

Discussion Questions

Week 6 - Self-Expansion / Mind, Body, & Relationships

1. In class, we have discussed that if you predict any alternative explanation for your results, you should include measures for them and control for them. Did Aron et al. (1995) and Aron et al. (2000) successfully refute alternative explanations by controlling for mood and social desirability, respectively? Do you think that mood could explain some of the findings by Kille, Forest, and Wood (2013)?

Aron et al. (1995)

2. With a sample of first- and second-year undergraduate students, in their fall term, these two studies found that after falling in love, participants reported a greater change in increased diversity of self-concept domains and increased self-efficiency and self-esteem. Could some of these findings be explained by other factors in the participants' lives, such as identity exploration in emerging adulthood, associated with starting college? Would older individuals, who might have a more established self-concept, have as great a change in increased diversity of self-concept domains?

3. Should the construct of being 'in love' have been more explicitly defined in the questionnaires given to participants to assess this variable?

Aron et al. (2000)

4. In Studies 1 and 2, participants were eligible if they were married or had been living together with their partner for 15 years or less. Couples who were together for longer tended to be older and were excluded because they had trouble doing physical tasks. Could there still be a way to test the hypotheses presented in the studies despite age/physical constraints?

Epstude & Forster (2011)

5. In a naturalistic scenario, what could prime the activation of low versus high levels of construal when interpreting ambiguous romantic situations?

6. This study did not mention any sex differences in how levels of construal guide perception of ambiguous romantic situations. From an evolutionary perspective, could we expect there to be sex differences? Might women have higher levels of construal, making them more likely to interpret a interpersonal situation as the start or continuation of a long lasting relationship; whereas men might have lower levels of construal, making them more likely to interpret the same situation as leading to a one-night stand (in a dating situation) or involving little chance of a common future for both actors (in a break-up situation)?

Kille, Forest, and Wood (2013)

7. In several other psychology classes, there has been discussion that findings from embodied cognition are over-interpretation of results. Do you agree with this argument? Is sitting at a "slightly wobbly chair and desk" a reasonable way to measure physical instability? Do you think that the findings from this study could be replicated?

8. How would the effect of physical instability on desire for stability traits in a partner vary in people with anxious, secure, and avoidant attachment styles?

Nauts et al. (2012)

9. The limitations section of this paper suggests that future research should examine if men's cognitive performance declined when engaging in a pseudo-interaction and anticipating an interaction with a women, regardless of sexual orientation. Might homosexual men show the same effects when engaging in a pseudo-interaction and anticipating an interaction with another homosexual man?

10. The General Discussion of the study states: "Because people more strongly rely on stereotypes if they have fewer cognitive resources available, knowing that one has to try to appear non prejudiced later on might have the paradoxical effect of increased reliance on stereotypes because high prejudice whites' cognitive resources are already depleted before they even start interacting with an African American" (p. 1055). If this is the case, why would it be evolutionarily favored for men's cognitive capacity to decrease when anticipating interactions or actually interacting with women?