and other close relationships and their connection to physical and mental health.

Alesia Hanzal is an assistant professor in the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Kansas. Her research focuses on interpersonal relationships with an emphasis on marriage and family.

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