Many cultures designate specific holidays to celebrate love and affection, such as Valentine's Day in Western culture. Intuition would suggest that holidays like Valentine's Day would enhance perceptions of romantic relationships for most people. However, few empirical studies have examined how relationship evaluations vary when assessed on such holidays. We found that reminders of relationships on Valentine's Day enhanced perceptions of relationship functioning. However, we found that individuals' attachment orientation moderated these responses: when relationships were made accessible on Valentine's Day (versus a control day), higher levels of satisfaction and investment were reported only by individuals lower in attachment avoidance. Together, the current findings suggest Valentine's Day enhances relationships; however, this enhancement is especially likely when individuals are thinking of their partner and have a disposition towards depending on romantic partners.
their position on two conceptually distinct dimensions: avoidance and anxiety (Fraley & Waller, 1998). The avoidance dimension is characterized by chronic attempts to inhibit attachment-system activation in an effort to minimize expressions of distress (Edelstein & Shaver, 2004). For instance, individuals with higher avoidance scores generally dislike intimacy and are less likely to provide emotional support for romantic partners (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). Attachment-related anxiety reflects “hyperactivation” of the attachment system and preoccupation with the availability of relationship partners (Mikulincer, Gillath, & Shaver, 2002). For instance, individuals with higher anxiety scores exhibit excessive reassurance-seeking and hypervigilance to signs of rejection and abandonment (Shaver, Schachner, & Mikulincer, 2005).

In the current study, we predict that individuals will be more likely to provide positive evaluations of their current relationships after being reminded of relationships on Valentine’s Day compared to individuals not reminded of relationships on Valentine’s Day and individuals providing evaluations on a control day, as this brings to mind the positive aspects of their relationships. However, we expect that individuals high in avoidance and/or anxiety will be less likely to respond with positive evaluations of their current relationship compared to individuals low in avoidance and/or anxiety. When reminded of Valentine’s Day, avoidant individuals may be more likely to report negative evaluations of their relationship functioning because they are thinking about their partner’s shortcomings; anxious individuals may be more likely to worry about their partner’s availability and conjure up relationship problems that may not exist. Further, individuals high in anxiety may have unrealistic expectations of how affectionately their partner should behave on Valentine’s Day and view their partner’s efforts as insufﬁcient. The current study examines how perceptions of relationship quality vary as a function of Valentine’s Day, a (presumably) relationship-enhancing event that many couples celebrate every year, and how these perceptions vary as a function of attachment style.

We sought to isolate the effects of accessibility of Valentine’s Day by comparing participants’ responses to a control day nearly 2 months later. The accessibility of relationships was manipulated unobtrusively through webpage advertisements (Chopik & Edelstein, 2014) and participants then completed a measure of relationship functioning. Thus, separate groups of participants on Valentine’s Day and on a control day were randomly assigned to either a high- or low-accessibility condition via webpage advertisements. We predicted a two-way interaction, between survey date and accessibility condition, such that higher accessibility of relationships on Valentine’s Day would increase perceptions of relationship functioning. We also predicted a three-way interaction between survey date, accessibility condition, and an individual’s attachment orientation. Speciﬁcally, we predicted that individuals high in avoidance and/or anxiety, given their discomfort with intimacy and insecurities about their relationships (Brennan et al., 1998; Shaver et al., 2005), would respond to reminders of relationships with lower perceptions of relationship functioning compared to individuals low in avoidance and/or anxiety.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Participants were 144 partnered respondents (76.9% female, Mage = 36.37, SD = 12.63) recruited through Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk; Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011). Single participants (N = 66) were redirected to a series of questions about subjective well-being and depression and are not considered here. Participation was limited to those in the United States, and participants were compensated $1.15, which is similar to other short studies implemented on MTurk. Participants were 85.3% Caucasian, 7.7% Asian, 3.5% Black or African American, 2.8% Hispanic/Latino/a, and <1% multiracial or other ethnicities. Relationship length ranged from four months to 50 years (M = 10.94 years, SD = 11.76).

2.2. Procedure and materials

Participants responded to a request to participate in a study on personality and well-being. The survey was left available for 2 days only, Valentine’s Day 2011 (n = 75) and a control day (April 20, 2011; n = 69). Participants were naïve to the fact that the survey was only available for these two days (6:00 AM through midnight). The survey made no mention of the date, so participants were not reminded of Valentine’s Day prior to exposure to the manipulation. They were first directed to an informed consent page, which provided the cover story that the University of Michigan was sponsoring the webpage. The banner advertisements at the top and bottom of the ﬁrst page read, “UM Events & Services 2011” and had a University of Michigan logo. These banner advertisements were included to reduce suspicion about the nature of the study by introducing advertisements early on in the study (on the consent page).

Participants ﬁrst completed the Experiences in Close Relationships-Short (ECR-S) inventory (Wei, Russell, Mallinckrodt, & Vogel, 2007), a 12-item questionnaire designed to measure attachment anxiety and avoidance. The ECR-S avoidance subscale (α = .86) reﬂects an individual’s discomfort with closeness. The ECR-S anxiety subscale (α = .78) reﬂects an individual’s concern about abandonment. Sample items include “I try to avoid getting too close to my partner” (avoidance), and “I worry that romantic partners won’t care about me as much as I care about them” (anxiety). Participants rated the extent to which they agree with each statement, using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (disagree strongly) to 7 (agree strongly). Anxiety and avoidance were moderately correlated (r = .19, p < .05), which is consistent with previous research using the ECR-S (Wei et al., 2007). The banner advertisements on the ECR-S page were identical to those featured on the consent page. The generic banner advertisements (depicting UM Events & Services 2011) were presented at the top and bottom of the page containing the ECR-S so that participants’ responses would not be affected by the relationship accessibility manipulation presented next.

On the next page, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions. The high-accessibility condition was designed to make relationships salient and featured banner ads that read, “Show Your Love for Your Partner Today!!!” with a picture of a couple kissing from Gone with the Wind; the low-accessibility condition featured banner ads that read, “Join Us for UM’s Cherry Picking Outing on Aug. 5th!!!” with a picture of cherries. To reduce suspicion, if participants clicked on any of the banner advertisements, they were linked to a website that included a calendar and list of university-approved events (Valentine’s Day did not appear on this list of events; See Appendix A for illustrations of these banner ads.). These advertisements were used to manipulate accessibility of relationships on both Valentine’s Day and the control day. These banner advertisements were at the top and bottom of the webpage on which participants ﬁlled out measures of relationship functioning. The placement of ads on this page ensured that participants were thinking about relationships before they responded to questions about their relationships. Thus, the manipulation of relationship accessibility and survey responses occurred simultaneously.

To assess relationship functioning, participants completed the 37-item Investment Model Scale (IMS; Ruschult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998). Ten items measured relationship satisfaction (α = .96; e.g.,
دریافت فوری متن کامل مقاله

امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات