THE PERCEIVED THREAT AND RESOLVABILITY OF SERIAL ARGUMENTS AS PREDICTORS OF RELATIONAL UNCERTAINTY IN ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

By

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the degree to which the perceived threat and resolvability of a serial argument predicted relational uncertainty in a romantic relationship (i.e., self, partner, and relationship uncertainties). Using an online survey, data was collected from 147 individuals who were currently participating in a romantic relationship. Results revealed a positive relationship between argument frequency and relationship uncertainty, a positive relationship between the perceived threat of the argument to the relationship and all three forms of relational uncertainty, and an inverse relationship between the perceived resolvability of the issue and all three forms of relational uncertainty. Most notably, interaction effects emerged for perceived threat by perceived resolvability for participants' reports of self and partner uncertainties, such that the resolvability of the issue diminished the strength of the positive association between the perceived threat of the argument and self and partner uncertainties. Overall, this study found meaningful results that extend extant models of serial argumentation in personal relationships.

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The Perceived Threat and Resolvability of Serial Arguments as Predictors of Relational Uncertainty in Romantic Relationships

Over the last decade, communication scholars have devoted increased attention to the antecedents and outcomes of serial arguments in romantic relationships (Bevan & Hefner, 2014; Carr, Schrodt, & Ledbetter, 2012; Hample & Cionea, 2012; Malis & Roloff, 2006). A *serial argument* is defined as a series of different arguments, revolving around the same topic, that occur over a period of time (Trapp & Hoff, 1985). Sources of serial arguments have been attributed to partners' demand and withdraw behaviors in conflict episodes, expectation violations, differing values and beliefs, and/or having different views of the relationship (Johnson & Roloff, 1998). Serial arguments are relatively common within personal relationships, as researchers have indicated that people, on average, report approximately 25 serial argument episodes over a median period of three years (Bevan et al., 2008). They often co-occur with the *demand/withdraw pattern*, which is "a communication pattern in which one person demands, complains, nags, or criticizes, while the other person withdraws or tries to avoid the issue" (Malis & Roloff, 2006, p. 199-200). This pattern is important to understand because it has been linked to adverse personal and relational effects when coupled with serial arguments. For example, Malis and Roloff (2006) found that when this pattern of conflict occurs within serial arguments, it is positively associated with intrusive thoughts that can damage partners' physical health to the point of interfering with daily activities. Therefore, serial arguments are a common occurrence in romantic relationships and are valuable to study because they impact not only relational outcomes but also physical and mental well-being.

This study sought to extend our understanding of serial arguments by examining the various ways in which three specific characteristics of serial arguments are associated with

relational uncertainty. The first element of serial arguments that this study explored is *perceived threat*, or how threatening one partner views the argument to the relationship itself. Not only might the experience of repetitive conflict create discomfort for relational partners, but the serial argument itself represents an ongoing reminder of the incompatibility of partners, which can heighten concerns over whether or not the relationship itself is viable. This could increase the fear and anxiety of partners, and therefore, exacerbate the relational uncertainty that both partners experience. Second, this study examined *perceived resolvability*, or "the extent to which relational partners believe that their serial argument is progressing toward resolution and, ultimately, conclusion" (Bevan, 2014, p. 777). Perceived resolvability is negatively related to relational quality, countercomplaining in initial conflicts, partner-initiated demand-withdraw habits, and withdrawing from a partner following an argument episode (Johnson & Roloff, 1998). Finally, this study examined the frequency of the argument and the potential association that argument frequency has with relational uncertainty. *Argument frequency* is the number of argument episodes that occur within the total length of time that has transpired since the argument began, and researchers have found that argument frequency is positively related to mutual hostility in relationships (Reznik & Roloff, 2011). Additionally, mutual hostility has been linked to demand-withdraw patterns in relationships which can, in turn, damage both partners' mental well-being and relational satisfaction (cf. Schrodt, Witt, & Shimkowski, 2014). Therefore, the more frequently partners argue over the same issue, the more hostility they may have toward each other and toward the relationship itself.

Concurrent with continued efforts to understand serial arguments is a similar interest in the antecedents and outcomes of relational uncertainty in romantic relationships. *Relational uncertainty* is the degree of confidence (or lack thereof) one has regarding the success of an

interpersonal encounter; it "involves the inability to describe, explain, and predict behavior within interaction" (Knobloch & Solomon, 1999, p. 262). Knobloch and Solomon (1999) argued that relational uncertainty is unique because it is composed of three separate uncertainties: self uncertainty, partner uncertainty, and relationship uncertainty. Relational uncertainty is important to examine because it can negatively influence both message processing and message production within interpersonal relationships. For instance, Knobloch, Miller, Bond, and Mannoe (2007) found that "people grappling with some doubts about their marriage felt that their partner showed less liking, more aggressiveness, and less engagement in the conversations" (p. 173). Clearly, relational uncertainty can undermine healthy interactions within romantic relationships, and thus, it warrants further attention.

Consequently, the primary purpose of this study was to examine the perceived threat and resolvability of serial arguments as predictors of relational uncertainty in romantic relationships. Researchers have looked at the serial argument process and some of the outcomes associated with an ongoing cycle of arguments on a similar topic (Bevan, 2014; Carr et al., 2012; Hample, Richards, & Na, 2012; Johnson & Roloff, 1998; Roloff & Soule, 2002). Researchers have also examined relational uncertainty in a variety of contexts and as part of the relational turbulence model (Knobloch, 2005; Knobloch, Saterlee, & DiDomenico, 2010; Knobloch & Theiss, 2011; Steuber, Priem, Scharp, & Thomas, 2014). What remains unanswered from both of these lines of research, however, are the unique and combined associations that features of serial arguments may have with romantic partners' reports of relational uncertainty. Not only might the frequency of serial arguments threaten the existence of the relationship, but the perceived threat of the argument to the relationship is likely to be positively associated with relational uncertainty. However, the degree to which a serial argument threatens the relationship and heightens

relational uncertainty may depend on the perceived resolvability of the argument. Thus, this study examined perceived resolvability as a possible moderator of the perceived threat of a serial argument on the relational uncertainty of romantic partners.

Theoretical Perspective

Serial Arguments in Interpersonal Relationships

This study was informed by Trapp and Hoff's (1985) model of serial argumentation. In this model, they posited that serial arguments include (a) antecedent conditions of incompatibility that spark an argument, (b) primary and secondary processes of actually having an argument, and (c) the consequent conditions that determine whether the argument becomes serial or ends as a single argument episode. Trapp and Hoff's model separated traditional arguments from serial arguments by advancing the idea of a cycle of heating up and simmering down. *Heating up* occurs "when arguers become frustrated about not being able to convince the other of their point of view" (Trapp & Hoff, 1985, p. 7). This process continues to the point where the frustration becomes the primary focus of the argument, and can result in changing the subject, avoiding one's partner, or physically leaving the situation. Once the argument has reached this point, the dyad is now in the simmering down phase. *Simmering down* is when one or both members exit the argument, either mentally or physically.

Based on Trapp and Hoff's (1985) model, it stands to reason that the repeated cycle of heating up and simmering down in a serial argument is likely to create a level of frustration that heightens feelings of relational uncertainty. Following simmering down, relational partners enter a cooling off period where they take time to calm down and return to a pre-argument state. Given that the argument has yet to be resolved, however, it is likely that repeated heating up and simmering down cycles will exacerbate the perceived threat of the argument to the relationship,

as partners focus more and more on their frustrations with the source of incompatibility in their relationship. Thus, the frequency of episodes within the serial argument may heighten partners' relational uncertainty as the cycle of argumentation intensifies over time.

Argument Frequency and Relational Uncertainty

An imperative qualification of serial arguments is that they occur multiple times. Therefore, they can range in frequency from one dyad to another. Reznik and Roloff (2011) found that the frequency of serial argument episodes could have important relational implications, as well as influence the likelihood that partners will continue the argument. As noted earlier, the demand-withdraw pattern of conflict is frequently found within serial arguments, as initiators often "report that a pattern of self-demand/partner-withdraw occurred" (Reznik & Roloff, 2011, p. 302). If this cycle is initiated, it can then trigger the heating up and simmering down processes outlined by Trapp and Hoff (1985). As these processes are initiated, the likelihood of an argument becoming serial increases, and therefore, the frequency of serial argument episodes is likely to increase as well. More importantly, Reznik and Roloff (2011) found that "reports of mutual hostility are positively linked to self-demand/partner-withdraw that in turn is positively associated with the number of episodes" (p. 303). Given that hostility is a negative emotion that undermines feelings of togetherness and satisfaction in a relationship, the frequency of serial argument episodes is likely to be associated with feelings of uncertainty within a relationship.

Relational uncertainty is an element of relationships that can cause great stress. For example, Knobloch and Theiss (2011) examined how relational talk changed with the presence of relational uncertainty, and how the uncertainty affected the relationship. One of their findings indicated that with the presence of relational uncertainty, couples communicated in ways that

were "more threatening to themselves, and to their relationship, and they reported more avoidance, and less enactment of relationship talk" (p. 20). This means that the way people interpret messages from their partner affects their feelings of relational uncertainty, and in turn, makes them communicate in more avoidant, less constructive ways. Their study also indicated that, longitudinally, the more relational uncertainty is experienced, the worse these destructive communication patterns become. Therefore, it stands to reason that an increase in the frequency of serial argument episodes is likely to be positively associated with feelings of relational uncertainty. To test this line of reasoning, the following hypothesis was advanced:

H1: The frequency of serial argument episodes is positively associated with relational uncertainty (i.e., self, partner, and relationship uncertainties) in romantic relationships.

Perceived Threat of Serial Arguments and Relational Uncertainty

A second characteristic of serial arguments that is likely to be associated with relational uncertainty is the perceived threat of the argument to the relationship itself. For instance, Knobloch, Miller, Bond, and Mannone (2007) examined relational uncertainty within the context of marriage, and discovered that spouses who felt uncertain in their relationship had a tendency to view interactions more negatively. They found that "relational uncertainty was positively associated with people's perceptions of the self threat and relationship threat of the conversation" (p. 173). This suggests, in turn, that the negative valence and frequency of serial arguments may be positively associated with partners' reports of relational uncertainty, if for no other reason than the simple fact that some conflicts may be perceived as more threatening to the relationship itself than others.

This line of reasoning should apply not only to spouses, but to dating couples as well, as Knobloch and Theiss (2011) discovered that people who perceived conversational threats in their dating relationship experienced more feelings of relational uncertainty. This means that when individuals feel that an argument is threatening overall, they tend to feel more uncertain about their relationship, their partner, and their own desires for continued involvement. In fact, Knobloch and Theiss's (2011) longitudinal results indicated that individuals who felt self-threat and relationship threat tended to have increased levels of relational uncertainty. Given that serial arguments are, by definition, cyclical events that occur over time, it stands to reason that as the perceived threat of a serial argument persists over time, partners may not only exhibit moderate signs of relational uncertainty, but may, in fact, have heightened relational uncertainty due to the threat. Finally, Knobloch and Theiss found that personal feelings of self and relationship threats are positively associated with the relational uncertainty of partners. Therefore, their research indicates that an individual's feelings of self threat and relationship threat can increase the feelings of relational uncertainty in the individual's partner, too. Therefore, a second hypothesis was advanced to test this line of reasoning:

H2: The perceived threat of a serial argument to the romantic relationship is positively associated with relational uncertainty (i.e., self, partner, and relationship uncertainties).

Perceived Resolvability, Perceived Threat, and Relational Uncertainty

The final goal of this investigation was to examine how the perceived resolvability of a serial argument is associated with relational uncertainty, as well as to test the degree to which perceived resolvability moderates the positive association between the perceived threat of the argument and relational uncertainty. Johnson and Roloff (1998) produced some of the first work

on perceived resolvability in serial arguments. Their research found that the "perceived resolvability of a serial argument was negatively related to relational quality, … and the overall amount of discord in the relationship" (p. 14). In other words, the more relational partners viewed the conflict issue as resolvable, the less likely they were to report having discordant relationships. However, Johnson and Roloff (1998) also found that "the person who initiates the cycle may be trying to solve the problem in spite of the partner's withdrawal" (p. 14). This means that although one partner sees the serial argument issue as resolvable and is striving toward closure, the other may be withdrawing and doing nothing to help the argument subside. Nevertheless, one might reason that the perceived resolvability of the issue at stake should be inversely associated with feelings of relational uncertainty, regardless of who owns the issue and initiates new episodes within the argument itself. To test this, a third hypothesis was advanced:

> H3: The perceived resolvability of a serial argument is inversely associated with relational uncertainty in a romantic relationship.

Finally, one might argue that the perceived threat of a serial argument is likely to heighten partners' feelings of relational uncertainty, unless the issue at stake is perceived as being quite resolvable. For example, engaged partners might be arguing about how they will manage their finances in marriage (e.g., separate or joint checking accounts). Although it may constitute a serial argument for a period of time, they may both know that the fundamental issue is quite resolvable, and thus, the effect that the perceived threat of the serial argument has on their relationship may be mitigated by the resolvability of the issue. On the other hand, if the engaged couple is arguing about whether or not to have children, and both partners are fixed on opposite positions, then the perceived irresolvability of the issue may heighten the negative effect that the perceived threat of the serial argument has on their relational uncertainty. Thus,

perceived resolvability may moderate the degree to which the perceived threat of a serial argument predicts an individual's relational uncertainty. To test this, a final hypothesis was advanced for consideration:

H4: The perceived resolvability of the serial argument will moderate the positive association between the perceived threat of the argument and relational uncertainty (i.e., self, partner, and relationship uncertainties).

Method

Participants

The sample included 147 participants, most of who were enrolled in undergraduate communication courses at a private university in the Southwest, although some individuals were obtained through the social media invitations and personal connections of the researcher. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 55, with a mean age of 22.04 years (*SD* = 7.11). The majority of participants were female (66.7%, *n* = 98) and most were Caucasian (87.7%, *n* =129).

Participants were asked to provide information on the status of their romantic relationship, and as expected, there was tremendous variability in how participants described their relational status. More than half of the participants reported either being in love (23.1%, *n* = 34) or being in love and having discussed marriage but not yet made marriage plans (29.3%, *n* = 43). An additional 10.9% (*n* = 16) described their relational status as merely romantic potential, whereas 10.2% (*n* = 15) were married. Of the remaining participants, 4.1% (*n* =6) reported casual dating with little emotional attachment, 2.0% (*n* = 3) reported frequent dating but little emotional attachment, 2.7% (*n* = 4) reported having some emotional attachment, 8.8% (*n* = 13) reported having emotional attachments but not being in love, 7.5% (*n* = 11) reported being in

love and wanting to marry but never having discussed marriage before, and 1.4% (n = 2) reported being engaged to be married.

Procedures

Participation was solicited initially using the researcher's social network on Facebook. Additionally, participation was solicited from young adult students at a medium-sized, private university in the Southwest. After receiving institutional review board approval, undergraduate students were recruited from basic communication courses. To qualify for participation, participants had to be at least 18 years of age and currently involved in a romantic relationship. After consenting to participate in the study, individuals voluntarily completed an online questionnaire that included demographic items and a series of survey measures (see Appendix). At their instructors' discretion, students were awarded minimal course credit, or extra credit (less than 2% of the total grade), for their participation in the research. Participants contacted through Facebook, or those not completing the survey for course credit, received no compensation. Participants completed the online questionnaire on their own time, and all responses were anonymous. The questionnaire took approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Measures

Serial arguments. Participants were provided with Johnson and Roloff's (1998) definition of a serial argument: "A serial argument occurs when individuals argue or engage in conflict about the same topic over time, during which they participate in several (at least two) arguments about the same topic" (p. 333). They were then instructed to recall and provide a written description of a single unresolved serial argument they were currently experiencing with their romantic partner. Participants reported that the length of the serial arguments ranged from 1 day to 27.5 years, with an average length of 19.0 months (SD = 40.6). The number of episodes

ranged from 1 to 200 (although only 93 participants responded to this item), with an average of 9.2 episodes per serial argument (*SD* = 22.6). Episodes lasted anywhere from a minute to 24 hours, with an average episode length of 62.4 minutes (*SD* = 168.4). Respondents also reported who typically initiated the serial argument: 36.7% (*n* = 54) reported "I am the initiator," 19.0% (*n* = 28) reported "My partner is typically the initiator," 39.5% (*n* = 58) reported "We both initiate the issue," and only 4.8% (*n* = 7) reported "I am unsure." When rating the average intensity of each episode within the series of arguments using a Likert-type scale that ranged from (1) *Not at all intense* to (7) *Very intense*, participants reported on arguments that were somewhat intense (*M* = 3.27, *SD* = 1.29). To determine the average frequency of serial argument episodes, a ratio was calculated by dividing the number of episodes by the average length of the series over time.

Perceived threat of the argument. In the absence of an established measure, a four-item scale was created to assess the perceived threat of the serial argument. Participants were prompted with the following question: "To what extent do you believe the following about your relationship following a serial argument episode?" They were then given four statements: "My relationship is in jeopardy," "My relationship will endure" (reverse-coded), "These arguments will come between us," and "Our relationship will outlast these arguments" (reverse-coded). Responses were solicited using a 7-point Likert scale that ranged from (1) *Not at all likely* to (7) *Very likely*. After reverse-coding two items, composites were created by averaging items so that higher scores represented greater perceived threat of the serial argument. In this study, the four-item scale produced acceptable internal reliability with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .87 (*M* = 2.52, *SD* = 1.59).

Perceived resolvability. The perceived resolvability of the argument was measured using Johnson and Roloff's (1998) four-item, Likert-type scale. Consistent with the perceived threat measure, participants were asked to respond to a series of statements following the question: "To what extent do you believe the following about your serial argument?" The measure included items such as "It will be resolved in the future" and "I don't think that my partner and I will ever agree on the issue" (reverse-coded). Responses were solicited using a 7-point scale that ranged from (1) *Not at all* to (7) *To a great extent*. Composite scores were created by averaging items so that higher scores represented greater resolvability. Previous researchers have demonstrated the validity and reliability of the perceived resolvability measure (e.g., Carr et al., 2012), and in this study, the scale produced an alpha coefficient of .81 (M = 4.70, SD = 1.57).

Relational uncertainty. Participants reported their relational uncertainty using Knobloch and Solomon's (1999) relational uncertainty scale. The instrument consisted of three subscales measuring participants' levels of *self* uncertainty (e.g., "How certain are you about how important this relationship is to you?"), *partner* uncertainty (e.g., "How certain are you about whether or not your partner wants to maintain this relationship with you?"), and *relationship* uncertainty (e.g., "How certain are you about how you and your partner view this relationship?"). Responses were solicited using a five-point, Likert-type scale that ranged from (1) *Completely or almost completely uncertain* to (5) *Completely or almost completely certain*. In this study, the RU scale produced alpha coefficients of .98 for self uncertainty (M = 1.76, SD = .91), .97 for partner uncertainty (M = 1.68, SD = .90), and .96 for relationship uncertainty (M = 1.84, SD = .84).

Data Analysis

The first three hypotheses were tested using Pearson's product-moment correlations. To test H4, three hierarchical regression analyses were conducted, one for each dimension of relational uncertainty (i.e., self, partner, and relationship uncertainties as the criterion variables). At step one in each model, the perceived threat and resolvability of the serial argument were entered as predictors of the criterion variable, followed by the orthogonalized interaction effect of threat x resolvability at step two. Following the recommendations of Little, Card, Bovaird, Preacher, and Crandall (2007), the interaction term was created by centering the first-order predictors and orthogonalizing the product term by regressing it onto the first-order predictors and saving the unstandardized residual.

Results

Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and Pearson's product-moment correlations for all variables included in this study, are reported in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among all Variables (*N* = 147)

Variables	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5
1. Frequency Ratio[a] - SA	4.27	13.17	-	-	-	-	-
2. Perceived Threat - SA	2.52	1.59	.04	-	-	-	-
3. PR	4.70	1.57	.11	-.42**	-	-	-
4. RU - Self	1.76	0.91	.16	.64**	-.35**	-	-
5. RU - Partner	1.68	0.85	.17	.57**	-.24**	.62**	-
6. RU - Relationship	1.84	0.85	.21*	.63**	-.32**	.78**	.73**

Note. SA = serial argument. PR = perceived resolvability. RU = relational uncertainty. The frequency ratio was calculated by dividing the number of argument episodes by the length of the serial argument in time (i.e., months).
[a]*n* = 93.
* *p* <. 05. ** *p* < .01.

The first hypothesis predicted that the frequency of serial argument episodes would be positively associated with relational uncertainty in a romantic relationship. As noted in Table 1, the results indicate that there is a statistically significant, positive correlation between frequency and relationship uncertainty ($r = .21$, $p < .05$). However, the associations between frequency of serial arguments and both self and partner uncertainties were not statistically significant. Although both associations were in the expected direction, neither association was significant due to the reduced power to detect small effect sizes, as only 93 of the 147 participants reported how many episodes they had experienced within the serial argument they were reporting on. Therefore, H1 was partially supported.

The second hypothesis predicted that the perceived threat of the serial argument to the romantic relationship would be positively associated with relational uncertainty. The results indicate that the perceived threat of the serial argument is positively associated with self, partner, and relationship uncertainties at statistically significant levels (see Table 1). Thus, H2 was supported.

The third hypothesis predicted that the perceived resolvability of a serial argument would be inversely associated with relational uncertainty in a romantic relationship. Again, the results revealed statistically significant, inverse associations between perceived resolvability and self, partner, and relationship uncertainties (see Table 1). Thus, H3 was supported.

The fourth hypothesis predicted that the perceived resolvability of the serial argument would interact with the perceived threat of the argument to predict relational uncertainty.
For the first regression model, which used self uncertainty as the criterion variable, a significant multiple correlation coefficient was obtained, $R = .67$, $F(3, 143) = 38.71$, $p < 001$, accounting for 44.8% of the shared variance in self uncertainty. An examination of the beta weights indicated that the perceived threat of the argument ($b^* = .60$, $t = 8.74$, $p < .001$) and the interaction effect of perceived threat by perceived resolvability ($b^* = -.18$, $t = -2.86$, $p < .01$) were significant predictors in the model. This interaction effect was decomposed using the procedures described by Aiken and West (1991) (see Figure 1). The results indicated that perceived resolvability moderates the positive association between the perceived threat of the serial argument and self uncertainty, such that the magnitude of the association decreases as perceived resolvability increases from low ($b = .43$, $z = 8.60$, $p < .001$), to moderate ($b = .34$, $z = 8.74$, $p < .001$), to high resolvability ($b = .25$, $z = 5.00$, $p < .001$).

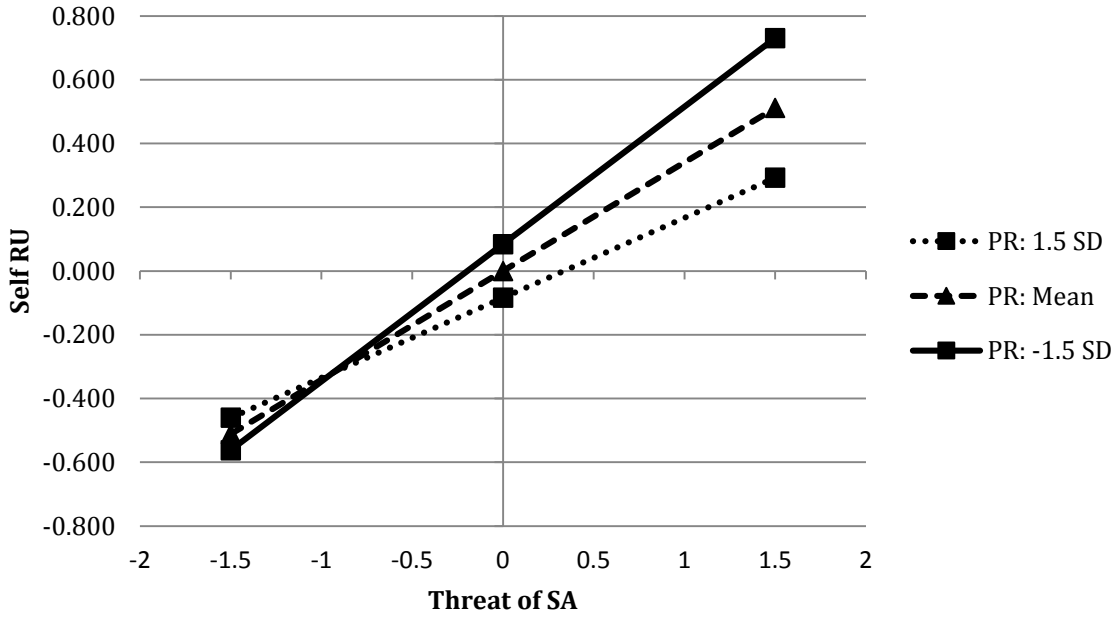

Figure 1. Interaction Effect of Perceived Threat and Resolvability of Serial Arguments as a Predictor of Self Uncertainty. RU = relational uncertainty. SA = serial argument. PR = perceived resolvability. SD = standard deviation.

The second regression model used the participants' reports of partner uncertainty as the criterion variable. This model also produced a significant multiple correlation coefficient, R = .60, $F(3, 143) = 26.12$, $p < .001$, accounting for 35.4% of the shared variance in partner uncertainty. An examination of the beta weights revealed that the perceived threat of the argument ($b^* = .57$, $t = 7.67$, $p < .001$) and the interaction effect of perceived threat by perceived resolvability ($b^* = -.17$, $t = -2.52$, $p < .05$) were significant predictors of partner uncertainty in the model. Again, consistent with the results for self uncertainty, perceived resolvability moderates the positive association between perceived threat and partner uncertainty, such that the magnitude of the association decreases as perceived resolvability increases from low ($b = .41$, $z = 7.52$, $p < .001$), to moderate ($b = .32$, $z = 7.69$, $p < .001$), to high resolvability ($b = .24$, $z = 4.37$, $p < .001$).

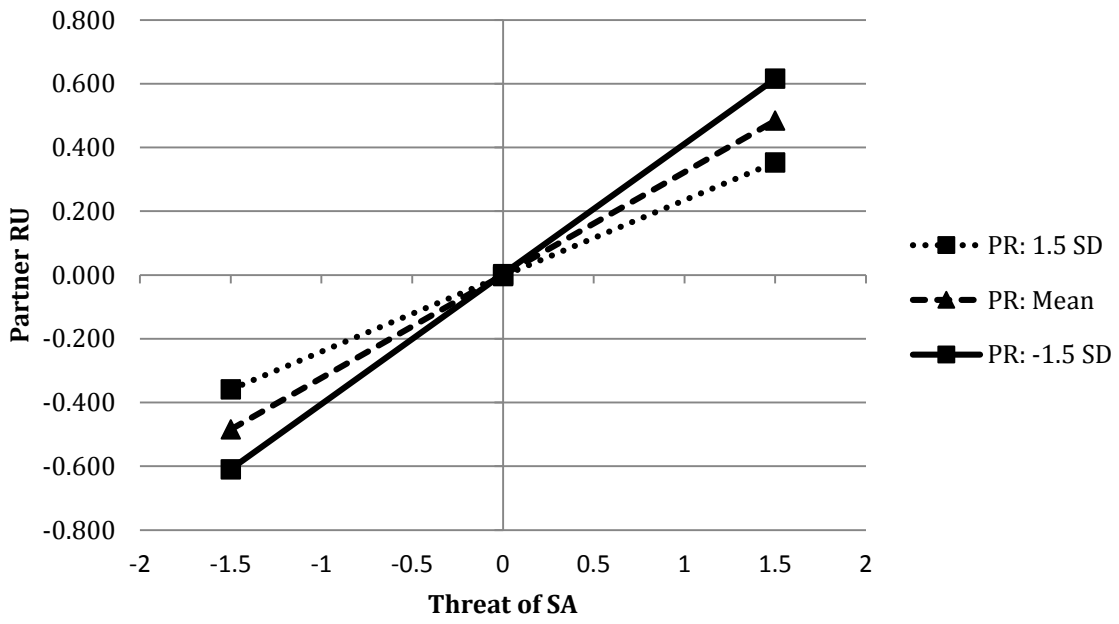

Figure 2. Interaction Effect of Perceived Threat and Resolvability of Serial Arguments as a Predictor of Partner Uncertainty. RU = relational uncertainty. SA = serial argument. PR = perceived resolvability. SD = standard deviation.

The third and final regression model used relationship uncertainty as the criterion variable. Although this model produced a significant multiple correlation coefficient, $R = .63$, $F(3, 143) = 31.52$, $p < .001$, accounting for 39.8% of the shared variance in relationship uncertainty, an examination of the beta weights indicated that only the perceived threat of the argument ($b^* = .60$, $t = 8.43$, $p < .001$) was a significant predictor in the model. The interaction effect of perceived threat by perceived resolvability was not statistically significant. Thus, the results for relationship uncertainty notwithstanding, H4 was supported.

Discussion

Serial arguments and relational uncertainty are two aspects of relationships that are widely studied by scholars, albeit in relatively distinct programs of research. Although both communication phenomena have been shown to have negative consequences for partners in romantic relationships, to date, researchers have yet to examine how the two are tied together.

Thus, this study examined how the frequency, perceived threat, and perceived resolvability of serial arguments predicted relational uncertainty in romantic relationships. Additionally, perceived resolvability was examined as a moderator between perceived threat of the argument and relational uncertainty (i.e., self, partner, and relationship uncertainties). Overall, the results of this study largely supported the theoretical line of reasoning advanced from the literature and provided at least three implications for future research on serial arguments and relational uncertainty. The first implication deals with the relationship between serial argument frequency and relationship uncertainty, which has a statistically significant, positive association. Second, the results suggest that the perceived threat and perceived resolvability of serial arguments have meaningful associations with relational uncertainty in romantic relationships. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the results suggest that the positive association between the perceived threat of the argument and relational uncertainty *depends* on the perceived resolvability of the issue at stake.

In partial support of the first hypothesis, the results indicate that there is a positive relationship between serial argument frequency and relationship uncertainty (but not self and partner uncertainties). This means that as the frequency of serial arguments increase, so does the tendency for one or both partners in the relationship to question the future of the relationship itself. One possible explanation for these findings is that as arguments increase in frequency partners may feel more negative emotions toward their partner, question the strength of the relationship, and/or if the relationship really is one that can last. As these feelings of uneasiness increase, individuals may begin to feel uncertain about their partner, themselves, and their relationship. It is important to note that although the associations between argument frequency and self and partner uncertainties were not statistically significant; they were positive and only

slightly smaller than the significant association for relationship uncertainty. Indeed, only 93 of the 147 participants who completed the survey reported the number of episodes they experienced within the serial argument, limiting the statistical power to detect small effect sizes. It stands to reason, then, that with a larger sample size, the associations between argument frequency and all three forms of relational uncertainty would likely be positive and significant. Many other researchers have studied frequency of serial arguments in the past (Reznik & Roloff, 2011; Knobloch & Theiss, 2011). However, this finding is an extension of past research, because no other researchers have specifically linked serial argument frequency to relational uncertainty. Although somewhat limited in statistical power, these findings are meaningful as they help provide an important link between how many times a dyad has an argument and how partners feel about themselves, each other, and their relationship.

The second implication of this study emerges from the positive relationship between the perceived threat of the serial argument to the relationship and the degree to which individuals experience relational uncertainty. This means that the more threatening the person views the argument, the more likely the individual begins to question his or her own involvement, the partner's involvement, and the future of the relationship itself. For example, if relational partners are engaging in multiple arguments over a highly sensitive topic, such as whether or not to have children, then the perceived threat of the argument is likely to coincide with increased feelings of relational uncertainty. Not only is this finding meaningful because it establishes an association between the threat of a particular form of conflict and relational uncertainty, but it extends previous work on relational uncertainty in marriage (e.g., Knobloch et al., 2007) to other romantic relationship contexts. Given that the communication patterns that couples establish early in their relationship are likely to persist as partners move toward marriage, conflict

intervention programs that focus on helping couples navigate serial arguments can underscore the potential effects that such arguments may have on partners' relational uncertainty in marriage.

Additionally, the perceived resolvability of the serial argument was found to have an inverse relationship with reports of relational uncertainty. In other words, the more partners perceive that the argument can be resolved, the less uncertain they will feel about their involvement in the relationship, their partner's involvement, and the future of the relationship. If partners think they can resolve an argument, they are unlikely to feel it is threatening to the relationship, and thus, they are less likely to feel uncertain about it. This finding extends Johnson and Roloff's (1998) research by showing that not only do dyads who feel serial arguments are more resolvable have less discord, but they also have less uncertainty in the relationship.

The final, but perhaps most notable implication of this report revolves around the significant interaction effects of perceived threat and perceived resolvability on self and partner uncertainties. Specifically, the positive associations between the perceived threat of the serial argument and self and partner uncertainties were diminished in strength as a function of the perceived resolvability of the issue. As the resolvability of the issue increased, the degree to which perceived threat heightened self and partner uncertainties was reduced, although the perceived threat of the argument remained a positive predictor of self and partner uncertainties even when the conflict was highly resolvable. Interestingly enough, the same interaction effect was not a significant predictor of relationship uncertainty. One explanation for this difference may lie in how the perceived threat and resolvability of a serial argument is processed cognitively. For instance, Knobloch and Solomon (1999) theorized that self and partner uncertainties occur at the individual level of analysis, whereas relationship uncertainty is dyadic

in nature. Given that the perceived threat and resolvability of a serial argument is assessed individually by each relational partner, rather than relationally as a dyad, perhaps the interaction effects found in this study are the result of matching levels of analysis. Given that self and partner uncertainties precede and predict relationship uncertainty (Knobloch & Theiss, 2011), however, the importance of the resolvability of the argument in mitigating the effect of perceived threat on relational uncertainty should be not underestimated.

Theoretically, the results of this study extend previous research on serial argument and relational uncertainty models. First, the results confirm and extend Trapp and Hoff's (1985) model of serial argumentation. In their model, there is a time between heating up and simmering down when partners return to their normal state. This study addresses the way that partners feel during this lull in the argument by showing that, depending on certain aspects of the serial argument (e.g., perceived threat, perceived resolvability, and frequency), relational uncertainty may increase. Additionally, this study provided further evidence in support of Reznik and Roloff's (2011) claim that the frequency of arguments would have a positive relationship with relational uncertainty. Finally, this study furthers the work of Knobloch et al. (2007) by demonstrating that the perceived threat of a serial argument may increase the amount of self, partner, and relationship uncertainty that partners experience. In fact, this study found not only that perceived threat is meaningfully associated with relational uncertainty, but that the associations depend on other characteristics of serial arguments that may be at play, such as the resolvability of the issue.

Despite these implications, however, this study has its limitations. One of the biggest limitations is the sample size, especially regarding argument frequency. Although the majority of the findings were statistically significant, a larger sample would have provided a stronger test of

H1 and perhaps established statistically significant links between argument frequency and all three forms of relational uncertainty. Additionally, this study was conducted using self-reported surveys based on participant recall. Therefore, there is always a possibility that information was remembered incorrectly or details were left out. Some respondents had trouble reporting on a significant serial argument and/or accurately determining the number and duration of serial argument episodes. Finally, the homogeneity of the sample (i.e., predominantly white, college-educated young adults) and the breadth of romantic relationships that participants reported on represent important limitations of this study. Some respondents reported relationships that could be characterized as casual dating, whereas others consisted of engaged or married partners, so it is possible that the breadth of intimacy represented by the sample was too large to account for how the results may change within different phases of romantic relationship development. Nevertheless, this study provides valuable results and directions for future research.

For instance, future researchers should more closely examine other characteristics of serial arguments that may influence relational uncertainty, including conflict intensity, duration of the episodes, and topic. Additionally, it would be interesting to do an in-depth study of how the demand-withdraw pattern is related to relational uncertainty. In previous research, scholars have linked the demand-withdraw pattern of conflict to serial arguments, and examining how demand and withdraw behaviors are associated with relational uncertainty could extend our understanding of how such uncertainty influences message production. Although this study represents a preliminary investigation of serial arguments and relational uncertainty, overall, the results suggest that continued research is needed to more fully understand how repetitive conflicts shape and alter more global understandings of romantic relationships at different stages of relational intimacy.

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APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Please provide the answer that most accurately describes you.

What is your age?

What is your biological sex?
- ❍ Male
- ❍ Female

What is your ethnicity or race?
- ❍ White
- ❍ African American
- ❍ Hispanic American
- ❍ Native American
- ❍ Asian American
- ❍ Other

How would you best classify your current romantic relationship?
- ❍ Romantic potential
- ❍ Casual dating but little emotional attachment
- ❍ Frequent dating but little emotional attachment
- ❍ Some emotional attachment
- ❍ Emotional attachment but not in love
- ❍ In love
- ❍ In love and would like to marry but have never discussed marriage
- ❍ In love and have discussed marriage but have not made marriage plans
- ❍ Engaged to be married
- ❍ Spouse

A serial argument exists when individuals argue or engage in conflict about the same topic over time, during which they participate in several (at least two) arguments about the same topic. Think of a serial argument that you have participated in and provide a FULL description of this argument below.

Who typically initiates further discussion of the issue?
- ❍ I am the initiator.
- ❍ My partner is typically the initiator.
- ❍ We both initiate the issue.
- ❍ I am unsure who the initiator is.

Please answer the following questions regarding the serial argument you previously described.

How many times have you had this argument (or an argument about the same issue) with this person?

On average, how long does each episode in your serial argument last?

Hours

Minutes

Beginning with the very first episode, how long have you and your relational partner been having/had ongoing arguments about this issue? (Provide an approximate number of days, months or years.)

Years

Months

Days

Please rate the average intensity of each episode within the series of arguments by selecting your response below.

	Not at all intense			Somewhat Intense			Very Intense
How intense is your average serial argument episode?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Please indicate your likelihood of actually continuing the series of arguments with this person.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unlikely:Likely	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Possible:Impossible	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Improbable:Probable	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Will continue:Will not continue	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Please indicate the likelihood of your partner actually continuing this series of arguments with you.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unlikely:Likely	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Possible:Impossible	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Improbable:Probable	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Will continue:Will not continue	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

For each pair of adjectives, select the bubble which best represents your feelings about this series of arguments.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Motivated:Unmotivated	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Interested:Uninterested	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Uninvolved:Involved	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Not Stimulated:Stimulated	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Challenged:Unchallenged	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Enthused:Unenthused	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Not excited:Excited	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Not looking forward to it:Looking forward to it	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

For each pair of adjectives, select the bubble which best represents your feelings about your partner after the argument.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Motivated:Unmotivated	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Interested:Uninterested	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Not committed:Committed	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Not stimulated:Stimulated	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Challenged:Unchallenged	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Enthused:Unenthused	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Not excited:Excited	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Not attracted:Attracted	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

To what extent do you believe the following about your serial argument?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It will never be resolved.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It will be resolved in the future.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I don't think that my partner and I will ever agree on the issue.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I anticipate that it will always be a problem.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

To what extent do you believe the following about your relationship following a serial argument episode?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My relationship is in jeopardy.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My relationship will endure.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
These arguments will come between us.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Our relationship will outlast these arguments.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Instructions: This section contains statements about arguing over controversial issues. Indicate how often each statement is true for you personally.

	1	2	3	4	5
While in an argument, I worry that my relational partner will form a negative impression of me.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I am energetic and enthusiastic when I argue.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
When I finish arguing with my partner I feel nervous and upset.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is important for me to always "win" arguments.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I enjoy defending my point of view on an issue.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I prefer being with people who rarely disagree with me.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I consider an argument an exciting intellectual challenge.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I find myself unable to think of effective points during an argument.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I have the ability to do well in an argument.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I try to avoid getting into arguments.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Instructions: For the next set of statements, please indicate how much you agree with each statement about yourself.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I wish I could have more respect for myself.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I am able to do things as well as most other people.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I certainly feel useless at times.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I feel that I do not	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

have much to be proud of.							
At times I think I am no good at all.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I have a positive attitude toward myself.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Instructions: For the next set of statements, please indicate how much you agree with each statement about your partner.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I feel that my partner has a number of good qualities.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I wish my partner could have more respect for himself/herself.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
All in all, I am inclined to feel that my partner is a failure.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I feel that my partner is useless at times.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I feel that my partner is a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
On the whole, I am satisfied with my partner.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I feel that my partner does not have much to be proud of.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
At times I think my partner is no good at all.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I have a positive attitude toward my partner.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My partner is able to do things as well	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

as most other people.							

We would like to know about your satisfaction with the relational partner with whom you have been having this series of arguments. Please think of how satisfied you have been in this relationship over the last two months. For each pair of adjectives, select the bubble which best represents your feelings about your relationship. The middle bubble represents a “neutral” feeling.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Miserable:Enjoyable	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Discouraging:Hopeful	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Tied down:Free	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Empty:Full	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Boring:Interesting	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Disappointing:Rewarding	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Doesn't give me much:Brings out the best in me	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Lonely:Friendly	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hard:Easy	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Useless:Worthwhile	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

All things considered, how satisfied are you with your relationship over the past two months?

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Instructions: We would like to know about how close you feel with your relational partner you reported on above. Indicate the number that best indicates how close you feel: 1 = "not at all", 4 = "moderately", and 7 = "very much"

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
How openly do you talk with your relational partner?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
How careful do you feel you have to be about what you say to your relational partner?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
How comfortable do you feel admitting doubts and fears to your relational partner?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
How interested is your relational partner when you talk to each other?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
How often does your partner express affection or liking for you?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
How well does your partner know what you are really like?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
How close do you feel to your	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

partner?							
How confident are you that your partner would help you if you had a problem?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
If you needed money, how comfortable are you asking your relational partner for it?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
How interested is your partner in the things you do?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
How comfortable do you feel expressing your true self to your partner?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
How comfortable are you telling your partner a secret?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
How often do you feel you argue with your partner?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
How often do you feel the same	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

arguments reoccur?							

Next, we would like for you to think about how certain you are about your relationship with your dating partner. Please indicate your level of certainty for each of the following questions.

How certain are you about...

	1	2	3	4	5
how committed you are to the relationship?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
your feelings for your partner?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
whether or not you want this relationship to last?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
how much you like your partner?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
how important this relationship is to you?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
how you feel about this relationship?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
how much you are romantically interested in your partner?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
whether or not you will want to be with your partner in the long run?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
how much you want to pursue the relationship?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
your goals for the future of the relationship?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
whether or not you are ready to	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

commit to your partner?					
whether or not you want to stay in a relationship with your partner?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
whether you want a romantic relationship with your partner or to just be friends?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
your view of the relationship?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
where you want this relationship to go?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
whether or not your partner wants to maintain your relationship?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
your partners view of this relationship?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
where your partner wants this relationship to go?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

How certain are you about...

	Completely uncertain	Mostly uncertain	Neutral	Mostly Certain	Completely Certain
how committed your partner is to the relationship?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
whether or not your partner wants this relationship to work out in the long run?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
whether or not your partner wants this relationship to last?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
how much you like your partner?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
how much your partner wants this relationship right now?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
how you feel about the relationship?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
how much you are romantically interested in your partner?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
whether or not you will want to be with your romantic partner in the long run?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
how much you want to	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

pursue the relationship?					
your goals for the future of the relationship?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
how ready you are to get involved with your partner?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
whether your partner wants a romantic relationship with you or just be friends?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
whether or not your partner wants to maintain the relationship?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
your view of this relationship?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
where you want this relationship to go?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

How certain are you about...

	Completely uncertain	Mostly uncertain	Neutral	Mostly certain	Completely certain
the definition of the relationship?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
whether or not you and your partner feel the same way about each other?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
whether or not you and your partner will stay together?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
how you and your partner would describe the relationship	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
the future of the relationship?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
what you can or cannot say to each other in this relationship?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
the boundaries for appropriate and/or inappropriate behavior in this relationship?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
whether or not this relationship will end soon?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
how you and your partner view this	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

relationship?					
the state of the relationship at this time?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
whether or not your partner likes you as much as you like him or her?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
the current status of this relationship?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
whether or not this is a romantic or platonic relationship?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
where this relationship is going?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
how you can or cannot behave around your partner?	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Instructions: Please use the following scale to indicate the degree to which this item describes you.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It is more fun to be involved in a discussion when there is a lot of disagreement.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I enjoy talking to people with points of view different than mine.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I don't like to be in situations where people are in disagreement.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
When I disagree with someone my opinion of them changes positively.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Disagreements are generally helpful.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
When I disagree with someone my opinion of them changes negatively.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I tend to create disagreements in conversation because it serves a useful purpose.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I enjoy arguing with other	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

people about things on which we disagree.							
I do not like to disagree with other people.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Given a choice, I would leave a conversation rather than continue a disagreement.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I avoid talking with other people who I think will disagree with me.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I enjoy disagreeing with others.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Instructions: For this set of statements, please indicate how much you agree with each statement while thinking about your serial argument.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My goals in this serial argument are so important for me to attain that I am strongly motivated to reach them.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I often get distracted from what I am doing by thoughts about this serial argument.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
When I think about my goals in this argument, that I have not yet reached, it makes me feel sad.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
When I think about unaccomplished goals in this argument, I become inspired to work on reaching them.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I seldom have difficulty concentrating on a current task because of the issue in this serial argument.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I become angry when I think about my goals in this argument that I have not yet	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

reached.							
When I think about an unresolved issue in this argument, it inspires me to work harder to resolve it.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I rarely become "lost in thought" over the issues in this argument.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Instructions: For this set of statements, please indicate how much you agree with each statement while thinking about your serial argument.

	Strongly Disagree			Neither agree nor disagree			Strongly Agree
I feel negatively toward my romantic partner after we argue.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My feelings toward my partner do not change after an argument.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I am scared that our relationship may be in jeopardy after an argument.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I do not feel that an argument damages the commitment of my relationship.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I am nervous to see my partner after we engage in a serial argument episode.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I am excited to spend time with my partner after we engage in an	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

argument.							
I have ended a romantic relationship following a serial argument episode.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I have never ended a romantic relationship following a serial argument episode.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I have felt uncertain about my relationship following a serial argument episode.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I have never felt uncertain about my relationship after an argument.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I am unsatisfied with my romantic relationship because of our arguments.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I am satisfied with my romantic relationship despite our arguments.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍