

Testing the Romantic Construal Model:
The Impact of Personalization, Specialness, and Value in Evaluating Romantic Actions

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of
Psychology and Neuroscience in the Graduate School
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2010

ABSTRACT

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Abstract

The Romantic Construal Model proposes that people interpret actions as romantic to the extent that they perceive that those actions take the receiver's idiosyncratic likes and dislikes into account (personalization), are out of the ordinary in terms of either frequency or the manner with which they are enacted (specialness), and convey that the person values the receiver and the relationship (conveyed value). This model was tested in two studies.

In Study 1, 132 participants (67 men and 65 women) were instructed to modify generic behaviors to make them either more or less romantic. These modifications were then coded for personalization, specialness, and conveyed value. The results showed that higher mean levels of personalization, specialness, and value were found when participants were asked to make a behavior more rather than less romantic. Furthermore, regression analyses predicting participant ratings of romance for the modified actions were significantly predicted by the levels of specialness and conveyed value, but personalization was not related to romantic ratings.

In Study 2, 132 participants (67 men and 65 women) read 8 vignettes describing potentially romantic behaviors that experimentally manipulated all combinations of high or low personalization, high or low specialness and high or low conveyed value. Participants rated each vignette for how romantic they thought the behavior was; the degree to which the behavior was personalized, special, and conveyed value; and how good, committed, and loved would they feel if their partner enacted that behavior in their relationship. The results of Study 2 showed that although personalization and specialness were successfully manipulated in the vignettes, value was not. Furthermore, significant effects of personalization and specialness, but not value, were obtained on

romantic ratings for half of the vignettes. In contrast, participants' subjective ratings of the romanticness of the behaviors were predicted by their ratings of value but not personalization or specialness. The implications of this study for the Romantic Construal Model are discussed and evaluated within the context of previous findings on the communication of affection.

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Acknowledgements

I have been very fortunate to have the support of many people without whom this dissertation would not have been possible. Much gratitude and heartfelt thanks go to:

- my committee members, Drs. Phil Costanzo, Laura Richman and Mary Frances Luces for taking the time out of their busy schedules to read and evaluate my research.

- Dr. Tara MacDonald who introduced me to the world of relationship research and Dr. Lee Fabrigar who was instrumental in my becoming a social psychologist.

- Andy Proctor and the team at Qualtrix for the countless hours spent providing technical support to prepare my on-line study.

- my parents, Jorge and Barbara Estrada for their support and love throughout all of graduate school, despite not fully understanding what I do.

- my numerous friends who all offered support, humor and their own horror stories about dissertation writing. Thank you for listening and being there, and making me smile despite it all. In particular, thank you to Lisa Cavanaugh, Wind Goodfriend, and Kelley Robinson, for being colleagues as well as friends, and for their willingness to discuss my research and offer their insights. Finally, I am grateful for Deborah Hall for the multitude of pep talks and for suffering through this process with me.

- Meredith Terry, Kaitlin Toner, and Erin Bradfield who came through in a crunch and provided help when it was most vital.

- Anastasia Mattox for her generosity and time spent helping me get participants for my on-line study.

- the Duke ILLIAD library service for the countless hours they saved me in tracking down all of the journal articles and books necessary for this project.

And finally, my deepest gratitude and appreciation go to my advisor, Mark Leary. Thank you for taking me on as your student and allowing me the freedom to pursue my own research. I am grateful for your ability to always being the sun (never the wind) and for working all sorts of miracles from resurrecting data to thinking of the appropriate statistical analysis when all seemed lost. I feel very fortunately to have had such a supportive, generous, knowledgeable advisor and I can sincerely say that this dissertation would not have been possible without your guidance. If in my career I am half the writer, teacher and mentor that you are, I will consider myself a success.

1. Introduction

1.1 *Communication in Close Relationships.*

Affection is responsible for nine-tenths of whatever solid and durable happiness there is in our lives.

-CS Lewis

Close relationships are among the most important aspects of people's lives, and difficulties in establishing and maintaining close relationships have a large impact on people's life satisfaction, well-being, and health. Whereas satisfying relationships increase happiness, buffer people against the negative effects of stress, promote recovery from serious illness, help to prevent depression, and are associated with lower mortality, dissatisfying relationships undermine psychological and physical well-being compared to being single (for reviews see Keicolt-Glaser & Newton, 2001; Robles & Kiecolt-Glaser, 2003). Indeed, Argyle (1983) concluded that "social relationships are a major source of happiness, relief from distress, and health" (p. 31).

Unfortunately, many people struggle with their closest relationships. The divorce rate for first time marriages in the United States is about 50%, and half of all marriages are remarriages for one or both partners (Census, 2000). Although many hypotheses have been suggested as to why close relationships are challenging to maintain, problems in communication are cited as among the most common sources of dissatisfaction. Although much is known about the impact of negative communication during arguments (see Gottman & Levinson, 2002 for a review), less is known about the role that communication plays during day-to-day activities.

Several models outline the strategies that partners use to maintain and repair their romantic relationships (Dindia & Baxter, 1987; Stafford & Canary, 1991). Although research has identified 12 categories of relationship maintenance mechanisms, people

typically rely primarily on only two, one of which involves communication. (The second is spending time together.) Importantly, certain types of communication are more valuable to romantic relationships than others and, because romantic relationships represent the apotheosis of love and belongingness for many people, the communication of affection should be especially important in this context. Indeed, research suggests that the communication of affection is one of the most valuable and important aspects to romantic relationships and is a primary basis for the relationship's continued growth (Dainton, 1998).

Researchers have examined the importance of communicating affection in maintaining and repairing interpersonal relationships but not specifically the nature of romantic communication and how it differs from the communication of affection in other kinds of relationships. This proposal offers a model of the unique qualities of "romantic" communications of affection and describes two studies that test the model. I begin by reviewing previous work on affectionate communication and then describe a new model that distinguishes "romantic" communication from loving communications of affection. I then discuss the importance of the perceived motivations underlying the expression of romantic communication of affection and articulate the hypotheses for the proposed studies.

1.2 The Communication of Affection in Interpersonal Relationships

Affection has been defined as an emotional state of fondness and intense positive regard directed at a living or once living target (Floyd & Morman, 1997). Although often regarded as an emotional state, in fact, affection can be distinguished from an emotion because it is not evoked by specific events in the way that other emotions—such as anger, fear, and happiness—may be. Rather, affection involves a set of abiding responses

that develop toward a particular entity (Floyd, 2006). The communication of affection is therefore any behavior through which a person expresses his or her subjective experience of affection.

Affection can be expressed in three distinct yet related ways: verbal expressions, nonverbal expressions, and social supportiveness (Floyd & Morman, 1997). Verbal expressions of affection involve spoken or written statements that convey positive feelings for another person. These expressions can take several forms such as expressing the sender's feelings for the receiver ("I love you"), reinforcing the nature of the relationship ("you're my best friend"), and expressing hopes for the future of the relationship ("I want to be with you forever"). Nonverbal expressions of affection include behaviors or gestures that convey affection without words according to the norms for a given society. Examples of these types of behaviors in Western societies include hugging, sitting close, kissing, and affectionate touching. Although these behaviors express affection directly, they are more ambiguous than verbal statements. For example, a kiss can range from a peck on the cheek of a family member to a deep mouth-to-mouth kiss within an intimate relationship. Social supportive behaviors convey affection indirectly through helpful and caring acts. They include behaviors such as giving compliments, offering financial assistance, doing favors, and accomplishing tasks to help the other person. Although supportive behaviors are indirect, if perceived by the receiver as communicating affection, they can "speak louder than words" and convey positive regard more powerfully than verbal or nonverbal expressions. Although socially supportive behaviors are an important way of communicating affection, recipients may construe supportive behaviors as practical rather than affectionate, or they might not even be noticed by the intended recipient.

The communication of affection provides an important foundation for all intimate relationships. Communicating affection reduces the uncertainty of each partners' view of the relationship, provides reassurance about the partners' level of investment in the relationship, promotes relationship satisfaction, buffers people against relationship dissatisfaction, and promotes health benefits for both the giver and the receiver. Communicating affection is perhaps most important in the early stages of relationships because budding relationships are characterized by uncertainty, and relationship partners have difficulty judging where they stand and anticipating future outcomes (Knobloch & Miller, 2008).

The communication of affection may also benefit relationships indirectly by facilitating constructive ways of dealing with conflict and buffering partners against relationship irritants (Huston & Cohost, 1994). Given that the uncertain transition from dating to more serious intimacy is often marked by increased arguments (Braiker & Kelley, 1979) and that the ways in which couples respond to relationship problems influence the trajectory of their relationship (Bradbury & Fincham, 1992; Fincham & Bradbury, 1993), the communication of affection may be an overlooked mechanism in relationship maintenance. In a longitudinal study of newlyweds, researchers found not only that communications of affection positively related to immediate satisfaction, but also that they buffered the impact of negativity in both short-term and long-term interactions. In the short term, newlywed husbands' affectionate behavior appeared to buffer the immediate impact of their negativity on their wives' satisfaction. Furthermore, this pattern replicated in the long term where initial levels of husbands' affectionate expressions buffered the impact of their negativity on their wives' later reports of satisfaction (Huston & Chorost, 1994). Given that negative marital exchanges are a

central cause of marital dissatisfaction, the inoculating effect of affectionate communication is especially beneficial (Fincham & Bradbury, 1993).

1.3 Romantic Communication of Affection

In brief, communicating affection is a fundamental and valuable aspect of interpersonal relationships. However, we know very little about how the communication of affection varies as a type of relationship (e.g., friend, sibling, parent, romantic partner). In particular, the communication of affection in romantic relationships may be qualitatively different than in other kinds of relationships.

Furthermore, romantic relationships often occupy a more central position in people's lives than other relationships due to higher levels of interdependence (Thibault & Kelley, 1959) and the fact that intimate relationships account for a larger percentage of variance in people's ongoing happiness (Kiecolt-Glaser et al., 1993). Research suggests that the communication of affection is also seen as more appropriate in mixed-gender dyads that comprise the typical romantic couple than in other kinds of relationships (Floyd & Morman, 1997).

Initial research on the communication of affection in romantic relationships suggests that communicating love and positive feelings is widely regarded as one foundation of intimate relationships. Overtly and intentionally communicating feelings of care, closeness, and admiration for one's partner appears to be essential to the maintenance of healthy relationships as both men and women highly value expressions of verbal intimacy (Floyd & Morman, 1997; Doohan & Manusov, 2004; Prager, 1995). Reflecting on one of the most ubiquitous expressions of affection, Marston and Hecht (1999) suggested that the statement "I love you" may be the most important way of showing love to a partner, and that the recall of such important relationship milestones is a good indicator of relationship well-being (Booth-Butterfield & Trotta, 1994).

Although most theories of close relationships differentiate romantic from platonic love, none distinguishes between “romantic” and “nonromantic” expressions of affection and love. For example, people can say “I love you” to a sibling, parent, child, friend, or relationship partner, but the statement might be regarded as “romantic” only within an intimate relationship. Similarly, a person can spend time planning a surprise party for any one of these close others, but the same gesture or statement may adopt an additional “romantic” meaning only for a romantic partner. Thus, despite appearing superficially indistinguishable, romantic statements and behaviors appear to be qualitatively different from nonromantic ones. The primary question to be addressed in this research is how romantic and nonromantic behaviors differ from each other.

Part of the answer may be found in conceptualizations of romantic love. Most definitions of romantic love (and, often, romance more generally) include some aspect of emotional intensity, physical attraction, or passion as a central feature. For example, romantic love has been defined as a combination of high intimacy (warmth, communication, support) and passion (physical arousal) (Sternberg, 1986), a generalized state of physical arousal that is attributed to another person (Dutton & Aron, 1974), a state of need and desire (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986), intimacy coupled with caring and attachment (Rubin, 1973), and a state of elation and excitement caused by high levels of neurotransmitters such as phenylethylamine, dopamine, norepinephrine, serotonin, oxytocin, and vasopressin (Fisher, 2006). In each instance, romantic love is distinguished from other types by the presence of high arousal or strong emotions, typically with sexual overtones. Romantic love appears to have a fervor and intensity that do not characterize even strong liking and love for family members and friends.

Although the terms “love,” “affection,” and “romance” are sometimes used interchangeably, research suggests that they are distinct. Affection encompasses a wide

variety of feelings (e.g., admiration, trust, etc.), one of which is love. Love can be felt toward many different people and have many different components, but when experienced with respect to a person that one finds attractive and sexually appealing, this constitutes romantic love. However, not all attraction involves love. In fact, love and physical attraction may be better conceptualized as two overlapping circles in which the overlap constitutes romantic love. Thus, people can experience physical attraction without a deeper emotional connection or feeling love, such as when people fall in lust at first sight.

I define a romantic communication of affection as a verbal or nonverbal behavior that increases intimacy in a relationship by conveying feelings of appreciation and value to someone with whom the initiator has, or wishes to have, an intimate relationship. I do not intend to imply that each romantic expression is intended to elicit a sexual response at the moment—only that expressions of love and affection that occur in the absence of a real or desired sexual relationship are qualitatively different than those that occur in the context of “romantic” relationships in which intimacy, attraction, and passion are involved. Thus, although the same behavior (e.g., throwing a surprise party) or verbal statement (e.g., saying “I love you”) can be enacted for either a friend or a romantic partner, the latter might be considered romantic whereas the former would not.

1.4 Motivations for Communicating Romantic Affection

People appear to regard expressions of romantic feelings primarily as heartfelt expressions of one’s love or affection. People who wish to convey love and admiration for a partner often do so in a romantic rather than platonic fashion, and the recipients of such communications generally interpret such expressions as an indication of deeply held feelings and personal attraction. However, although the default attribution for romantic communications is one of sincerity, actors may be motivated by other goals

that, if detected, can influence how a communication of affection is interpreted by the receiver. For example, although two acts may be superficially identical (e.g., two men bring flowers home for their wives), if the actor's motivation is perceived as disingenuous by the receiver (one wife believes that her husband brought her flowers just to facilitate sex), the impact of the romantic communication may be modified. Thus, people's interpretations of romantic behaviors depend on the motivations that they ascribe to the individual as much as the behaviors themselves.

Research on people's perceptions of declarations of love suggests that communications of affection are attributed to one of five categories of motives: true feelings, situational influences, comfort/support, confusion, or ulterior motives (Boothe-Butterfield & Trotta, 1994). True feelings refer to the authentic expression of one's feelings. Situational influences refer to aspects of the situation that make the expression of love socially appropriate (e.g., after having sex for the first time, or saying "I love you too" after one's partner says "I love you"). Comfort/support motivation are typically expressions of love to alleviate the distress or suffering of a partner (e.g., when a loved one falls ill or is writing a dissertation). Confusion refers to spontaneous utterances that appear uncontrollable, such as a person blurting out his or her feelings without it being planned. Finally, the ulterior motives category involves the expression of affection as a means to a personal end—that is, as a tactic to attain a goal. These goals tend to be self-focused and are often either sexual in nature, a way of gaining a person's compliance with a desire, or a means of gaining reassurance that the partner feels the same way.

The ulterior motives category was also found in research that identified six tactics that people use in the context of dating relationships to influence a dating partner: charm, silent treatment, coercion, reason, regression, and debasement (Buss, Gomes, Higgins, & Lauderbach, 1987). The "charm" tactic involves positive behaviors

that are intended to evoke desired reactions. For example, the items used to measure charm involved statements such as “I compliment him/her so she’ll do it again,” “I try to be loving and romantic when I ask him/her (to do action),” and “I give him/her a small gift or card before I ask.” The charm technique involves many behaviors that might be regarded as romantic in certain contexts—such as giving compliments or gifts—but they are enacted primarily to elicit desired behaviors from a partner. Furthermore, research comparing the social influence tactics used across close relationships (with one’s spouse, parents, or friends) found that of the 12 factors identified, charm was one of only four tactics that were used more frequently with spouses than in other relationships (Buss, 1992). These findings suggest that actions that are often labeled as “romantic” are often efforts to elicit desired partner behaviors rather than spontaneous expressions of love, affection, or desire. Collectively, these findings suggest that people sometimes use romantic expressions as social influence tactics to evoke particular desired responses from the other person. In as much as they convey positive sentiments about the other person, romantic expressions can resemble flattery and other forms of ingratiation (Jones et al., 1965; Gordon, 1996).

Importantly, tactical expressions of affection differ in the degree to which they are honest versus deceptive. People may communicate their honest feelings yet do so tactically in that they express romantic sentiments primarily when doing so will result in desired reactions (e.g., expressing love before asking for a favor or broaching a difficult topic). At other times, the expressions themselves are dishonest and deceitful, as when a person expresses romantic sentiments in hopes of coaxing another individual to have sex.

Tactical expressions of affection also differ in the degree to which they are intended to elicit a specific reaction versus maintain oneself in a partners’ good graces.

In some instances, romantic communication may be used to elicit a particular desired reaction from a relationship partner (e.g., to obtain a favor, repair hurt feelings, or elicit physical affection). Indeed, research suggests that the statement “I love you” is used as a strategy to encourage a partner into having sex or for other ulterior goal attainment (Booth-Butterfield & Trotta, 1994; Motley, 2008). In other instances, people sometimes express romantic sentiments to project an image of themselves as a caring, responsive, and desirable partner, an image that has no immediate payoff but that may have value in the long run. To the extent that occasional expressions of affection, love, and commitment are needed for a successful relationship, people may convey romantic sentiments to keep a relationship functioning smoothly.

1.5 The Romantic Construal Model

The primary goal of this dissertation is to propose and test a model that identifies the features of a person’s behavior that leads his or her partner in an intimate relationship to regard the behavior as “romantic.” According to the Romantic Construal Model, people’s judgments of whether a particular act is romantic is determined by three factors: the degree to which the action is (a) personalized (personalization), (b) special (specialness), and (c) conveys that the actor values the relationship (conveyed value). Personalization refers to the extent to which an action is tailored specifically to the receiver’s idiosyncratic personality, interests, preferences, and dislikes. Specialness refers to how “out-of-the-ordinary” the act is, the degree to which the act positively deviates from everyday partner actions. Conveyed value is the degree to which receiver perceives that the act originated from or conveys the actor’s high esteem for the receiver and the relationship. According to the model, higher levels of personalization, specialness, and conveyed value increase the likelihood that a particular expression or

behavior will be regarded as romantic. These key elements will be discussed in detail below.

1.5.1. Personalization

Personalization refers to the degree to which a particular behavior is perceived to have been enacted with the receiver's likes and dislikes in mind—the degree to which that behavior is tailored to the receiver. Personalization can range from mildly personalized to highly personalized. For example, if John knows that Mary likes poetry, he can buy her a book of poetry (mildly personalized), a book of poetry by her favorite author (moderately personalized), or an out of print copy of a book of poetry by her favorite author that she has been wanting for a long time and that contains her favorite poem (highly personalized). Personalization may also extend to the method in which the behavior is enacted. For example, a shy person would probably not appreciate a marriage proposal flashed on the screen at a baseball game, and thus might not regard the action as romantic.

Personalization may be a central component of romance because it symbolizes that the actor cares enough to pay attention to details about a partner's likes and dislikes (thereby suggesting that he or she is important enough to warrant cataloguing the smallest preferences) and knows the partner well enough to make appropriate behavioral choices. Remembering specific preferences also ensures that the behavior is one that the receiver will like, suggesting that the actor ultimately aims to make the receiver happy. Thus, a behavior with a high degree of personalization likely conveys a sense of closeness and importance to the receiver, both in terms of knowing their unique preferences ("you remembered!") and also by ensuring that they will have a positive response to the behavior ("I love it!").

1.5.2. Specialness

Specialness refers to the degree to which an action deviates in a positive direction from the normative and typical actions that the person ordinarily performs within a relationship. Specialness may derive both from the behavior itself as well as the way in which it is enacted. The way in which an otherwise ordinary behavior is performed can sometimes make it special so that the same behavior may be viewed as quite ordinary or as special and romantic depending on the degree of ceremony or emphasis with which it is enacted. For example, Mary may make John dinner most nights which is ordinary and expected; however, a candlelight dinner with soft music would be out of the ordinary, transforming the expected into something special. Essentially, even expected and routine behaviors may be still considered romantic if they occur with some fanfare. For example, although John may always give Mary a card on their anniversary, the ceremony that accompanies it and the frequency of its occurrence (once a year) may make it “special.” Thus, in order for a behavior to be “special” it must either be a novel or rare occurrence or be presented in a notable way.

The dimension of specialness also helps to distinguish romantic behaviors from those that are merely loving. When an action moves from being novel or rare (in either the act itself or the method of enactment) to a habitual occurrence, it becomes a ritualized expression of love and is not likely to be regarded as romantic. As a result, the action loses much of its emotional impact or intensity in terms of the receiver’s reaction. For example, the husband who unexpectedly brings his wife coffee the first morning after they are married may be seen as romantic. However, after the husband continues to bring his wife coffee every morning for five years, the action goes from being out of the ordinary to ordinary and thereby loses its specialness and aura of “romantic.” This

does not mean that ritualized expressions of love do not have any emotional impact but rather that they are no longer regarded as romantic.

1.5.3. Conveyed Value

As noted, people express affection in romantic relationships for a number of reasons. According to the Romantic Construal Model, in order for an action to be considered romantic, the receiver must perceive that the actor's behavior affirms or conveys that he or she sincerely values the receiver and the relationship. In some cases, the actor may have performed the behavior with the goal of expressing to the receiver that the relationship is important and valuable to the actor, but in other cases, the actor's behavior may convey that he or she values the relationship although it was not enacted for that purpose. In this sense, sometimes partners intentionally express relationship value, whereas at other times, value is implicit in their actions although it may not have been a motivation behind their behavior. For example, John may take Mary out for their anniversary with the intention of conveying how important she is to him ("you're the best thing that ever happened to me") or merely take her to dinner to celebrate the event, which may implicitly convey that he values her and the relationship. In either case, she should see the behavior as reasonably romantic, assuming some level of personalization and specialness.

In sum, the model suggests that people interpret actions as romantic when a personalized action that is seen as special conveys relationship value. If an action does not meet the criteria of personalization and specialness, the receiver will still be likely to experience positive affect because he or she may feel valued and perceive good intentions on the behalf of the actor, but the reaction will be attenuated and the behavior will not be seen as romantic. Likewise, if an act meets the criteria of being personalized and special, but the receiver perceives that it is being enacted for reasons that do not

convey sincere value of the receiver and relationship (e.g., ulterior actor-oriented motivations such as placating the partner, social influence, or increasing the likelihood of having sex), this lack of value will also attenuate the receiver's positive response.

1.5.4. Potential Moderator: Effort

A potential moderator included in the Romantic Construal Model involves the degree to which the personalization or specialness of the action is seen as requiring effort on the actor's part. Effort may take several forms including time invested in the act and the level of personal sacrifice. Time invested could involve planning an event, tracking down a particular object, or thinking about how to enact the behavior, whereas personal sacrifice might involve forgoing a pleasurable activity in order to provide the act for the partner (e.g., a girlfriend who chooses to miss her sorority's formal so that she can attend her boyfriend's sporting event), choosing to engage in a non-enjoyable activity or spend time with non-enjoyable people (e.g., a husband who goes to the ballet for his wife even though he hates it), or even suffering some emotional or physical consequence (e.g., standing up to a family member who disapproves of the partner).

Importantly, however, an act does not need to be effortful to the actor in order to be considered romantic. A man can write a personalized "I love you" note to his girlfriend and unexpectedly leave it on her car's windshield. This behavior has met the act-level criteria for romance (it was personalized and special and conveyed value) but did not require substantial time or personal sacrifice. However, even though effort is not essential to romantic construal, greater effort on the actor's behalf serves to increase the intensity of the action's impact on the receiver because it implies that the actor cared enough to sacrifice time, effort, or other resources for the receiver. For example, the same personalized note left on the same windshield but at increased personal cost (e.g., the

man walked a mile in a snowstorm at 4:00 a.m. to deliver it) would be perceived as more romantic than when the gesture was less effortful.

Furthermore, there may be some sort of a reciprocal or compensatory relationship between different types of efforts and costs. Thus, if an act requires much time invested in planning, it may not require as much personal sacrifice to have the same level of romantic impact. In the same vein, if an act requires a large sacrifice on the actor's behalf, it may not require much investment of time to be regarded as romantic. Regardless of the specific relationship between costs, there appears to be a minimal threshold of effort that needs to be reached.

In summary, according to the model, an action will be considered romantic if it is performed by an actor who has (or is perceived to wish to have) an intimate relationship with the receiver, the act itself is to some extent personalized (i.e., tailored to the receiver's particular likes and dislikes) and special (i.e., outside the ordinary behavioral patterns of the relationship) and communicates or connotes that the actor values the receiver and the relationship. Although the effects of these three factors is expected to be moderated by the effort required, with higher levels of effort increasing ascriptions of romance, the main focus of this paper is to test the basic tenants of the Romantic Construal Model, and therefore effort will be measured but included only as an exploratory variable.

Two pilot studies were conducted to test preliminary versions of the Romantic Construal Model, each of which led to changes in the parameters of the model just described. In the next section, I described the two pilot studies, followed by two studies that tested the final version of the model.

1.6 Pilot Study 1

In an initial test of the basic tenants of the model, a study was conducted using ratings of predictability and specialness to predict ratings of potentially romantic behaviors. Valentine's Day is considered the most romantic day of the year (Ogletree, 1992) and provides a unique opportunity to evaluate the Romantic Construal Model because a large percentage of coupled individuals plan romantic events (versus randomly throughout the year for other occasions such as anniversaries and birthdays).

1.6.1 Method

1.6.1.1. Participants.

Participants were 136 passers-by (86 men and 50 women) who were recruited to participate in the study during the two weeks leading up to Valentine's Day (February 14). They ranged in age from 19 to 64 ($M = 29.6$). As an incentive, participants were told that they would be entered in a drawing for a gift certificate to an upscale restaurant. In order to participate, participants had to be in a relationship.

1.6.1.2. Procedure

Participants completed the study on laptop computers using MediaLab software. Participants were presented with a randomly ordered list of seven potentially romantic behaviors: finding a hard to track down gift that your partner has been wanting for a while, giving your partner an extravagant expensive gift, giving a gift certificate for a massage, spending a sensual evening in bed, going to a movie, play, concert, or sporting event, going out to a fancy dinner, and writing your partner a love letter, song or poem. For each of the behaviors, participants rated on a 5-point scale (1 = not at all to 5 = extremely) how romantic their partner would think this behavior was, how ordinary and expected vs. special and unexpected the partner would think this behavior was, and how personalized and tailored to the partner's likes and dislikes this behavior would be.

At the end of the study, participants were paid and thanked for their participation.

1.6.2. Results

Multiple regression analyses were used to predict the romantic ratings of each of the 7 behaviors from their individual ratings of unexpectedness and personalization. For all 7 behaviors, specialness and personalization significantly predicted the ratings of how romantic the behavior would be regarded, p 's < .05. The results for each of the seven behaviors are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Ratings of romance as a function of specialness and personalization.

Behavior	Specialness			Personalization		
	β	t	$p <$	β	t	$p <$
Finding a hard to track down gift	.68	10.61	.05	.23	3.43	.05
Giving your partner an extravagant gift	.49	7.10	.05	.33	4.74	.05
Giving a gift certificate for a massage	.48	7.93	.05	.45	7.41	.05
Spending a sensual evening in bed	.58	7.43	.05	.21	3.43	.05
Going to a movie, play, concert of sporting event	.65	8.17	.05	.18	2.24	.05
Going out to a fancy dinner	.57	7.38	.05	.19	2.45	.05
Writing your partner a love letter, song or poem.	.74	12.52	.05	.13	2.21	.05

1.6.3. Discussion

The findings for the first pilot study provided initial support for two components of the Romantic Construal Model. For all seven behaviors, specialness and personalization predicted participants' ratings of how romantic their partner would regard each behavior.

In retrospect, the wording of some of the items may have inadvertently connoted extra unintended meaning. For example, some of the behaviors contained qualifiers such

as “[a gift] that your partner has been wanting for a while” which, by definition, would be personalized. Therefore, participants’ ratings of personalization may have been influenced by the descriptors. Even so, although some of the behaviors contain potentially misleading adjectives, the majority were neutrally worded (e.g., a gift certificate for a massage).

1.7 Pilot Study 2

Pilot Study 2 was conducted to address the shortcomings of the first study by using a list of neutrally worded descriptions of behaviors. Furthermore, the second pilot study attempted to clarify the dimension of “specialness” by specifying to participants that the key aspect of being “out of the ordinary” was unexpectedness (that is, a behavior that is not habitual and that the receiver would not have predicted the actor doing at that moment). Finally, Pilot Study 2 expanded on the model tested in the first study by including the variable of conveyed value described earlier.

1.7.1. Method

1.7.1.1. Participants

Participants were 117 passers-by (59 men, 58 women) who were recruited to participate during a graduate and professional student social gathering in exchange for financial compensation. They ranged in age from 22 to 36 ($M = 25.9$).

1.7.1.2. Procedure

Participants were presented with a randomly ordered list of 8 potentially romantic behaviors: a night time walk on the beach, hiding a note saying “I love you,” giving your partner a massage, buying tickets to an event your partner wants to see, cuddling up in front of the fire, going out to a fancy dinner, giving your partner a card on your anniversary, and flirting seductively with your partner. For each behavior,

participants answered questions that asked: “How romantic would your partner think this behavior is?,” “How personalized would this behavior be? (That is, how much is this behavior specifically tailored to your partners’ personal likes and dislikes?),” “How unexpected would your partner think this behavior is? (That is, how unusual or “out of the ordinary” would it be for you to do this behavior in your relationship?),” “How costly would this behavior be to YOU in terms of time, effort, money, or personal sacrifice?,” and “To what extent would your partner think this act tells them that you value him/her and your relationship?” All ratings were made on 7-point scales. At the end of the study, participants were paid and thanked for their participation.

1.7.2. Results

Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were used to predict the romantic ratings of each behavior from ratings of unexpectedness and personalization along with their interaction. Main effects were entered on Step 1 and the two-way interaction on Step 2.

Next I re-ran the hierarchical regression models including the exploratory variable of value. All main effects were included at level 1 and all two-way interactions were included at level 2. For all 8 behaviors both personalization and value also emerged as significant predictors (see Table 2). However, unexpectedness predicted rating of romance for only one behavior.

Table 2: Ratings of romance as a function of personalized, unexpectedness and value.

Behavior	Personalized			Unexpectedness			Value		
	β	t	$p <$	β	t	$p <$	β	t	$p <$
Night time walk on the beach	.55	.32	.01				.22	.50	.05
Hiding a note that says “I love you”	.48	.54	.01				.42	.76	.01
Giving your partner a massage	.33	.36	.01				.33	.32	.01

Buying tickets to an event your partner wants to see	.33	.44	.01				.37	.91	.01
Cuddling up in front of the fire	.32	.92	.01				.38	.40	.01
Going out to a fancy dinner	.31	.96	.01				.52	.47	.01
Giving your partner a card on your anniversary	.43	.71	.01	.11	2.03	.05	.47	.30	.01
Flirting seductively with your partner	.26	.81	.01				.52	.54	.01

Although a few significant interactions were obtained, they displayed no consistent pattern across behaviors. Specifically “giving your partner a massage” was significantly predicted by both the personalization x unexpectedness ($\beta = .96, t = 2.35, p < .05$) and unexpectedness x value ($\beta = -.84, t = -1.96, p < .05$) interactions. “Buying tickets to an event your partner wants to see” and “cuddling up in front of the fire” were both significantly predicted by the cost x value interaction ($\beta = -.99, t = 2.04, p < .05$ and $\beta = -1.43, t = -2.54, p < .05$, respectively). “Going out to a fancy dinner” was significantly predicted by personalization x cost ($\beta = -.67, t = -2.18, p < .05$) and unexpectedness x value ($\beta = -.97, t = -2.71, p < .01$). Finally “giving your partner a card on your anniversary” was significantly predicted by the personalization x cost interaction ($\beta = -.76, t = -2.05, p < .05$).

1.7.3. Discussion

The results of Pilot Study 2 suggested two new directions. First, it suggested that unexpectedness did not fully capture the essence of “specialness” in that specialness predicted romantic ratings in Pilot Study 1, but unexpectedness had little effect in Pilot Study 2. In retrospect, the term unexpectedness may have suggested that the behavior is novel or out of character rather than that it is special. As most of these behaviors were common ones in relationships, even a rare occurrence would therefore not merit the

label “unexpected,” and unexpected behaviors would not necessarily be “special.” Furthermore, as noted, behaviors that may be somewhat expected (i.e., giving a card on an anniversary) may be rendered special by their mode of enactment. Based on the lack of relationship between unexpectedness and romantic ratings in Pilot Study 2, it seems that “specialness” rather than “unexpectedness” is the key dimension. This new specification has the added advantage of distinguishing loving behaviors that are habitual and unceremonious from romantic behaviors that are out of the ordinary and presented with fanfare.

The second contribution of Pilot Study 2 was the addition of the component of conveyed value. The previous version of the Romantic Construal Model had included a “relationship affirming” dimension, but it had not been tested or specified earlier. The results of Pilot Study 2 suggested that conveying value to the receiver is a key component of romance and thus was added to the model and tested in both of the subsequent studies.

2. Study 1

2.1. Rationale for Study 1

Pilot Studies 1 and 2 were useful in helping to refine the Romantic Construal Model, but each had limitations. The two following studies were designed to provide robust tests of the model in two different ways. The first study asked participants to modify behaviors to make them more or less romantic so that their changes to personalization, specialness, and conveyed value could be examined. The second study experimentally manipulated the three variables specified by the Romantic Construal Model to examine their effects on the degree to which participants regarded the behaviors as romantic.

This first study tested the Romantic Construal Model by subjectively asking participants to modify potentially romantic situations to make them either more or less romantic. These modifications were then content-analyzed with respect to the degree to which they would be expected to influence personalization, specialness, and relationship value. Based on the Romantic Construal Model, I hypothesized that participants who are instructed to make the situations more romantic will modify them by increasing the levels of personalization, specialness, and/or relational value. Conversely, when instructed to make the situations less romantic, participants should make changes that lower personalization, specialness, and/or relational value.

2.1.1. Method

2.1.1.1. Participants

Participants were 132 (67 men and 65 women) undergraduate students recruited from the Duke psychology participant pool. Participants ranged in age from 17-23 ($M = 19.1$).

2.1.1.2. Procedure

This experiment was administered on-line through the psychology pool website using the Qualtrics software. Participants logged onto the website to access the questionnaire. After reading and electronically signing the informed consent form, participants completed a demographics questionnaire and were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: the increasing romance condition or the decreasing romance condition. In both conditions, participants were presented with descriptions of nine mundane behaviors: cooking your partner a meal at home, spending time with your partner doing something together, making a fire in a fireplace, going out to dinner, picking your partner up at the airport, giving your partner a card on your anniversary, spending time with your partner doing something together, going for a drive with your partner, going on a weekend getaway with your partner. For each behavior, participants answered the question, “How romantic do you think this behavior is?,” on 7-point scales from 1 (not at all) to 7 (extremely).

Participants in the increasing romance condition were then asked how they would change each behavior so it would be more romantic and given a blank space to list possible changes. They then re-rated how romantic the modified situation was now after their suggested changes. Participants in the decreasing romance condition were asked how they would change each behavior so it would be less romantic and given a blank space to list possible changes. They then rated how romantic the modified situation is after their suggested changes. All participants then received a debriefing form and were thanked for their participation.

Participants’ modifications of the 8 situations were coded by four research assistants using the coding sheet in Appendix A. For each modification that the participant suggested, each coder rated the degree to which the change decreased or

increased personalization, specialness, and conveyed value, (-2 = decreased; 0 = no change; +2 increased). The reliabilities for the four coders were assessed using the intraclass correlation. The reliability of specialness (.94), personalization (.71) and value (.81) all exceeded the suggested minimum criterion of .70 for interrater reliability (Nunnally, 1978).

2.1.2. Results

The primary goal of study 1 was to test the Romantic Construal Model by evaluating whether the degree of specialness, personalization, and conveyed value in participants' modifications of the mundane behaviors were higher when they were instructed to increase rather than decrease how romantic the behaviors were. The secondary goal of study 1 was to evaluate how well coders' ratings of personalization, specialness, and conveyed value predicted participants' ratings of how romantic the behaviors were.

2.1.2.1. Primary analyses: MANOVAs for personalization, specialness, and value.

To assess whether the degree of specialness, personalization, and conveyed value were higher in the increase romance condition than in the decreased romance condition, a 2 (instructions: increase vs. decrease how romantic the behaviors are) by 2 (gender of the participant) between-subjects multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) was conducted on ratings of personalization, specialness, and conveyed value (averaged across the four coders) on the 9 behaviors. Because the hypotheses involve the effects of increasing and decreasing romance across the set of 9 behaviors (and we have no interest in the 9 specific behaviors themselves), significant effects were examined at the multivariate level by calculating the means for the canonical variable for each effect (please see Tables 7, 8, and 9 in Appendix C for the full multivariate and univariate models). Significant interactions were decomposed by testing multivariate simple main

effects. According to the Romantic Construal Model, average ratings of personalization, specialness, and conveyed value should be significantly higher when participants were instructed to make the situations more romantic than when instructed to make the situations less romantic.

2.1.2.1.1. Personalization

A MANOVA conducted on the average of the coders' ratings of personalization across the 9 behaviors revealed significant multivariate main effects of the increasing/decreasing romance instructions, $mF(9,115) = 89.98, p < .01$. Examining the means of the canonical variable for the experimental conditions showed that participants who were instructed to increase how romantic the behaviors were ($M = 3.4$) offered suggestions that were rated as higher in personalization than participants who were instructed to decreased the romanticness of the behavior ($M = 1.1$).

2.1.2.1.2. Specialness

A MANOVA conducted on coders' ratings of specialness across the 9 behaviors obtained significant multivariate main effects of the increasing/decreasing romance instructions, $mF(9,115) = 697.49, p < .01$, and as well as a condition by gender interaction, $mF(9,115) = 3.12, p < .01$.

Examining the means of the canonical variable showed that participants who were instructed to increase how romantic the behaviors were ($M = 7.3$) offered suggestions that were rated as higher in specialness than participants who were instructed to decreased the romanticness of the behavior ($M = -7.3$).

The multivariate simple main effects for the condition by gender interaction revealed that female participants that were instructed to increase how romantic the behaviors were had significantly higher ratings of specialness ($M = 3.0$) than did male participants ($M = 1.7$), $F(9,115) = 3.54, p < .01$.

2.1.2.1.3. *Conveyed Value*

A MANOVA conducted on coders' ratings of conveyed value across the 9 behaviors revealed significant multivariate main effects of the increasing/decreasing romance condition $mF(9,115) = 122.62, p < .01$ and a gender by condition interaction $mF(9,115) = 1.97, p < .05$.

Examining the means of the canonical variable for the experimental conditions showed that participants who were instructed to increase how romantic the behaviors were ($M = 3.2$) offered suggestions that were rated as higher in conveyed value than participants who were instructed to decrease how romantic the behavior was ($M = -2.9$).

The multivariate simple main effects for the condition by gender interaction revealed that male participants who were instructed to decrease how romantic the behaviors were offered suggestions that had significantly lower ratings of value ($M = -2.2$) than did female participants ($M = -1.4$), $F(9,115) = 2.21, p < .01$.

2.1.2.2. **Secondary analyses: Regression analyses predicting romance from personalization, specialness, and value.**

According to the Romantic Construal Model, coders' ratings of participants' changes in personalization, specialness, and conveyed value should predict participants' ratings of how romantic each behavior is afterward they made their modifications of the behavior. The model also predicts that personalization, specialness, and conveyed value will each account for unique variance in participants' ratings of how romantic the modified situations are.

To test these hypotheses, hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted in which coders' ratings of the personalization, specialness, and conveyed value of the modified behaviors were used to predict participants' ratings of how romantic the modified behaviors were, controlling for participants' ratings of how romantic the original, unmodified behaviors were (to control for baseline ratings of

romance). Gender of the participant and the baseline rating of romance were entered in step 1, and coders' ratings of personalization, specialness, and conveyed value were included in step 2.

The results of the regression analyses indicated that specialness was a significant predictor of participants' ratings of how romantic the behaviors were across 8 of the 9 scenarios. Conveyed value emerged as a significant predictor for 6 of the 9 scenarios, and personalization was a significant predictor for 2 of the 9 scenarios. (Interestingly, the baseline rating of how romantic the behaviors were predicted the final rating for only 4 of the 9 scenarios). Gender did not predict ratings of how romantic any of the behaviors were. Full results of these regression analyses are shown in Table 10 in Appendix D.

2.1.3. Discussion for Study 1

The primary goal of Study 1 was to evaluate whether the degree of specialness, personalization, and conveyed value in participants' modifications of the 9 behaviors were higher when they were instructed to increase rather than decrease how romantic the behaviors were. The results for Study 1 showed that participants who were asked to make a behavior more romantic made modifications that coders rated as higher in specialness, personalization and conveyed value than participants who were asked to make a behavior less romantic. This pattern of means provides initial support for the Romantic Construal Model in that participants increased specialness, personalization, and conveyed value to make behaviors more romantic.

The second goal of Study 1 was to evaluate the degree to which coders' ratings of personalization, specialness, and conveyed value predicted participants' ratings of how romantic the behaviors were. The results of the regression analyses suggested partial support for the Romantic Construal Model. For the majority of scenarios, specialness significantly predicted the final rating of how romantic the behavior was while

controlling for baseline ratings, and value predicted romantic ratings for approximately two-thirds of the scenarios. Contrary to hypotheses, personalization was a weak predictor of the final ratings.

3. Study 2

3.1 Rationale for Study 2

Study 2 provided an experimental test of the Romantic Construal model where participants read vignettes in which personalization, specialness, and conveyed value were experimentally manipulated and rated the behavior in each vignette with respect to how romantic it is. I hypothesized that main effects of each of the components of the Romantic Construal Model (personalization, specialness, and conveyed value) would be obtained, showing that the presence of each component results in higher romantic ratings. Because each of the components should contribute individually to ratings of romance, vignettes that are high on personalization, specialness, and conveyed value should be viewed as most romantic.

Study 2 also allowed an examination of the possible additive and/or interactive effects of different combinations of the model's key variables, although no hypotheses were advanced for these combinations aside from the fact that the main effects of specialness, personalization, and conveyed value should be somewhat cumulative. Furthermore, because the gender of both the participant and the actor described in each vignette may moderate romantic ratings, gender of participant and actor were included as a factor in the design although no hypotheses were ventured regarding gender differences.

Study 2 also evaluated the hypotheses about the effects of specialization, personalization, and conveyed value in a more subjective way as well. If the Romantic Construal Model is correct, then participants' subjective ratings of personalization, specialness, and conveyed value should predict their ratings of how romantic each of the behaviors is. I predicted that each of the three model components would predict participants' romantic ratings

3.1.1. Method

3.1.1.1. Participants.

Participants were 67 male and 65 female undergraduate students recruited from the Duke psychology participant pool. Participants ranged in age from 17-23 ($M = 19.1$).

3.1.1.2. Procedure

This experiment was administered on-line through the psychology pool website using the Qualtrics software. Participants logged onto the website to access the questionnaire. After reading and electronically signing the consent form, they answered a demographics questionnaire and were presented with 8 romantic vignettes in which the three key variables (personalization, specialness, and conveyed value) were varied (low vs. high).

Every participant received 8 different vignettes, each of which reflected one of the 8 possible combinations of the three model components (low vs. high personalization, low vs. high specialness, and low vs. high conveyed value). Thus, each participant served in all 8 conditions of the design but read a different scenario in each condition. The 8 vignettes described situations that involved buying a partner a birthday present, cooking dinner for the partner, watching a partner in a play, giving a partner a back massage, taking a partner on a weekend getaway, taking a partner out to a concert, buying an anniversary card for a partner, and leaving a note for a partner. Across all participants, each vignette was used equally in each of the 8 conditions. Please see Appendix B for all study 2 materials.

In the “high” conditions, a phrase was included in the vignette that specified personalization, specialness, or conveyed value, whereas in the “low” conditions, this phrase was omitted. Thus, the “low” conditions reflected the absence of personalization, specialness, or conveyed value rather than their opposites. For example, in a scenario in

which the protagonist took his partner to the beach for a weekend, personalization was heightened by including the phrase “because he knows she loves the beach,” conveyed value was heightened by including mention that he planned the trip because “their relationship is really important to him,” and specialness was heightened by noting that “he rarely does things like this.” Participants received one vignette with each of the 8 combinations of personalization, specialness, and conveyed value but differed with respect to which vignette a particular combination occurred.

To control for possible effects of the gender of the actor (the person enacting the behavior) and the receiver (the person for whom the behavior is being enacted), two versions of each vignette were written—one in which the man is the actor (and the woman is the receiver), and one in which the woman is the actor (and the man is the receiver). Study 2 is therefore a mixed factorial design in which personalization, specialness, and conveyed value were within-subject factors and the gender of the participant and actor in the vignette were between-subject variables. Thus, the design of study 2 is a 2 (personalization: high vs. low) x 2 (specialness: high vs. low) x 2 (conveyed value: high vs. low) x 2 (gender of the participant) x 2 (gender of the vignette actor).

After reading each vignette, participants answered questions that asked: “How romantic do you think this behavior is?” “How loving do you think this behavior is?” “How loving do you think the average person would think this behavior is?” Questions were answered on 7-point scales (1 = not at all; 7 = extremely).

Once participants provided their romantic ratings of all 8 vignettes, they were asked to rate each vignette in terms of the three model components (personalization, specialness, and conveyed value). For each vignette, participants answered the following questions: (a) “How personalized is this behavior for the person it is intended for (i.e., how much is this behavior something that reflects that person’s specific tastes

and likes)?”, (b) “How special do you think this behavior is? That is, how unusual or “out of the ordinary” would it be for the person to behave this way in this relationship?”, and (c) “To what extent did you think this act conveys that the person enacting the behavior values the partner and their relationship?” All ratings were made on 7-point scales (1 = not at all; 7 = extremely). Participants were then debriefed and thanked for their participation.

3.1.2. Results

The goals of this study were twofold. First, the primary goal was to evaluate how experimentally manipulated differences in personalization, specialness and value predicted participants’ ratings of romance. The secondary goal was to evaluate how participants’ subjective ratings of personalization, specialness and value predicted their ratings of romance for each vignette.

3.1.2.1. Preliminary analyses: Manipulation checks

To assess the whether the manipulations of personalization, specialness and conveyed value within each vignette were accurately perceived by participants, a 2 (specialness: high vs. low) \times 2 (personalization: high vs. low) \times 2 (conveyed value: high vs. low) \times 2 (vignette actor’s gender) \times 2 (participant gender) mixed factorial analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted separately on participants’ ratings of personalization, specialness, and conveyed value. Participants’ mean ratings of romance for the other seven vignettes was included as a covariate to control for individual differences in participants’ overall tendency to rate situations as romantic.

The ANCOVAs showed that the personalization and specialness manipulations were highly successful in inducing the desired perceptions, but the conveyed value manipulation was less so. As seen in Table 3, significant effects of personalization and

specialness were obtained on ratings of personalization and specialness for 7 of the 8 vignettes.

Table 3: Mean ratings of manipulation checks for specialness and personalization.

Vignette	Specialness			Personalization		
	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i> Low	<i>M</i> High	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i> Low	<i>M</i> High
1	7.59**	4.2	5.2	27.13**	4.5	4.7
2	4.08**	3.6	4.2	12.57**	3.9	4.8
3	19.61**	3.3	4.7	5.46**	4.6	5.2
4	11.01**	5.1	5.8	26.14**	4.2	5.5
5	5.44*	2.4	3.0	31.39**	2.4	3.9
6	4.55*	4.7	5.2	11.94**	4.6	5.4
7	6.34*	4.4	5.0	1.80	4.9	5.2
8	3.39+	4.4	4.7	20.53**	3.9	5.0

Note, + $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Main effects of manipulated value on participants' ratings of value were obtained on only 2 of the 8 vignettes, vignette 2, $F(1, 115) = 5.46$, $p < .05$ ($M_{\text{high}} = 4.0$; $M_{\text{low}} = 4.5$) and vignette 8, $F(1,115) = 4.15$ $p < .05$ ($M_{\text{high}} = 4.2$; $M_{\text{low}} = 4.7$). These findings were contrary to expectations in two ways. First, I expected that the value manipulations would strongly influence participants' value ratings. Second, in the two instances where manipulated value did predict participants' ratings, the means showed the opposite pattern than was predicted by the manipulation. Accordingly, the means ratings of value were lower in the high value condition than in the low value condition. This suggests that either value was not effectively manipulated in the vignettes or the participants' perception of value may be based on other factors.

Furthermore, all three manipulation check items were occasionally affected by another manipulated variable. (See Tables 16, 17, and 18 in Appendix F for the results of each ANCOVA). However, no clear pattern emerged across variables or vignettes. As will be discussed, these unanticipated effects likely occurred because specialness, personalization, and conveyed value often connote each other, as when enacting a special behavior conveys that the person values the partner or highly personalized actions are seen as particularly special. Indeed, participants' ratings of perceived personalization, specialness, and value were moderately correlated with each other (See Table 10 in Appendix D). In summary, personalization and specialness were manipulated as expected, but the manipulation of conveyed value was weaker.

3.1.2.2. Primary analyses: ANCOVAs

The same $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$ mixed factorial ANCOVA model used to evaluate the manipulation check items was used to test the impact of the three within-subject factors (personalization, specialness, value) and the two between-subjects variable (gender of the participant and gender of the actor in the vignette) on participants' ratings of how romantic each vignette was. As with the manipulation check analyses, the mean level of that participant's rating of romance for the other seven vignettes was included as a covariate. For all vignettes, the Levene's test of equality of error variances was non-significant, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was met. Furthermore, tests of interactions between the independent variables and the covariate were nonsignificant in all but one case, indicating that the assumption for homogeneity of regression slopes across conditions was met.¹

The Romantic Construal Model predicts significant main effects of personalization, specialness and value in which high levels of each factor result in higher

¹ There were one significant interaction of participant gender by covariate $F(12,131) = 2.04, p < .05$.

ratings of romance. This expected pattern emerged for personalization where, for four out of the eight vignettes, participants rated the vignettes that were high in personalization as significantly more romantic than those that were low in personalization (see Table 4).

Table 4: Main effect of personalization on ratings of romance across vignettes

Vignette	<i>F</i>	Mean Low	Mean High
1	9.03**	4.6	4.7
2	13.67**	3.9	4.6
3	5.69**	4.4	4.9
4	1.95	5.5	5.7
5	9.85**	3.1	3.7
6	1.41	5.3	5.5
7	.87	5.3	5.1
8	2.07	4.4	4.6

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

In addition, main effects of specialness were obtained for four of the vignettes. In each case, high specialness vignettes were rated as more romantic than low specialness vignettes (see table 5). Contrary to hypotheses, there were no significant main effects for value on any vignette. Also, two significant interactions emerged, but these were each obtained for a single vignette and, thus, can not be interpreted as indicating any general patterns.

Table 5: Main effects of specialness on romantic ratings.

Vignette	<i>F</i>	Mean Low	Mean High
1	.38	4.3	4.9
2	7.84**	4.0	4.6
3	8.12**	4.3	5.0
4	.01	5.6	5.6
5	3.33+	3.2	3.6
6	6.71**	5.1	5.6
7	4.26**	5.00	5.5
8	.10	4.5	5.4

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

3.1.2.3. Ancillary analyses

The same ANCOVA model was used to test the effects of personalization, specialness, and conveyed value on other variables such as feeling good, feeling committed, and feeling loved. For nearly all vignettes, the Levene's test of equality of error variances was nonsignificant, indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was generally met. (Three vignettes did not meet this requirement: vignettes 2 & 8 for ratings of feeling good, and vignette 6 for commitment.) Furthermore, tests of the interaction between the independent variables and the covariate were not significant for the large majority of vignettes were non-significant, indicating that the assumption for homogeneity of regression slopes across conditions in general was met.²

Personalization had significant main effects on participants' ratings of how good, committed and loved they would feel if someone enacted that behavior in their own

² There were four significant interactions: for commitment there was a significant interaction of gender of participant by covariate $F(11,131) = 2.48, p < .05$, and special by covariate $F(10,131) = 2.33, p < .05$. For feeling loved, there was a significant interaction of actor gender by covariate $F(12,132) = 2.16, p < .05$, and value by covariate $F(9,132) = 2.42, p < .05$.

relationships. Although not explicitly hypothesized, the literature on communication of affection would suggest that romantic behaviors are likely associated with other positive relationship functions such as feeling good about the relationship, feeling more committed to the relationship, and feeling more loved by one's partner. If this is the case, then the manipulated variables from The Romantic Construal Model should cause higher ratings on these dependent variables.

Indeed, personalization significantly predicted higher levels of feeling good, feeling more committed, and feeling more loved each in 4 out of the 8 vignettes (please see Table 6).

Table 6: Effects of specialness on ratings of good feelings, commitment, and feeling loved

Vignette	Good			Committed			Loved		
	F	M Low	M High	F	M Low	M High	F	M Low	M High
1	7.30**	4.9	5.0	3.95*	4.9	4.8	5.61*	4.9	4.9
2	5.23*	4.5	5.0	2.86+	4.2	4.6	8.74**	4.2	4.9
3	3.74+	4.8	5.2	4.22*	4.5	5.0	3.12+	4.7	5.2
4	1.67	5.7	5.9	0.11	5.7	5.8	1.70	5.7	5.9
5	8.10**	3.4	4.1	4.87*	3.2	3.7	7.67**	3.2	3.9
6	5.43*	5.4	5.8	9.80**	5.0	5.5	6.60*	5.4	5.7
7	1.62	5.6	5.3	0.09	5.2	5.1	1.16	5.5	5.3
8	0.20	4.9	4.9	0.91	4.4	4.6	0.40	4.7	4.8

Note: + $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Specialness significantly predicted ratings of feeling good on only one vignette (vignette 3: $F(1,115) = 16.09, p < .01; M_{low} = 4.6, M_{high} = 5.4$), feeling committed on only two vignettes (vignette 3: $F(1,115) = 7.06, p < .01; M_{low} = 4.4, M_{high} = 5.0$; vignette 6: $F(1,115) = 5.83, p < .05; M_{low} = 5.0, M_{high} = 5.4$) and two for feeling more loved (vignette 3: $F(1,115) = 12.03, p < .01; M_{low} = 4.5, M_{high} = 5.4$; vignette 6: $F(1,115) = 4.59, p < .05; M_{low} =$

5.4, $M_{\text{high}} = 5.7$). Finally, value predicted feeling more committed on vignette 3, $F(1, 115) = 4.27$, $p < .05$; $M_{\text{low}} = 4.5$, $M_{\text{high}} = 5.0$). In all instances except one (vignette 1, feeling more committed predicted by personalization), higher levels of each manipulated variable (specialness, personalization, or value) were associated with higher mean levels of feeling good, feeling committed, and feeling loved.

3.1.2.4. Secondary analyses: Regression analyses predicting romantic ratings

Hierarchical multiple regressions were used to evaluate the degree to which participants' ratings of specialness, personalization, and conveyed value predicted their romantic ratings for each vignette. For each analysis, participants' gender was entered in the first step, subjective ratings of personalization, specialness, and value were entered in the second step, and the three two-way interaction between gender and personalization, specialness, and value were included in the third step. Analyses were conducted separately for vignettes with male actors and those with female actors.

For vignettes with male actors, value emerged as a significant predictor of romantic ratings for five of the eight vignettes. In contrast, specialization and gender each predicted romantic ratings for only one vignette, and personalization was nonsignificant across vignettes (for complete regression results, see Table 19 in Appendix G). Overall the two-way interactions with gender were nonsignificant, except for a specialness by gender interaction for vignette 6, but this interaction did not qualify the main effect of specialness. For vignettes with female actors, value was a significant predictor for five of the eight vignettes, whereas specialness was a significant predictor for only two vignettes. Gender and personalization were nonsignificant across vignettes. For vignette 5, significant interactions were obtained for specialness by gender, and value by gender, neither of which qualified the main effects of specialness or value, respectively.

Importantly, for both male and female actor vignettes, even when the three model components were individually nonsignificant (i.e., their semi-partial correlations were nonsignificant), the three variables together accounted for a significant proportion of the total variance in romantic ratings. For example, in the male actor's vignette 2, neither personalization ($\beta = .13, p = .41$), specialness ($\beta = .29, p = .13$), nor value ($\beta = .30, p = .13$) were significant predictors of romantic ratings, but the step on which the three variables were entered accounted for a large and significant increase in variance explained (R^2 change = .48, $p < .01$). This pattern suggests that, although each component may not uniquely predict romantic ratings, the variance shared by all three variables does so.

3.1.3. Discussion for Study 2

The primary goal was to evaluate how experimentally manipulated differences in personalization, specialness, and value influenced participants' ratings of romance. The results of study 2 suggested that although specialness and personalization were successfully manipulated in the vignettes, the expected relationships between these variables and romantic ratings were not as robust as predicted. Specifically, although these two variables significantly predicted ratings of romance for half of the vignettes, for the others, they did not. Furthermore, manipulated value did not influence romantic ratings for any vignette. Although both participant and actor gender had been included to explore possible effects, they were largely nonsignificant individually and interactively.

The secondary goal of Study 2 was to evaluate how participants' subjective ratings of personalization, specialness, and conveyed value predicted their ratings for each vignette. The regression analyses predicting participants' ratings of how romantic each behavior was from their own ratings of personalization, specialness and value had

different—and stronger—results than analyses of the manipulated variables.

Specifically, although value did not influence romantic ratings when it was manipulated across vignettes, participants' subjective ratings of value consistently predicted their ratings of the romantic behaviors. It is possible that, in the eyes of observers, specialness and personalization may both convey that the actor values the target. That is, although these variables may be distinguished conceptually, in everyday judgments of romantic behavior, they each connote the others.

Finally, the ancillary analyses suggested that, as with romance, personalization predicted ratings of feeling good, feeling more committed and feeling loved for half of the vignettes, although specialization and value did not. This finding suggests that whereas personalization may affect other aspects of relationships in general, the specialness of a behavior may in part determine whether it is perceived as romantic.

4. General Discussion for Studies 1 and 2

4.1. General Discussion

The goal of this project was to evaluate hypotheses derived from the Romantic Construal Model. The Romantic Construal Model predicts that within close, intimate relationships (those in which partners are attracted to one another), people's perceptions of how romantic a behavior is are influenced by three factors: personalization (how much the action is tailored to the specific likes and dislikes of the receiver), specialness (how out of the ordinary the behavior is in terms of occurrence or mode of enactment), and conveyed value (the degree to which the receiver interprets the action as communicating that the actor values him or her and the relationship).

4.1.1. Testing the model

The viability of the Romantic Construal Model was tested in two studies. In the first study, participants were randomly assigned to make mundane behaviors either more or less romantic, and their changes to those behaviors were coded for levels of personalization, specialness, and conveyed value. These coded variables were also used in regression analyses to see whether they predicted participants' romantic ratings for the modified situations. I hypothesized that the levels of personalization, specialness, and conveyed value would be higher when participants were instructed to make the behaviors more romantic rather than less romantic, and that each of the coded model variables would predict the participants' romantic ratings.

In Study 2, participants were presented with vignettes that were written to manipulate low or high levels of personalization, specialness, and conveyed value. They then rated each vignette in terms of how romantic they perceived it to be as well as the degree to which the behavior was personalized and special, and conveyed relational value. I hypothesized that personalization, specialness, and conveyed value would each

have an independent effect on romantic ratings and that participants' ratings of the three model variables would predict their ratings of vignette romance.

The results of both studies provided moderate support for the Romantic Construal Model but with some inconsistencies across studies and variables. As predicted, in Study 1, participants who attempted to make the actions more romantic modified the situations in ways that increased personalization, specialness, and conveyed value, relative to participants who tried to make the actions less romantic. These findings show that personalization, specialness, and conveyed value are involved in what it means for an action to be romantic and further suggest that people who wish to behave in a romantic fashion do so by making their actions more personalized and special and by increasing the degree to which their actions convey that they value the target and the relationship. In Study 2, however, only effects of personalization and specialness were obtained in response to the experimental manipulations of the three variables.

Furthermore, the internal regression analyses revealed results that differed from those obtained for the experimental manipulations, and the patterns differed across the two studies. In Study 1, regression analyses of coders' ratings of participants' modifications of the behaviors revealed that specialness and value predicted romantic ratings reasonably well but that personalization predicted romantic ratings only weakly. Regression analyses for Study 2 showed that value was the strongest predictor. When viewed as a whole, the results of the two studies showed all three variables were associated with higher interpretations of behaviors as romantic but that the patterns unexpectedly different across studies and analyses.

The impact of personalization on participants' ratings may reflect a broad tendency for people to respond differentially to stimuli and events that specifically

reflect or focus on them personally. For example, people exhibit preference for the letters in their name (Jones, Pelham, Mirenberg, & Hetts, 2002) and, more generally, the perception that another person has similar characteristics to oneself has a strong effect on liking for that person (Byrne & Nelson, 1965). One theory speculates that it is validating for people to have their own opinions, likes, and desires mirrored back to them by another person (Byrne & Clore, 1970), and research shows that having one's nonverbal behaviors mimicked by another person leads to increased liking and a desire to affiliate with that other person (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999; Lakin & Chartrand, 2003). The fact that people are more likely to mimic people with whom they are close (Jefferis, van Baaren, & Chartrand, 2003) suggests that people may associate personalized actions on the part of other people with psychological or interpersonal closeness. Thus, a personalized behavior may imply not only that an actor cares, but in tailoring actions to a receiver's preferences and personality, he or she may indirectly communicate closeness and a desire to affiliate.

Personalization may also be important to romantic relationships because it connotes distinctiveness. According to Kelley's (1986) covariation model, distinctiveness refers to the uniqueness of a person's behavior toward a target when compared with that person's behavior toward other similar targets. When a behavior is high in distinctiveness toward a given target ("I don't like wine in general, but I like this wine"), people tend to infer that the behavior reflects something about the target itself ("there must be something special about that wine") as opposed to the actor. In the context of the Romantic Construal Model, if John typically bought roses for his previous girlfriends but then buys orchids for his new girlfriend Mary, she may infer that this behavior is distinctively tailored for her. Of course a gesture may be distinctive without being personalized (such as giving Mary a cactus), but the degree to which it is both

personalized and distinct allows Mary to be more certain that this behavior was genuinely intended for her. The more generic the gift (and, thus, the less distinctive it is), the more difficulty she would have in attributing John's actions to his distinctive feelings for her.

Specialness may be related to romance through its association with novelty and excitement. Healthy romantic relationships require both stability and change, and establishing a balance between security and excitement is one of the biggest concerns of premarital couples (Zimmer, 1986). Research has suggested that novelty and excitement in relationships help to stimulate the individual growth of the people involved. In fact, the self-expansion model suggests that romantic relationships allow people to grow by expanding their self-concepts to include the other person (Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991). In the initial stages of a romantic relationship, self-expansion can occur quickly, often resulting in a high degree of positive affect, arousal, and intimacy. However, once the couple has gotten to know one another, the rate of self-expansion decreases and boredom may replace excitement and positive affect (Aron, Norman, Aron, McKenna, & Heyman, 2000). This decrease in excitement is cited as one of the causes of the transition from passionate romantic love to stable companionate love, but new research has found that couples who engage in exciting and novel activities together are able to maintain more passion in their relationships (Aron et al., 2000). This effect may occur because exciting and novel activities boost arousal and promote the continued self-expansion of the people's self-concepts. Thus, specialness may be particularly important in romantic actions, in part, because it involves novelty that stimulates excitement and expands the partners' selves (Aron et al., 2000). When a partner does something special, people may both feel more valued and experience heightened arousal and attraction.

The findings for conveyed value were particularly intriguing. As noted, Study 1 found that participants in the increasing romance condition modified the mundane behaviors in ways that conveyed higher levels of personalization, specialness, and value than those in the increasing romance condition, but that participants' subjective romantic ratings were predicted only by specialness and value. In Study 2, the experimental manipulations of specialness and personalization (but not value) influenced romantic ratings, but participants' ratings of romance were uniquely predicted only by their subjective perceptions of conveyed value. Thus, participants used value to increase romantic behaviors in Study 1, but the manipulation of conveyed value did not influence romantic ratings in Study 2. However, in both studies, participants' ratings of the degree to which the situations conveyed value for the target and the relationship were strongly related to their judgments of how romantic the behaviors were.

The strong effects of value, relative to personalization and specialness, may reflect a difference in participants' perceptions of which variables imply the others. Although the Romantic Construal Model conceptualizes the three variables as distinct features of romantic behavior, people may perceive that high personalization and specialness imply high conveyed value. That is, when people make an effort to do things for another individual that are tailored to that person's idiosyncratic preferences (personalization) and enact the behaviors in an atypical, special way (specialness), both the target and observers are likely to infer that the actor values the target and the relationship. Accordingly, if John does something for Mary that is special and highly personalized, she may infer that he values her and the relationship.

In fact, the pattern of results suggests that the effects of personalization and specialness on romantic ratings may be mediated by conveyed value. That is, perhaps

personalization and specialness may in themselves indicate that the receiver is valued by the actor, and the resulting conveyed value may create the perception of romanticness. For example, if John cooks Mary her favorite dinner (personalized) and he rarely cooks for her (special), Mary might infer from this action that John values her and would consequently perceive the dinner as romantic. If personalization and specialness do not connote value in a particular situation, the target might not regard the action as romantic.

Implicit in the concept of conveyed value is the notion of sincerity that may act as a moderator. Specifically, Mary must trust that John is being sincere in acting in this special and personalized way in order for her to perceive that he is conveying value for her and the relationship. If Mary distrusts John's sincerity, then even if the action is special and personalized it would not result in perceptions of value and consequently not be perceived as romantic.

This modification of the Romantic Construal Model would have implications for the proposed moderator of effort. If personalization and specialness are the concrete aspects of the action that imply conveyed value, then effort's effect would most likely involve how much time or energy was invested in making the action personalized and/or special. Thus, the more effort invested in making the action special and personalized, the more value it should be seen as conveying, and the more romantic it should be perceived as being.

This modification of the model may explain why value emerged as the only consistent predictor in the regression analyses predicting participants' ratings of romance in both studies. Indeed, although participants' ratings of the three variables were highly correlated, ratings of value tended to correlate more highly with ratings of personalization and specialness than personalization and specialness correlated with

each other. As a result, relational value tended to account for variance that would otherwise be predicted by personalization and specialness.

The centrality of relational value in ascriptions of romantic behaviors may arise from its importance in human relationships more generally. People obviously need to be socially accepted (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), and social acceptance is based on having high relational value to other people—defined as the degree to which a person sees his or her relationship with another as “valuable, important or close” (Leary, 2001, p. 6). Having high relational value is typically associated with receiving many rewards and social affordances, having others seek out one’s company, receiving favors and nice treatment, obtaining pragmatic and emotion support, and so on (Leary, 2001). Thus, conveying relational value in an exclusive relationship is likely to encompass a variety of other positive behaviors. Furthermore, from an evolutionary perspective, acceptance in a pair-bonded relationship would promote survival and reproduction, so it is perhaps not surprising that perceived value more strongly predicted participants’ reactions than personalization or specialness (Hill & Buss, 2008).

Moreover, although participants in these studies responded to vignettes and scenarios, in the real world the occurrence of an action itself may sometimes be enough to convey specialness, personalization, or value, and differences in how the behavior is enacted may exert relatively little effect. For example, showing up at a partner’s play may convey that he or she has high relational value, taking him or her on a weekend getaway is special, and most gifts are implicitly personalized. As a result, the impact of these actions may be a function of whether they occur at all rather than whether the behaviors are enacted in a special, personalized, or value-conveying way. Thus, if many of people’s judgments regarding the romantic nature of behavior are based on the mere performance of the behavior (which may inherently convey personalization, specialness,

or value), further variations of these three features may play a relatively weak role in the degree to which people see behaviors as romantic.

Some of the findings differed across specific romantic behaviors. To an extent, these differences might be a function of the type of behavior, specifically how easy it may be to convey specialness, personalized, or value in a particular context. Perhaps some behaviors are more amenable to variations of certain components of the model than others. For example, when buying a present, a person might find it easy to make the action more personalized or special, but it might be more difficult to convey very high relational value (except perhaps by buying a particularly expensive gift). Similarly, in writing a letter, people might find it easy to convey value through what one writes but more difficult to make sending the letter seem special. Although the Romantic Construal Model predicts that all three variables contribute to perceptions of romantic behaviors, certain features may be easier to enact with particular behaviors.

Moreover, people may use only one or two of the features depending on the situation, which may complicate matters. Research has found that as the possible causes of a behavior increase, the more difficult it is for people to infer the actual cause (Jones & Davis, 1965). Thus, if a behavior simultaneously communicates personalization, specialness, and value, none of these variables may dominate in the receiver's mind. This ambiguity may explain why in the regression analyses for Study 2, the three model variables were sometimes individually non-significant in predicting ratings of romance but collectively accounted for a significant proportion of the variance in romantic ratings. People may be responding to the gestalt of three correlated and interdependent variables rather than responding to each separately.

4.1.2. Ancillary Findings

The ancillary analyses in Study 2 provided initial information about the relationship between the features of romantic behaviors and indicators of relational quality such as commitment, feeling good about how one was treated, and feeling loved by one's partner. Although personalization predicted both relational quality and romance equally strongly, specialness predicted romantic ratings but generally not relational quality. This pattern suggests that personalization may be important for many positive aspects of romantic relationships, but that specialness may be particularly important for perceptions of romance specifically.

More generally, there is support for the finding that personalization is a key component many types of relationships. Research on female friendships has found that, controlling for the liking and cost of the act, the gratitude experienced by the receiver was robustly predicted by the perception that the benefactor was responsive to the needs and wishes of the recipient (Algoe, Gable, & Maisel, in press). The effects of personalized actions on positive emotions may occur because intimacy and closeness are in large part determined by a person's responsiveness to a partner's needs and wishes (Reis, Clark, & Holmes, 2004). Furthermore, relational intimacy is strongly based on self-disclosure by both parties, including "self-revealing behaviors" that disclose personal private aspects of oneself to the other, which inevitably include one's likes and dislikes (Prager & Roberts, 2004). This line of reasoning suggests then that personalized actions can be interpreted as understanding the recipient and may lead to increased intimacy regardless of the relational context.

The ancillary results of Study 2 also suggest that romance may be uniquely "special" when compared to other positive aspects of relationships such as feeling good, feeling loved, and feeling committed. In most relationships, people may try to treat

others in a personalized way, but romantic relationships may also require that the action be out of the ordinary. The impact of specialness was previously explained in terms of the effects of novelty on positive arousal, but positive expectancy violations may also be involved. Deviance regulation theory suggests that, although deviance is often negatively framed, people can deviate from group norms in positive ways (Blanton & Christie, 2003). Thus, within the context of the Romantic Construal Model, specialness can be seen as a desirable deviation from normative behavior in a given relationship. When expectations for how we desire to be treated in a romantic relationship are exceeded, people experience increased arousal (Burgoon, 1995) and relationship satisfaction (Thibault & Kelley, 1959). Furthermore, because expectancy-violating occurrences tend to be more memorable, the impact of this “special” event may be magnified.

Notably, only a few small gender differences were obtained, indicating that the effects of personalization, specialness, and conveyed value on ratings of romance were largely the same for both men and women. The three model variables affected men and women in similar ways, which is congruent with the general view that, although gender differences may exist in communication, “they are overwhelmed by similarities..[.] when there are differences, in general they are small” (Dindia, 2006, p. 3). Although it is not surprising that romantic communications of affection are generally perceived and interpreted the same by men and women, further research is needed to fully validate these null findings.

4.2 Limitations

Because these studies were an initial test of the Romantic Construal Model, I used sets of generic behaviors to control for relationship confounds and participants’ biases. One consequence of this approach, however, was that participants were not

personally invested in the romantic behaviors, which may have attenuated some of the effects. Future research should explore the roles of personalization, specialness, and conveyed value in actual romantic behaviors that participants have enacted or experienced. Although studying real-life romantic behaviors will sacrifice experimental control and introduce extraneous influences, doing so may show stronger effects of the three variables than were obtained in these studies.

In addition, the undergraduate sample that was used for this research may be less familiar with romance in general than previous generations of their age. The mean age for marriage has increased (from 25.5 for men and 23.3 for women in 1985 to 27.1 for men and 25.3 for women in 2005; Census data, 2006), and research suggests that undergraduates are not dating as much as previous generations, engaging instead in more transient relationships such as hooking up (Paul, McManus, & Hayes, 2000). It may be useful to test the Romantic Construal model with older populations that have a more experience with romantic relationships and perhaps more first hand accounts of romantic behaviors.

4.3 Directions for Future Research

Future research on the Romantic Construal Model should clarify the roles of specialness, personalization, and value in indentifying a behavior as romantic. Specifically, these studies should identify the degree to which these three variables overlap in perceptual and conceptual ways. In particular, value should be further studied to determine whether the findings of the current studies are based on a lack of intimate knowledge about the relationship or the fact that personalization and specialness are seen as implying value. More generally, studies are needed to tease apart precisely why personalization, specialness, and conveyed value influence people's interpretations of romantic behaviors. Future research should also explore whether the

impact of effort, which was included as a theoretical moderator in the model but not tested in the current studies, increases the impact of personalization, specialness and value.

The results of Study 2 have possible implications for the impact of the Romantic Construal Model variables on other aspects of relationship quality. Although a review of the communication of affection literature implies that increased romance should benefit relationships (Floyd, 2006), research is needed to explore the mechanisms through which this occurs. Previous research has already linked the communication of affection in general to a multitude of beneficial effects, both for the relationship and for partners' physical and mental health (Floyd et al., 2007). For example, research has found numerous health benefits associated with being affectionate. When compared with non-affectionate adults, highly affectionately expressive people were happier, more self-assured, less stressed, less likely to be depressed, in better mental health, more likely to engage in regular social activity, less lonely, and more likely to be in a highly satisfying romantic relationship (Floyd et al., 2007).

Other research suggests that expressing affection, even without reciprocation, has health benefits. For example, participants who engaged in affectionate writing about a partner had lower cholesterol levels two weeks later when compared to the control group (Floyd, Mikkeson, Hesse, & Pauley, 2007). Similarly, receiving affection from a romantic partner reduces a person's response to stress (Grewen, Girdler, Amico & Light, 2005). In response to a stressful public speaking task, participants who had held hands with their partner, viewed a romantic video, and received a hug exhibited lower systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure, and heart rate compared to controls.

Although much research has linked the communication of affection to positive benefits for the self and partner, previous research has examined affection within a

range of relationships, including friends, parents, dating couples, and married couples. Given that communication in romantic relationships is perceived as a more intense form of affectionate communication (Floyd, 2006) that occurs in more interdependent relationships (Thibault & Kelley, 1959), I hypothesize that its impact on health and relationship benefits would be even stronger than in other relationships. Indeed, initial research suggests that communications of affection in romantic relationships are positively related to immediate relationship satisfaction and also seem to buffer the impact of partner negativity. When newlywed husbands were highly affectionate, this appeared to buffer the immediate impact of their negativity on their wives' satisfaction. This pattern also replicated in the long term where initial levels of husbands' affectionate expressions buffered the impact of their negativity on their wives' later reports of satisfaction (Huston & Chorost, 1994).

In summary, romantic communications of affection may promote positive relationship interactions and individual benefits for both the giver and the receiver. Indeed, romantic communications may act as a buffer against emotional and physical stresses while increasing relationship satisfaction and decreasing health risks. Given that that stress and stress-related disorders take an annual economic toll of nearly 200 billion dollars in the U. S. alone (McEwan, 1999), further investigations into romantic communication are needed. Future research should focus on clarifying how the variables of the Romantic Construal Model relate to one another and to both romantic and non-romantic relationship outcomes. An increased understanding of romance's association with relational quality and the partners' well-being is needed to facilitate its positive impact on romantic relationships and the people involved in them.

Appendix A: Materials for study 1

Demographics questionnaire

Your gender (please check one): Male Female

Your age: years old

What year are you in school?

Freshman

Sophomore

Junior

Senior

Other (specify: _____)

Which of the following best describes your current relationship status?

I am currently married

I am engaged to be married

I am in an exclusive relationship with one person but not married or engaged

I am dating one or more people casually (seeing other people)

I am not in a relationship nor dating anyone at the present time

Other (specify: _____)

How many serious romantic relationships have you had (including any that you may be in now)?

1. A night-time stroll along the beach
2. Cooking your partner a meal at home.
3. Making a fire in a fireplace
4. Going out to dinner.
5. Picking your partner up at the airport.
6. Giving your partner a card on your anniversary
7. Spending time with your partner doing something together
8. Going for a drive with your partner.
9. Going on a weekend getaway with your partner.

How romantic do YOU think this behavior is?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Moderately	Quite a bit	Very	Extremely

How romantic do you think the AVERAGE PERSON thinks this behavior is?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Moderately	Quite a bit	Very	Extremely

How loving do YOU think this behavior is?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Moderately	Quite a bit	Very	Extremely

How could you change this scenario so it would be MORE romantic? That is, what could you add or specify that would make it more romantic? How does this increase the romance and WHY?

	What would you add or change to make it more romantic?	Why?
1		
2		

3		
---	--	--

How romantic do YOU think this behavior is NOW?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 Not at all Slightly Somewhat Moderately Quite a bit Very Extremely

How could you change the original scenario so it would be LESS romantic? That is, what could you add or specify that would make it LESS romantic? How does this decrease the romance and WHY?

	What would you add or change to make it less romantic?	Why?
1		
2		
3		

How romantic do YOU think this behavior is NOW?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 Not at all Slightly Somewhat Moderately Quite a bit Very Extremely

Please read each situation and answer the following questions:

How romantic do YOU think this behavior is?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Moderately	Quite a bit	Very	Extremely

How romantic do you think the AVERAGE PERSON thinks this behavior is?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Moderately	Quite a bit	Very	Extremely

How loving do YOU think this behavior is?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Moderately	Quite a bit	Very	Extremely

How loving do you think the AVERAGE PERSON would think this behavior is?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Moderately	Quite a bit	Very	Extremely

What about this scenario makes it romantic in your opinion, if at all? (open ended)

Coding Scheme

Decreased -2 1 0 1 2 Increased

___ **Personalization**: behavior tailored to the receiver that clearly reflects partner's specific likes and dislikes

Decreased personalization

- General, generic action or gift
- Clearly lacks any reference of partner's likes/dislikes
- Gifts based on anyone else's likes or preferences

Increasing personalization

- partner's favorite --
- something that partner had been wanting
- something that is partner's particular "style" or something that they would really like

___ **"Specialness"** : how "out of the ordinary" the behavior is

Decreasing specialness

- Something that makes the situation ordinary (less special), or undesirable
- Something predictable, habitual,
- Anything added to the situation that makes it less remarkable to the receiver (i.e. other people, negative ambiance, environment)

Increasing specialness

- something that is rarely done,
- something unexpected in a positive way,
- something that is presented in a different way than usual (for example with added emphasis or fanfare like making dinner but with candles and nice plates)

___ **Conveyed Value** : conveys a message that the actor values the partner and the relationship

Decreasing value

- Doesn't seem to care about receiver, about spending time with him/her
- Relationship/partner not seen as important
- Relationship isn't a priority – clearly is second to some other aspect.
-

Increasing value

- reference to spending quality time with partner
- exhibited genuine caring for partner/and or relationship
- says how important partner and/or relationship is
- prioritizing relationship – e.g. sacrificing other responsibilities like work, social commitments

___ **Effort** : how much work the partner put into the action

Decreasing Effort

- Action that is easy for the giver,

Increasing Effort

- time spent on planning activity,

- Action that is easy for the giver, doesn't take any time or thought
- Benefits the giver NOT the receiver – activity / gift that the giver actually wants (i.e. boyfriend buys tickets for a band HE wants to see)
- Apathetic about spending time with the other person
- time spent on planning activity, looking for objects, organizing, thoughtful
- sacrifice made in terms of own desired activities for behavior (missing important personal event)
- Financial cost that is seen as requiring commitment (e.g. working extra shifts to afford x) or being difficult for the

Comments:

Manipulation Check

How personalized is this behavior for the person it is intended for (i.e. how much is this behavior something that reflects that person's specific tastes and likes?)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Moderately	Quite a bit	Very	Extremely

How special do you think this behavior is? That is, how unusual or "out of the ordinary" would it be for the person to behave this way in this relationship?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Moderately	Quite a bit	Very	Extremely

How effortful would this behavior be to the person enacting it in terms of effort, time, or personal sacrifice?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Moderately	Quite a bit	Very	Extremely

To what extent did YOU think this act conveys that the person enacting the behavior values the partner and their relationship?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Moderately	Quite a bit	Very	Extremely

Appendix B: Materials for study 2

[*Note:* In the “high” condition, vignettes will include a phrase that specifies personalization, specialness, or conveyed value, and in the “low” condition the phrase will be omitted. Thus, each vignette has eight possible combinations that reflect low vs. high personalization, low vs. high specialness, and low vs. high conveyed value. The bolded phrases in the vignettes below show the phrases that will be added in when personalization (p), specialness (s), and conveyed value (v) are high.]

For the following vignettes, please read and then rate them on how romantic they seem to you:

Male actor/Female receiver

Martin is shopping for his girlfriend Caroline’s birthday and decides to buy her a watch. **(He knows that she likes watches by a certain designer = p)**. Martin hopes Caroline likes the gift because he **(really values her and their relationship and =v)** wants her to have a happy birthday. When Caroline opens the watch she’s touched **(because Martin doesn’t usually get her presents like that = s)**

Brad decides to cook dinner for his girlfriend Jane **(and makes her favorite meal = p)**. Brad invites Jane over **(and instead of using everyday plates has set the table with nice dishes and candles = s)** and is looking forward to the meal. He hopes Jane enjoys the meal **(because he really cares about her and their relationship and wants to show her =v)**.

This weekend Martha is in a play, and her boyfriend John is going to watch her perform. After the play, John gives Martha a bottle of **(her favorite =p)** wine **(which he rarely buys for her = s)** **(because she’s really important to him = v)**.

Eric is stressed out from studying to for finals and goes over to his girlfriend Joan’s house. Joan listens to him talk about his stress and then offers to give him **(one of his favorites stress reliefs = p)** - a back massage **(because he’s important to her =v)**. **(To make this exceptional, Joan decides to light some candles and put on soft music = s)** Joan begins to massage Eric’s back.

Patrick decides to take Eliza away for the weekend. He decides to rent a beach hotel room **(because he knows she loves the beach – p)** and **(because their relationship is really important to him=v)**. Patrick takes Eliza about the beach house and she is moved **(because he rarely does things like this - s)**.

Mark wants to go out with his girlfriend Jessica out and buys concert tickets **(to her favorite band –p)**. He hopes that they both enjoy the concert **(and that by buying these tickets she understands how much he cares about her –v)**. Jessica is happy to be going to the concert **(since Mark rarely does things like this for her – s)**.

Sean and Maria have been dating for a while and it’s their six-month anniversary. Sean **(really cares about Maria and= v)** decides to get her a card. He picks out a card **(that’s just her style =p)** and **(since he rarely buy Maria cards= s)** hopes she likes it.

John (**knows that his girlfriend likes it when he writes notes for her and so = p**) decides to write a note for his girlfriend Samantha (**because she means a lot to him=v**). John hides the note in Samantha's bag (**instead of leaving it on the counter the way he usually does =s**). *reverse scored

Female actor/Male receiver

Caroline is shopping for her boyfriend Martin's birthday and decides to buy him a watch. (**She knows that he likes watches by a certain designer = p**). Caroline hopes that Martin likes the gift because she (**really values him and their relationship and =v**) wants him to have a happy birthday. When Martin opens the watch he's touched (**because Caroline doesn't usually get him presents like that = s**)

Jane decides to cook dinner for her boyfriend Brad (**and makes his favorite meal = p**). Jane invites Brad over (**and instead of using everyday plates has set the table with nice dishes and candles = s**) and is looking forward to the meal. She hopes Brad enjoys the meal (**because she really cares about him and their relationship and wants to show him =v**).

This weekend Martha is in a play, and her boyfriend John is going to watch her perform. After the play, John gives Martha a bottle of (**her favorite =p**) wine (**which he rarely buys for her = s**) (**because she's really important to him = v**).

Joan is stressed out from studying to for finals and goes over to her boyfriend Eric's house. Eric listens to her talk about her stress and then offers to give her (**one of her favorites stress reliefs = p**) - a back massage (**because she's important to him =v**). (**To make this exceptional, Eric decides to light some candles and put on soft music = s**) Eric begins to massage Joan's back.

Eliza decides to plan a weekend getaway for her boyfriend Patrick. She decides to rent a hotel room on the beach (**because she knows he loves the beach - p**) and (**because their relationship is really important to her=v**). Eliza takes Patrick to the beach house and he is moved (**because she rarely does things like this - s**).

Jessica wants to go out with her boyfriend Mark and buys concert tickets (**to his favorite band -p**). He hopes that they both enjoy the concert (**and that by buying these tickets he understands how much she cares about him -v**). Mark is happy to be going to the concert (**since Jessica rarely does things like this for him - s**).

Sean and Maria have been dating for a while and it's their six-month anniversary. Maria (**really cares about Sean and=v**) decides to get him a card. She picks out a card (**that's just his style =p**) and (**since she rarely buy Eric cards= s**) hopes he likes it.

Samantha (**knows that her boyfriend likes it when she writes notes for him and so = p**) decides to write a note for her boyfriend Jack (**because he means a lot to her=v**). Samantha leaves /hides the note in Jack's bag (**instead of on the counter the way she usually does =s**). *reverse scored

Appendix C: Multivariate and Univariate Analyses for Study 1

Table 7: Multivariate and Univariate Analyses of Variance for specialness.

Source	MANOVA F (9,115)	ANOVA F (1,123)								
		s1	s2	s3	s4	s5	s6	s7	s8	s9
Condition (C)	697.49**	835.23**	1215.76**	986.68**	2361.26**	945.52**	2106.62**	835.70**	973.60**	1580.39**
Gender (G)	1.51	.01	.86	2.45	1.81	1.03	6.75**	.28	.02	.58
C x G	3.12*	1.78	7.23**	12.13**	.01	1.21	2.97+	4.31*	.00	.38

Note: F ratios are Pillai's Trace approximations of F. ANOVA = univariate analysis of variance, MANOVA = multivariate analysis of variance.
+ $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 8: Multivariate and Univariate Analyses of Variance for personalization.

Source	MANOVA <i>F</i> (9,115)	ANOVA <i>F</i> (1,123)								
		s1	s2	s3	s4	s5	s6	s7	s8	s9
Condition (C)	89.98**	152.68**	129.92**	95.37**	71.68**	203.04**	361.65**	189.98**	68.96**	78.09**
Gender (G)	1.65	.13	2.57	3.66+	.06	.12	3.32+	.15	3.83+	2.36
C x G	1.19	.82	.39	.84	3.17+	.31	4.49+	.81	1.35	.00

Note: F ratios are Pillai's Trace approximations of F. ANOVA = univariate analysis of variance, MANOVA = multivariate analysis of variance. + $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 9: Multivariate and Univariate Analyses of Variance for value.

Source	MANOVA <i>F</i> (9,115)	ANOVA <i>F</i> (1,123)								
		s1	s2	s3	s4	s5	s6	s7	s8	s9
Condition (C)	122.62**	178.95**	124.90**	178.83**	227.14**	287.53**	296.34**	403.77**	178.04**	185.45**
Gender (G)	1.40	.28	1.20	.17	.25	.13	8.60**	.13	.86	3.28+
C x G	1.97**	6.94**	.45	.23	.95	.17	.88	9.08**	.00	.01

Note: F ratios are Pillai's Trace approximations of F. ANOVA = univariate analysis of variance, MANOVA = multivariate analysis of variance. + $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Appendix D: Regression Analyses for study 1.

Table 10: Regression Analyses for study 1.

	β	t	sr^2	ΔR^2
Stem 1				
Original romantic rating	.26**	3.20	.07	.07**
Gender of participant	-.02	-.27	.00	
Personalization	.13*	2.21	.01	.71**
Special	.52**	8.78	.12	
Value	.31**	6.17	.06	
Stem 2				
Original romantic rating	.25**	3.01	.06	.07**
Gender of participant	.07	.84	.00	
Personalization	.20**	2.94	.01	.71**
Special	.68**	11.83	.23	
Value	.03	.47	.00	
Stem 3				
Original romantic rating	.19*	2.21	.04	.05*
Gender of participant	.08	.96	.00	
Personalization	-.06	-.83	.00	.70**
Special	.73**	10.92	.23	
Value	.20**	2.83	.01	
Stem 4				
Original romantic rating	.47**	4.46	.21	.26**
Gender of participant	-.17	-1.59	.03	
Personalization	.08	.65	.00	.04
Special	.16	1.46	.02	
Value	.08	.60	.00	
Stem 5				
Original romantic rating	.08	.97	.00	.03
Gender of participant	.13	1.45	.01	
Personalization	.14	1.40	.00	.66**
Special	.54**	5.74	.08	
Value	.23*	2.23	.01	

Stem 6				
Original romantic rating	.10	1.17	.00	.01
Gender of participant	.04	.46	.00	
Personalization	-.07	-.71	.00	.82**
Special	.59**	7.33	.07	
Value	.46**	5.11	.03	
Stem 7				
Original romantic rating	.08	.89	.00	.01
Gender of participant	.01	.12	.00	
Personalization	.16+	1.80	.00	.73**
Special	.48**	6.46	.08	
Value	.33**	3.21	.02	
Stem 8				
Original romantic rating	.08	.97	.00	.10
Gender of participant	.05	.58	.00	
Personalization	.10	1.50	.00	.76**
Special	.88**	14.28	.35	
Value	-.03	-.40	.00	
Stem 9				
Original romantic rating	.03	.38	.00	.00
Gender of participant	-.04	-.47	.00	
Personalization	-.06	-.77	.00	.72**
Special	.66**	9.09	.18	
Value	.31**	3.18	.02	

Note: + $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Appendix E: Correlations for study 2

Table 11: Correlations between personalization, specialness, and value.

	Male Actor			Female Actor		
	S	P	V	S	P	V
Vignette 1						
S	-			-		
P	.67**	-		.71**	-	
V	.58**	.63**	-	.74**	.78**	-
<i>sr</i>	.12	.05	.41	.07	-.01	.40
Vignette 2						
S	-			-		
P	.78**	-		.69**	-	
V	.86**	.79**	-	.70**	.66**	-
<i>sr</i>	.14	.08	.14	.26	.05	.25
Vignette 3						
S	-			-		
P	.62**	-		.61**	-	
V	.70**	.82**	-	.75**	.78**	-
<i>sr</i>	.10	-.07	.35	.27	.12	.13
Vignette 4						
S	-			-		
P	.55**	-		.45**	-	
V	.74**	.62**	-	.66**	.65**	-
<i>sr</i>	.08	-.07	.31	.10	.17	.25
Vignette 5						
S	-			-		
P	.66**	-		.59**	-	
V	.75**	.81**	-	.63**	.74**	-
<i>sr</i>	.28	.10	.09	.14	.16	.24
Vignette 6						
S	-			-		
P	.54**	-		.66**	-	
V	.55**	.52**	-	.77**	.79**	-
<i>sr</i>	.26	.01	.11	.08	.16	.30

Vignette 7						
S	-			-		
P	.70**	-		.45**	-	
V	.66**	.62**	-	.79**	.51**	-
sr	.28	-.13	.29	.08	.17	.23
Vignette 8						
S	-			-		
P	.61**	-		.61**	-	
V	.64**	.59**	-	.67**	.68**	-
sr	.03	-.03	.42	.07	.14	.19

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

Appendix F: ANCOVA tables for study 2

Table 12: ANCOVA for ratings of romantic behaviors

Source	df	<i>F</i>							
		v1	v2	v3	v4	v5	v6	v7	v8
Between									
Participants' Gender (PG)	1	0.52	0.00	3.11+	0.05	2.21	1.42	1.24	3.14+
Actor's Gender (AG)	1	0.20	2.09	0.31	0.00	0.72	1.34	0.07	3.66+
PG x AG	1	0.00	0.01	0.20	0.32	0.11	0.02	0.00	0.24
Error	16	(5.64)	(5.95)	(9.25)	(4.55)	(5.40)	(2.34)	(4.32)	(4.64)
Within									
M 7 vignette romance cov.	1	52.68**	53.03**	55.99**	51.14**	33.52**	17.70**	24.76*	47.09**
Personalized (p)	1	9.03**	13.67**	5.68*	1.95	9.85**	1.41	0.87	2.07
Specialness (s)	1	0.38	7.84**	8.12**	0.01	3.33+	6.71*	4.26*	0.10
Value (v)	1	0.56	1.40	0.29	0.02	2.94+	0.61	0.41	0.06
AG x s	1	0.83	0.14	0.14	0.45	2.28	0.62	0.05	0.07
AG x p	1	0.30	0.26	0.02	0.11	0.00	0.59	1.14	0.02
AG x v	1	2.00	1.29	0.26	0.05	0.23	0.01	0.01	0.51
PG x s	1	0.00	0.01	0.12	0.92	1.10	0.07	2.42	4.31*
PG x p	1	1.53	1.84	0.09	0.02	0.21	0.00	0.62	0.71
PG x v	1	4.63*	1.74	0.42	0.40	0.22	0.87	0.00	1.58
AG x PG x s	1	0.62	0.30	0.00	0.00	0.82	0.11	0.53	0.33
AG x PG x p	1	0.09	0.02	0.10	1.31	0.83	0.93	0.34	0.15
AG x PG x v	1	0.01	2.54	1.03	0.01	0.58	0.53	1.79	0.26
Error	115	(1.19)	(1.13)	(1.43)	(1.26)	(1.51)	(1.01)	(1.55)	(0.99)

Note: Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean squared errors. + $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$.

Table 13: ANCOVA for ratings of feeling good

Source	df	<i>F</i>							
		v1	v2	v3	v4	v5	v6	v7	v8
Between									
Participants' Gender (PG)	1	1.41	1.75	4.77*	0.13	3.27+	2.21	0.05	0.56
Actor's Gender (AG)	1	0.15	0.02	0.18	0.14	1.43	2.35	0.99	5.28*
PG x AG	1	0.51	0.42	0.00	0.33	0.00	1.24	0.01	0.08
Error	16	(5.60)	(3.46)	(7.07)	(4.45)	(5.35)	(3.62)	(4.87)	(4.04)
Within									
M 7 vignette DV cov.	1	45.15**	23.00**	32.00**	61.51**	22.79**	62.25*	30.76**	45.81**
Personalized (p)	1	7.30**	5.23*	3.74+	1.67	8.10**	5.43*	1.62	0.20
Specialness (s)	1	0.59	0.94	16.09**	0.01	2.68	4.65	1.54	0.00
Value (v)	1	3.09+	0.05	2.14	0.06	2.21	0.14	1.29	0.05
AG x s	1	0.39+	0.34	0.29	1.37	2.03	0.18	3.51+	0.02
AG x p	1	0.03	0.03	0.08	0.00	0.09	3.53+	4.81*	0.41
AG x v	1	2.88	0.05	0.00	3.10+	1.72	0.25	0.17	0.25
PG x s	1	0.05	0.29	0.26	0.46	0.56	0.25	0.98	2.26
PG x p	1	0.79	0.07	1.79	1.62	0.76	0.29	1.21	0.63
PG x v	1	2.15	1.64	0.07	1.21	0.39	0.51	1.17	0.04
AG x PG x s	1	1.37	0.17	0.02	0.05	0.24	1.24	0.02	2.05
AG x PG x p	1	2.41	0.96	0.38	1.44	0.13	0.46	1.16	0.00
AG x PG x v	1	0.00	0.63	0.29	0.08	1.67	0.06	0.39	0.16
Error	115	(1.19)	(1.53)	(1.63)	(1.03)	(1.79)	(0.63)	(1.35)	(1.00)

Note: Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean squared errors. + $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$.

Table 14: ANCOVA results for feelings of commitment

Source	df	<i>F</i>							
		v1	v2	v3	v4	v5	v6	v7	v8
Between									
Participants' Gender (PG)	1	0.46	1.80	3.84*	0.07	3.81*	4.03*	0.06	0.00
Actor's Gender (AG)	1	0.83	0.12	0.26	0.12	1.51	2.86+	0.04	1.54
PG x AG	1	0.08	0.00	0.01	0.47	0.86	0.28	0.49	0.22
Error	16	(5.70)	(5.74)	(9.74)	(4.13)	(8.09)	(5.96)	(6.95)	(6.99)
Within									
M 7 vignette DV cov.	1	55.30**	47.67**	64.59**	43.28**	46.81**	70.82**	53.33**	84.98**
Personalized (p)	1	3.95*	2.86+	4.22*	0.11	4.87*	9.80**	0.09	0.91
Specialness (s)	1	0.24	2.85+	7.06**	0.19	1.28	5.83*	2.74	0.17
Value (v)	1	0.19	0.82	4.27*	0.00	0.02	1.36	0.20	0.03
AG x s	1	0.87	1.02	0.00	0.44	4.05*	0.54	0.01	1.69
AG x p	1	1.72	0.03	0.15	0.28	0.09	3.13+	0.07	0.08
AG x v	1	0.24	0.00	0.09	1.12	1.77	0.02	1.50	0.66
PG x s	1	0.04	0.53	0.26	0.00	4.19*	0.19	2.78+	3.42+
PG x p	1	5.43*	0.19	4.11*	2.17	0.01	0.04	0.02	0.15
PG x v	1	1.43	0.08	0.31	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.09	0.96
AG x PG x s	1	2.81+	0.92	0.02	0.13	0.06	0.02	0.32	0.58
AG x PG x p	1	0.95	0.61	1.00	0.56	0.07	1.17	0.27	1.62
AG x PG x v	1	0.09	0.00	0.58	0.45	0.31	0.10	0.01	0.15
Error	115	(1.10)	(1.50)	(1.59)	(1.40)	(1.75)	(0.93)	(1.65)	(1.02)

Note: Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean squared errors. + $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$.

Table 15: ANCOVA results ratings of feeling loved

Source	df	<i>F</i>							
		v1	v2	v3	v4	v5	v6	v7	v8
Between									
Participants' Gender (PG)	1	1.75	0.56	4.74*	0.03	6.29*	2.76	0.04	0.39
Actor's Gender (AG)	1	0.09	0.53	0.02	1.06	2.44	2.28	0.42	3.31+
PG x AG	1	0.31	0.01	0.04	0.13	0.15	1.28	0.01	0.12
Error	16	(6.06)	(5.55)	(8.51)	(4.06)	(8.32)	(3.72)	(4.72)	(5.31)
Within									
M 7 vignette DV cov.	1	47.98**	36.85**	35.17**	52.52**	50.17**	58.30**	34.52**	61.33**
Personalized (p)	1	5.61*	8.74**	3.12+	1.70	7.67**	6.60*	1.16	0.40
Specialness (s)	1	0.01	3.16+	12.03**	0.13	1.28	4.59*	1.18	0.47
Value (v)	1	0.61	0.02	2.25	0.00	1.49	0.63	0.03	1.02
AG x s	1	0.47	0.48	1.39	0.08	1.24	0.32	0.34	1.66
AG x p	1	0.26	0.25	0.01	0.09	0.73	3.33+	0.13	0.03
AG x v	1	2.28	0.57	0.03	0.94	0.77	0.04	1.45	0.55
PG x s	1	1.53	0.82	1.13	0.21	2.22	0.05	2.97+	4.69*
PG x p	1	1.78	0.02	2.16	1.65	0.10	0.00	0.05	0.35
PG x v	1	3.59+	0.43	0.05	0.15	0.00	0.31	0.03	1.25
AG x PG x s	1	0.80	1.96	0.61	0.40	0.68	0.20	0.89	0.16
AG x PG x p	1	0.07	0.32	1.73	0.32	0.69	0.00	0.04	0.22
AG x PG x v	1	0.31	0.06	0.76	0.40	0.01	0.11	0.04	0.52
Error	115	(1.23)	(1.58)	(1.79)	(1.15)	(1.63)	(0.69)	(1.50)	(0.99)

Note: Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean squared errors. + $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$.

Table 16: ANCOVA results for ratings of specialness

Source	df	v1	v2	v3	v4	<i>F</i> v5	v6	v7	v8
Between									
Participants' Gender (PG)	1	5.65*	0.08	2.81+	0.01	2.04	0.80	0.00	0.36
Actor's Gender (AG)	1	0.70	0.16	0.06	0.07	0.06	2.99+	0.12	1.20
PG x AG	1	0.49	0.97	0.61	0.88	0.97	4.03*	2.58	7.14**
Error	16	(6.65)	(5.73)	(6.55)	(5.12)	(6.88)	(4.36)	(7.42)	(5.03)
Within									
M 7 vignette DV cov.	1	21.45**	23.97**	4.97*	17.35**	25.03**	33.99**	26.91**	19.97**
Personalized (p)	1	20.96**	7.67**	2.66	1.76	2.78+	2.61	0.11	4.43*
Specialness (s)	1	7.59**	4.08*	19.61**	11.01**	5.44*	4.55*	6.34*	3.39+
Value (v)	1	2.72	5.03*	0.13	3.28+	4.11*	1.72	0.01	7.97**
AG x s	1	0.99	0.00	0.30	0.12	0.80	0.02	1.82	1.33
AG x p	1	0.01	0.09	0.22	0.87	0.00	0.24	0.12	0.00
AG x v	1	0.28	0.20	0.03	2.08	1.20	1.17	0.39	0.36
PG x s	1	1.37	0.28	0.50	4.23*	2.53	0.28	0.13	1.50
PG x p	1	0.12	0.72	0.11	10.20**	1.22	0.18	1.87	0.08
PG x v	1	3.10+	0.02	0.05	0.07	1.43	0.49	0.26	0.06
AG x PG x s	1	0.01	0.14	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.95	4.81*	0.26
AG x PG x p	1	0.08	1.33	4.83*	0.15	0.25	0.13	0.57	4.66*
AG x PG x v	1	0.37	1.23	0.46	0.67	1.64	0.00	2.18	1.55
Error	115	(1.63)	(1.83)	(2.94)	(1.71)	(2.08)	(1.28)	(2.03)	(1.32)

Note: Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean squared errors. + $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$.

Table 17: ANCOVA results for ratings of personalization

Source	df	v1	v2	v3	v4	<i>F</i> v5	v6	v7	v8
Between									
Participants' Gender (PG)	1	4.37*	0.01	2.32	0.08	1.85	1.83	0.00	0.62
Actor's Gender (AG)	1	1.16	0.01	0.96	0.02	0.00	0.91	0.23	4.94*
PG x AG	1	1.54	2.12	0.08	0.06	2.05	0.08	1.38	1.38
Error	16	(6.67)	(5.90)	(4.14)	(7.30)	(9.02)	(3.60)	(5.12)	(6.65)
Within									
M 7 vignette DV cov.	1	20.74**	12.32**	2.56	18.49**	25.19**	16.99**	25.47**	10.87**
Personalized (p)	1	27.13**	12.57**	5.46*	26.14**	31.39**	11.94**	1.80	20.53**
Specialness (s)	1	0.82	2.84+	5.16*	7.47**	1.93	0.38	0.92	0.20
Value (v)	1	1.83	2.13	0.33	1.27	1.29	0.39	0.34	3.30+
AG x s	1	0.70	0.01	2.13	0.26	1.29	0.14	0.57	0.02
AG x p	1	1.59	0.04	0.04	0.03	0.93	0.87	0.00	0.07
AG x v	1	0.00	0.01	0.05	3.74+	0.45	0.96	2.27	0.02
PG x s	1	3.67+	0.15	1.12	0.01	0.36	1.39	0.07	0.97
PG x p	1	0.18	0.80	1.53	1.93	0.47	0.56	0.25	1.52
PG x v	1	0.12	0.09	0.29	1.74	0.08	0.28	0.52	0.32
AG x PG x s	1	1.23	4.69*	0.14	1.93	0.56	0.01	9.93*	0.13
AG x PG x p	1	1.25	0.18	0.49	0.22	1.93	0.00	2.45	0.01
AG x PG x v	1	0.39	0.06	0.31	0.99	3.57+	0.12	1.10	0.67
Error	115	(1.76)	(2.31)	(2.73)	(2.17)	(2.08)	(1.55)	(1.83)	(2.00)

Note: Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean squared errors. + $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$.

Table 18: ANCOVA results for ratings of conveyed value

Source	df	<i>F</i>							
		v1	v2	v3	v4	v5	v6	v7	v8
Between									
Participants' Gender (PG)	1	5.21*	0.17	2.28	0.63	3.25+	2.23	0.00	0.01
Actor's Gender (AG)	1	0.31	0.03	0.01	0.42	0.10	1.33	0.09	3.43+
PG x AG	1	0.15	0.03	0.90	0.08	0.51	0.23	0.55	0.66
Error	16	(5.26)	(4.60)	(4.23)	(3.59)	(6.92)	(3.84)	(3.82)	(3.42)
Within									
M 7 vignette DV cov.	1	22.62**	25.46**	8.87**	20.10**	46.83**	38.54**	25.77**	15.92**
Personalized (p)	1	9.14**	0.69	2.40	7.44**	11.05**	0.74	0.80	6.08*
Specialness (s)	1	0.17	0.44	3.51+	6.06*	0.03	0.81	1.66	0.12
Value (v)	1	0.00	5.46*	1.06	0.90	3.66+	0.94	0.07	4.15*
AG x s	1	0.34	0.01	1.87	0.03	0.98	0.65	0.15	0.49
AG x p	1	0.45	0.07	0.00	0.37	0.42	2.83+	0.83	0.04
AG x v	1	1.64	0.44	0.01	2.08	0.79	0.01	1.97	0.43
PG x s	1	0.04	0.37	0.37	3.49+	0.49	0.35	0.56	0.47
PG x p	1	0.37	0.33	1.25	2.04	1.07	2.33	0.68	0.21
PG x v	1	0.01	0.07	0.70	0.01	0.45	4.28*	0.02	4.58*
AG x PG x s	1	0.60	2.46	0.67	0.47	0.00	0.00	0.45	0.00
AG x PG x p	1	0.18	0.61	0.35	0.16	1.56	1.80	0.17	1.31
AG x PG x v	1	0.10	0.98	0.00	0.79	3.13+	0.25	0.05	0.34
Error	115	(1.70)	(1.83)	(2.52)	(1.37)	(1.42)	(1.18)	(1.60)	(1.24)

Note: Values enclosed in parentheses represent mean squared errors. + $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$.

Appendix G: Regression analyses for study 2

Table 19: Regression analyses per vignette actor.

	Male				Female			
	β	t	sr^2	ΔR^2	β	t	sr^2	ΔR^2
Vignette 1								
Gender of participant	-.02	-.18	.00	.00	.05	.36	0.00	.00
Special	.17	1.31	.01	.46**	.11	.80	0.00	.58**
Personalization	.07	.49	.00		-.01	-.07	0.00	
Value	.55**	4.50	.17		.70**	4.75	0.16	
Special x gender	.06	.32	.00	.01	.12	.58	0.00	.02
Personalization x gender	.12	.60	.00		.13	.49	0.00	
Value x gender	-.04	-.21	.00		-.39	-1.55	0.02	
Vignette 2								
Gender of participant	-.06	-.46	.00	.00	.02	.16	0.00	.00
Special	.29	1.54	.02	.48**	.41**	3.12	0.07	.58**
Personalization	.13	.84	.00		.07	.57	0.00	
Value	.30	1.53	.02		.36**	2.96	0.06	
Special x gender	.01	.02	.00	.00	.14	.75	0.00	.04+
Personalization x gender	-.03	-.13	.00		-.36	-1.73	0.02	
Value x gender	.08	.27	.00		-.09	-.42	0.00	
Vignette 3								
Gender of participant	-.24*	-1.96	.06	.06*	-.12	-.96	0.01	.01
Special	.13	1.05	.01	.44**	.41**	3.40	0.07	.59**
Personalization	-.13	-.80	.00		.19	1.47	0.01	
Value	.67**	3.85	.12		.25	1.63	0.02	
Special x gender	.02	.08	.00	.02	-.26	-1.56	0.01	.04+
Personalization x gender	.00	.00	.00		.16	.82	0.00	
Value x gender	-.20	-.79	.00		.32	1.35	0.01	
Vignette 4								
Gender of participant	-.13	-1.04	.01	.02	.05	.39	0.00	.00
Special	.13	.79	.01	.31**	.13	.97	0.01	.42**
Personalization	-.10	-.70	.00		.22+	1.73	0.03	
Value	.51**	2.92	.10		.39*	2.52	0.06	
Special x gender	-.30	-1.23	.02	.05	-.35+	-1.86	0.03	.07+
Personalization x gender	-.24	-1.23	.02		.11	.56	0.00	
Value x gender	.18	.66	.00		-.12	-.51	0.00	

Vignette 5								
Gender of participant	.05	.43	.00	.00	.06	.53	0.00	.00
Special	.42**	3.01	.08	.49**	.19	1.56	0.02	.50**
Personalization	.17	1.08	.01		.24+	1.76	0.03	
Value	.17	.95	.02		.38*	2.65	0.06	
Special x gender	.09	.46	.00	.01	.48*	2.50	0.05	.06+
Personalization x gender	.14	.64	.00		-.01	-.07	0.00	
Value x gender	-.08	-.31	.00		-.47*	-2.14	0.04	
Vignette 6								
Gender of participant	-.12	.93	.01	.01	-.14	-1.01	0.02	.02
Special	.34*	2.25	.07	.19**	.13	.70	0.01	.17**
Personalization	.01	.10	.00		.26	1.39	0.03	
Value	.14	.97	.01		.06	.26	0.09	
Special x gender	.48*	2.08	.05	.06	-.19	-.62	0.00	.14*
Personalization x gender	-.15	-.61	.00		-.73*	-2.56	0.08	
Value x gender	-.44	-1.46	.03		.32	.75	0.01	
Vignette 7								
Gender of participant	.02	.19	.00	.01	.07	.55	0.00	.01
Special	.42**	2.79	.08	.39**	.13	.77	0.00	.39**
Personalization	-.19	-1.30	.02		.20+	1.70	0.03	
Value	.40**	2.88	.08		.39*	2.31	0.05	
Special x gender	.10	.40	.00	.00	-.18	-.68	0.00	.01
Personalization x gender	-.03	-.14	.00		.01	.04	0.00	
Value x gender	.05	.24	.00		.04	.12	0.00	
Vignette 8								
Gender of participant	-.22	-1.81	.05	.05+	-.10	-.79	0.01	.10
Special	.04	.27	.00	.33**	.10	.68	0.00	.29**
Personalization	-.04	-.32	.00		.21	1.33	0.02	
Value	.58**	4.11	.18		.29+	1.79	0.04	
Special x gender	.08	.40	.00	.01	-.02	-.09	0.00	.05
Personalization x gender	-.18	-.78	.01		.10	.30	0.00	
Value x gender	.01	.06	.00		-.40	-1.44	0.02	

Note: + $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

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Biography

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