The impact of entitled and humble attitudes on romantic satisfaction

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The impact of entitled and humble attitudes on romantic satisfaction

Abstract
Entitlement, the sense of deserving more than others, has been shown to be associated with several negative interpersonal outcomes. In this dissertation, the impact of entitlement on romantic relationship satisfaction was investigated. On the other hand, psychological literature suggests humility may benefit interpersonal relationships. The impact of humility on relationship satisfaction was also examined in this dissertation. A sample of 158 individuals in monogamous romantic relationships of at least one year completed self-report measures of trait entitlement, relational entitlement, humility, relationship satisfaction, positive affect maintenance skills, and negative affect reduction skills. As expected, trait entitlement and relational entitlement were both significant negative predictors of relationship satisfaction. Additionally, results showed trait entitlement significantly moderated the relationship between negative affect reduction and relational satisfaction, such that participants with low levels of trait entitlement showed a stronger relationship between negative affect reduction and relationship satisfaction than participants who scored high on entitlement.

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THE IMPACT OF ENTITLED AND HUMBLE ATTITUDES
ON ROMANTIC SATISFACTION

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF
SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
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BY
CAMILLE C. CURRY
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APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE:

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Abstract

Entitlement, the sense of deserving more than others, has been shown to be associated with several negative interpersonal outcomes. In this dissertation, the impact of entitlement on romantic relationship satisfaction was investigated. On the other hand, psychological literature suggests humility may benefit interpersonal relationships. The impact of humility on relationship satisfaction was also examined in this dissertation. A sample of 158 individuals in monogamous romantic relationships of at least one year completed self-report measures of trait entitlement, relational entitlement, humility, relationship satisfaction, positive affect maintenance skills, and negative affect reduction skills. As expected, trait entitlement and relational entitlement were both significant negative predictors of relationship satisfaction. Also as expected, humility was a significant positive predictor of relational satisfaction. Additionally, results showed trait entitlement significantly moderated the relationship between negative affect reduction and relational satisfaction, such that participants with low levels of trait entitlement showed a stronger relationship between negative affect reduction and relationship satisfaction than participants who scored high on entitlement.

Keywords: entitlement, humility, relationships, Gottman
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Introduction

Several years ago, the generation born between 1979 and 1994 was labeled “The Entitlement Generation” by an Associated Press article (Irvine, 2005). Entitlement is the sense one deserves more and is entitled to more than others independent of merit (Campbell, Bonacci,
Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004). It is suggested in the Associated Press article that young employees exhibit high expectations for salary, job flexibility, and duties but little willingness to do unpleasant tasks or remain loyal to a company (Irvine, 2005). Additionally, it is proposed in the article that many young people who had too much success early and who have become accustomed to instant gratification find it difficult to transition into the workforce (Irvine, 2005). Others have also observed an upsurge of entitlement in the late 20th century, resulting in book titles such as *Generation me: Why today's young Americans are more confident, assertive, entitled--and more miserable than ever before* (Twenge, 2006) and *The Narcissism Epidemic: Living in the age of entitlement* (Twenge & Campbell, 2009).

Additionally, empirical interest in entitlement and related constructs has bloomed in the past decade. In particular, there has been a notable rise in empirical studies on entitlement since publication of the well-validated Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES; Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004). The development of the HEXACO model of personality also attests to the rise of interest in related constructs. Specifically, theorists (e.g., Peterson & Seligman, 2004) describe a close (inverse) relationship between entitlement and humility. In the recently developed HEXACO model of personality (e.g., Ashton et al., 2004), an Honesty-Humility factor was added as the sixth major cross-cultural dimension of personality (to the previously-established dimensions of Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism). In light of the perceived rise of entitlement in the late 20th century and the growing numbers of empirical studies of entitlement and humility, entitlement presents itself as a particularly relevant construct for understanding social dynamics and being able to promote prosocial behaviors.
Entitlement is the covert (as opposed to the overt) facet of narcissism (Fossati, Borroni, Eisenberg, & Maffei, 2010). Although narcissism is a well-studied construct in psychological research (e.g., Kernberg, 1975; Kohut, 1977; Millon, 1981), empirical research shows that outcomes of covert narcissism (i.e., entitlement) frequently differ from outcomes of overt narcissism (i.e., grandiosity) or outcomes that conflate the two dimensions of narcissism.

Overall, results of recent empirical research show many negative intra- and interpersonal outcomes associated with a sense of entitlement. For instance, a higher sense of entitlement has been associated with the intrapersonal qualities of low self-esteem, anxiousness, insecurity, depression, and pessimism (e.g., Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009). Entitlement has also been found to correspond to irritability, motivation to avoid negative outcomes, fear of failure, and lower life satisfaction (e.g., Foster & Trimm, 2008). Interpersonally, entitlement has been associated with hypersensitivity, self-indulgence, arrogance, reactive aggression, low agreeableness, deliberative cheating, hostility, affect-laden defensive behavior, and impulsivity (e.g., Fossati et al., 2010; Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009). Additionally, entitlement has been shown to correlate with less loyalty, an inability to forgive, an inability to empathize and adopt different perspectives, and a self-serving attributional bias (e.g., Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004). In sum, there is strong evidence that a sense of entitlement damages personal wellbeing and interpersonal relationships. In light of such outcomes, reducing one’s sense of entitlement is likely an important way to improve relationships and promote wellbeing.

Despite being the subject of recent empirical attention, limitations in entitlement research remain. In particular, it is currently unclear how exactly feeling entitled reduces one’s satisfaction in romantic relationships. Researchers (e.g., Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011) have
begun to examine how a sense of entitlement impacts partner satisfaction in romantic relationships, finding significant (negative) correlations between entitlement and relationship satisfaction (e.g., Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). However, few if any studies have yet examined what moderates the association between high entitlement levels and reduced romantic satisfaction.

Another area that has yet eluded clarification is how the constructs of entitlement and humility are related. Theoretical literature (e.g., Peterson & Seligman, 2004) suggests entitlement and humility are significantly and inversely related, but a correlation between the two has not yet received substantial empirical support. Historically, it has been difficult to empirically study humility due to psychometric challenges. However, the development of a new humility scale (Elliot, 2010) has recently advanced the ability to study humility empirically.

The present dissertation aims to address limitations in entitlement research in the context of romantic relationships. Specifically, purposes of this dissertation are (1) to empirically clarify whether entitlement and humility are significantly and inversely related, (2) to confirm that entitlement (negatively) and humility (positively) significantly correlate with satisfaction in romantic relationships, and (3) to identify particular mechanisms by which entitlement reduces (and humility increases) satisfaction in romantic relationships. To identify such mechanisms, this dissertation will identify whether a sense of entitlement (as well humility) moderates the relationships between key predictors of satisfying relationships and relationship satisfaction itself.

**Literature Review**

**Review of the Literature on Entitlement**

Entitlement as a facet of narcissism.
The construct of narcissism has been in the attention of psychological research for a century. Classic psychodynamic works on narcissism include Freud (1914), Kohut (1966, 1977), and Kernberg (1975). However, the constructs of narcissism and entitlement were largely undifferentiated until the latter decades of the 20th century, when psychodynamic researchers (e.g., Levin, 1970; Kriegman, 1983; Moses & Moses-Hrushovski, 1990) began exploring how a sense of entitlement – independent of narcissism – might be socially adaptive or maladaptive.

Recent psychological research has clarified the relationship between narcissism and entitlement, identifying entitlement as a separate construct under the umbrella of narcissism. Specifically, contemporary research has conceptualized entitlement as the covert aspect of narcissism (e.g., Fossati, Borroni, Eisenberg, & Maffei, 2010). Whereas the overt aspect of narcissism (i.e., grandiosity) is characterized by exhibitionism, self-importance, and preoccupation with receiving admiration, covert narcissism is typified by a sense of entitlement, exploitativeness, hypersensitivity, anxiousness, and insecurity (Fossati, Borroni, Eisenberg, & Maffei, 2010). Simply, overt narcissism describes the grandiosity aspect of narcissism, whereas covert narcissism describes the entitlement aspect of narcissism. Additionally, overt narcissism has been viewed as intrapersonal, focusing on a grandiose sense of self-importance, whereas covert narcissism has been conceptualized as interpersonal, being concerned with an entitled, objectifying sense of the self in relation to others (Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009).

Researchers have also begun referring to covert narcissism as vulnerable narcissism (e.g., Krizan & Johar, 2012; Miller et al., 2012; Miller, Price, Gentile, Lynam, & Campbell, 2012). For a detailed discussion of overt and covert narcissism see Curry (2010).

In general, research shows overt narcissism predicts positive outcomes, such as optimism, hopefulness, self-esteem, and positive affect (e.g., Hickman, Watson, & Morris, 1996).
Conversely, covert narcissism shows associations with negative outcomes such as low self-esteem (e.g., Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009). It should be noted, however, that the relationship between narcissism and self-esteem continues to be debated (see Bosson et. al., 2008 for a theoretical and empirical review).

Based on evidence that covert and overt narcissism predict different outcomes, researchers recommended using psychological measures that differentiate between covert and overt narcissism rather than conflate the two dimensions of narcissism. For instance, Brown, Budzek and Tamborski (2009) suggest overt narcissism be measured using the Narcissistic Grandiosity Scale (NGS; Steshenko, 2007), and that covert narcissism be measured using the Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES; Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004). Following such recommendations, a growing number of studies have employed the PES to measure outcomes of entitlement. Results of empirical research on entitlement are summarized below.

**Empirical research on entitlement.**

**Trait entitlement.**

Research suggests a higher sense of entitlement compromises personal wellbeing and damages relationships. Overall, as noted previously, higher entitlement has been related to low-self esteem, anxiousness, insecurity, depression, and pessimism (e.g., Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009). Entitled attitudes have also been shown to correlate with irritability, motivation to avoid negative outcomes, fear of failure, and lower life satisfaction (e.g., Foster & Trimm, 2008). Further, entitlement has also been associated with the interpersonal traits of hypersensitivity, self-indulgence, arrogance, reactive aggression, low agreeableness, deliberative cheating, hostility, defensive behavior, and impulsivity (e.g., Fossati et al., 2010; Brown,
Finally, research shows entitled attitudes are associated with less loyalty, an inability to forgive, an inability to empathize and adopt different perspectives, and a self-serving attributional bias (e.g., Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004). What follows is a more detailed discussion of entitlement research.

In terms of psychological wellbeing, several studies have found detrimental outcomes associated with higher levels of entitlement (e.g., Brown, Budzek & Tamborski, 2009; Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004). To measure entitlement, studies have generally employed the PES and the entitlement subscale of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI; Raskin & Hall, 1979, 1981; Raskin & Terry, 1988). For instance, Brown, Budzek, and Tamborski (2009) found higher entitlement was significantly related to higher levels of depression and pessimism, as well as lower self-esteem. The grandiosity dimension of narcissism, however, was associated with greater self-esteem and optimism, and with less depression. Brown, Budzek, and Tamborski (2009) also found entitlement was more strongly related to low agreeableness than was grandiosity, which is consistent with prior research suggesting higher levels of entitlement were associated with a greater propensity to engage in antisocial behavior (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004). Further, their research showed individuals endorsing higher entitlement were more likely to deliberately cheat, whereas participants with high grandiosity scores engaged in rationalized cheating but did not deliberately cheat.

Research also shows a sense of entitlement is associated with interpersonal conflict. For example, in a longitudinal study, Moeller, Crocker, and Bushman (2009) found that entitlement predicted both self-image goals and chronic hostility (measured both by the PES and the NPI Entitlement subscale). Entitlement also corresponds to certain types of aggression. Specifically,
Fossati, Borroni, Eisenberg, and Maffei (2010) found a high sense of entitlement in adolescents associated with reactive aggression, whereas overt narcissism, or grandiosity, was associated with both proactive and reactive aggression. Interestingly, their results suggested entitlement “represented a psychopathological core that was common both to overt and covert subtypes of pathological narcissism” (p.24). They purport that reactive aggression tends to be emotionally driven and impulsive, and theorize that a sense of entitlement might have been uniquely associated with reactive aggression because “due to their emotionality, adolescents prone to reactive aggression tend to ruminate about what they feel entitled to receive (and believe they have not received)” (p. 26). Reidy et al. (2008) also found a correlation between entitlement and aggression, although their results suggested a high sense of entitlement was associated with a tendency to explosively initiate aggression.

Foster and Trimm (2008) also suggest a high sense of entitlement is associated with strong avoidance motivation, whereas the grandiosity aspect of narcissism was associated with approach motivation. In particular, Foster and Trimm found that participants who obtained higher entitlement scores were more afraid of failure and negative results of their actions. Additionally, a higher sense of entitlement was found to be associated with dogmatism and certainty in one’s beliefs (Curry, 2010). Curry (2010) also found individuals who endorsed a higher sense of entitlement viewed themselves as bigger than others in a visual task, and were less likely to behave modestly.

Although the majority of research indicates individuals who feel more entitled are less content in their relationships and lives in general, entitlement may not always be “bad.” In one empirical study, researchers differentiated between exploitive and non-exploitive entitlement in adolescents, finding that each resulted in different outcomes (Lessard, Greenberger, Chen, &
Farruggia, 2011). Specifically, Lessard et al. (2011) found exploitive entitlement was related to higher levels of psychopathy and neuroticism, and lower levels of work orientation, social commitment, and self-esteem; conversely, non-exploitive entitlement was associated with higher self-esteem and did not significantly correlate with negative outcomes. Lessard et al. (2011) also found that both exploitive and non-exploitive entitlement correlated significantly with the Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES; the most widely-used trait entitlement measure), which brings into question whether research showing negative consequences of entitlement conflates exploitive and non-exploitive entitlement. In spite of such questions, entitlement appears to be an influential factor in interpersonal relationships and life satisfaction.

Although research on entitlement has not yet clearly identified the means by which entitlement creates interpersonal conflict and dissatisfaction, a few studies have begun to examine potential mechanisms that moderate the relationship between entitlement and disruptive interpersonal outcomes. For instance, O’Brien, Anastasio, and Bushman (2011) empirically demonstrate that time is a resource valued more by entitled individuals, suggesting that a link between entitlement and time perception may be a mechanism underlying self-focus and prosocial dynamics. Specifically, results of three studies showed that individuals who feel entitled perceive dull tasks as less interesting and as taking longer to complete, and leave the task more quickly (O’Brien et al., 2011). The study suggests that, although all people have to complete dull tasks, individuals who feel entitled perceive dull tasks as a waste of valuable time, which results in the perception that time drags.

To review, the majority of empirical research on trait entitlement shows negative outcomes associated with entitled attitudes. Results of new studies are beginning to illuminate the reasons (e.g., differences in time perception) entitled attitudes are associated with negative
outcomes. Contemporary research also demonstrates an emerging interest in how entitled attitudes manifest in different contexts, which will be discussed in the next section.

**State entitlement.**

Research on entitlement has primarily focused on trait entitlement, conceptualizing entitlement as an “intrapsychically pervasive” attitude that remains consistent for individuals across situations (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004, p. 32). However, a handful of recent studies have shifted focus to state entitlement, examining how entitled attitudes may differ across situations.

In particular, romantic relationships have been proposed as an area wherein entitlement attitudes may contrast with other interpersonal contexts. Psychoanalytically oriented researchers stress that early experiences shape the quality of adult romantic relationships (e.g., Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007) and that romantic relationships are the primary milieu in which we seek to undo early losses and to gratify unfulfilled wishes (Person, 1989). Similarly, psychoanalytic writers suggest romantic relationships are the “main arena where adults expect to meet and negotiate psychological needs” (e.g., Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011, p. 78). If romantic relationships are indeed the primary arena in which we expect our basic psychological needs will be met, entitlement attitudes by extension should be more prominent in romantic relationships. In other words, individuals likely have higher expectations for getting needs met in romantic relationships, representing stronger attitudes of entitlement. Romantic relationships may be an arena that entitled attitudes are particularly visible because partners may be less inhibited, thereby being less polite and censored as they may be in other social relationships.

Based on such a theory, Tolmacz and Mikulincer (2011) developed and tested a scale measuring entitled attitudes in romantic relationships (Sense of Relational Entitlement Scale;
SRE). Relational entitlement is characterized as the degree to which a person expects his or her relational needs, wishes, and fantasies should be fulfilled by a romantic partner (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011); it also refers to an individual’s responses (both affective and cognitive) to a romantic partner’s failure to meet such relational needs, wishes, and fantasies (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011).

Exploratory factor analysis of the SRE yielded a five factor structure, showing that relational entitlement is comprised of the following factors: (1) Vigilance on Negative Aspects of Partner and Relationship, (2) Sensitivity to Relational Transgressions and Frustrations, (3) Assertive Entitlement, (4) Expectations for Partner’s Attention and Understanding, and (5) Restricted Entitlement (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). Results of initial SRE testing showed higher total scores on relational entitlement were significantly associated with higher neuroticism, lower conscientiousness, and lower agreeableness (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). Higher scores on several SRE factors were significantly associated with lower self-esteem, less positive mood, and higher levels of stress, depression, anxiety, loneliness, and social anxiety (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). Attitudes of relational entitlement were associated with attachment insecurities (both anxious and avoidant attachment styles; Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). Finally, higher scores on the SRE significantly correlated with lower life satisfaction and marital adjustment, such that individuals who endorsed more entitled attitudes were less happy in their lives and marital relationships.

**Summary of entitlement research.**

In summary, entitlement is the sense that one deserves more and is entitled to more than others, independent of one’s actions. It has been conceptualized as the covert aspect of narcissism, and is generally typified by a sense of exploitativeness, hypersensitivity,
anxiousness, and insecurity. The recent interest in entitlement has clarified mixed outcome research on narcissism. Specifically, narcissism research suggests both positive and negative outcomes of narcissism. However, research on entitlement (excepting one study) has consistently found negative outcomes associated with a high sense of entitlement. Overall, research suggests entitlement is an important variable in interpersonal relationships, and may inform the degree to which one behaves prosocially.

Recent theoretical literature (e.g., Elliot, 2010) suggests entitlement may be significantly inversely related to humility, and some (e.g., Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009) recommend humility be measured using proxy measures such as the Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES; Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004). The following section contains a discussion of problems involved in the measurement of humility, and reviews existing theoretical and empirical research on outcomes of humility.

**Review of the literature on humility**

**Theoretical conceptualization of humility.**

The preceding review of entitlement research shows that entitled attitudes are associated with many negative psychological and interpersonal outcomes. However, positive psychologists (e.g., Bauer & Wayment, 2008) disparage the focus on negative outcomes, advocating for a more constructivist approach in which researchers examine positive effects of low self-interest rather than negative effects of high self-interest. One avenue for constructively studying self-interest – a purpose of this dissertation – is to examine outcomes of humility. Conceptually, the fact that researchers (e.g., Templeton, 1997; Peterson & Seligman, 2004) view entitlement and humility
as polarities on a spectrum of self-interest lends credence to humility research as a more constructive approach to understanding self-interest.\(^1\)

However, conducting empirical research on humility has historically presented psychometric challenges. As a result, although religious and philosophical literature has long touted the importance of being humble, psychological research is only beginning to elucidate how humble attitudes impact interpersonal relationships and wellbeing. One of the major psychometric challenges facing researchers has been the problem of construct validity. Specifically, it has been debated whether humility is a single construct. Lack of clarity around the parameters of the construct has resulted in self-report humility measures with poor psychometric properties (Tangney, 2000; Exline, 2008).

Although the construct validity problem has not entirely resolved, there have been significant advances that enable understanding and study of humility. First, there appears to be greater consensus about the definition of humility, which includes the following attributes (Tangney, 2000):

- An accurate assessment of one’s abilities and achievements
- The ability to acknowledge one’s mistakes, imperfections, gaps in knowledge, and limitations
- An openness to new ideas, contradictory information, and advice

\(^1\) On a broader note, theorists also suggest that research on humility be seen as fitting within a larger, emerging field of research termed quiet ego research (Bauer & Wayment, 2008). Such research examines outcomes of having a quiet ego, which is characterized by: (1) detached awareness, or a mindful and non-defensive type of attention (2) interdependence, central to which is the ability to understand others’ perspectives in a way that enables identification with them (3) compassion, or an accepting and empathetic stance toward the self and others, and (4) growth, the tendency toward prosocial development over time.
• A keeping of one’s abilities and accomplishments–one’s place in the world–in perspective

• A relatively low self-focus, a “forgetting of the self”, while recognizing that one is but one part of the larger universe

• An appreciation of the many different ways that people and things can contribute to our world

Second, an advance in the ability to empirically study humility is the development of the Humility Scale (HS; Elliot, 2010), items of which were drawn from Tangney’s (2000) above conceptualization. Studies examining the reliability and validity of the HS show the four factors of the scale (Openness, Self-forgetfulness, Modest Self-assessment, and Focus on Others) parallel Tangney’s (2000) definition of humility. The HS also showed acceptable reliability and several indications of discriminant and convergent validity.

A third advance in humility research has been the development of HEXACO, a six-factor model of personality. In the recently developed HEXACO personality structure and corresponding HEXACO Personality Inventory (HEXACO-PI, Lee & Ashton, 2004), an Honesty-Humility factor was added as the sixth major cross-cultural dimension of personality. In the 1980s and 1990s, many researchers had adopted the Big Five model of personality structure. Lexically derived, the Big Five showed five major dimensions of personality: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability (as opposed to neuroticism), and Openness to Experience (see Digman & Takemoto-Chock, 1981; Goldberg, 1990; Hofstee, de Raad, & Goldberg, 1992; Saucier & Goldberg, 1996, McCrae & Costa, 1985; McCrae, 1989). However, recent lexical investigations repeatedly show a sixth dimension to personality – Honesty-Humility (e.g., Ashton & Lee, 2008) – that supersedes the original five-factor model.
The Honesty-Humility factor involves aspects of sincerity, fairness, greed avoidance, and modesty (e.g., Lee & Ashton, 2004). Although the Honesty-Humility factor does not wholly align with Tangney’s (2000) definition of humility, it does support the validity of a humility construct. The HEXACO-PI and HEXACO-PI-Revised (HEXACO-PI-R) have also been well validated, enabling valid measurement of Honesty-Humility outcomes.

**Empirical research on humility.**

Empirical research on humility is limited. However, some theoretical and empirical work suggests humility is a key variable in interpersonal relationships. For instance, theorists suggest humility is important prerequisite for many models of forgiveness (Emmons, 1999; Enright, 2001; Sandage, 1997). The correlation between humility and forgiveness is supported by some studies that show humble individuals are more likely to seek and give forgiveness (Means, Wilson, Sturm, & Biron, 1990; Sandage, Worthington, Hight, & Berry, 2000). Results of such studies suggest humble attitudes correspond with an ability to share responsibility for conflicts and learn from it in order to correct mistakes. Some have also suggested that higher levels of humility are associated with greater compassion (e.g., Elliot, 2010). Additionally, Baumeister and Exline (1999) have also suggested humility is associated with a high and effective rate of self-control. They suggest that many socially problematic actions involve self-control failures, and that greater self-control would result in improved social relationships.

Research on the HEXACO personality structure also elucidates how the Honesty-Humility dimension of personality impacts interpersonal behaviors. Specifically, HEXACO research suggests low levels of honesty-humility are associated with unethical behaviors, materialism, and other negative outcomes. It should be mentioned, however, that studies using the HEXACO scale measure Honesty-Humility, a factor-derived construct involving elements of
modesty, sincerity, honesty, faithfulness, and loyalty.

Low scores on the Honesty-Humility HEXACO factor have been shown to predict antisocial behaviors in the workplace (Ashton & Lee, 2008b). When combined with low conscientiousness and low agreeableness, it also predicts workplace delinquency (Ashton & Lee, 2008b). Low levels of the Honesty-Humility also predicted unethical business practices, even when it posed safety risks to oneself and others (Lee, Ashton, Morrison, Cordery, & Dunlop, 2008; Weller & Tikir, 2011). Additionally, one study found that workers who scored high on Honesty-Humility consistently engaged in more productive behaviors than workers who scored low on Honesty-Humility (Zettler & Hilbig, 2010).

Interpersonally, studies show individuals who obtained low scores on Honesty-Humility are more likely to endorse revenge (Edwin & Boon, 2012). One study also showed that higher levels of Honesty-Humility were associated with being faithful to one’s partner in a relationship (Bourdage, Lee, Ashton, & Perry, 2007). Further, empirical studies on sexuality show individuals who score higher on Honesty-Humility show a greater propensity to engage in seductive and sexual behaviors without emotional attachments (e.g., Ashton & Lee, 2008b). Finally, results of studies show high scores on Honesty-Humility predict greater risk taking with regards to social situations, health, and safety (e.g., Weller & Tikir, 2011).

In summary, humility has been proposed as an important element in interpersonal relationships, especially with regards to the ability to show compassion, to seek and give forgiveness, and to demonstrate self-control. HEXACO research suggests that higher levels of humility may also be associated with less revenge-taking, greater faithfulness in relationships, and fewer unemotional seductive and sexual behaviors. However, in light of the scarcity of empirical research on humility, more research is needed to confirm the positive effects of
Components of Relationship Satisfaction: The Sound Marital House Theory

In a study that examines what contributes to relationship satisfaction, it is important to account for what might moderate the relationship between entitlement and relationship satisfaction. Although there is a wealth of disparate research on what contributes to satisfaction in romantic relationships, some of the most comprehensive empirical research has been conducted by John Gottman, who developed a theory of relationships based on his research findings (1999).

Based on his extensive research of married couples, Gottman (1999) observed that the two major predictors of marital longevity and satisfaction are (1) maintaining an overall level of positive affect and (2) an ability to reduce negative affect during conflict resolution. In order to elucidate how couples actually maintain positive affect and reduce negative affect during conflict, Gottman (1999) developed the Sound Marital House Theory (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: The Sound Marital House Theory
Gottman’s theory uses a seven-story house as a metaphor to illustrate the theory: it is a hierarchical system with a four-part foundation and three upper stories. The Sound Marital House Theory suggests the foundation of lasting relationships is a marital friendship and its ability to create three levels of positive affect in non-conflict situations. The three levels of positive affect are identified as (1) cognitive room, (2) the fondness and admiration system, and (3) turning toward versus turning away. Cognitive room refers to the amount of cognitive room partners allocate to one another. The fondness and admiration system refers to the frequency of spontaneous expressions of fondness and admiration. Turning toward versus turning away refers to the frequency of turning toward versus turning away in non-conflict interactions. When the three levels of marital friendship are working well, it results in positive sentiment override (PSO). Positive sentiment override is a term based on the research of Weis (1980), who observed, “reactions during marital exchanges could be determined by a global dimension of affection or disaffection rather than by the immediately preceding valence of the stimulus” (Gottman, 1999, p. 107). In other words, when there is a sufficient level of positive affect in times of non-conflict, individuals are less likely to perceive neutral messages from their spouses as negative. Gottman also asserts that sentiment override determines the success of repair attempts, defined as any attempt to de-escalate tension (e.g., humor, time-outs, apologies) during conflict (1999).

Establishing a friendship and maintaining positive sentiment override in times of non-conflict form the foundation of successful relationships in the Sound Marital House Theory. The next level of the theory is about conflict and how it is regulated. Gottman suggests there are three parts to regulating conflict, including (1) establishing dialogue, not gridlock, with perpetual problems, (2) solving solvable problems with some basic skills, and (3) physiological soothing,
or self-soothing (1999). Gottman asserts every relationship contains problems that cannot be “solved,” and that managing such problems requires different skills (i.e., dialogue) than managing problems that can be solved (i.e., problem-solving skills). Additionally, Gottman asserts that a person is more effectively able to manage conflict when he or she is able to independently self-sooth and reduce physical manifestations (e.g., tension, increased heart rate) that often are present during conflict.

The uppermost level of the Sound Marital House Theory involves a shared meaning system, which consists of (1) meshing individual life dreams, and (2) meshing rituals of connection, goals, roles, myths, narratives, and metaphors. Gottman (1999) suggests that when couples have already established a strong friendship (with positive sentiment override) and are able effectively manage conflict, developing a shared meaning system will continue to strengthen the friendship and contribute to the overall health of the relationship.

As mentioned above, empirical research (Gottman, 1999) suggests the two major predictors of marital satisfaction and longevity are (1) maintaining an overall level of positive affect and (2) an ability to reduce negative affect during conflict resolution. Using Gottman’s theory and corresponding measures, an aim of the present dissertation is to clarify whether entitlement (negatively) and humility (positively) moderate the relationship between such predictors and relationship satisfaction. Doing so will shed light on the specific mechanisms by which entitlement reduces satisfaction in romantic relationships. Having outlined Gottman’s (1999) empirical research and corresponding theory, the next section contains an explanation of why entitlement is expected moderate the association between entitlement and relationship satisfaction.

**Entitlement as a Moderator between Relationship Predictors and Satisfaction**
Research indicates that entitled attitudes reduce satisfaction in romantic relationships. However, no research to date has employed the Sound Marital House Theory to explore which particular relationship skills are impacted by attitudes of entitlement. This section consists of an explication, based on empirical research, of how entitled attitudes are expected to impact specific relationship skills of the Sound Marital House Theory.

**Entitlement effects on non-conflict positive affect.**

There are several ways that entitled attitudes are expected to impact one’s ability to maintain positive sentiment in times of non-conflict. As a reminder, couples are able to maintain positive sentiment override when they allow each other cognitive room, express fondness and admiration, and “turn toward” each other rather than away from each other in non-conflict occasions. It is expected the presence of entitled attitudes will influence each aspect of maintaining positive sentiment override.

First, it is expected that entitlement will impact the ability to allow romantic partners cognitive room. For instance, research shows higher levels of entitlement are associated with diminished ability to adopt different perspectives and show empathy (Campbell et al., 2004). When a person shows a tendency to not to adopt different perspectives or show empathy, it should, by extension, be more difficult the person to allow cognitive room for a partner to have differing views. Similarly, research suggests entitled attitudes are associated with a greater sense of certainty and dogmatism (Curry, 2010). Having a strong sense of certainty about the rightness of personal beliefs would also likely make it more difficult to be open to differing opinions of a partner.

Second, it is expected that entitlement will impact the ability to express fondness and admiration to romantic partners. Higher levels of entitlement have been associated with self-
indulgence and a self-serving attributional bias (Anderson, 1999; Seligman et al., 1984), suggesting it may be more difficult for such individuals to express fondness and admiration to their partners. The relational entitlement factors (as measured by the SRE) also suggest a correlation between relational entitlement and the ability to express fondness and admiration. Relational entitlement, as mentioned previously, includes five factors: (1) Vigilance on Negative Aspects of Partner and Relationship, (2) Sensitivity to Relational Transgressions and Frustrations, (3) Assertive Entitlement, (4) Expectations for Partner’s Attention and Understanding, and (5) Restricted Entitlement (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). Vigilance on the negative aspects of one’s partner likely results in fewer expressions of fondness and admiration, thereby reducing positive sentiment during non-conflict. Specifically, attunement to the unpleasant features of one’s partner would likely reduce one’s awareness of the partner’s positive qualities, thereby resulting in fewer expressions of fondness and affection.

Third, it is expected that entitlement levels will impact individual ability to “turn toward” partners in non-conflict situations, thereby impact the overall level of positive affect in the relationship. In particular, the relational entitlement factor of Expectations for Partner’s Attention and Understanding likely results in decreased ability to turn toward a partner. Specifically, harboring high expectations from a partner would likely make it more difficult for one to attend to partner needs, thereby reducing positive sentiment in times of non-conflict. Further, the association between high entitlement and avoidance motivation (Foster & Trimm, 2008; Fossati et al., 2010) suggests a high sense of entitlement would predispose individuals to turn away from their partners rather than turning toward.

**Entitlement effects on conflict regulation.**
Entitlement may also play a role in conflict regulation and the ability to reduce negative affect during conflict. As noted, conflict regulation involves three components: (1) establishing dialogue, not gridlock, with perpetual problems, (2) solving solvable problems with some basic skills, and (3) physiological soothing, or self-soothing (Gottman, 1999). Entitled attitudes may make it more difficult to establish dialogue with perpetual problems. Specifically, entitlement has been associated with reactive aggression and affect-laden defensive behavior (Fossati, 2010), as well as low agreeableness (Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009). If a person is disagreeable, defensive, and reacts aggressively, it is likely more difficult to establish dialogue with ongoing problems in a relationship. Additionally, with regards to being able to effectively regulate conflict, the relational entitlement factor of Sensitivity to Relational Transgressions likely impacts one’s ability manage all aspects of conflict regulation, including establishing dialogue, using problem-solving skills, and physiological self-soothing. Overall, research suggests entitled attitudes are likely to reduce both the ability to maintain positive sentiment in peaceful times, and the ability to effectively regulate conflict.

**Humility as a Moderator between Relationship Predictors and Satisfaction**

**Humility effects on non-conflict positive affect.**

Empirical research on humility is more limited than research on entitlement. However, there are some indicators that humble attitudes result in greater ability to maintain overall positive affect in non-conflict situations. Theoretically, the key elements of humility suggest a correlation with sustaining positive affect during non-conflict. For instance, Tangney (2000) suggests humility is characterized by openness to new ideas, contradictory information, and advice. Such openness to new ideas and contradictory information would likely make it easier for individuals to give their partners cognitive room, one of the three components of creating
positive sentiment override in relationships. Humility is also characterized by an appreciation of the many ways people can contribute to the world (Tangney, 2000), which would make it more likely such people would express fondness and admiration to their partners. Additionally, the association between humility and forgiveness (Means, Wilson, Sturm, & Biron, 1990; Sandage, Worthington, Hight, & Berry, 2000) suggests humble individuals are more able to turn toward their partners rather than away from their partners. Specifically, forgiving someone (rather than holding a grudge) requires a stance of openness and “turning toward” rather than turning away.

**Humility effects on conflict regulation.**

Research on humility also indicates an association with the ability to reduce negative affect in conflict. Specifically, Baumeister and Exline (1999) suggest humble attitudes are associated with a high rate of self-control, suggesting such individuals may be more able to reduce negative affect in conflict situations. In particular, self-control may make it easier to physiologically self soothe in conflict situations, which Gottman (1999) suggests is a component of being able to effectively establish dialogue with perpetual problems in relationships. Additionally, studies using the HEXACO model of personality show higher scores on Honesty-Humility predict less romantic revenge (Edwin & Boon, 2012), suggesting a greater ability to regulate conflict.

The Sound Marital House Theory is an empirically based system that describes the mechanism of how couples sustain satisfying relationships of longevity. Specifically, it explains how couples maintain positive sentiment in peaceful times, and reduce negative affect in conflict situations. Although no research has yet explored the role of entitlement as it relates to the Sound Marital House Theory, evidence suggests entitled (and, conversely, humble) attitudes may play a significant role in being able to maintain positive affect and reduce negative affect as necessary.
Summary and Hypotheses

Despite recent empirical attention on entitlement, mechanisms of entitlement and how it impacts relationships is not clearly delineated. Overwhelmingly, studies suggest entitled attitudes result in greater unhappiness and poorer interpersonal relationships. Conversely, research suggests humble attitudes improve relationship quality. Such evidence lends credence to the proposition that entitlement and humility are significantly inversely related. Although studies show correlations between entitlement and relationship satisfaction, few studies have examined the mechanisms by which entitlement adversely affects relationships. Similarly, psychological research has not yet elucidated how humble attitudes improve relationships.

The present dissertation aimed to confirm that there is a negative relationship between sense of entitlement and sense of satisfaction in relationships, and a positive relationship between humble attitudes and romantic satisfaction. Additionally, an aim of the dissertation was to explore how entitlement and humility might moderate the relationship between Gottman’s (1999) key predictors of relationship satisfaction (i.e., maintain positive affect and ability to reduce negative affect) and relationship satisfaction. It was hypothesized that:

1. Entitlement would be significantly and negatively correlated with humility (H₁)
2. Ability to maintain positive affect (PA) would be a positive predictor of relationship satisfaction (H₂)
3. Ability to reduce negative affect would be a positive predictor of relationship satisfaction (H₃)
4. Trait entitlement would be a negative predictor of relationship satisfaction (H₄)
5. Relational entitlement would be a negative predictor of relationship satisfaction (H₅)
6. Humility would be a positive predictor of relationship satisfaction (H₆)
7. Entitlement would moderate the relationship between positive affect and relationship satisfaction ($H_7$)
   a. Trait entitlement would moderate the relationship between positive affect and relationship satisfaction, such that participants with low levels of entitlement would have a stronger relationship between positive affect and relationship satisfaction than participants who are high in entitlement ($H_{7a}$)
   b. State (relational) entitlement would moderate the relationship between positive affect and relationship satisfaction, such that participants with low levels of entitlement would have a stronger relationship between positive affect and relationship satisfaction than participants who are high in entitlement ($H_{7b}$)

8. Humility would moderate the relationship between positive affect and relationship satisfaction, such that participants with high levels of humility would have a stronger relationship between positive affect and relationship satisfaction ($H_8$)

9. Entitlement would moderate the relationship between negative affect and relationship satisfaction ($H_9$)
   a. Trait entitlement would moderate the relationship between negative affect reduction and relationship satisfaction, such that participants with low levels of entitlement would have a stronger relationship between negative affect reduction and relationship satisfaction than participants who are high in entitlement ($H_{9a}$)
   b. State (relational) entitlement would moderate the relationship between negative affect reduction and relationship satisfaction, such that participants with low levels of entitlement will have a stronger relationship between negative affect
reduction and relationship satisfaction than participants who are high in entitlement (H9b)

10. Humility would moderate the relationship between negative affect reduction and relationship satisfaction, such that participants with high humility would have a stronger relationship between negative affect reduction and relationship satisfaction (H10)

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited from websites that host postings of psychological survey studies, including the following: Psychological Research on the Net (psych.hanover.edu/research/exponent.html); The Inquisitive Mind (beta.in-mind.org/online-research); I Science (www.iscience.edu); Lab United (www.w-lab.de/lab-united/actual.php); Social Psychology Network (www.socialpsychology.org); and PsychStudies (www.psychstudies.co.uk). Participants were also recruited from Backpage and Craigslist. Participants were required to be of at least 18 years of age and involved in a monogamous romantic relationship of at least one year. It was expected that approximately 120 individuals would participate in the study. A total of 205 individuals agreed to participate, and the study retained a final sample of 158 participants.

Table 1 provides demographic information for the sample. Of the final sample, the average age was 32 years (SD = 11). There were more female participants (67.7%) than male participants (31.6%), and one participant identified as transgendered. The majority of participants identified their ethnicity as Caucasian or being of European origin (65.8%), 11.4% identified as African American or of African; 7% identified as Asian or Pacific Islander; 10.8%
identified as Latino/a; 1.9% identified as Native American or an Alaska Native, and 3.2% identified as biracial or multiracial.

In terms of highest education level completed, 2.5% of the sample had completed less than high school; 34.8% had obtained a high school diploma; 15.8% had completed an associate’s degree; 32.3% had completed a bachelor’s degree; 12% had completed a master’s degree, and 2.5% had completed a doctoral degree.

The mean duration of relationship for participants was eight years (SD = 8), although the duration of relationship ranged from 1 to 45 years. The majority of participants reported being unmarried (65.8%), with 34.1% endorsing being married. Additionally, the majority of participants reported living together (55.7%), while 44.3% of participants endorsed living apart from their partners.
Table 1

Demographic Information for the Sample (N = 158)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N (%)</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (in years)</td>
<td>158 (100.0)</td>
<td>32 (11)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18 - 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50 (31.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>107 (67.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Trans* identified)</td>
<td>1 (.01)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African/African-American</td>
<td>18 (11.4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>11 (7.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino/a</td>
<td>17 (10.8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American/Alaska Native</td>
<td>3 (1.9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Level Completed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than High School</td>
<td>4 (2.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>55 (34.8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
<td>25 (15.8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>51 (32.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>19 (12.0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>4 (2.5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of relationship (in years)</td>
<td>158 (100.0)</td>
<td>6 (8)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 – 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>54 (34.2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>104 (65.8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-habitation Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Together</td>
<td>88 (55.7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Separately</td>
<td>70 (44.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Procedure

After obtaining IRB approval, surveys were conducted through SurveyMonkey.com, a secure internet-based survey program. Upon entering the secure website, participants were presented with and asked to read an informed consent document. Upon agreeing to participate in the study, each participant was presented with a demographics questionnaire and the scales used in the study. Upon completion of the measures, the participant was thanked for their time and participation. Participants were given the opportunity to receive a summary of results on completion of the study. Participants were also given the opportunity to enter a drawing for one of two $100 Visa gift cards, and were notified that the first 50 participants to complete the survey would be entered twice in the drawing. Participants who opted to receive a summary of results or enter the drawing were directed to a second secure website wherein they entered their e-mail addresses. By keeping e-mail contact information in a second site, survey responses were unable to be associated with a given individual. All data were collected, analyzed, and contained in a password-protected computer that was only accessible by investigators.

Measures

The Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES), developed by Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, and Bushman (2004), is a questionnaire designed to measure a global sense of entitlement. Although psychometric information on the PES is limited to data provided by the developers, it has shown good reliability and validity, and several studies have employed it as a measure since its development. Principal components analysis yielded a one-factor solution to the 9-item measure, with the one factor accounting for 46% of the variance in scores, indicating a high level of construct validity, and the factor structure was confirmed in a second study with a larger sample size (Campbell et al., 2004). In a third study, Campbell et al. examined test-retest
reliability of the PES over 1-month and 2-month time periods. Results indicated that the 1-month test-retest correlation for the PES was \( r = .72, p < .001 \). The 2-month test-retest correlation for the PES was \( .70, p < .001 \).

The Sense of Relational Entitlement Scale (SRE), developed by Tolmacz and Mikulincer (2011), is a 33-item scale assessing entitlement-related thoughts, feelings and behaviors in romantic relationships. It was used in addition to the PES because it measures state entitlement, which researchers (e.g., Tolmacz & Mikulincer) suggest operates differently than trait entitlement. Using the SRE in addition to the PES enabled an examination of whether trait and state entitlement produce different outcomes. The SRE uses a 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much). Its authors reported good internal consistency, with an alpha of .93. However, factor analysis yielded a five-factor solution, including Vigilance on Negative Aspects of Partner and Relationship (31.7%), Sensitivity to Relational Transgressions and Frustrations (8.9%), Assertive Entitlement (6.3%), Expectations for Partners’ Attention and Understanding (4.8%), and Restricted Entitlement (4.2%). The five-factor solution indicates questionable construct validity. Only the total scale score was used in this dissertation.

The Humility Scale (HS), developed by Elliot (2011), is a 32-item scale assessing trait humility, and items were drawn from Tangney’s (2000) conceptualization of the construct. It uses a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Due to the recency of its development, psychometric information is limited to data provided by its developer. However, Elliot reports good internal consistency, with an alpha of .79. He also reports several indications of concurrent and discriminant validity. For instance, he reports significant positive correlations with measures of religiosity (\( r = .35, p < .05 \)), empathy (\( r = .25, p < .05 \)), and self-compassion (\( r = .33, p < .05 \)), and a significant negative correlation with the
Self-sufficiency scale of the NPI \((r = -.18, \ p < .05)\). Principal component analyses showed that a four-component solution best fit the data in a way that was consistent with Tangney’s theoretical conceptualization of humility. Only the total scale score was used in this dissertation.

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS), developed by Spanier (1976), is a widely used measure of marital satisfaction. It contains four subscales, consisting of Dyadic Consensus, Dyadic Cohesion, Dyadic Satisfaction, and Affective Expression. Many studies have assessed its psychometric properties and have consistently shown that the DAS discriminates between distressed and non-distressed couples (e.g., Busby, Crane, & Larson, 1995). The factor structure of the DAS has been contested, largely because dyadic satisfaction is not a determinant of relationship adjustment, as are the other subscales (Graham, Liu, & Jeziorski, 2006). Spanier (1976) originally proposed that the Dyadic Satisfaction subscale could be used as a separate measure of relationship satisfaction and researchers have recently begun to assess the psychometric properties of the DAS Satisfaction Subscale as a short form for the DAS. For instance, Huntsley, Pinsent, Lefebvre, James-Tanner, and Vito (1995), recommend that the Dyadic Satisfaction subscale might be used as a short form of the DAS. Specifically, they found that the DAS Satisfaction Subscale accounted for a large portion of the variance of the total DAS scale, and had adequate internal consistency, with an alpha of .82.

The Sound Marital House Questionnaires (SMHQs) are a set of self-report questionnaires with face validity that assess each important process in the Sound Marital House theory. They are presented in a forced choice (true/false) format. They were designed and validated by Gottman (1999), who reports good concurrent and discriminant validity with related scales (e.g., the Lock-Wallace marital satisfaction scale, the Weiss-Cerreto divorce proneness scale, and the SCL-90 psychopathology checklist) but does not report correlation coefficients. Other
psychometric information on the SMHQs was unable to be located. For a more detailed
description of these concepts and the questionnaires, readers are referred to The Marriage Clinic
(Gottman, 1999, p. 118-119).

Predictors of relationship satisfaction were measured using the SMHQs. Positive affect
maintenance was measured using an aggregate of three SMHQs (Love Maps, Fondness and
Admiration System, and Turning Toward or Away) that measure mechanisms involved in
maintaining positive affect. Each of the questionnaires used to measure positive affect
maintenance included 20 items. Negative affect reduction was measured using an aggregate of
six SMHQs (Negative Perspective, Startup, Accepting Influence, Repair Attempts, Compromise,
and The Four Horsemen) that assess mechanisms involved negative affect reduction. All of the
above questionnaires included 20 items except Accepting Influence (19 items) and The Four
Horsemen (33 items).

**Design and Analyses**

We were interested in examining whether entitlement, as well as humility, moderated the
relationship between the ability to maintain positive affect and relationship satisfaction. Positive
affect was measured using an aggregate of three Sound Marital House questionnaires (Love
Maps, Fondness and Admiration System, and Turning Toward or Away). Trait and state
entitlement were both measured. Specifically, trait entitlement was measured using the
Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES). Relational entitlement was measured using the Sense of
Relational Entitlement Scale (SRE). Humility was measured using the Humility Scale (HS).
Relationship satisfaction was measured using the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS). Additionally,
we were interested in examining whether entitlement, as well as humility, moderated the
relationship between an ability to reduce negative affect and relationship satisfaction. Ability to
reduce negative affect was measured using an aggregate of five Sound Marital House questionnaires (Negative Perspective, Startup, Accepting Influence, Repair Attempts, Compromise, and The Four Horsemen). Lastly, we were interested in examining whether entitlement and humility were significantly and negatively correlated.

It was hypothesized trait and relational entitlement would each moderate the relationship between positive/negative affect and relationship satisfaction, such that participants with low levels of entitlement would have a stronger relationship between positive/negative affect and romantic satisfaction than participants who are high in entitlement. Similarly, it was hypothesized humility would moderate the relationship between positive/negative affect and romantic satisfaction, such that participants with high levels of humility would have a stronger relationship between positive/negative affect and relational satisfaction than participants with low levels of humility. To examine the above hypotheses, a hierarchical linear regression analysis was used. At step 1, positive affect maintenance and negative affect reduction were entered. At step 2, trait entitlement, relational entitlement, and humility were entered. At step 3, all the interactions between positive/negative affect and entitlement/humility were entered.

Additionally, posthoc analyses examining whether individual relational entitlement factors moderated the relationship between positive/negative affect and romantic satisfaction were conducted. To examine whether individual relational entitlement factors moderated the relationship between positive/negative affect and satisfaction, a second hierarchical linear regression analysis was used. At step 1, positive affect maintenance and negative affect reduction were entered. At step 2, five relational entitlement factors were entered. At step 3, all interactions between positive/negative affect and the five relational entitlement factors were entered.
Further, it was hypothesized that trait and relational entitlement would be significantly and negatively correlated, which was determined by examining the bivariate correlation between entitlement and humility. Descriptive statistics and correlations were analyzed using SPSS 21.0. Regressions and interaction hypotheses were also tested using SPSS 21.0. Interaction effects were further tested using Andrew Hayes’ modprobe script (Hayes & Matthes, 2009).

**Results**

**Introduction**

**Distribution Characteristics and Descriptive Statistics**

Prior to analyzing data, compliance with univariate and multivariate assumptions was examined for each variable. Only those cases containing at least 85% of completed data were retained for analysis (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001), which resulted in the removal of 47 cases. No data were missing from the remaining 158 participants. No multivariate outliers were detected (using a criterion of 4.0 standard deviations), resulting in a final sample size of 158.

Examination of the distribution of scores for each measure showed the DAS to be significantly negatively skewed. A square root transformation was performed on DAS scores, which normalized the distribution. Distribution of scores for the ability to maintain positive affect (PA) was determined to be significantly leptokurtic and positively skewed. To make the distribution more normal, a log transformation was performed on PA. Distribution of scores for the ability to reduce negative affect (NA) was found to be significantly platykurtic and negatively skewed, which was addressed by performing a log transformation on NA. Transformed skewness and kurtosis coefficients, with means and standard deviations, are reported below in Table 2.
Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Distribution Characteristics for Variables (N = 158)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skewness (SE)</th>
<th>Kurtosis (SE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Affect Maintenance (PA)*</td>
<td>70.03</td>
<td>11.61</td>
<td>1.25 (.19)*</td>
<td>.97 (.38)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Affect Reduction (NA)*</td>
<td>170.20</td>
<td>31.59</td>
<td>-.66 (.19)*</td>
<td>-.71 (.38)*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trait Entitlement (PES)</td>
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<td>9.33</td>
<td>.06 (.19)</td>
<td>.14 (.38)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relational Entitlement (SRE)</td>
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<td>32.73</td>
<td>-.07 (.19)</td>
<td>.22 (.38)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humility (HS)</td>
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<td>11.9</td>
<td>-.03 (.19)</td>
<td>-.03 (.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Satisfaction (DAS)*</td>
<td>120.99</td>
<td>38.92</td>
<td>-.82 (.19)*</td>
<td>.47 (.38)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Transformed values

Means and standard deviations for study variables are similar to those in the normative samples. Specifically, the mean for the PES (M = 34.14, SD = 9.33), SRE (M = 120.59, SD = 32.73), HS (M = 114.23, SD = 11.9), and DAS (M = 120.99, SD = 38.92) in the present sample are similar to those in normative samples: PES (M = 30.3, SD = 8.22; Campbell et al, 2004), SRE (M = 133.65, SD = 34.32; Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011), HS (M = 99.96, SD = 5.48; Elliot, 2010), DAS (M = 101.5, SD = 28.3; Spanier, 1976). Because PA and NA were aggregated variables, no normative means and standard deviations were available for comparison.

Cronbach alpha levels and zero-order correlations were also examined, and are reported below in Table 3. All Cronbach’s alphas in the present dissertation were acceptable (Howell, 2006). The ability to maintain positive affect was significantly positively correlated with the ability to reduce negative (r = .70, p < .001) and with overall relational satisfaction (r = .64, p < .001). The ability to reduce negative affect during conflict was also significantly and positively associated with overall relational satisfaction (r = .73, p < .001). Trait entitlement was
significantly negatively associated with positive affect maintenance \((r = -.28, p < .001)\) and negative affect reduction \((r = -.29, p < .001)\). Relational entitlement as also significantly and negatively associated with positive affect maintenance \((r = -.43, p < .001)\) and negative affect reduction \((r = -.44, p < .001)\). Additionally, relational entitlement was significantly and negatively correlated with relational satisfaction \((r = -.34, p < .001)\). Consistent with hypothesis 1, humility was significantly negatively correlated both with trait entitlement \((r = -.20, p < .05)\) and relational entitlement \((r = -.36, p < .001)\).

Table 3

*Correlations and Cronbach’s alphas of study variables (N = 158)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>PA</th>
<th>NA</th>
<th>PES</th>
<th>SRE</th>
<th>HS</th>
<th>DAS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Affect Maintenance (PA)</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td><strong>-28</strong></td>
<td><strong>-43</strong></td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Affect Reduction (NA)</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td><strong>-29</strong></td>
<td><strong>-44</strong></td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trait Entitlement (PES)</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td><strong>-20</strong></td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational Entitlement (SRE)</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td><strong>-36</strong></td>
<td><strong>-34</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Humility (HS)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>.81</td>
<td>.14</td>
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<td>Relational Satisfaction (DAS)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.88</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chronbach’s alpha is on the diagonal

**\(p < .001\)

*\(p < .05\)*

**Main hierarchical linear regression analyses**

To test the remainder of the hypotheses, a multiple regression was conducted to determine whether entitlement (and, conversely, humility) moderated the relationship between positive affect maintenance and relational satisfaction. It was also examined in the regression analysis whether entitlement (and, conversely, humility) moderated the relationship between
negative affect reduction and relational satisfaction. Predictors were mean centered to reduce multicollinearity (Cohen et al., 2003). Results are summarized in Table 4.

At step 1, positive affect maintenance (PA) and negative affect reduction (NA) were entered. Consistent with hypotheses 2 and 3, NA accounted for 51% of the variance in relational satisfaction ($\Delta R^2 = 0.51, \beta = .27, p < .001$) and PA accounted for an additional 4% of the variance in relational satisfaction ($\Delta R^2 = 0.04, \beta = .96, p = .001$).

At step 2, trait entitlement (PES), relational entitlement (SRE), and humility (HS) were entered. Consistent with hypothesis 4, PES accounted for 2% of unique variance to the model ($\Delta R^2 = 0.02, \beta = -1.11, p < .05$). Consistent with hypothesis 5, SRE also accounted for 2% of unique variance to the model ($\Delta R^2 = 0.02, \beta = -.24, p < .05$). Finally, consistent with hypothesis 6, humility (HS) contributed 1% of unique variance to the model ($\Delta R^2 = 0.01, \beta = .13, p < .05$).

At step 3, all the interactions were entered, including PA x PES, PA x SRE, PA x HS, NA x PES, NA x SRE, and NA x HS. It was hypothesized that there would be a significant interaction between positive affect and entitlement in predicting relational satisfaction. Inconsistent with hypothesis 7, the PA x PES interaction was not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.4, p = .94$). Similarly, inconsistent with hypothesis 7, the PA x SRE interaction was not significant ($\beta = -.05, p = .91$). It was also expected that there would be a significant interaction between positive affect and humility. Inconsistent with hypothesis 8, the PA x HS interaction was not statistically significant ($\beta = -.28, p = .58$).

Further, it was hypothesized that there would be a significant interaction between negative affect reduction and entitlement in predicting relational satisfaction. Consistent with hypothesis 9, the NA x PES was significant ($\beta = -.87, p = .02$), suggesting trait entitlement significant moderates the relationship between negative affect reduction and relational
satisfaction. However, inconsistent with hypothesis 9, the NA x SRE interaction was not statistically significant ($\beta = -.33, p = .43$). Finally, it was expected that there would be a significant interaction between negative affect reduction and humility. However, inconsistent with hypothesis 10, the NA x HS interaction was not statistically significant ($\beta = -.85, p = .07$).

Table 4

*Regression analyses predicting satisfaction from positive affect maintenance, trait entitlement, relational entitlement, humility and their interactions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$\Delta R^2$</th>
<th>$r$</th>
<th>$F_{\Delta}$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
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<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Affect Maintenance (PA)</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>12.04</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Affect Reduction (NA)</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>162.93</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trait Entitlement (PES)</td>
<td>-1.11</td>
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<td>8.31</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relational Entitlement (SRE)</td>
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<td>.02</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
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<tr>
<td>Humility (HS)</td>
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<td>.02</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>.02</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Step 3</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Affect x Trait Entitlement (PA x PES)</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Affect x Relational Entitlement (PA x SRE)</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.91</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Affect x Humility (PA x HS)</td>
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<td>.05</td>
<td>.58</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative Affect x Relational Entitlement (NA x SRE)</td>
<td>-.33</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Affect x Humility (NA x HS)</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.07</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: Values are reported at the final step, with all variables entered into the regression.

To further explore the negative affect x trait entitlement interaction, a simple slope analysis was used to plot relational satisfaction (DAS) regressed onto negative affect (NA) at high (+1 SD) and low (-1 SD) values of trait entitlement (see Figure 2). Consistent with hypothesis 9a, participants high in trait entitlement did not evidence a significant relationship between negative affect reduction and relational satisfaction ($\beta = -0.63$, $t = 1.34$, $p = .08$), whereas participants low in trait entitlement did ($\beta = -0.94$, $t = 3.75$, $p < .001$).

![Figure 2. Simple slopes for negative affect (NA) reduction in the prediction of relational satisfaction at low (-1 SD) and high (+1 SD) values of trait entitlement.]

In summary, positive affect maintenance and negative affect reduction were significant predictors of relational satisfaction. Trait entitlement and relational entitlement were also significant negative predictors of relational satisfaction. Further, humility was a significant positive predictor of relational satisfaction. However, none of the hypothesized interactions were significant except the NA x PES interaction, which indicated that trait entitlement significantly moderated the relationship between negative affect reduction and relational satisfaction.
Posthoc regression analyses

Results of the main regression analysis showed negative reduction ability ($\Delta R^2 = 0.51, p < .001$) and positive affect maintenance ability ($\Delta R^2 = 0.04, p < .001$) significantly predicted relational satisfaction. Trait ($\Delta R^2 = 0.03, p < .001$) and relational entitlement ($\Delta R^2 = 0.2, p < .001$) were significant predictors of relational satisfaction. Finally, results of the main regression analysis showed humility was a significant positive predictor of satisfaction ($\Delta R^2 = 0.02, p < .001$).

Results showed that relational entitlement was a significant predictor of romantic satisfaction. However, relational entitlement did not significantly moderate the relationship between positive affect maintenance and romantic satisfaction. Similarly, relational entitlement did not significantly moderate the relationship between negative affect reduction and satisfaction.

To further explore the impact of relational entitlement (SRE), posthoc analyses were performed to determine whether each SRE factor was a predictor of relational satisfaction. It was also examined in the posthoc analyses whether each SRE factor interacted with positive/negative affect in predicting relational satisfaction. Specifically, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to explore how each relational entitlement factor (Vigilance of Negative Aspects of Partner and Relationship; Sensitivity to Relational Transgressions and Frustrations; Assertive Entitlement; Expectations for Partner’s Attention and Understanding; Restricted Entitlement) moderated the relationship between positive/negative affect and relational satisfaction. Predictors were mean centered to reduce multicollinearity (Cohen et al., 2003). Results are summarized in Table 5.

At step 1, positive affect maintenance (PA) and negative affect reduction (NA) were entered. Consistent with hypotheses 2 and 3, NA accounted for 51% of the variance in relational satisfaction.
satisfaction ($\Delta R^2 = 0.51, p < .001$) and PA accounted for an additional 4% of the variance in relational satisfaction ($\Delta R^2 = 0.04, p = .001$).

At step 2, all of the SRE factors were entered, including the following: Vigilance of Negative Aspects of Partner and Relationship (SRE1); Sensitivity to Relational Transgressions and Frustrations (SRE2); Assertive Entitlement (SRE3); Expectations for Partner’s Attention and Understanding (SRE4); and Restricted Entitlement (SRE5). Results showed that SRE1 accounted for 6% of unique variance to the model ($\Delta R^2 = 0.06, p < .001$). Additionally, SRE4 contributed 4% of unique variance to the model ($\Delta R^2 = 0.04, p < .001$). No other SRE factors contributed unique variance to the model.

At step 3, all of the interactions were entered, including PA x SRE1, PA x SRE2, PA x SRE3, PA x SRE4, PA x SRE5, NA x SRE1, NA x SRE2, NA x SRE3, NA x SRE4, and NA x SRE5. Results are described below and are displayed in Table 5. The PA x SRE1 interaction was not statistically significant ($\beta = -.36, p = .83$), which indicates that vigilance on negative aspects of one’s partner and relationship did not moderate the relationship between positive affect maintenance and relational satisfaction. However, results showed the NA x SRE1 interaction was significant ($\beta = -4.02, p < .001$), indicating that vigilance on negative aspects did moderate the relationship between negative affect reduction and relational satisfaction.

Neither the PA x SRE2 interaction ($\beta = -.01, p = .89$), nor the NA x SRE2 interaction ($\beta = -.04, p < .84$), was statistically significant. Such results suggest that sensitivity to relational frustrations did not moderate the relationship between positive affect/negative affect and relational satisfaction. Similarly, assertive entitlement did not moderate the relationship between positive/negative affect and relational satisfaction. Specifically, results showed that neither the PA x SRE3 interaction ($\beta = -.05, p = .44$) nor the NA x SRE3 interaction ($\beta = -.04, p = .54$),
were statistically significant. The PA x SRE4 interaction was significant ($\beta = -4.22, p < .001$), suggesting that expectations for partner attention and understanding moderates the relationship between the ability to maintain positive affect and relational satisfaction. However, the NA x SRE4 interaction was not significant ($\beta = -.56, p = .69$), indicating that high expectations do not moderate the relationship between negative affect reduction and relational satisfaction. Lastly, neither the PA x SRE5 interaction ($\beta = -.02, p = .80$) nor the NA x SRE5 interaction ($\beta = -.01, p = .81$) was statistically significant, which suggests that restricted entitlement did not moderate the relationship between positive/negative affect and relational satisfaction.

Table 5

*Regression analysis predicting satisfaction from positive affect maintenance, relational entitlement factors, and their interactions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$\Delta R^2$</th>
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<th>$F_A$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Affect Maintenance (PA)</td>
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<td>.04</td>
<td>12.04</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Affect Reduction (NA)</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>162.93</td>
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<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vigilance of Negative Aspects (SRE1)</td>
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<td>25.16</td>
<td>.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sensitivity to Relational Transgressions (SRE2)</td>
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<td>Expectations for Attention/Understanding (SRE4)</td>
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<td>Restricted Entitlement (SRE5)</td>
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<td>Interaction</td>
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<td>Parameter 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Affect x Assertive (PA x SRE3)</td>
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<td>.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Affect x Restricted (PA x SRE5)</td>
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<td>.70</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Negative Affect x Sensitivity (NA x SRE2)</td>
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<td>.02</td>
<td>.84</td>
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<td>Negative Affect x Assertive (NA x SRE3)</td>
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<td>.10</td>
<td>.54</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Negative Affect x Expectations (NA x SRE4)</td>
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<td>.04</td>
<td>.69</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Affect x Restricted (NA x SRE5)</td>
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<td>.03</td>
<td>.81</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant interactions were further explored using simple slope analyses. Specifically, to examine the PA x SRE4 interaction, a simple slope analysis was used to plot relational satisfaction (DAS) regressed onto positive affect (PA) at high (+1 SD) and low (-1 SD) values of expectations for partner understanding and attention (see Figure 3). Participants with low expectations for attention/understanding evidenced a significant relationship between positive affect and satisfaction ($\beta = -3.23$, $t = 2.64$, $p < .001$). Participants with high expectations also evidenced a significant relationship between positive affect and satisfaction, but in the opposite direction ($\beta = 3.47$, $t = 2.12$, $p < .001$).
Figure 3. Simple slopes for positive affect (PA) maintenance in the prediction of relational satisfaction at low (-1 SD) and high (+1 SD) values of SRE4.

To examine the PA x SRE4 interaction, a simple slope analysis was used to plot relational satisfaction (DAS) regressed onto positive affect (PA) at high (+1 SD) and low (-1 SD) values of expectations for partner understanding and attention (see Figure 4). Participants with low vigilance of negative aspects of the partner and relationship evidenced a significant relationship between positive affect and satisfaction ($\beta = -3.09$, $t = 1.98$, $p < .001$). Participants with high expectations also evidenced a significant relationship between positive affect and satisfaction, but in the opposite direction ($\beta = 2.24$, $t = 2.56$, $p < .001$).
Figure 4. Simple slopes for negative affect (NA) reduction in the prediction of relational satisfaction at low (-1 SD) and high (+1 SD) values of SRE1

Summary of Results

To review, it was hypothesized that trait and relational entitlement would be significantly and negatively correlated with humility (H1). Consistent with hypotheses, both trait and relational entitlement were significantly and negatively correlated with humility. It was hypothesized that positive affect maintenance and negative affect reduction would both be significant positive predictors of relational satisfaction. As hypothesized, results showed ability to maintain positive affect was a positive predictor of relationship satisfaction (H2). Similarly, results showed negative affect reduction was also a positive predictor of relationship satisfaction (H3). Further, it was hypothesized trait entitlement (H4) and relational entitlement (H5), would be significant negative predictors of relational satisfaction, and that humility (H6) would be a significant positive predictor. Consistent with hypotheses, results showed trait and relational entitlement were both significant predictors of relational satisfaction, while humility was a significant positive predictor of satisfaction.

Further, it was hypothesized that trait (H7a) and relational (H7b) entitlement would both moderate the relationship between positive affect and relational satisfaction, which was not supported by results. It was also hypothesized that humility would moderate the relationship between positive affect and relational satisfaction (H8), which was also not supported by results. Similarly, it was hypothesized that trait (H9a) and relational entitlement (H9b) would both moderate the relationship between negative affect reduction and relational satisfaction. Consistent with hypothesis 9a, results showed trait entitlement significantly moderated the relationship between negative affect reduction and relational satisfaction. Conversely, contrary to
expectation, relational entitlement did not significantly moderate the relationship between negative affect reduction and relational satisfaction. Finally, it was hypothesized that humility would moderate the relationship between negative affect reduction and relational satisfaction, which was not supported by results.

Although relational entitlement did not moderate the relationship between positive/negative affect and relational satisfaction, posthoc analyses were conducted to explore whether specific relational entitlement moderated the relationship between positive/negative affect and relational satisfaction. Results showed that expectations for partner understanding and attention moderated the relationship between positive affect maintenance and relational satisfaction, such that participants with low expectations showed a stronger relationship between positive affect and relational satisfaction. Results also showed that vigilance of negative aspects of one’s partner and relationship significantly moderated the relationship between negative affect reduction and satisfaction, such that participants with low vigilance had a stronger relationship between negative affect reduction and relationship satisfaction. The remainder of relational entitlement factors did not significantly moderate the relationship between positive/negative affect and relational satisfaction.

Discussion

The present dissertation explored how a sense of entitlement, and conversely humility, impacts satisfaction in romantic relationships. It was hypothesized a high sense of personal entitlement would reduce romantic satisfaction, and a high sense of humility would increase romantic satisfaction.

The impact of entitlement on relationship satisfaction
The majority of empirical research shows trait entitlement is associated with several interpersonal traits likely to negatively impact quality of relationships. For instance, entitled attitudes are related to hypersensitivity, self-indulgence, arrogance, reactive aggression, low agreeableness, deliberative cheating, defensive behavior, and impulsivity (e.g., Fossati et al., 2010; Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009). Research also shows entitled attitudes to be associated with inability to forgive, inability to adopt different perspectives, and a self-serving attributional bias (e.g., Campbell, Bonacci Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004). Consistent with such research, results of the current dissertation suggest trait entitlement negatively impacts satisfaction in the context of romantic relationships.

The majority of research on entitlement conceptualizes it as an “intrapsychically pervasive” attitude that manifests consistently across situations (Campbell, Bonacci Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004, p. 32). Diverging from such a trend, new research on entitlement has begun to examine how entitlement manifests uniquely in different contexts (e.g., workplace, romantic relationships). Because romantic relationships are important for meeting psychological needs, researchers suggest entitlement in relationships may be exhibited differently than trait entitlement (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007) in a romantic context. Research that employs the newly developed Sense of Relational Entitlement Scale (SRE; Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011) shows total scores on the SRE were significantly and negatively correlated both with life satisfaction and marital adjustment (Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011). Adding support to such research, results of the current dissertation show the SRE was a significant negative predictor of relational satisfaction.

*Implications for ability to maintain positive affect without conflict*
As outlined in the Sound Marital House Theory (Gottman, 1999), the ability to maintain positive affect in peaceful times is a major predictor of relationship satisfaction. Ability to maintain positive affect is comprised of three broad abilities: (1) the ability to allow one’s partner to have cognitive room, (2) the ability to express fondness and admiration to one’s partner, and (3) the ability to “turn toward,” rather than away from, one’s partner.

It was hypothesized that higher levels of global and relational entitlement would be associated with decreased ability to maintain positive affect, resulting from lower ability to allow cognitive room, express fondness and admiration, and turn toward partners. Specifically, it was expected that higher levels of global and relational entitlement would be associated with decreased ability to allow cognitive room to partners. Research shows that high entitlement levels are associated with decreased ability to adopt different perspectives (Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004), suggesting it would be more difficult for such individuals to allow their partners cognitive room.

Similarly, it was hypothesized that high global and relational entitlement levels would negatively impact the ability to express fondness and admiration to one’s partner. Research shows higher levels of entitlement are associated with self-indulgence and a self-serving attributional bias (e.g., Anderson, 1999), which suggests, by extension, that it would be more difficult for such individuals to express fondness and admiration to romantic partners.

Further, research shows that high entitlement levels are associated with avoidance motivation (e.g., Foster & Trimm, 2008), suggesting that individuals exhibiting entitled attitudes would be more likely to turn away, rather than turn toward, their partners. Based on such research, it was hypothesized that global and overall relational entitlement would predispose individuals to turn away from their partners.
In this dissertation, contrary to expectation, global entitlement did not significantly impact participants’ reported ability to maintain positive affect during peaceful times. Although trait entitlement was a significant negative predictor of romantic satisfaction, results of the dissertation suggest that global entitlement does not result in decreased relational satisfaction via an impaired ability to maintain positive affect during non-conflict times.

Also contrary to expectation, results of this dissertation showed total relational entitlement did not significantly impact participants’ reported ability to maintain positive affect. Similarly, although relational entitlement was a significant negative predictor of romantic satisfaction, such results suggest that relational entitlement does not result in decreased satisfaction via a reduced ability to maintain positive affect.

However, posthoc analyses showed two factors of relational entitlement (i.e., Vigilance of Negative Aspects of Partner and Relationship; Expectations for Partner’s Understanding and Attention) were significant, negative predictors of relational satisfaction. Additionally, results showed one factor of relational entitlement – Expectations for Partner’s Understanding and Attention – negatively impacted participants’ ability to maintain positive affect. In other words, results suggest high expectations decrease one’s ability to maintain positive affect during times when there is no conflict. A major implication of this dissertation is that tempering personal expectations for attention and understanding will likely result in greater ability to maintain positive affect, thereby increasing romantic satisfaction.

Implications for ability to reduce negative affect during conflict

The second major predictor of relationship satisfaction in the Sound Marital House Theory (Gottman, 1999) is the ability to reduce negative affect during conflict. The three major components of reducing negative affect during conflict are as follows: (1) establishing dialogue,
not gridlock, with perpetual problems, (2) solving solvable problems with some basic skills, and (3) physiological soothing, or self-soothing (Gottman, 1999). It was hypothesized that higher levels of entitlement would decrease participants’ ability to reduce negative affect during conflict as a result of decreased ability to establish dialogue, solve problems, and physiologically self-soothe.

Specifically, it was hypothesized that higher levels of entitlement would make it more difficult to establish dialogue with perpetual problems and practice problem-solving skills with solvable problems. Research shows entitlement is associated with reactive aggression and affect-laden defensive behavior (Fossati, 2010), as well as low agreeableness (Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009). Such associations suggest it would be more difficult to sustain meaningful dialogue and use problem-solving skills for individuals who feel more entitled.

As expected, trait entitlement significantly and negatively impacted participants’ reported ability to reduce negative affect during conflict. Results of this dissertation extend our understanding of the mechanisms by which entitlement impacts relationships. Specifically, this dissertation suggests higher entitlement results in less relational satisfaction via decreased ability to reduce negative affect during conflict.

Contrary to expectation, total relational entitlement did not significantly impact participants’ reported ability to reduce negative affect during conflict. However, posthoc results showed that one factor of relational entitlement – Vigilance of Negative Aspects of Partner and Relationship – significantly and negatively impacted participants’ reported ability to reduce negative affect during conflict. In other words, participants who were more vigilant of negativity and more sensitive to frustrations were less able to reduce negative affect during conflict, which resulted in decreased satisfaction in the relationship. A major implication of this dissertation is
that minimizing vigilance to negative aspects of one’s partner and relationship will likely improve one’s ability to reduce negative affect during conflict, thereby increasing romantic satisfaction.

**The impact of humility on romantic satisfaction**

It was hypothesized that humility would predict relationship satisfaction. Theoretical and empirical literature suggests that humble attitudes are relationally beneficial. Studies suggest high humility is associated with greater ability to forgive (e.g., Means, Wilson, Sturm, & Biron, 1990), greater compassion (e.g., Elliot, 2011), less romantic revenge (Edwin & Boon, 2012), and a higher rate of self-control (Baumeister & Exline, 1999). Research that uses the HEXACO-PI indicates participants who scored higher on Honesty-Humility were more likely to be faithful in their romantic relationships (Bourdage, Lee, Ashton, & Perry, 2007). Additionally, studies on sexuality show individuals who endorse low humility show a greater propensity to engage in seductive and sexual behaviors without emotional attachments (e.g., Ashton & Lee, 2008b). Such associations suggest that humility levels would impact the ability to maintain positive affect and reduce negative affect in romantic relationships. As hypothesized, results of this dissertation showed humility was a significant positive predictor of relationship satisfaction. Such results contribute to an emerging body of research suggesting humility is beneficial in relationships. However, results showed that humility did not significantly impact participants’ abilities to maintain positive affect or reduce negative affect. Implied in such results is that humility improves relationships via different mechanisms than positive affect maintenance and negative affect reduction.
Humility and entitlement: polarities on a self-interest spectrum?

Theoretical literature on humility implies that entitlement and humility represent the polarities on a spectrum of self-interest, or that they essentially form a singular construct (e.g., Templeton, 1997). For example, because of psychometric challenges in studying humility, researchers have recommended using proxy measures for low humility, such as the PES (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Such recommendations suggest the two constructs of humility and entitlement are strongly and inversely related. However, minimal research has actually empirically examined the strength of association between entitlement and humility.

The recent development of the Humility Scale (Elliot, 2011) provides a newer measure for studying humility that is consistent with the most widely accepted conceptualization of humility (Tangney, 2000). One aim of the present dissertation was to empirically examine the degree to which entitlement and humility comprise a single continuum. Consistent with theoretical literature, results showed significant negative correlations between trait entitlement and humility ($r = -.20, p < .001$). Also theoretically consistent, results showed a significant negative correlation between relational entitlement and humility ($r = -.36, p < .001$). However, although the correlations are statistically significant, neither correlation is strong enough to suggest that entitlement scales should be used as proxy measures for low humility, or that entitlement and humility form a singular construct.

Study limitations

One limitation of the present dissertation is the reliance on self-report measures. Research suggests that individuals with higher entitlement levels self-enhance and operate with a self-serving attributional bias. The reliance on self-report measures may not have yielded accurate results if participants answered with a self-enhancement bias. One way to address such a...
limitation would be to have each member of the dyad rate their own sense of entitlement and humility and to rate his or her perception of the other’s sense of entitlement and humility. Such a method would clarify whether a self-enhancement bias existed. However, the present dissertation did not elicit data from both members of the dyad.

Another limitation is that the present dissertation used a theory of marital relationships to explore romantic satisfaction for participants who were in a monogamous romantic relationship but not necessarily married. Specifically, Gottman’s (1999) Sound Marital House Theory is derived empirically from observation of married couples. Using the Sound Marital House Theory with unmarried couples has not been previously validated, which may have compromised the validity of results. For instance, unmarried couples may show lower levels of commitment to resolving conflict in their relationships. Alternately, married couples may show higher levels of entitlement in their relationships.

Further, the current dissertation employs the PES to measure trait entitlement. In light of one study (Lessard, Greenberger, Chen, & Farruggia, 2011) showing that exploitive and non-exploitive entitlement both correlated with the PES, results may be impacted by the possibility that the current dissertation may conflate exploitive and non-exploitive entitlement. Specifically, it was shown that exploitive and non-exploitive entitlement resulted in different outcomes among adolescents (Lessard et al., 2011). In particular, exploitative entitlement showed associations with psychopathy and neuroticism, and lower levels of work orientation, social commitment, and self-esteem. Non-exploitive entitlement, on the other hand, showed a significant positive association with self-esteem, and was not significantly correlated with any negative outcome. If exploitive and non-exploitive entitlement have different outcomes, using the PES (shown to correlate with both)
There were also limitations regarding the measures used. First, aggregated Sound Marital House Questionnaires were used to measure maintenance of positive affect and reduction of negative affect. Limited psychometric information exists for the Sound Marital House Questionnaires, which may reduce the reliability of results. Additionally, the Sound Marital House Questionnaires are presenting in True/False format, which reduces response variability and may have impacted results. Although other measures are available that measure positive and negative affect (e.g., PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988), the Sound Marital House Questionnaires were used in order to explore the relationships between entitlement, humility, and specific mechanisms of positive affect maintenance and negative affect reduction.

Further, another limitation of the current dissertation is that a high number of cases ($N = 47$) were removed prior to conducting the main analyses due to participants completing less than 85% of the dissertation surveys. As outlined in the IRB proposal, data was not used for participants who completed less than 85% of the surveys. However, the removal of 47 cases likely impacted results of the study. A majority of the removed cases completed the demographics questionnaire, PES, SRE, and DAS, but ceased participation prior to completing the SMHQs.

As mentioned previously, empirical interest in humility and entitlement has increased in the past decade, resulting in new scales to measure entitlement and humility constructs. Several newer scales were used in the present dissertation, including the Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES; Campbell, Bonacci, Shelton, Exline, & Bushman, 2004), Sense of Relational Entitlement Scale (SRE; Tolmacz & Mikulincer, 2011), and Humility Scale (HS; Elliot, 2010). Although the PES has been validated by several empirical studies since its initial development, psychometric information beyond that provided by developers has not been reported for the SRE and HS.
Limited psychometric information on the SRE and HS makes the results of the present dissertation less reliable. Initial testing of the SRE and the HS showed good internal consistency, along with good convergent and discriminant validity. However, neither scale showed high construct validity, which may impact the validity of results.

**Directions for future research**

One direction for future research would be to empirically examine the degree of overlap between Tangney’s conceptualization of humility and the Honesty-Humility factor of the HEXACO-P-I (Lee & Ashton, 2004). Measurement of humility has historically – and continues to be – problematic due the psychometric properties of measurement tools. The Honesty-Humility factor of the HEXACO-P-I was shows good psychometric properties. The fact that it was factor-analytically derived indicates that honesty and humility belong to a common factor. Traditional measures of humility have not included items that related to honesty. However, Tangney’s (2000) commonly accepted definition of humility involves several descriptors that involve elements of honesty. For example, her conceptualization of humility involves an accurate assessment of one’s abilities and achievements, along with the ability to acknowledge one’s mistakes, imperfections, gaps in knowledge, and limitations. It raises the question of whether humility is an implicit component of humility. Further empirical testing would clarify whether honesty and humility belong to a unified construct. If they represent a single construct, future researchers may be able to employ the Honesty-Humility factor of the HEXACO-P-I as a psychometrically sound measure of humility.

The present dissertation explored the impact of entitlement and humility in committed monogamous relationships. Future directions for research may involve examining the impact of entitlement or humility in non-committed or non-monogamous relationships. It would be
expected that members of monogamous relationships would exhibit a higher sense of entitlement in relationship because each member would rely on one partner to meet psychological needs. It would be interesting to explore whether there are significant differences in entitlement levels for members of monogamous relationships depending on whether a strong relational support system existed outside of the primary relationship. It would also be expected that members of committed relationships would show a higher sense of entitlement than members of non-committed relationships. Specifically, if one’s partner has committed to the relationship, it would be reasonable to expect more from the partner than from a partner who was not invested in the relationship. Future research might examine differences in entitlement levels between individuals in committed relationships and individuals in non-committed relationships.

A further avenue for future research would be to explore differences in outcomes for exploitive and non-exploitive entitlement. As mentioned previously, results of a recent study (Lessar, Greenberger, Chen, & Farruggia, 2011) indicate that there are two types of entitlement – exploitive and non-exploitive – that result in different outcomes. Lessard et al. (2011) found that exploitive entitlement primarily resulted in negative outcomes, whereas non-exploitive entitlement did not. However, both exploitive and non-exploitive entitlement showed significant correlations with the PES (Lessar et al., 2011). Further research on exploitive and non-exploitive entitlement would help clarify whether the PES is the most appropriate scale to use for measuring entitlement, and would help to clarify whether entitlement outcomes are different depending on whether it is an exploitive or non-exploitive type of entitlement.

Results of the present dissertation also suggest potential directions for future research. In particular, results suggest that having high expectations for attention and understanding from one’s partner negatively impacts relationship satisfaction. It would be beneficial for future
research to confirm such results and explore other outcomes of holding high expectations for attention and understanding in the context of romantic relationships. Additionally, being vigilant to negative aspects of one’s partner and relationship also appears to negatively impact relationship satisfaction. Additionally, being sensitive to relational transgressions and frustrations, and having a sense of restricted entitlement, were also harmful to relationship satisfaction. Future research might further test the validity of the SRE, and explore demographic information and outcomes related to particular SRE factors.

**Conclusion**

Recent theoretical and empirical literature suggests that constructs such as entitlement and humility are important for understanding interpersonal relationships and for understanding how to promote pro-social behaviors. The majority of empirical research on entitlement suggests that people with a lower sense of entitlement are more open to differing perspectives, less reactive and defensive, and happier in relationships and overall. Although empirical research on humility remains limited, theoretical literature and a handful of studies suggest that individuals with a higher sense of humility fare better in relationships and are more able to be compassionate, forgiving, and self-controlled.

The primary aim of the present dissertation was to explore how entitlement impacts satisfaction in the specific context of romantic relationships. Although the majority of entitlement research suggests entitled attitudes are detrimental in relationships, few studies have examined the outcomes of entitlement within the context of romantic relationships.

The present dissertation showed trait entitlement and relationship both negatively predicted relationship satisfaction, such that participants who endorsed higher entitlement were less likely to endorse satisfaction in their romantic relationships. Results also showed that
humility predicted satisfaction in relationships, such that participants who endorsed higher humility were more likely to endorse romantic satisfaction.

Additionally, results of this dissertation suggest that decreasing global entitlement will better enable individuals to reduce negative affect during conflict, thereby improving the quality of romantic satisfaction. Additionally, results showed that having high expectations for attention and understanding from one’s partner decreased an ability to maintain positive affect in non-conflict situations. Results of the current dissertation suggest that decreasing expectations for attention and understanding from one’s partner will enable couples to better maintain positive affect in their relationships. Results also suggest that being less vigilant to negative aspects of one’s partner and relationship will enable better reduction of negative affect during conflict, thereby increasing relationship satisfaction.

The primary purpose of the dissertation was to examine the impact of entitlement, and conversely, humility, on relationship satisfaction. However, a second purpose was to examine the relationship between entitlement and humility to determine whether they represent opposite ends of a single construct. Although the correlation between entitlement and humility was significant and negative, the correlation was not strong enough to suggest that entitlement and humility represent a single construct. Results suggest that entitlement scales should not be used as proxy measures for humility, as some researchers have suggested. However, the significant negative correlation suggests that humility and entitlement represent overlapping constructs. Future research might further examine what elements are common and unique between entitlement and humility constructs.

The current dissertation contributes to a body of emerging research on transcending self-interest, and contributes to understanding components of relational satisfaction. As our empirical
understanding of entitlement and humility improves, so, hopefully, will our ability to promote behaviors that engender healthy and satisfying romantic relationships.
References


Twenge, J. M., Konrath, S., Foster, J. D., Campbell, W. K., & Bushman, B. (2008). Egos inflating over time: A cross-temporal meta-analysis of the narcissistic personality inventory. *Journal of Personality, 76*(4) 875-901.


Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire

Please answer the following demographic questions to the best of your ability.

1. In what year were you born?

2. What is your gender?
   a. Male
   b. Female
   c. Other (please specify)

3. What is the gender of your spouse/partner?
   a. Male
   b. Female
   c. Other (please specify)

4. What is your marital status?
   a. Married
   b. Unmarried

5. Do you currently live with your spouse/partner?
   a. Yes, we live together
   b. No, we do not live together

6. How many years have you and your spouse/partner been a couple?

7. How do you characterize your ethnicity?
   a. African Origin
   b. Asian American/Asian Pacific Islander
   c. Latino/Latina/Hispanic
   d. European Origin/White
   e. Bi-racial/Multi-racial
   f. Other (please specify)

8. What is the highest education level you have completed?
   a. Less than high school
   b. High school/GED
   c. Some college
   d. Associates degree
   e. Bachelor’s degree
   f. Masters degree
g. Doctoral degree

9. What is your current state of residence? ________________________

Appendix B

Psychological Entitlement Scale (PES)

Please respond to the following items using the number that best reflects your own beliefs, using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I honestly feel I’m just more deserving than others.

2. Great things should come to me.

3. If I were on the Titanic, I would deserve to be on the first lifeboat.

4. I demand the best because I’m worth it.

5. I do not necessarily deserve special treatment.

6. I deserve more things in my life.

7. People like me deserve an extra break now and then.

8. Things should go my way.

9. I feel entitled to more of everything.
Appendix C

Sense of Relational Entitlement Scale (SRE)

Please respond to the following items using the number that best reflects your own beliefs, using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I expect my partner to understand me without having to explain myself
2. I have high expectations of my partner
3. I can’t give up my expectations from my partner in a relationship
4. I’m very sensitive to expressions of indifference from my partner
5. I expect my partner to be very attentive to me
6. When my partner frustrates me, I start thinking about new relationships
7. I won’t make do with less than what I deserve in a couple relationship
8. When I feel angry with my partner, it’s difficult for me to calm down
9. When my partner fails to live up to my expectations, I feel it isn’t fair
10. I’m often preoccupied with the question if my partner is good enough for me
11. I am possessed with my partner’s faults
12. When my partner hurts me, I’m immediately filled with a sense of distrust
13. Sometimes I feel my partner is not good enough for me
14. Sometimes I get very critical of my partner
15. I’m less tolerant in my relationship with my partner than in daily life
16. When I’m frustrated with my relationship, I get filled with rage

17. When I’m frustrated with my relationship, I feel I don’t deserve it

18. I deserve a partner who is very sensitive

19. I am unable to make compromises in choosing a partner

20. It is very important to me that my partner takes responsibility when s/he hurts me

21. When I’m not getting what I deserve from my partner, I become very tense

22. Sometimes I feel the couple relationship is my last chance of getting the special attention I deserve

23. I’m often preoccupied with the question if I deserve my partner

24. When my partner frustrates me, I can’t let it go

25. I deserve to get in my relationship things I was deprived in prior relationships

26. I feel my partner deserves to get more than s/he does in our relationship item

27. When my partner frustrates me, I contemplate ending the relationship

28. I think my partner is lucky to be with me

29. When I’m frustrated with my relationship, I suffer a deep pain

30. I insist on getting what I deserve in my relationship

31. I often feel I deserve to get more than I do in my relationship

32. Sometimes I feel I am not good enough for my partner

33. In my relationship, I’m sometimes filled with rage that I hardly ever experience in daily life
Appendix D

Humility Scale

Please select the response that most accurately describes you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. When it seems like God is ignoring my prayers, I become frustrated.
2. I enjoy spending time reflecting on the majesty and power of nature.
3. It is easy for me to accept the honest criticism of a friend.
4. When asked I can give an accurate assessment of my personal strengths.
5. I often spend time thinking about my personal inadequacies.
6. When I have put myself out for another, I want them to acknowledge my sacrifice.
7. I often feel bad for wanting more, when so many have less than me.
8. The challenges ahead of me often cause me to feel overwhelmed.
9. When asked to do something, I usually think of others who are more qualified.
10. During times of prayer/meditation, I reflect on areas in my life where I need improvement.
11. When someone else is being recognized, I think about my accomplishments.
12. I feel honored when others ask for my help.
13. I often struggle with being selfish.
14. Compared to the greatness and vastness of the universe, I feel so insignificant.
15. It frustrates me, when others are praised and I am not.
16. I don’t have my act together the way I’d like.
17. Recently, I have felt ashamed of my arrogance.
18. I often wish I were as talented as my peers.

19. When I don’t know an answer, I get upset because I think I should have.

20. I get angry with know-it-alls.

21. When I see inspiring examples, it reminds me of what I could be.

22. When confronted with my mistakes, my first response is to explain why I did it.

23. I am deeply touched when others sacrifice for me.

24. It is hard for me to accept others’ praise because I am far from perfect.

25. It irritates me when people below me don’t fulfill their responsibilities.

26. I feel valuable doing “lowly” things for others.

27. When friends ask for my counsel, I feel like “why me”?

28. When I get in trouble, it is important to me to be able to explain what happened.

29. I try to downplay my part when I help others.

30. Death usually reminds me how needy I am.

31. When I have been confronted with the reality of death, it causes me to think how quickly life passes by.

32. I am usually quick to rationalize my failures.
Appendix E

Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)

1. Most persons have disagreements in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list.

Please use the following six-point scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always agree</th>
<th>Almost always agree</th>
<th>Occasionally disagree</th>
<th>Frequently disagree</th>
<th>Almost always disagree</th>
<th>Always disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Handling family finances
Matters of recreation
Religious matters
Demonstrations of affection
Friends
Sex relations
Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)
Philosophy of life
Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws
Aims, goals, and things believed important
Amount of time spent together
Making major decisions
Household tasks
Leisure time, interests, and activities
Career decisions

2. Please respond to the following questions about your relationship, using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All the time</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>More often than not</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating the relationship?
How often do you or your mate leave the house after a fight?
In general, how often do you think that things between you and your partner are going well?
Do you confide in your mate?
Do you ever regret that you married (or lived
3. Do you kiss your mate?
   a. Every day
   b. Almost every day
   c. Occasionally
   d. Rarely
   e. Never

4. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together?
   a. All of them
   b. Most of them
   c. Some of them
   d. Very few of them
   e. None of them

5. How often would you say the following events occur between you and your mate, using the following scale?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Less than once a month</th>
<th>Once or twice a month</th>
<th>Once or twice a week</th>
<th>Once a day</th>
<th>More often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have a stimulating exchange of ideas</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laugh together</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calmly discuss something</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work together on a project</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. These are some things about which couples sometimes agree and sometimes disagree. Indicate if either item below caused differences of opinions or were problems in your relationship during the past few weeks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being too tired for sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not showing love</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Please select the option that best describes your degree of happiness, all things considered, with your relationship.
   a. Extremely unhappy
   b. Fairly unhappy
   c. A little unhappy
   d. Happy
   e. Very happy
   f. Extremely happy
   g. Perfect
8. Which of the following statements best describes how you feel about the future of your relationship?
   a. I want desperately for my relationship to succeed, and would go to almost any length to see that it does.
   b. I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do all I can to see that it does.
   c. I want very much for my relationship to succeed, and will do my fair share to see that it does.
   d. It would be nice if my relationship succeeded, but I can’t do much more than I am doing now to help it succeed.
   e. It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep the relationship going.
   f. My relationship can never succeed, and there is no more than I can do to keep the relationship going.
Appendix F

Sound Marital House Questionnaire 1: Love Maps

Read each statement and circle TRUE or FALSE.

1. I can name my partner's best friends.
2. I can tell you what stresses my partner is currently facing.
3. I know the names of some of the people who have been irritating in my partner’s current life.
4. I can tell you some of my partner's life dreams.
5. I am very familiar with my partner's religious beliefs and ideas
6. I can tell you about my partner's basic philosophy of life.
7. I can list the relatives my partner likes the least.
8. I know my partner's favorite music.
9. I can list my partner's three favorite movies.
10. My spouse is familiar with what are my current stresses.
11. I know the three times that have been most special in my partner's life.
12. I can tell you the most stressful thing that happened to my partner as a child.
13. I can list my partner's major aspirations and hopes in life.
15. My spouse knows who my friends are.
16. I know what my partner would want to do if he or she suddenly won the lottery.
17. I can tell you in detail my first impressions of my, partner.
18. Periodically, I update my knowledge of my partner's world.
19. I feel that my partner knows me pretty well.
20. My spouse is familiar with my own hopes and aspirations.
Appendix G

Sound Marital House Questionnaire 2: Fondness and Admiration System

Read each statement and circle TRUE or FALSE.

1. I can easily list the three things I most admire about my partner.
2. When we are apart I often think fondly of my partner.
3. I will often find some way to tell my partner "I love you."
4. I often touch or kiss my partner affectionately.
5. My partner really respects me.
6. I feel loved and cared for in this relationship.
7. I feel accepted and liked by my partner.
8. My partner finds me sexy and attractive.
9. My partner turns me on sexually.
10. There is fire and passion in this relationship.
11. Romance is something our relationship definitely still has in it.
12. I am really proud of my partner.
14. I can easily tell you why I married my partner.
15. If I had it to do all over again I would marry the same person.
16. We rarely go to sleep without some show of love or affection.
17. When I come into a room my partner's face brightens.
18. My partner appreciates the things I do in this marriage.
19. My spouse generally likes my personality.
20. Our sex life is generally satisfying.
Appendix H

Sound Marital House Questionnaire 3: Turning Toward or Away

Read each statement and circle TRUE or FALSE.

1. We enjoy doing even the smallest things together, like folding laundry or watching TV.
2. I look forward to spending my free time with my partner.
3. At the end of a day my partner is glad to see me.
4. My partner is usually interested in hearing my views on things.
5. I really enjoy discussing things with my partner.
6. My partner is one of my best friends.
7. I think my partner would consider me a very close friend.
8. We love just talking to each other.
9. When we go out, the time goes very quickly.
10. We always have a lot to say to each other.
11. We have a lot of fun together in our everyday lives.
12. We are spiritually very compatible.
13. We tend to share the same basic values in life.
14. We like to spend time together in similar ways.
15. We really have a lot of interests in common.
16. We have many of the same dreams and life goals.
17. We like to do a lot of the same things.
18. Even though our interests are somewhat different, I enjoy my partner's interests.
19. Whatever we do together we usually tend to have a good time.
20. My partner tells me when he or she has had a bad day.
Appendix I

Sound Marital House Questionnaire 4: Negative Perspective

Fill this form out thinking about your immediate past (last 2 to 4 weeks), or a recent discussion of an existing marital issue. Read each statement and circle TRUE or FALSE.

IN THE RECENT PAST IN MY RELATIONSHIP, GENERALLY

1. ...I felt hurt.
2. ...I felt misunderstood.
3. ...I thought, "I don't have to take this.'
4. ...I felt innocent of blame for this problem.
5. ...I thought to myself, just get up and leave.
6. ...I was angry
7. ...I felt disappointed.
8. ...I felt unjustly accused.
9. ...I thought, "My partner has no right to say those things.'
10. ...I was frustrated.
11. ...I felt personally attacked.
12. ...I wanted to strike back.
13. ...I felt like I was warding off a barrage.
14. ...I felt like getting even.
15. ...I wanted to protect myself.
16. ...I took my partner's complaints as slights.
17. ...I felt like my partner was trying to control me.
18. ...I thought that my partner was very manipulative.
19. ...I felt unjustly criticized.
20. ...I wanted the negativity to just stop.
Appendix J

Sound Marital House Questionnaire 5: Startup

Read each statement and circle TRUE or FALSE.

WHEN WE DISCUSS OUR RELATIONSHIP ISSUES....

1. ...My partner is often very critical of me.
2. ...I hate the way my partner raises an issue
3. ...Arguments often seem to come out of nowhere.
4. ...Before I know it we are in a fight.
5. ...When my partner complains I feel picked on.
6. ...I seem to always get blamed for issues.
7. ...My partner is negative all out of proportion.
8. ...I feel I have to ward off personal attacks.
9. ...I often have to deny charges leveled against me.
10. ...My partner's feelings are too easily hurt.
11. ...What goes wrong is often not my responsibility.
12. ...My spouse criticizes my personality.
13. ...Issues get raised in an insulting manner.
14. ...My partner will at times complain in a smug or superior way.
15. ...I have just about had it with all this negativity between us.
16. ...I feel basically disrespected when my partner complains.
17. ...I just want to leave the scene when complaints arise.
18. ...Our calm is suddenly shattered.
19. ...I find my partner's negativity unnerving and unsettling.
20. ...I think my partner can be totally irrational.
Appendix K

Sound Marital House Questionnaire 6: Accepting Influence

Read each statement and circle TRUE or FALSE.

WHEN WE DISCUSS OUR RELATIONSHIP ISSUES....

1. ...I find that I am really interested in my spouse's opinion on our basic issues.
2. ...I usually learn a lot from my spouse even when we disagree.
3. ...I want my partner to feel that what he or she says really counts with me.
4. ...I generally want my spouse to feel influential in this marriage.
5. ...I can listen to my partner.
6. ...My partner has a lot of basic common sense.
7. ...I try to communicate respect even during our disagreements.
8. ...I don't keep trying to convince my partner so that I will eventually win out.
9. ...I don't reject my spouse's opinions out of hand.
10. ...My partner is rational enough to take seriously when we discuss our issues.
11. ...I believe in lots of give and take in our discussions.
12. ...I am very persuasive, but don't usually try to win arguments with my spouse.
13. ...I feel important in our decisions.
14. ...My partner usually has good ideas.
15. ...My partner is basically a great help as a problem solver.
16. ...I try to listen respectfully even when I disagree.
17. ...My ideas for solutions are not better than my spouse's.
18. ...I can usually find something to agree with in my partner's position.
19. ...My partner is not usually too emotional.
Appendix L

Sound Marital House Questionnaire 7: Repair Attempts

Read each statement and circle TRUE or FALSE.

DURING OUR ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE CONFLICT BETWEEN US

1. ...We are good at taking breaks when we need them.
2. ...When I apologize it usually gets accepted by my partner.
3. ...I can say that I am wrong.
4. ...I am pretty good at calming myself down.
5. ...Even when arguing we can maintain a sense of humor.
6. ...When my partner says we should talk to each other in a different way, it usually makes a lot of sense.
7. ...My attempts to repair our discussions when they get negative are usually effective.
8. ...We are pretty good listeners even when we have different positions on things.
9. ...If things get heated we can usually pull out of it and change things.
10. ...My spouse is good at soothing me when I get upset.
11. ...I feel confident that we can resolve most issues between us.
12. ...When I comment on how we could communicate better my spouse listens to me.
13. ...Even if things get hard at times, I know we can get past our differences.
14. ...We can be affectionate even when we are disagreeing.
15. ...Teasing and humor usually work with my spouse for getting over negativity.
16. ...We can start all over again and improve our discussions when we need to.
17. ...When emotions run hot, expressing how upset I feel makes a real difference.
18. ...Even when there are big differences between us we can discuss these.
19. ...My partner expresses appreciation for nice things I do.
20. ...If I keep trying to communicate it will eventually work.
Appendix M

Sound Marital House Questionnaire 8: Compromise

Read each statement and circle TRUE or FALSE.

DURING OUR ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE CONFLICT BETWEEN US

1. ...Our decisions often get made by both of us compromising.
2. ...We are usually good at resolving our differences.
3. ...I can give in when I need to, and often do.
4. ...I can be stubborn in an argument but I'm not opposed to compromising.
5. ...I think that sharing power in a marriage is very important.
6. ...My partner is not a very stubborn person.
7. ...I don't believe one person is usually right and the other wrong on most issues.
8. ...We both believe in meeting each other halfway when we disagree.
9. ...I am able to yield somewhat even when I feel strongly on an issue.
10. ...The two of us usually arrive at a better decision through give and take.
11. ...It's a good idea to give in somewhat, in my view.
12. ...In discussing issues we can usually find our common ground of agreement.
13. ...Everyone gets some of what they want when there is a compromise.
14. ...My partner can give in, and often does.
15. ...I don't wait until my partner gives in before I do.
16. ...When I give in first my partner then gives in too.
17. ...Yielding power is not very difficult for my spouse.
18. ...Yielding power is not very difficult for me.
19. ...Give and take in making decisions is not a problem in this marriage.
20. ...I will compromise even when I believe I am right.
Appendix N

Sound Marital House Questionnaire 10: The Four Horsemen

Read each statement and circle TRUE or FALSE.

WHEN WE DISCUSS OUR RELATIONSHIP ISSUES

1. ...I feel attacked or criticized when we talk about our disagreements.

2. ...I usually feel like my personality is being assaulted.

3. ...In our disputes, at times, I don't even feel like my partner likes me very much.

4. ...I have to defend myself because the charges against me are so unfair.

5. ...I often feel unappreciated by my spouse.

6. ...My feelings and intentions are often misunderstood.

7. ...I don't feel appreciated for all the good I do in this marriage.

8. ...I often just want to leave the scene of the arguments.

9. ...I get disgusted by all the negativity between us.

10. ...I feel insulted by my partner at times.

11. ...I sometimes just clam up and become quiet.

12. ...I can get mean and insulting in our disputes.

13. ...I feel basically disrespected.

14. ...Many of our issues are just not my problem.

15. ...The way we talk makes me want to just withdraw from the whole marriage.

16. ...I think to myself, "Who needs all this conflict?"

17. ...My partner never really changes.

18. ...Our problems have made me feel desperate at times.

19. ...My partner doesn't face issues responsibly and maturely.

20. ...I try to point out flaws in my partner's personality that need improvement.

21. ...I feel explosive and out of control about our issues at times.
22. ...My partner uses phrases like "You always" or "You never" when complaining.
23. ...I often get the blame for what are really our problems.
24. ...I don't have a lot of respect for my partner's position on our basic issues.
25. ...My spouse can be quite selfish and self-centered.
26. ...I feel disgusted by some of my spouse's attitudes.
27. ...My partner gets far too emotional.
28. ...I am just not guilty of many of the things I get accused of.
29. ...Small issues often escalate out of proportion.
30. ...Arguments seem to come out of nowhere.
31. ...My partner's feelings get hurt too easily.
32. ...I often will become silent to cool things down a bit.
33. ...My partner has a lot of trouble being rational and logical.