

I WANT TO BREAK UP: TESTING AN INTEGRATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR  
UNDERSTANDING AND PREDICTING ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP DISSOLUTION

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Anna Maruska Semanko

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**Title**

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**By**

Anna Maruska Semanko

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The Supervisory Committee certifies that this *disquisition* complies with North Dakota  
State University's regulations and meets the accepted standards for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:

Dr. Verlin Hinsz

---

Chair

Dr. Joel Hektner

---

Dr. Michael Robinson

---

Dr. Clay Routledge

---

Approved:

August 10, 2021

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Date

Dr. Mark Nawrot

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Department Chair

## **ABSTRACT**

Romantic relationships are desired by the majority of individuals. Despite this prevalent desire, romantic relationships end often. What are the underlying motivations and reasons for breaking up with a romantic partner? The current research investigated this question through an innovative theoretical approach. First, salient beliefs associated with breaking up with a committed romantic partner were elicited (Study 1). Based on the prominent themes associated with breaking up, measures were designed to test a unique integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution (Study 2). This integrative framework is largely based on the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) and the theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977), elaborated to include select factors important in goal setting literature (Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990; Gollwitzer, 1999). Results from a path analytic test of the integrative framework highlighted that attitudinal, affective, and social factors were particularly relevant for understanding and predicting intentions for romantic relationship dissolution. In all, the evidence gathered relating to the integrative framework contributes to our understanding of romantic relationship dissolution intentions and behavior. Furthermore, the integrative framework advances theoretical considerations for behavioral intention models, while also providing insights for behaviors and research regarding romantic relationships.

## **DEDICATION**

To my sister, Natasha, for always giving me a reason to move forward.

To my husband, Devon, for confidently investing in me and our life together.

To my late Mother and Father, for modeling courage, ambition, and undoubted strength.

To my friend, Taylor, for being a continued source of encouragement and kindness.

To my advisor, Verlin, for demonstrating what it means to be an authentic, stimulating, and benevolent mentor. My graduate career would not have been as gratifying without your expertise, creativity, and confidence of all that can be accomplished.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iii
DEDICATION .....	iv
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	ix
INTRODUCTION .....	1
The Reasoned Action Approach .....	2
The Theory of Interpersonal Behavior .....	3
Predominant Similarities and Differences Between the Reasoned Action Approach and Theory of Interpersonal Behavior .....	5
An Integrative Framework for Understanding and Predicting Romantic Relationship Dissolution .....	7
Importance of the Integrative Framework for Understanding and Predicting Romantic Relationship Dissolution .....	12
Research Overview and Hypotheses .....	13
STUDY 1: ELICITATION OF BELIEFS ASSOCIATED WITH BREAKING UP .....	16
Methods .....	16
Analyses and Results .....	22
Discussion .....	38
STUDY 2: TESTING THE INTEGRATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING AND PREDICTING ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP DISSOLUTION .....	42
Methods .....	42
Analyses and Results .....	54
Discussion .....	78
CONCLUSION .....	112
REFERENCES .....	114
APPENDIX A. STUDY 1 BELIEF ELICITATION QUESTIONS .....	121

APPENDIX B. PAST BEHAVIOR AND HABITS QUESTIONS .....	125
APPENDIX C. SOCIAL ROLE QUESTIONS .....	127
APPENDIX D. SELF-CONCEPT QUESTIONS.....	130
APPENDIX E. AFFECT (EMOTION) TOWARDS THE BEHAVIOR QUESTIONS .....	131
APPENDIX F. ANTICIPATED AFFECT QUESTIONS .....	133
APPENDIX G. PERCEIVED CONSEQUENCES QUESTIONS .....	138
APPENDIX H. PERSONAL AND MORAL OBLIGATION QUESTIONS .....	141
APPENDIX I. BEHAVIORAL BELIEFS AND ATTITUDE QUESTIONS .....	145
APPENDIX J. NORMATIVE BELIEFS AND PERCEIVED SOCIAL NORM QUESTIONS .....	151
APPENDIX K. PERCEIVED BEHAVIORAL CONTROL, FACILITATORS, AND CONSTRAINTS QUESTIONS.....	159
APPENDIX L. INTENTION QUESTIONS.....	166
APPENDIX M. ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PROCESS QUESTIONS.....	168
APPENDIX N. IMPLEMENTATION INTENTION QUESTIONS .....	171
APPENDIX O. ADDITIONAL COMMITMENT QUESTIONS .....	172
APPENDIX P. HEAD VS. HEART LOCATOR QUESTIONS .....	174
APPENDIX Q. FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE/ASSESSMENT OF BEHAVIOR .....	175

## LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Summary of Components Involved in The Integrative Framework for Understanding and Predicting Romantic Relationship Dissolution.....	9
2. Characteristics, Qualities, and Attributes Associated with Breaking Up .....	23
3. Perceived Causes of Breaking Up.....	24
4. Specific Consequences Associated with Breaking Up .....	24
5. Advantages of Breaking Up.....	25
6. Disadvantages of Breaking Up .....	26
7. What Else Comes to Mind When Thinking About My Breaking Up.....	27
8. Individuals or Groups Who Would Approve of Breaking Up.....	27
9. Individuals or Groups Who Would Disapprove of Breaking Up .....	28
10. Other People I Might Talk To If Breaking Up .....	29
11. Individuals or Groups I Would Look to for Guidance If Breaking Up .....	29
12. Factors or Circumstances That Would Make It Easy to Break Up.....	30
13. Factors or Circumstances That Would Make It Difficult to Break Up.....	30
14. Additional Factors or Constraints That Would Limit Ability to Break Up .....	31
15. Additional Things That Would Encourage Breaking Up .....	31
16. Additional Things That Would Enhance Ability to Break Up .....	31
17. Social Roles That Would Influence Breaking Up.....	32
18. What I See As My Role in Breaking Up.....	32
19. Specific Beliefs/Ideas About Myself That Would Influence Breaking Up .....	32
20. Am I The Kind of Person Who Would Break Up With Their Partner .....	33
21. Perceptions of If Moral Obligations Would Influence Breaking Up.....	33
22. Personal and Moral Beliefs That Would Influence Breaking Up.....	33

23.	Perceptions of If Recent Breaking Up Would Influence Current Breaking Up .....	34
24.	How Past Breaking Up May Contribute to Current Breaking Up .....	34
25.	Emotions or Feelings Associated With Breaking Up .....	35
26.	Emotions or Feelings Anticipated If Breaking Up .....	36
27.	Emotions or Feelings Associated With NOT Breaking Up .....	36
28.	Emotions or Feelings Anticipated If NOT Breaking Up .....	37
29.	How Breaking Up Would Make Me Feel.....	37
30.	Qualities, Characteristics, and Attributes Associated With The Process of Breaking Up .....	38
31.	Would I Develop Plans or Strategies Before Breaking Up.....	38
32.	Correlations for Theoretical Components Leading to Romantic Relationship Dissolution Intentions.....	57
33.	Scale Categorizations, Internal Consistency, Means, and Standard Deviations for the Integrative Framework Theoretical Concepts.....	58
34.	Path Analysis Results from the Revised Model of Understanding and Predicting Romantic Relationship Dissolution Intentions .....	68
35.	SEM Bootstrap Results and Confidence Intervals.....	75
36.	Discriminant Validity and Inter-Construct Correlations of SEM Measurement Models.....	76
37.	Correlations with Variables Predicted to Relate to Dissolution Behavior or The Intention-Dissolution Relationship.....	78



## LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. The Reasoned Action Approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011).....	3
2. The Theory of Interpersonal Behavior (Triandis, 1977).....	5
3. An Integrative Framework for Understanding and Predicting Romantic Relationship Dissolution.....	8
4. Initial Path Analysis Results from the Proposed Integrative Framework for Understanding and Romantic Relationship Dissolution (Intentions) .....	62
5. The Revised Model for Understanding and Predicting Romantic Relationship Dissolution Intentions .....	65
6. Path Analysis Results from the Revised Model of Understanding and Predicting Romantic Relationship Dissolution Intentions .....	67
7. Proposed Structural Equation Model Through Dissolution Behavior .....	70
8. Proposed Structural Equation Model Through Precursors to Dissolution Behavior .....	71
9. The Revised Structural Equation Model and Standardized Coefficients Leading to Intentions to Break Up .....	74

## INTRODUCTION

Being in a committed romantic relationship (i.e., an intimate relationship in which individuals are exclusive with each other) can provide psychological, social, and physical health benefits. For example, individuals in committed relationships report positive feelings of affect (Stanton, Campbell, & Loving, 2014), companionship (Sedikides, Oliver, & Campbell, 1994), support (Fine & Harvey, 2013), and health (e.g., Cutrona & Gardner, 2006; Pauley, Floyd, & Hesse, 2015). Thus, the ending of a romantic relationship is often labeled as distressing (e.g., Brumbaugh & Fraley, 2015; Eastwick, Finkel, Krishnamurti & Loewenstein, 2007; Simpson, 1987; Spielmann, MacDonald, Joel, & Impett, 2016). Indeed, individuals who endure a romantic relationship break up can suffer feelings of negative affect, depression, longing, and anger (Brumbaugh & Fraley, 2015; Eastwick et al., 2007; Sbarra, 2006; Spielmann et al., 2016). Even though ending a romantic relationship is generally considered distressing, committed romantic relationships end frequently (e.g., almost 50% of marriages end in divorce; National Center for Health Statistics, 2020). What motivates an individual to end their romantic relationship?

The present research sought to answer this question, by testing an integrative framework of intentional behavior within the context of romantic relationship dissolution (i.e., ending the relationship by breaking up with a romantic partner). This integrative framework is derived from the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011), the theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977), and select components from theories of goal setting (Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990; Gollwitzer, 1999). Accordingly, this introduction a) briefly describes the mentioned theories, b) introduces the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic

relationship dissolution, and c) articulates a set of hypotheses derived from the integrated framework that will be tested.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Reasoned Action Approach**

When we think about our behaviors, whether in the context of a romantic relationship or not, we may assume that behavior is complex. Despite the presumed complexity involved in our patterns of behavior, Fishbein and Ajzen (2011) state that understanding behavior may not be as complicated as it seems. Instead, behavior is an ‘observable event’ that can be examined through the lens of several critical constructs.

The critical constructs of the reasoned action approach are background factors, beliefs, resulting attitudes, perceived social norms, perceived behavioral control, and intentions. These theoretical concepts and their relation to behavior are presented in Figure 1. The reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) denotes that behavior derives from personal beliefs about a specific behavior. Beliefs can arise from many sources, such as presented information, personal experiences, personal traits, and exposure to certain environments, opportunities or thought patterns. The theory specifies three categories of beliefs: behavioral beliefs (beliefs that indicate the favorableness of outcomes associated with the behavior of interest and contribute to an individual’s attitude), normative beliefs (beliefs that assess perceived approval of a specific behavior or describe the presence of the behavior from important others, leading to perceived social norms), and control beliefs (beliefs about the personal control or perceived capability of the individual to perform that specific behavior, resulting in perceived behavioral control). The resulting attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioral control toward the behavior

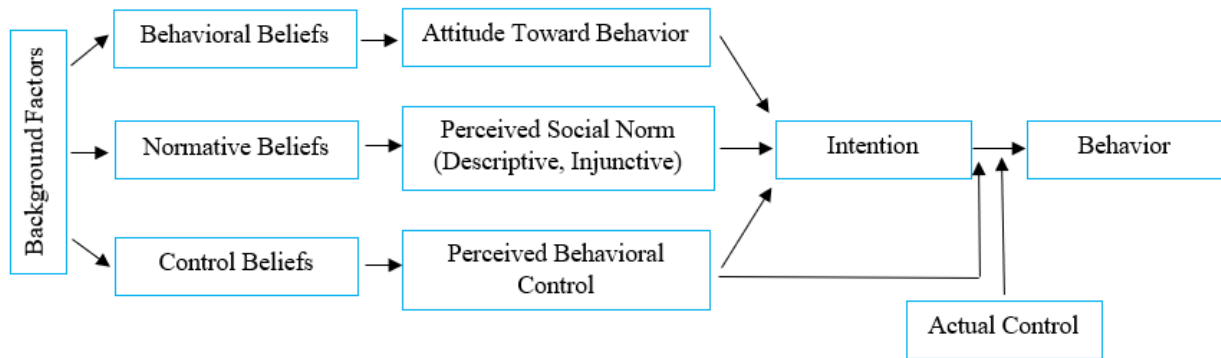
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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed description of the theories and their behavioral antecedents, as well as more information about the integrative framework within the context of romantic relationship dissolution, please see Semanko and Hinsz (2021).

of interest contribute to a behavioral intention – or an intent to perform the behavior of interest. Intentions can be influenced by factors such as actual control (constraints or ability to perform the behavior), and the individual weight or importance of attitudes, perceived social norms, and perceived behavioral control upon the intention. Overall, behavioral intentions are considered the primary theoretical antecedents to behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011).

**Figure 1**

*The Reasoned Action Approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011)*



### **The Theory of Interpersonal Behavior**

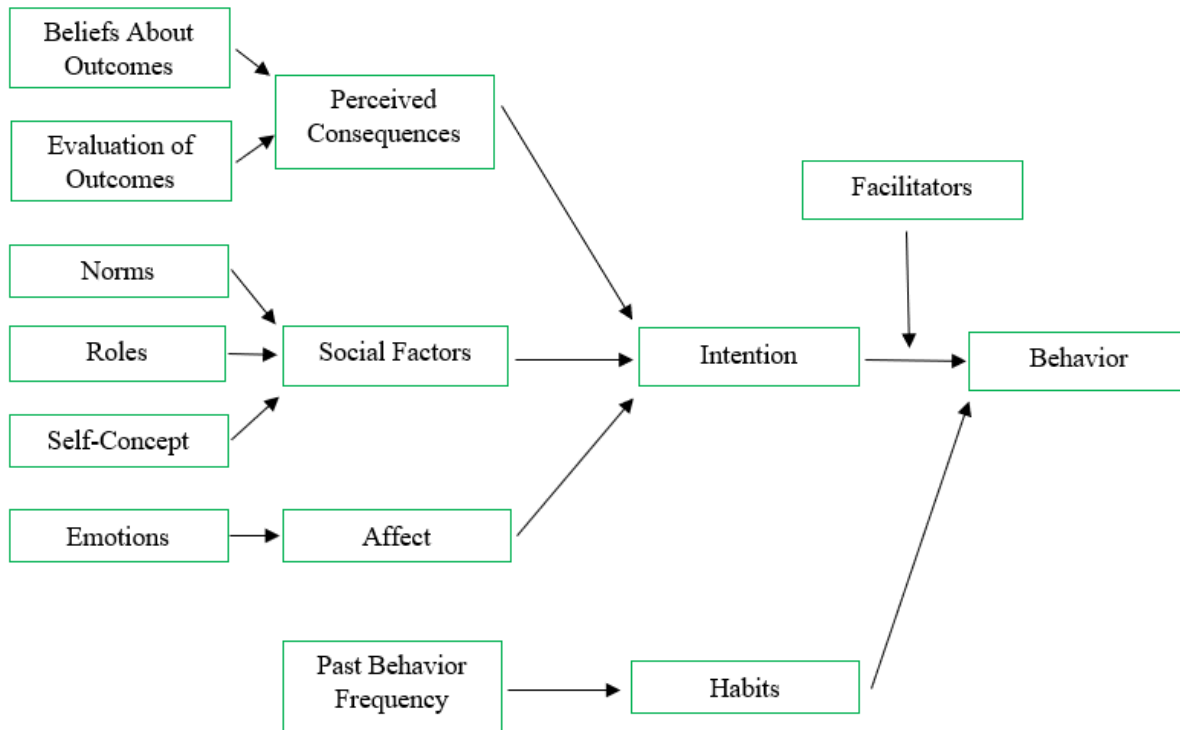
Similar to Fishbein and Ajzen’s reasoned action approach, the theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977) has a set of critical constructs that can be used to understand and predict behaviors like romantic relationship dissolution. The theory of interpersonal behavior seeks to predict behavior as a function of behavioral intentions, behavioral habits, and facilitating conditions. Behavioral intentions are influenced by affective, cognitive, and social components. The affective contributors to intentions are emotions or feelings towards the behavior. The cognitive contributors to intentions are an individual’s perceived consequences or attitude about the behavior (ideas toward an action that can include affective feelings). Social contributors to behavioral intentions are present social norms (social indicators that tell us what behavior is

expected), social roles (behaviors appropriate for a person of a specific position), and ideas surrounding the self-concept (an individual's beliefs about who they are). The theory of interpersonal behavior also acknowledges that moral beliefs, character, and development can relate to the social factors (e.g., social roles) that influence behavioral intentions.

Triandis' (1977) theory of interpersonal behavior further considers habits as important for understanding behavior. Behavioral habits are a reflection of patterns of past behavior, and both behavioral habits and intentions to behave directly contribute to behavior. Reinforcements for behavior (either facilitating or restricting conditions) can moderate the intention-to-behavior relationship. Each interpersonal behavior, or interaction outcome, can either be rewarding (e.g., breaking up with my romantic partner sets me free) or punishing (e.g., breaking up with my romantic partner makes me sad and lonely). The theoretical concepts and their relation to intentions and interpersonal behavior are presented in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

*The Theory of Interpersonal Behavior (Triandis, 1977)*



### **Predominant Similarities and Differences Between the Reasoned Action Approach and Theory of Interpersonal Behavior**

Both the theory of interpersonal behavior and the reasoned action approach have substantial ability to predict behavior from behavioral intentions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011; Triandis, 1977). The theories overlap in conceptualization in several areas, such as: the inclusion of attitudes (what Triandis considers perceived consequences), social influences (primarily norms), facilitating conditions (or perceived behavioral control), willingness to perform a specific behavior (intention), the concept of “weighted” beliefs and associations, and the overarching awareness that behavior depends heavily on context.

Despite these similarities, there are a few key differences between the theories. The first key difference is the inclusion of habits in the theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977). Triandis (1977) incorporates past behavior into his model as a large contributor to behavior, whereas Fishbein and Ajzen (2011) argue that the intentions are generally predictive of behavior regardless of past or habituated nature of the behavior. Another difference between the theories is that the model of interpersonal behavior includes the concept of affect or emotions as a contributor, whereas the reasoned action approach denotes affect as a background factor that can alter beliefs but should not have a substantial influence on behavior. Further, Triandis' consideration of attitudes in the theory of interpersonal behavior is charged with affect (Triandis, 1977), whereas Fishbein and Ajzen argue that attitudes reflect evaluative statements.

In addition, although the theories overlap with their consideration of barriers (constraints) and facilitating conditions, Triandis generally discusses facilitating or constraining conditions as external environmental factors, whereas Fishbein and Ajzen's (2011) concept of perceived behavioral control is based on two distinct characteristics: capacity (capability of performing the behavior) and autonomy (perceived degree of control). The last key difference is the consideration of multiple social factors within the theory of interpersonal behavior (i.e., norms, social roles, self-concept, and acknowledgement of personal or moral influences; Triandis, 1977), compared to the succinct use of descriptive and injunctive norms in the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011).

Notably, both the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) and the theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977) have received considerable empirical support for their ability to predict intentions and behavior (e.g., McEachan et al., 2016; Moody & Siponen, 2013). Thus, these theories are highly relevant and can be applied to understand the behavior of ending

a romantic relationship. The framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution that is tested in this dissertation integrates both the theory of reasoned action and theory of interpersonal behavior, in addition to building upon those theoretical frameworks by including factors well-documented in goal setting literature.

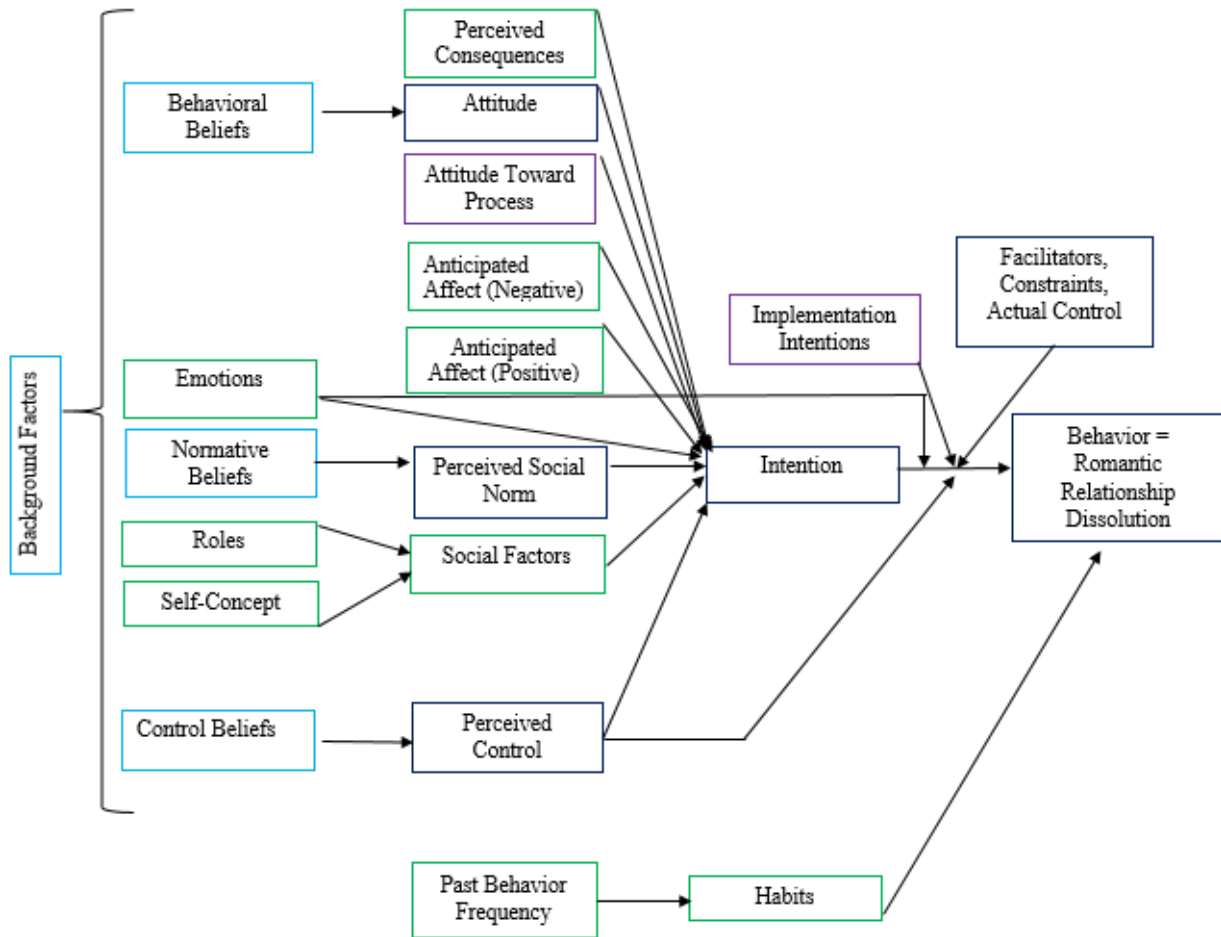
### **An Integrative Framework for Understanding and Predicting Romantic Relationship Dissolution**

The integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution is presented in Figure 3. Beyond the main factors listed in the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) and theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977), this integrative framework has unique contributions in terms of the theoretical antecedents to intentions and behavior. To be specific, the framework distinguishes between anticipated affect and emotion, identifies different contribution pathways for affect and emotion, adds attitude toward the process as a contributor to intentions (Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990), and includes implementation intentions as a moderator to the intention-behavior relationship (Gollwitzer, 1999). For a summary of the involved theoretical concepts, see Table 1.



**Figure 3**

*An Integrative Framework for Understanding and Predicting Romantic Relationship Dissolution*



*Note.* The light blue boxes represent belief assessment unique to the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). The green boxes represent factors unique to the theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977). The dark blue boxes represent factors that are thoroughly examined in both the reasoned action approach and theory of interpersonal behavior. The purple boxes are additional factors important to goal setting (Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990; Gollwitzer, 1999) that have been added to the integrative framework.

**Table 1**

*Summary of Components Involved in The Integrative Framework for Understanding and Predicting Romantic Relationship Dissolution*

Theoretical Concept	Definition
Attitude	Some degree of favorableness or unfavorableness toward behavior
Perceived Consequences	Ideas toward an action that include affective feelings (probability of perceived outcomes, value of consequences)
Attitude Toward the Process	Feelings towards pursuing a goal (behavior), regardless of whether or not that goal will be achieved
Anticipated Affect	Anticipated feelings about behavior and its consequences
Emotions	Intense experiences/feelings in response to a specific situation or stimuli
Social Roles	Positions or roles an individual holds and behaviors appropriate for those roles
Perceived Social Norms	Social expectations concerning what should/should not be done (injunctive norms); how other, similar people behave (descriptive norms)
Self-Concept	Beliefs, attributes, and preferences that contribute to an individual's sense of identity
Perceived Control	An individual's capability and sense of autonomy over behavior
Habits	Frequency of behavior
Intention	Likelihood of performing behavior
Implementation Intention	Specific intentions, indicating where, when, and how behavior will occur
Facilitators	Factors that encourage behavior
Constraints	Factors that constrain behavior (e.g., barriers)
Actual Control	Skill, ability, or environmental conditions that make performing the behavior possible or impossible
Behavior	An act or observable event

*Note.* These definitions are derived from the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011), the theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977), and additional research on implementation intentions (Gollwitzer, 1999), attitude toward the process (Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990; Hinsz & Ployhart, 1998), and anticipated affect (Sandberg & Conner, 2008).

To distinguish between affect and emotion, we defined anticipated affect as anticipated feelings about the behavior and its consequences (Sandberg & Conner, 2008) and emotions as intense experiences in response a specific situation or stimuli (Watson, 2000). This distinction allowed us to look at differences in anticipated feelings (e.g., loneliness) and their contribution to intentions to break up, while also considering more intense emotions (e.g., love, anger) and how they contribute to intentions. The consideration of anticipated affect and emotion in this fashion is different than previously considered in the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) or theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977). This consideration of anticipated affect was expected to increase the amount of variance accounted for in the prediction of dissolution behavior, particularly because breaking up is commonly associated with affective forecasting and affective consequences (Eastwick et al., 2007).

Similar to the distinction between (anticipated) affect and emotion, the concept of attitude *toward the process* was added to the integrated model to enhance understanding and prediction of romantic relationship dissolution. Attitude toward the process is a construct in the theory of goal pursuit (Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990; Hinsz & Ployhart, 1998), and describes an individual's feelings towards pursuing a goal (behavior), regardless of whether or not the goal will be achieved. The process of breaking off a romantic relationship can be perceived as a dynamic experience – the act of dissolving a relationship can cause feelings of distress, pain, and guilt, and/or be associated with feelings of relief and freedom (Symoens, Bastait, Mortelmans, & Bracke, 2013). Depending on how the process of breaking up is perceived, intentions to break up may be higher or lower. That is, if a person is disturbed by the process of breaking up, then that person may avoid breaking up even if the personal and social forces toward breaking up are strong. In contrast, if a person has a positive reaction to the process of breaking up (e.g., this is a

beneficial experience in which I will learn how to interact with others in an emotional circumstance), then the person may be more predisposed toward breaking up independent of the personal and social forces toward breaking up.

In addition to incorporating attitude toward the process of breaking up, implementation intentions were also considered in the integrative framework for understanding and predicting dissolution behavior. Beyond assessing intentions as mentioned in the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) and theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977), assessing implementation intentions could account for important variance in predicting romantic relationship dissolution. Implementation intentions are more specific than a general intention or goal. Implementing intentions indicate where, when, and how the behavior will occur (“If I am in situation X, then I’ll do Y.”; Gallo & Gollwitzer, 2007; Gollwitzer, 1999; Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). Having plans or strategies to break up with a romantic partner may prevent some barriers generally associated with goal attainment, such as not knowing when to act.

As an example, an implementation intention to break up with a committed romantic partner could be: *If it is just my partner and I tonight at their home, I will end the relationship by talking to them about how I feel.* This intention specifies a suitable situation (alone with partner) and process (talking about how I feel) to reach goal attainment (relationship dissolution). Forming this implementation intention creates a mental representation of breaking up that will make identifying the time/situation to dissolve the relationship accessible and salient. Further, the mental representation increases readiness to have the break up discussion, even if the individual may feel distracted otherwise (Gallo & Gollwitzer, 2007). Consequently, implementation intentions were added to the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution (Figure 3).

## **Importance of the Integrative Framework for Understanding and Predicting Romantic Relationship Dissolution**

Integrating the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) and the theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977) can provide great explanatory benefits for understanding and predicting relationship dissolution behavior. Both theories have strengths (e.g., the complex understanding of perceived behavioral control in the reasoned action approach, and the expansion of social factors and past behavior in the theory of interpersonal behavior), and combining those strengths should lead to more predictive power. Previous research has compared versions of the reasoned action approach (theory of planned behavior; Ajzen, 1985) and theory of interpersonal behavior in predicting behavior within the same context (e.g., Bamberg & Schmidt, 2003 compared the theories for students' car use; Godin et al., 1996 with intentions for condom use). This past research found that moral normative beliefs (Godin et al., 1996), role beliefs, and habits (Bamberg & Schmidt, 2003) significantly increased prediction of the intentions or behavior, supporting our position that an integrative approach will be useful.

Further, the additions of implementation intentions (Gollwitzer, 1999), attitude toward the process (Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990; Hinsz & Ployhart, 1998), and anticipated affect (Sandberg & Conner, 2008) could help us understand what facilitates or hinders breaking off a romantic relationship. It is highly likely that individuals consider breaking up with their partner and make plans before doing so (implementation intentions), think about the process of breaking up (e.g., viewing it as unpleasant; attitude toward the process), and ponder how they will feel about engaging in relationship dissolution (anticipated affect). Accordingly, these factors may account for unique variance in predicting intentions to dissolve a romantic relationship. Altogether, the proposed integrative framework includes valuable aspects of the reasoned action

approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011), theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977), and specific contributors from the goal setting literature (Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990; Gollwitzer, 1999), to enhance our knowledge of what contributes to romantic relationship dissolution.

### **Research Overview and Hypotheses**

This dissertation tests the novel integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution. To test the integrative framework, two studies were conducted: 1) a qualitative belief elicitation study to advance our understanding of beliefs associated with breaking up and to inform the measures for the components involved in the integrative framework, and 2) a quantitative study testing the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution.

As depicted in Figure 3, the integrated framework provides a set of distinguished hypotheses. In particular, the following were predicted:

- H1) Perceived consequences of breaking up will have a significant, positive association with intentions to break up with a romantic partner.
- H2) Behavioral beliefs will have a significant, positive association with attitudes toward breaking up with a romantic partner.
- H3) Attitudes toward breaking up will have a significant, positive association with intentions to break up with a romantic partner.
- H4) Attitudes toward the process of breaking up will have a significant, positive association with intentions to break up with a romantic partner.
- H5) Low levels of negative anticipated affect (e.g., low anticipated loneliness or sadness) will have a significant, positive association with intentions to break up with a romantic partner.

- H6) Positive anticipated affect (e.g., expecting feelings of freedom) will have a significant, positive association with intentions to break up with a romantic partner.
- H7) Emotions toward the behavior of breaking up will be associated with intentions to break up with a romantic partner, such that positive emotions (e.g., happiness toward breaking up) will have a significant, positive association with intentions to break up with a romantic partner.
- H8) Normative beliefs will have a significant, positive association with the perceived social norms regarding breaking up with a romantic partner.
- H9) Perceived social norms (both injunctive and descriptive) will have a significant, positive association with intentions to break up with a romantic partner.
- H10) Social roles will have a significant, positive association with the “social factors” that contribute to intentions to break up with a romantic partner.
- H11) Self-concept will have a significant, positive association with the “social factors” that contribute to intentions to break up with a romantic partner.
- H12) Social factors uniquely identified by the theory of interpersonal behavior (social roles, self-concept, personal norms or moral obligations) will have a significant, positive association with intentions to break up with a romantic partner.
- H13) Control beliefs will have a significant, positive association with perceived control over breaking up with a romantic partner.
- H14) Perceived control over breaking up with a romantic partner will have a significant, positive association with intentions to break up with a romantic partner.
- H15) Intentions to break up will have a significant, positive association with the behavior of breaking up with a romantic partner.

- H16) Emotions will moderate the intention-to-behavior relationship, such that negative emotions will be associated with an increased likelihood of breaking up (e.g., during a fit of anger), and positive emotions will be associated with a decreased likelihood of breaking up (e.g., strong feelings of love, being ‘caught in the heat of the moment’).
- H17) Perceived control over breaking up with a romantic partner will moderate the intention-behavior relationship, such that high perceived control will be associated with a higher likelihood of breaking up with a romantic partner, and low perceived control will be associated with a lower likelihood of breaking up with a romantic partner.
- H18) Facilitators will moderate the intention-behavior relationship, such that strong facilitators to breaking up (e.g., a partner cheating) will strengthen the likelihood of breaking up with a romantic partner.
- H19) Constraints will moderate the intention-behavior relationship, such that strong constraints (e.g., receiving love from the partner) will lessen the likelihood of breaking up with a romantic partner.
- H20) Implementation intentions will moderate the intention-behavior relationship, such that individuals with more developed implementation intentions for breaking up will be more likely to break up with a romantic partner.
- H21) Break up habits, or past break up behavior, will have a significant, positive association with breaking up with a romantic partner.



## STUDY 1: ELICITATION OF BELIEFS ASSOCIATED WITH BREAKING UP

### Methods

#### Participants and Procedure

Seventy-four undergraduate students at North Dakota State University (41 female, 28 male, 5 unidentified) were recruited for this study in Fall 2019.<sup>2</sup> To qualify for this study, participants had to be over 18 years of age ( $M_{age} = 19.08$ ,  $SD_{age} = 1.84$ ) and in a committed romantic relationship (average relationship length  $M = 15.16$  months,  $SD = 16.38$  months). In exchange for participation, students received points for fulfillment of course requirements or extra credit in one of their psychology courses.

Participants were welcomed into the lab and sat at a table with a computer workstation and chair. The undergraduate students received information upon which they provided their consent to participate. After their informed consent was received, participants were presented with a sequence of open-ended questions asking about their thoughts associated with breaking up with their committed romantic partner. These questions were presented on a computer monitor through Qualtrics© and designed to elicit beliefs relevant to the theoretical components involved in the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) and theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977), as well as the concepts of attitude toward the process (Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990), anticipated affect (Sandberg & Conner, 2008), and implementation intentions (Gollwitzer, 1999).

In accordance with guidelines for belief elicitation (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011; p. 449), the survey prompted participants to “Please take some time to tell us what you think about the

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<sup>2</sup> Five participants began this study on Qualtrics© and exited before they had completed all questions. The responses that were received from those five participants are considered and coded. All five participants exited before their gender, age, and relationship length were recorded.

possibility of your breaking up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months. There are no right or wrong responses; we are merely interested in your personal opinions. In response to the questions that follow, please list the thoughts that come immediately to your mind. Write each thought on a separate line.” Participants were provided with sufficient time (over 1 minute per question, with the screen not allowing participants to advance to the next question for 60 seconds) and told that although some questions may appear similar, they were different in important ways. There were approximately 30 questions eliciting responses related to behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, control beliefs/facilitators/constraints, social roles, self-concept, past behavior, emotions, affect, attitude toward the process, and implementation intentions regarding “your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months”. These open-ended questions are described below, as well as presented in Appendix A.

## **Measures**

*Behavioral beliefs /perceived outcomes.* Participants first responded to questions assessing their beliefs regarding the characteristics, causes, and consequences associated with their breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months. These questions were: “Please list the characteristics, qualities, and attributes you associate with your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months.”, “What do you perceive as the causes of your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?”, and “What are some of the specific consequences you associate with your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?”. The responses to these questions were used to inform Study 2 measures for attitudes and perceived consequences.

After responding to the questions about beliefs and outcomes associated with breaking up, participants responded to questions about the advantages and disadvantages regarding their

breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months. Specifically, participants responded to: “What do you see as the advantages of your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?”, “What do you see as the disadvantages of your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?”, and “What else comes to mind when you think about your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?”. The responses to these questions were used to create Study 2 measures for attitudes and perceived consequences.

*Normative beliefs.* Beliefs concerning normative referents for both injunctive and descriptive norms were then assessed. For the questions about injunctive norm beliefs, participants were given the prompt: “When it comes to your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months, there might be individuals or groups who would think you should or should not perform this behavior.” Then, participants were asked to respond to the following questions: “Please list the individuals or groups you think would approve or think you should break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months.”, and “Please list the individuals or groups you think would disapprove or think you should NOT break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months.” For beliefs about descriptive norms, participants were asked to respond to the questions: “Please list any other people or groups you might want to talk to if you were to break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months.” and “Sometimes, when we are not sure what to do, we look to see what others are doing. When it comes to your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months, please list the individuals or groups whose behavior you might look to for guidance.” The responses to this set of questions guided Study 2 measures for the injunctive and descriptive beliefs associated with perceived social norms.

*Control beliefs, facilitators, and constraints.* After listing thoughts about individuals or groups they might consider when deciding to break up with a committed romantic partner, participants then responded to questions about factors that might promote or constrain their breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months. These question prompts were: “Please list any factors or circumstances that would make it easy or enable you to break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months.”, “Please list any factors or circumstances that would make it difficult for you to break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months.”, “Are there additional things that constrain or limit your ability to break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?”, “Are there additional things that would encourage your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?”, and “Are there additional things that would enhance your ability to break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?”. The responses to these questions informed Study 2 measures for facilitators, constraints, and the control beliefs associated with perceived behavioral control.

*Social roles.* The participants were then presented questions addressing the involvement of their social roles in their breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months. Participants were given the prompt: “When it comes to your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months, there may be certain social roles that impact *your breaking up* with your committed romantic partner or *your NOT breaking up* with your committed romantic partner.” Then, participants were asked to respond to the following questions about roles: “Please list the social roles you hold that would influence your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months.”, “What do you see as your role in breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?”, and “I

believe someone like me should/should not break up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months.” The answers to these questions informed Study 2 measures on social roles.

*Self-concept.* Beyond listing the social roles that might influence their breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months, participants also responded to questions about their self-concept. These questions were: “Please list specific beliefs/ideas you hold about yourself that would influence your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months.”, “Do you think you are the kind of person who would break up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?”, and “Do you perceive your moral obligations would influence your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?”. The responses to these questions guided Study 2 measures on self-concept.

*Habits, past behavior.* After participants described how their self-concept might influence their breaking up, participants were asked to respond to questions about their past break up behavior. Specifically, participants responded to these questions: “How many times have you broken up with a committed romantic partner in the past?”, “How recently have you broken up with a committed romantic partner?”, “Do you perceive your recent breaking up with a committed romantic partner would influence your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?”, and “Please describe how your past breaking up with a committed romantic partner may or may not contribute to your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months.” The answers to these questions were used to inform Study 2 measures on break up habits and past behavior.

*Emotions and affect.* Emotions and feelings associated with the idea of participants breaking up with a committed romantic partner were then assessed. Participants responded to the following questions: “What emotions or feelings do you associate with your breaking up with a

committed romantic partner within the next six months?”, “What emotions or feelings would you *anticipate* you would feel if you broke up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?”, “What emotions or feelings do you associate with your NOT breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?”, and “What emotions or feelings would you *anticipate* you would feel if you did NOT break up your committed romantic partner within the next six months?”. The responses to these questions guided Study 2 measures on emotion and anticipated affect.

*Attitude toward the process.* Once participants finished describing the emotions and affect associated with the possibility of breaking up with their romantic partner, they were presented questions addressing their attitude toward the process of breaking up. Participants responded to “How would your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months, ignoring whether or not you actually do so, make you feel?” and “What are the qualities, characteristics, and attributes you associate with the process of breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months, regardless of whether or not you want to?”. The answers to these questions informed Study 2 measures on attitude toward the process of breaking up.

*Implementation intentions.* After participants described their beliefs about the process of breaking up with their committed romantic partner, participants responded to questions about potential implementation intentions for breaking up with their committed romantic partner within the next six months. Those questions were: “If you were to break up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months, would you develop plans or strategies before doing so?”, “How much time would you put into developing plans or strategies before your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months? (1 = *No time*, 7 = *Extreme amount of*

time)”, and “How much effort would you put into developing plans or strategies before your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months? (1 = *No effort*, 7 = *Extreme effort*)”.

*Post-session questionnaire.* Once participants finished the above mentioned questions, they completed a final post-session questionnaire that gathered information on respondents’ gender, age, relationship status, and relationship length.

*Debriefing.* Upon completion of the study, participants were thanked and thoroughly debriefed regarding the purpose of the study. Participants were provided the opportunity to ask the researcher questions, and given an information sheet that contained resources on healthy dating relationships (e.g., qualities of a healthy relationship, on-campus and off-campus resources that can help promote positive relationships).

### **Analyses and Results**

The responses to all questions were content analyzed and used to inform the measures for Study 2. To code the responses to these questions, the following steps were taken: 1) Each response was coded, with the goal of identifying major themes to the questions. The total frequency of participants that responded with a theme was identified. 2) The frequency was also recorded based on gender. 3) Salience of the responses was recorded and indicates the order in the which responses came to mind. For example, if a response was first in the participants’ generated response list, it was coded with a “1”. 4) Each response was coded using terms similar to how the participant phrased it. 5) Answers that were equivalent, or extremely similar, are combined in the same category. For instance, if a participant responded to a question saying they would be “lonely” after breaking up, those responses would be combined with a participant response saying they would “experience loneliness”. Subtle differences were noted in

parentheses after the major response theme. So, a major response theme of “Lonely” may be written as: “Lonely (feeling lonely, experiencing loneliness)”. 6) All responses were coded – so, if a participant said they would be “lonely and embarrassed” after breaking up, then both “lonely” and “embarrassed” were coded for that participant. This included responses that were confusing or very specific.

The major response themes, frequency, and gender breakdown for each question are shown in Tables 2 through 31. All question prompts asked participants about their *breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months*. The tables include the five of the 74 participants in the study who did not identify their gender. Consequently, the frequency total is often higher than the female plus male frequency total.

**Table 2**

*Characteristics, Qualities, and Attributes Associated with Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Being sad (sadness)	22	12	7
Cheating	12	5	5
Lying	9	6	2
Being lonely (loneliness)	7	5	1
Can't picture breaking up	6	4	2
Long distance	5	4	0
Loss of interest	5	0	5
Being depressed	5	3	1
Break up because of differences	5	3	1
Breaking up would be difficult	5	3	2



**Table 3***Perceived Causes of Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Cheating (unfaithfulness)	22	11	10
Being apart (long distance, distance)	14	6	6
Losing feelings (growing apart)	13	5	8
Lying	10	6	3
Busy with other activities (5 military)	7	5	1
Lack of communication	7	4	2
Lack of trust	6	4	2
Difference in what future holds	6	4	2
Too much fighting	5	2	2
Not enough time	5	2	2
Disagreements often (disagreeing)	5	4	1

**Table 4***Specific Consequences Associated with Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Feeling lonely (loneliness)	17	9	7
Loss of a friend (8 losing best friend)	15	14	1
Feeling sad	15	8	5
No longer having someone to talk to	14	9	4
Lose relationships with my partner's family	8	6	0
Depression (be depressed)	7	3	3
Missing them	7	1	3
Losing mutual friends	7	5	1
Being alone	7	4	3
A broken heart (heartbroken, heart break)	6	3	3

**Table 5***Advantages of Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
More freedom (free to do what I want)	16	11	3
More 'me' time (focus on myself)	16	8	6
Seeing friends more	15	7	8
Less distraction from school or activities	15	6	8
Spend less money	11	5	6
More free time	11	6	5
No advantages	9	6	3
Be more independent	7	4	2
Getting to be single	6	5	0
Free from relationship stress (2 less stress)	5	2	2

**Table 6***Disadvantages of Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Loss of a friend (12 lose best friend)	20	12	6
Losing someone to talk to/share things with	14	9	4
More lonely (lonely, loneliness)	11	4	5
Broken relationships with partner's family	9	8	0
Losing connections with mutual friends	8	5	2
Being alone (feeling alone)	8	4	4
Going into depressive state (depression)	7	4	2
Sadness	7	3	3
Missing them	6	3	1
Investment lost (waste of time)	5	3	2
Not motivated/wanting to find someone	5	2	1
Heartbreak (heartbroken)	5	2	2
Have to find someone else to date	5	1	4
Lose support	5	4	1
Less happy	5	3	1
Less frequent sex (2 no more sex)	5	1	4

**Table 7***What Else Comes to Mind When Thinking About My Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Sadness	18	13	2
Don't want to break up	9	4	5
Fear (scared)	8	6	1
Loneliness	6	4	2
Depression (depressed)	5	2	1
Lose (best) friend	6	6	0

**Table 8***Individuals or Groups Who Would Approve of Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
No one would approve	16	11	4
My friends	16	10	6
My parents	10	5	5
My family	10	5	4
1 or 2 friends	6	3	3

**Table 9***Individuals or Groups Who Would Disapprove of Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Partner's family	22	12	9
My friends	21	14	7
My family	20	9	10
My partner	17	7	7
My parents	15	12	3
Partner's friends	14	7	7
Me (myself)	11	4	5
Our mutual friends	11	7	3
My mother	8	5	1
My best/close friends	8	5	2
My partner's parents	7	7	0
My dad	6	3	1
My sister	5	2	3
My brother	5	3	2
My siblings	5	4	0

**Table 10***Other People I Might Talk To If Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
My mother (mom)	23	17	4
My friends	23	14	9
My parents	16	6	10
My counselor (therapist)	13	8	5
My best friend	13	7	3
My family	10	3	6
Close friends	10	5	4
My partner	8	5	3
My sister	8	6	2
My roommate(s)	7	5	2
My sibling(s)	6	4	2

**Table 11***Individuals or Groups I Would Look to for Guidance If Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
My friends	30	15	13
My parents	19	9	8
My best/close friend(s)	11	8	2
My mother (mom)	11	9	1
My sister	7	5	2
My roommate(s)	6	4	2
My brother	5	2	2
Family (family members)	5	1	3

**Table 12***Factors or Circumstances That Would Make It Easy to Break Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Cheating (unfaithfulness)	37	20	15
Lying	8	3	4
Long distance	7	4	3
Trust issues (lack of trust)	6	4	2
Fighting	6	2	4
Treating me badly (poorly)	6	4	2
Want different things	5	3	2
Trying to control me (controlling)	5	3	2
Abusive (physical or emotional abuse)	5	2	2
Stop putting in effort	5	3	1

**Table 13***Factors or Circumstances That Would Make It Difficult to Break Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Love (still love them, first love)	19	9	7
Family ties	10	9	1
Time together (memories together)	8	6	1
Happy together	8	4	2
A non-mutual break up	8	2	5
Partner being best friend	7	6	0
Moving (if one of us had to move)	6	4	2
Emotions	4	2	2

**Table 14***Additional Factors or Constraints That Would Limit Ability to Break Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
No additional constraints	13	5	8
Love	8	4	4
Being together for a long time	5	3	2

**Table 15***Additional Things That Would Encourage Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Cheating	17	8	8
No additional encouragements	14	7	6
Being treated badly	6	6	0
Lost feelings (didn't feel loved anymore)	6	4	2
Lying to me (dishonesty)	5	3	1

**Table 16***Additional Things That Would Enhance Ability to Break Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
No additional enhancements	18	10	7
Cheating	14	7	5
Lying	5	3	2



**Table 17***Social Roles That Would Influence Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
It would be awkward	8	3	5
Still want to be friends	5	4	1
Can't think of any influencing social roles	5	3	1

**Table 18***What I See As My Role in Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
I'd do the breaking up	19	10	9
My partner would break up with me	13	13	0
I don't see myself breaking up	7	4	3
I don't see a/my role	6	3	3
Telling my partner why we're breaking up	5	3	2
I don't know	5	3	2

**Table 19***Specific Beliefs/Ideas About Myself That Would Influence Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
I'm independent and can do what I want	5	4	1

**Table 20***Am I The Kind of Person Who Would Break Up With Their Partner*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Overall 'no'	43	26	16
Overall 'yes'	13	9	4
General 'it depends'	5	1	4

**Table 21***Perceptions of If Moral Obligations Would Influence Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Overall 'yes'	30	19	12
Overall 'no'	17	11	6
Overall 'possibly'	10	6	3

**Table 22***Personal and Moral Beliefs That Would Influence Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Should try to work it out	10	6	4
Wouldn't want to hurt them	5	1	4

**Table 23***Perceptions of If Recent Breaking Up Would Influence Current Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Overall 'no'	40	21	19
Overall 'yes'	11	7	4
Never broken up with someone before	6	5	1
Overall 'possibly'	5	3	2

**Table 24***How Past Breaking Up May Contribute to Current Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
General 'it won't contribute'	19	11	8
It won't contribute, two different relationships	5	3	2
Never broken up with someone before	5	4	1

**Table 25***Emotions or Feelings Associated With Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Sadness (sad)	53	34	19
Loneliness (lonely)	25	16	9
Anger	15	8	7
Depressed (depression)	12	8	4
Anxiety (anxious)	8	7	1
Heartbroken (heartache)	6	6	0
Emptiness (feeling empty)	6	4	2
Confusion (confused)	6	3	3
Guilt (guilty)	5	4	1
Regret	5	3	2
Feeling upset	5	4	1

**Table 26***Emotions or Feelings Anticipated If Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Sadness (sad)	44	28	16
Depressed (depression)	17	13	4
Anger	14	9	5
Regret	8	5	3
Guilt (guilty)	8	3	5
Confusion (confused)	6	3	3
Feeling alone	6	4	2
Anxious (anxiety)	6	4	2
Feeling hurt	5	5	0
Feeling lost	5	5	0
Crying (will cry)	5	4	1

**Table 27***Emotions or Feelings Associated With NOT Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Happiness (happy)	45	26	19
Love (feeling loved)	22	14	8
Joy	10	7	3
Excitement (excited)	9	7	2
Comfort (comfortable)	6	5	1
Feeling secure	5	4	1

**Table 28***Emotions or Feelings Anticipated If NOT Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Happiness (happy)	51	31	20
Love (feeling loved)	23	17	6
Joy	13	10	3
Excitement (excited)	10	6	4
Content	6	6	0
Relief (relieved)	6	4	2
Same emotions experiencing now	5	2	3

**Table 29***How Breaking Up Would Make Me Feel*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Sad	41	29	12
Lonely	15	11	4
Depressed	12	7	5
Lost	9	6	3
Upset	8	7	1
Guilty	7	5	2
Confused	7	4	3
Hurt	6	5	1
Angry (anger)	6	4	2
Happy (happier in a while, in the long run)	5	3	2

**Table 30***Qualities, Characteristics, and Attributes Associated With The Process of Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Sadness (sad)	13	8	5
Would be hard (hard to do, hard to talk about)	9	4	5
Anxiety (anxiety provoking)	8	8	0
Depression (depressed, depressing)	5	4	1
Stressful (stress)	5	2	3

**Table 31***Would I Develop Plans or Strategies Before Breaking Up*

Response Theme	Frequency	Female Frequency	Male Frequency
Overall 'yes'	50	32	18
Overall 'no'	7	5	5

**Discussion**

The results from the belief elicitation revealed prominent patterns regarding individuals' thoughts about breaking up with their committed romantic partner. Perhaps unsurprisingly, participants in this sample associated breaking up with being sad and lonely. Many responses to the belief elicitation questions involved emotional components (e.g., loss, fear, depression, anger), supporting the idea that breaking up with a romantic partner is often an emotionally taxing event (Brumbaugh & Fraley, 2015; Eastwick et al., 2007; Sbarra, 2006; Spielmann et al., 2016). Consistent with other themes noted in dissolution literature, prevalent reasons for why an individual may break up with their romantic partner included unfaithfulness in the relationship, being apart from a romantic partner, losing feelings, or lying (McAnulty & Brineman, 2007;

Simpson, 2007; Wilmot, 1986). Factors that would make breaking up difficult, or constrain the behavior of breaking up with a romantic partner, included feelings of love, ties with mutual friends or partner's family, and time or memories together. These responses regarding constraints are again consistent with other research on romantic relationship dissolution (e.g., Fine & Harvey, 2013; Felmlee, 2001; Kaukinen, 2014), suggesting that the undergraduate student sample may not differ much from other samples in regard to their beliefs about breaking up.

Even though the major response themes to the belief elicitation questions often mentioned emotionally-related content, participants also indicated that they would give sufficient thought into developing plans or strategies before breaking up with their committed romantic partner. The majority of these belief elicitation responses to the implementation intention prompts mentioned planning out where, when, how, and what they would say to their romantic partner if breaking up. This indicates that although breaking up is often associated with feelings, it is also frequently associated with deliberative thought. This is important to note, as it supports the point of view that romantic relationship dissolution often involves planning and a decision (or intent) to break up.

Within the common response themes mentioned above (i.e., prominent emotions, facilitators, constraints, implementation intentions), there were no substantial gender differences. There were, however, a few gender differences noted throughout the entirety of the belief elicitation. For example, females were more likely to mention that breaking up would result in the loss of a friend. Females were also more likely to mention that breaking up would result in loss of relationships with their partner's family. These findings support prior research indicating that females regularly exhibit communal qualities (Twenge, 1997), as they often consider how situations would affect them and others around them.



Intriguingly, despite their communal qualities, females in the sample were more likely to list having more freedom (being free) and getting to be single as advantages of breaking up with their committed romantic partner. These beliefs are interesting in the context of other research noting that relationship dissolution results in less stress and more growth for females than males (Tashiro & Frazier, 2003). When females are in romantic relationships, they often carry more burdens than males do (e.g., relationship maintenance, planning, providing social support). Thus, breaking up could be considered more “freeing” for females than males. In general, although some of the beliefs associated with breaking up may be different between females and males, it is not likely to affect overall relationship dissolution (i.e., dissolution is just as likely for women as it is for men; Fine & Harvey, 2013).

Altogether, the responses to the belief elicitation informed us about the causes, motivations, and factors that contribute to an individual deciding to dissolve their romantic relationship. Participants were open in their responses to the belief elicitation questions, often providing detailed information about the question prompt and their relationship. This openness offered valuable insights into beliefs that contribute to perceived consequences, attitudes, anticipated affect, perceived social norms, social roles, self-concept, personal and moral obligations, attitudes toward the process, perceived control, facilitators, constraints, implementation intentions, habits, and emotions regarding breaking up with a romantic partner.

The response themes from the belief elicitation also fostered the creation of measures that are consistent with the target, action, context, and time of *breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months* (cf. Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). Study 2 uses these measures in a test of the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution. Consequently, Study 2 involves direct tests of the hypotheses outlined earlier

concerning the roles that each critical construct might play in contributing to dissolution intentions or behavior. The methodology for the test of the integrative framework is presented next.

## **STUDY 2: TESTING THE INTEGRATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING AND PREDICTING ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP DISSOLUTION**

### **Methods**

#### **Participants and Procedure**

Given the integrative framework being tested and the behavior of interest (breaking up with a romantic partner), this study required a large number of participants. Research on similar frameworks analyzed with path analyses and structural equation modeling indicate that estimating a proper sample size is complex. Considerations for estimating a sufficient sample size should not rely solely on statistical power, but instead should be supplemented by considerations of potential measurement error, bias, missing data, and weak relationships or effects (Wolf et al., 2013). Given these considerations and the well-established rule of thumb that there should be a minimum of 20 observations for each estimated model parameter, but ideally more, (Kline, 2015; Barbeau, Boileau, Sarr, & Smith, 2019), the aim was to recruit 1050 participants (a goal of 50 observations per estimated model parameter).

Overall, 1003 individuals were recruited ( $M_{\text{age}} = 27.57$  years,  $SD_{\text{age}} = 8.38$ ). All participants were involved in non-marital, non-engaged, committed romantic relationships with one other partner. These individuals were recruited through the online research platform Prolific©. Sixty-two percent of the participants identified as female, 35% male, and 3% another gender identity. The average relationship length in this sample was 42.05 months ( $SD = 52.10$ ). The participant sample was 70% heterosexual, 22% bisexual, 5% homosexual, and 3% another sexual orientation. The majority of participants were Caucasian (64.5%), with the remaining individuals identifying as Asian American or Asian (16%), Hispanic or Latino (8%), African

American or Black (5.5%), Middle Eastern (.5%), American Indian or Alaska Native (.5%), and Other (4.5%).

The participants were welcomed to the study and provided information associated with their consent to participate. After consent was received, participants confirmed they were at least 18 years of age and currently in a committed, non-marital, non-engaged, romantic relationship with one other partner. Subsequently, participants responded to a questionnaire presented with Qualtrics© survey software. This questionnaire was designed to assess the theoretical components involved in the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution. Specifically, this questionnaire involved 3-15 questions assessing each theoretical antecedent involved in the model: the individual's behavioral beliefs, perceived consequences, attitude, normative beliefs, perceived social norms, self-concept, social roles, control beliefs, perceived behavioral control, negative/positive anticipated affect, emotions toward relationship dissolution, attitude toward the process of breaking up, past break up behavior, break up habits, intentions to break up, implementation intentions, facilitators, and constraints regarding breaking up. Upon completion of the questions, participants were debriefed and thanked for their participation. In addition, participants received monetary compensation for their participation in the survey (\$7 USD for a median of approximately 35 minutes).

Beyond participation in the above mentioned questionnaire assessing the theoretical components of the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution, all 1003 participants were also invited to a two-month follow-up survey. The follow-up survey assessed participants' current romantic relationship status and determined if they engaged in romantic relationship dissolution (i.e., broke up with their romantic partner). Upon

completion, participants received \$0.33 USD as compensation for their participation in the approximately two-minute follow-up survey.

In total, 656 individuals participated in the follow-up survey. Six hundred eleven individuals were still in the same committed romantic relationship, 10 reported their partner had broken up with them, 17 reported they broke up with their romantic partner, 12 reported a mutual break up, and 6 indicated an “Other” current relationship status (e.g., they are still in a relationship but have not spoken to their partner in a while).

## Measures

The measures for this study were largely informed by prior research assessing the components of the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) and theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977). Consistent with this prior research, the responses to Study 1’s belief elicitation about breaking up with a committed romantic partner were used to create unique measures appropriate for this study’s behavior of interest: *my breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months*. The full list of items used in this study can be found in Appendices B-Q.

*Habits and past behavior.* Past break up behavior was assessed first in the questionnaire. Participants were asked to respond to questions such as “How many times have you broken up with a committed romantic partner in your lifetime?”, “How recently have you broken up with a committed romantic partner?”, and “Do you perceive your past breaking up with a committed romantic partner would influence your breaking up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?” (1 = *Definitely no*, 7 = *Definitely yes*; Triandis, 1977). Break up habits are assessed with questions such as “How often do you break up with your committed romantic partner?” (1 = *Never*, 7 = *Always*) and “How much would your habits in your relationships

matter for breaking up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?” (1 = *Not at all*, 7 = *Completely*; Hinsz, Nickell, & Park, 2007). The full list of questions for habits and past behavior can be found in Appendix B.

*Role perceptions.* The influence of social roles in breaking up was assessed next. Participants responded to questions like “For me as someone who is seeking a committed romantic partner, it is \_\_\_\_\_ for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.” and “For me as a (male/female/other gender identity), it is \_\_\_\_\_ for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.” (Bamberg & Schmidt, 2003; Triandis, 1977). There are three response indicators for each question (1 = *Extremely inappropriate*, 7 = *Extremely appropriate*; 1 = *Extremely unfitting*, 7 = *Extremely fitting*, 1 = *Extremely improper*, 7 = *Extremely proper*). These questions are listed in Appendix C.

*Self-concept.* After participants responded to questions about their social roles, they were presented questions about their self-concept and breaking up. For example, participants were asked “Are you the kind of person who would break up with their committed romantic partner within the next six months?” (1 = *Definitely no*, 7 = *Definitely yes*; Triandis, 1977) and “To what extent do you feel you would become more of who you are, as a result of breaking up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?” (1 = *Not at all*, 7 = *Completely*; Lewandowski, Aron, Bassis, & Kunak, 2006). The self-concept questions are in Appendix D.

*Emotion towards the behavior.* Feelings toward breaking up were assessed next. Participants were asked to indicate responses to statements such as “My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be:” (1 = *Extremely sad*, 7 = *Extremely happy*; 1 = *Extremely lonely*, 7 = *Extremely loving*, 1 = *Extremely angry*, 7 =

*Extremely enthused*; 1 = *Extremely depressing*, 7 = *Extremely joyful*; Triandis, 1977). In total, there were 10 different response indicators for feelings toward the behavior. These questions are listed in Appendix E.

*Anticipated affect.* After assessing emotion towards the behavior, questions about negative and positive *anticipated* affect over breaking up were presented. For instance, participants responded to “How sad do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?” (1 = *Not at all sad*, 7 = *Extremely sad*), “How lonely do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?” (1 = *Not at all lonely*, 7 = *Extremely lonely*), “How happy do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?” (1 = *Not at all happy*, 7 = *Extremely happy*), and “How proud do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?” (1 = *Not at all proud*, 7 = *Extremely proud*; Hinsz, Nickell, & Park, 2007; Sandberg & Conner, 2008). The full list of anticipated affect questions is in Appendix F. The negative anticipated affect questions were reverse scored (1 = *Extremely sad*, 7 = *Not at all sad*) because intentions to break up are associated with lower levels of negative anticipated affect regarding breaking up.

*Perceived consequences.* Questions concerning perceived consequences about breaking up were asked next. Participants were asked to indicate responses to probability of perceived outcome statements such as “If I break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, the likelihood I would be lonely is:” and “If I break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, the likelihood I would lose a friend is:” (1 = *Extremely unlikely*, 7 = *Extremely likely*; Triandis, 1977). The value of the perceived consequences was

assessed with questions like “Being lonely after breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be \_\_\_\_\_.” and “Losing a friend after breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be \_\_\_\_\_.” (1 = *Extremely bad*, 7 = *Extremely good*; Triandis, 1977). These questions are in Appendix G. Consistent with Triandis’ theory of interpersonal behavior, perceived consequences were calculated using the sum of the cross-products for the probability of perceived outcomes and value of consequences items (Triandis, 1977). The probability of perceived outcome questions were reverse scored into 1 = *Extremely likely* and 7 = *Extremely unlikely* because perceived consequences that are less likely are more closely associated with intentions to break up.

*Personal and moral obligations.* After perceived consequences, moral obligations and personal norms were assessed. Moral obligations are mentioned in Triandis’ theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977) as part of the “social” component, but have not always been included in previous applications of this theory. This study asked participants about their obligations regarding breaking up, with questions such as “Do you feel a moral obligation to break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months? That is, do you think it is something you ought to do?” (1 = *Extremely weak moral obligation to break up*, 7 = *Extremely strong moral obligation to break up*; Hom & Hulin, 1981), “How strongly do you feel a personal obligation to break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?” (1 = *Not at all*, 7 = *Completely*; Bamberg & Schmidt, 2003), and “How strongly do you feel you owe it to yourself to break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?” (1 = *Not at all*, 7 = *Completely*). Moral obligation and personal norm questions can be found in Appendix H.



*Behavioral beliefs.* Participants were then asked to respond to questions about their behavioral belief strength and outcome evaluations regarding breaking up with their committed romantic partner within the next six months. Examples of questions about behavioral belief strength are “If I break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, I will have more freedom.” (1 = *Extremely unlikely*, 7 = *Extremely likely*) and “If I break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, I will have more time to focus on myself.” (1 = *Extremely unlikely*, 7 = *Extremely likely*). The evaluations of these outcomes were assessed through items such as “My having more freedom is:” (1 = *Extremely bad*, 7 = *Extremely good*) and “My having more time to focus on myself is” (1 = *Extremely bad*, 7 = *Extremely good*). Consistent with the reasoned action approach, behavioral beliefs were scored using the sum of the cross-products of outcome evaluation and belief strength items (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). Negative outcome belief strength items (e.g., “If I break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, I will lose a friend to talk to and share things with”) were reverse scored into 1 = *Extremely likely* and 7 = *Extremely unlikely* because negative outcomes that are less likely are more closely associated with intentions to break up. For the three questions that were reverse scored, see Appendix I.

*Attitude toward the behavior.* Once participants completed questions about behavioral beliefs and outcome evaluations, attitudes toward breaking up were assessed. These direct attitudes were assessed through measures like “My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months is:” (1 = *Extremely bad*, 7 = *Extremely good*; 1 = *Extremely negative*, 7 = *Extremely positive*; 1 = *Extremely unfavorable*, 7 = *Extremely favorable*; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). All questions related to behavioral beliefs, outcome evaluations, and attitudes toward breaking up are in Appendix I.

*Normative beliefs and perceived social norms.* Participants were then asked to answer questions about injunctive and descriptive norms regarding breaking up with their romantic partner. Direct measures were used to assess both injunctive and descriptive norms. Examples of direct injunctive norm items are “Most people who are important to me think I should break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.” (1 = *Extremely false*, 7 = *Extremely true*), and “Most people whose opinions I value would approve of my breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.” (1 = *Extremely improbable*, 7 = *Extremely probable*; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). Examples of direct measures for descriptive norms are “Most people like me will break up with their committed romantic partner within the next six months.” (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*) and “Most people I talk to will break up with their committed romantic partner within the next six months.” (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011).

Injunctive and descriptive normative beliefs were also measured through questions that assess motivation to comply (e.g., “When it comes to committed romantic relationships, I want to do what my friends think I should do.”; 1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*), belief strength (e.g., “My friends think that I should break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.” (injunctive); “My friends would break up with their committed romantic partner within the next six months.” (descriptive); 1 = *Extremely improbable*, 7 = *Extremely probable*), and identification with the normative referents (e.g., “When it comes to committed romantic relationships, how much do you want to be like your friends?”; 1 = *Not at all*, 7 = *Completely*; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). The normative referents derived from the belief elicitation and used in this set of questions were: friends, parents, family members, partner’s family members, and romantic partner. In accordance with the reasoned action approach,

normative beliefs were calculated using the sum of the cross-products for all motivation to comply and belief strength questions (injunctive norms) as well as all identification with the referents and belief strength items (descriptive norms). All questions related to perceived social norms and normative beliefs are found in Appendix J.

*Perceived behavioral control, control beliefs, facilitators, and constraints.* After participants responded to questions about injunctive and descriptive norms, participants were presented questions assessing their perceived behavioral control over breaking up with their romantic partner. Direct perceived behavioral control items such as “I am confident that I can break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.” (‘capacity’; 1 = *Extremely false*, 7 = *Extremely true*) and “My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months is up to me.” (‘autonomy’; 1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) were used.

In addition, questions about control beliefs were asked. For example, participants responded to power of control questions such as “My romantic partner cheating would make it easy for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.” (a facilitator, 1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*) and “My receiving love from/loving my romantic partner would make it difficult for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.” (a constraint, 1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*). The belief strength that these outcomes will occur was also assessed, with questions like “That I will be cheated on by my romantic partner in the next six months is:” (1 = *Extremely unlikely*, 7 = *Extremely likely*) and “That I will receive love from/love my romantic partner within the next six months is:” (1 = *Extremely unlikely*, 7 = *Extremely likely*; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). Control beliefs were calculated using the sum of the cross-products for all power of control and belief

strength questions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). The power of control questions for constraint-like items were reverse scored into 1 = *Strongly agree*, 7 = *Strongly disagree*, to maintain consistency that the higher summed cross-product score reflects more control over breaking up.

The moderating facilitators and constraints proposed in the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution were created using the corresponding power of control items assessed within control beliefs. The calculation for facilitators and constraints differs from the calculation of control beliefs, as the calculation of facilitators and constraints uses the mean of only the respective power of control questions, whereas control beliefs are calculated using the multiplicative cross-product of both the power of control and belief strength measures for all facilitator and constraint-like items. See Appendix K.

*Intentions.* Intentions to break up were then assessed. Example items for intentions are “I \_\_\_\_\_ intend to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.” (1 = *Definitely do not*, 7 = *Definitely do*; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011), “I will break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.” (1 = *Extremely unlikely*, 7 = *Extremely likely*; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011), and “I desire to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.” (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*; Hinsz, Nickell, & Park, 2007). All six intention questions can be found in Appendix L.

*Attitude toward the process.* Once participants indicated their intentions about breaking up, participants responded to questions about their attitude toward the process of breaking up. Questions such as the following were presented: “My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, regardless of whether or not we actually break up, would feel right to me.” (1 = *Extremely false*, 7 = *Extremely true*; Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990; Higgins, 2005), “The procedures that would be involved in me breaking up with my committed romantic

partner within the next six months would be:” (1 = *Extremely unpleasant*, 7 = *Extremely pleasant*), and “The process of me breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be:” (1 = *Extremely unenjoyable*, 7 = *Extremely enjoyable*; Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990; Hinsz & Ployhart, 1998). Attitude toward the process questions are in Appendix M.

*Implementation intentions.* Implementation intentions were then assessed. Participants were asked to answer questions like “If I were to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, I would develop plans or strategies before doing so.” (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*; Gollwitzer, 1999), “How much time would you put into developing plans or strategies before your breaking up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?” (1 = *No time*, 7 = *Extreme amount of time*), and “How much effort would you put into developing plans or strategies before your breaking up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?” (1 = *No effort*, 7 = *Extreme amount of effort*). The list of implementation intention questions is in Appendix N.

*Additional questions on commitment (intentions, personal norms, obligations).* Some additional commitment questions were then presented to participants. These questions are phrased like “How much do you WANT to stay in a committed romantic relationship with your partner at this stage?” (1 = *Not at all*, 7 = *Completely*), “How much do you feel that you SHOULD stay in a committed romantic relationship with your partner at this stage?” (1 = *Not at all*, 7 = *Completely*), and “How much do you feel that you HAVE to stay in a committed romantic relationship with your partner at this stage?” (1 = *Not at all*, 7 = *Completely*; Johnson, Caughlin, & Huston, 1999). These additional questions were included to allow for the possibility of exploring if intentions and perceived social norms can account for variance associated with

these common measures of relationship commitment. The full list of questions can be found in Appendix O.

*Head and heart identifiers.* Participants were then asked to respond to two supplementary questions about whether they more closely associate themselves with their head or heart. These questions were “Irrespective of what you know about biology, which body part do you more closely associate with yourself?” (1 = *Brain*, 2 = *Heart*), and “Irrespective of what you know about biology, which body part do you more closely associate with yourself?” (1 = *Head*, 2 = *Heart*; Fetterman & Robinson, 2013). In prior literature, head identifiers have been linked to more rational decision making, whereas heart identifiers have been associated with more emotional decision making (Fetterman & Robinson, 2013). These questions are listed in Appendix P and were included to allow for the opportunity to explore if similar patterns of decision making occur within the context of romantic relationship dissolution.

*Attention checks.* Embedded in this survey were six multiple-choice attention checks. As an example attention check question, participants were asked to respond to “It is important for me to make conscientious (careful) responses to these questions about my breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months. Please select ‘moderately agree’, regardless of what your actual opinion is.” (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*). These attention checks were used as a means of assessing participants’ conscientiousness in responding. Participants who failed more than two attention checks were dismissed from the online study. In total, 19 participants were rejected and thus are not included in this dataset.

*Post-session questions.* Once participants finished all of the above mentioned measures, they were asked to answer descriptive and demographic questions. These questions asked

participants to indicate their gender, age, race, sexual orientation, relationship length, and number of past romantic relationships/relationship partners.

*Follow-up questionnaire.* Two months after completion of the initial study, an invitation to participate in a brief follow-up survey was sent to all 1003 participants. The follow-up questionnaire asked participants “Are you still in a committed romantic relationship with the person you were dating at the time you completed the ‘Breaking Up’ Study”? (1 = *Yes, we are still in a committed romantic relationship*, 2 = *No, my partner broke up with me*, 3 = *No, I broke off the relationship with my partner*, 4 = *No, we had a mutual break up*, 5 = *Other*). Participants who had broken up were asked to indicate how long ago the romantic relationship with their partner ended. Participants who were still in the committed romantic relationship were asked the current length of their romantic relationship, as well as intention questions (e.g., “I \_\_\_\_ intend to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.”; 1 = *Definitely do not*, 7 = *Definitely do*; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). The full list of follow-up questions is presented in Appendix Q.

*Debriefing.* Upon completion of both the initial study and the follow-up questionnaire, the purpose of the study was reiterated to participants. Further, information about healthy romantic relationships was provided.

## **Analyses and Results**

Path analyses were used to examine the hypotheses set forth by the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution (Figure 3). First, correlational analyses were conducted on the main theoretical components. These correlations are presented in Table 32. Then, internal consistency of the measures used within the test of the integrative framework was assessed. Table 33 provides the scale categorization, level of internal consistency

of measures, mean, and standard deviation for each concept involved in the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution. All scales included in the integrative framework reached acceptable levels of internal consistency ( $\alpha > .70$ ).

After internal consistency was established, a path analysis of the integrative framework was conducted (Figure 4). Revisions were made based on the initial test of the model, in accordance with critical consideration of involved theories (Figure 5). A path analysis was then conducted on the revised model (Figure 6, Table 34). Supplementary structural equation modeling analyses were also used to explore the overarching concepts involved within the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution (e.g., attitudinal, affective, and social contributors to intentions to break up; Figures 7, 8, 9, Tables 34, 35). Lastly, correlational analyses were used to investigate potential support for relationships that were not tested within the path analyses (Table 37).

It is important to note that a number of the measures had a restriction of range, primarily by exhibiting floor or ceiling effects. For example, among the 1003 participants, 633 participants indicated that they had no intention to break up with their romantic partner on all six intention items (a composite intention score of 1). Similar issues arise for the measures of attitude, attitude toward the process, positive anticipated affect, emotions towards the behavior, self-concept, personal or moral obligations, and constraints regarding breaking up with a committed romantic partner. This restriction of range could lead to underestimates of effect sizes or predictive validity within the relationships specified in the integrative framework. Within the context of romantic relationship dissolution though, the response patterns are generally unsurprising (e.g., it is not surprising individuals would report low positive anticipated affect towards breaking off their committed relationship) yet meaningful (e.g., having no intention to break up with a



committed romantic partner tells us something meaningful about the participants' interpretations of their relationships). Thus, despite the restriction of range, no modifications were made to the data because the meaning of participants' responses is too important to risk altering.

**Table 32***Correlations for Theoretical Components Leading to Romantic Relationship Dissolution Intentions*

Factor	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1 Intentions	.21**	.38**	.75**	.59**	.44**	.55**	.54**	.52**	.58**	.40**	.69**	.74**	.67**	.48**	-.01
2 Perceived Consequences	—	.22**	.39**	.26**	.42**	.29**	.40**	.16**	.23**	.19**	.29**	.18**	.25**	.27**	.06
3 Behavioral Beliefs		—	.39**	.37**	.36**	.36**	.38**	.26**	.39**	.26**	.49**	.36**	.41**	.42**	.06
4 Attitude			—	.65**	.63**	.59**	.68**	.45**	.55**	.40**	.64**	.62**	.62**	.51**	.03
5 Attitude Toward Process				—	.51**	.52**	.61**	.47**	.53**	.36**	.57**	.60**	.57**	.51**	-.01
6 Negative Anticipated Affect					—	.43**	.80**	.22**	.37**	.34**	.50**	.36**	.45**	.40**	.17**
7 Positive Anticipated Affect						—	.58**	.42**	.43**	.31**	.54**	.52**	.50**	.38**	.01
8 Emotions Toward Behavior							—	.36**	.44**	.35**	.56**	.47**	.52**	.46**	.05
9 Normative Beliefs								—	.57**	.26**	.45**	.50**	.44**	.42**	-.11**
10 Perceived Social Norms									—	.36**	.53**	.56**	.55**	.52**	.03
11 Social Roles										—	.52**	.36**	.89**	.33**	.09**
12 Self-Concept											—	.63**	.78**	.52**	.06
13 Personal and Moral Obligations												—	.72**	.48**	-.03
14 Social Factors Composite													—	.50**	.06
15 Control Beliefs														—	.07*
16 Perceived Behavioral Control															—

Note.  $p < .05^*$ ,  $p < .01^{**}$

**Table 33***Scale Categorizations, Internal Consistency, Means, and Standard Deviations for the Integrative Framework Theoretical Concepts*

Theoretical Concept	Scale Categorization	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )	Mean ( $M$ )	Standard Deviation ( $SD$ )	Notes/Relevant Appendix
Behavioral Beliefs	Sum of the cross-products of Outcome Evaluations and Belief Strength; 9 cross-products	.80	160.62	62.11	Negative outcome belief strength questions reverse scored; Appendix I
Direct Attitude	Mean of all direct attitude questions; 3 items	.91	1.63	1	Appendix I
Perceived Consequences	Sum of the cross-products of Probability of Perceived Outcomes and Value of Consequences; 4 cross-products	.72	16.43	14.75	Probability of perceived outcomes was reverse scored for all items. The "losing relationships with my partners' family" item was not included due to low internal consistency with other items; Appendix G
Attitude Toward the Process	Mean of all attitude toward the process items; 8 items	.83	1.69	.85	Appendix M
Negative Anticipated Affect	Mean of negative anticipated affect items; 10 items	.89	2.79	1.24	Items reverse scored, 7 now indicates low negative anticipated affect; Appendix F
Positive Anticipated Affect	Mean of all positive anticipated affect questions; 7 items	.84	1.33	.54	Appendix F
Emotions Toward Behavior	Mean of emotion towards behavior questions; 10 items	.87	1.79	.64	Appendix E
Normative Beliefs	Sum of the cross-products of the Motivation to Comply/Belief Strength and Identification with the Referents/Belief Strength questions; 10 cross-products	.81	47.11	28.26	Appendix J
Direct Perceived Social Norms	Mean of direct perceived social norm items; 6 items	.79	2.21	1.08	Appendix J

**Table 33.** *Scale Categorizations, Internal Consistency, Means, and Standard Deviations for the Integrative Framework Theoretical Concepts (continued)*

Theoretical Concept	Scale Categorization	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )	Mean ( $M$ )	Standard Deviation ( $SD$ )	Notes/Relevant Appendix
Social Roles	Mean of all social role questions; 9 items	.92	2.78	1.21	Appendix C
Self-Concept	Mean of self-concept questions; 3 items	.81	2.16	1.27	Appendix D
Personal/Moral Obligations	Mean of selected personal/moral obligation questions; 6 items	.84	3.34	1.54	Appendix H; other items having poor item characteristics were not included (see Appendix H)
Social Factors	Mean of all social role, self-concept, and personal/moral obligation questions; 18 items	.91	2.4	.94	Appendices C, D, and H
Control Beliefs	Sum of the cross-products of all Power of Control and Belief Strength questions; 10 cross-products	.75	104.8	43.85	Power of control "constraint" items were reverse scored; see Appendix K
Direct Perceived Behavioral Control	Mean of all direct perceived behavioral control questions; 3 items	.72	5.28	1.38	"Confident I can break up" item was not included due to low internal consistency with other items; Appendix K
Intentions	Mean of all intention items; 6 items	.94	1.51	1.04	Appendix L
Implementation Intentions	Mean of all implementation intention items; 5 items	.92	4.94	1.52	Appendix N
Facilitators	Mean of Facilitator 'Power of Control' items; 6 items	.80	4.63	1.2	Appendix K
Constraints	Mean of Constraint 'Power of Control' items; 4 items	.77	6.47	.82	"Connections to partner's family...would make it difficult for me to break up" item was not included due to low internal consistency with other items; Appendix K
Past Behavior	Mean of frequency of past behavior items; 2 items	.82	2.83	1.68	137 participants reported never breaking up before and were coded as missing; Appendix B

**Table 33.** *Scale Categorizations, Internal Consistency, Means, and Standard Deviations for the Integrative Framework Theoretical Concepts (continued)*

Theoretical Concept	Scale Categorization	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )	Mean ( $M$ )	Standard Deviation ( $SD$ )	Notes/Relevant Appendix
Habits	Mean of habit questions; 4 items	.77	2.59	1.23	133 participants reported never breaking up before and were coded as missing; Appendix B
Additional Commitment Items	Mean of all additional commitment questions; 4 items	.69	4.88	1.32	Appendix O

### Path Analysis

To test the relationships within the proposed integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution, a path analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS AMOS 26©. Unfortunately, given the few participants who engaged in the behavior of breaking up with their romantic partner (17 individuals/656 respondents), we were unable to test hypotheses 15-21 within the path analysis. Accordingly, the initial path analysis of the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution includes all variables leading to 'intentions' to break up with a romantic partner.

The results of the initial path analysis are depicted in Figure 4.<sup>3</sup> This initial path analysis supported hypotheses 1-14 at traditional levels of statistical significance ( $p < .05$ ), with the exception of hypothesis 1 (perceived consequences of breaking up will have a significant, positive association with intentions to break up,  $\beta = -.11, p < .01$ ), hypothesis 5 (low levels of negative anticipated affect will have a significant, positive association with intentions to break up,  $\beta = -.10, p < .01$ ), hypothesis 7 (emotions toward the behavior of breaking up will be

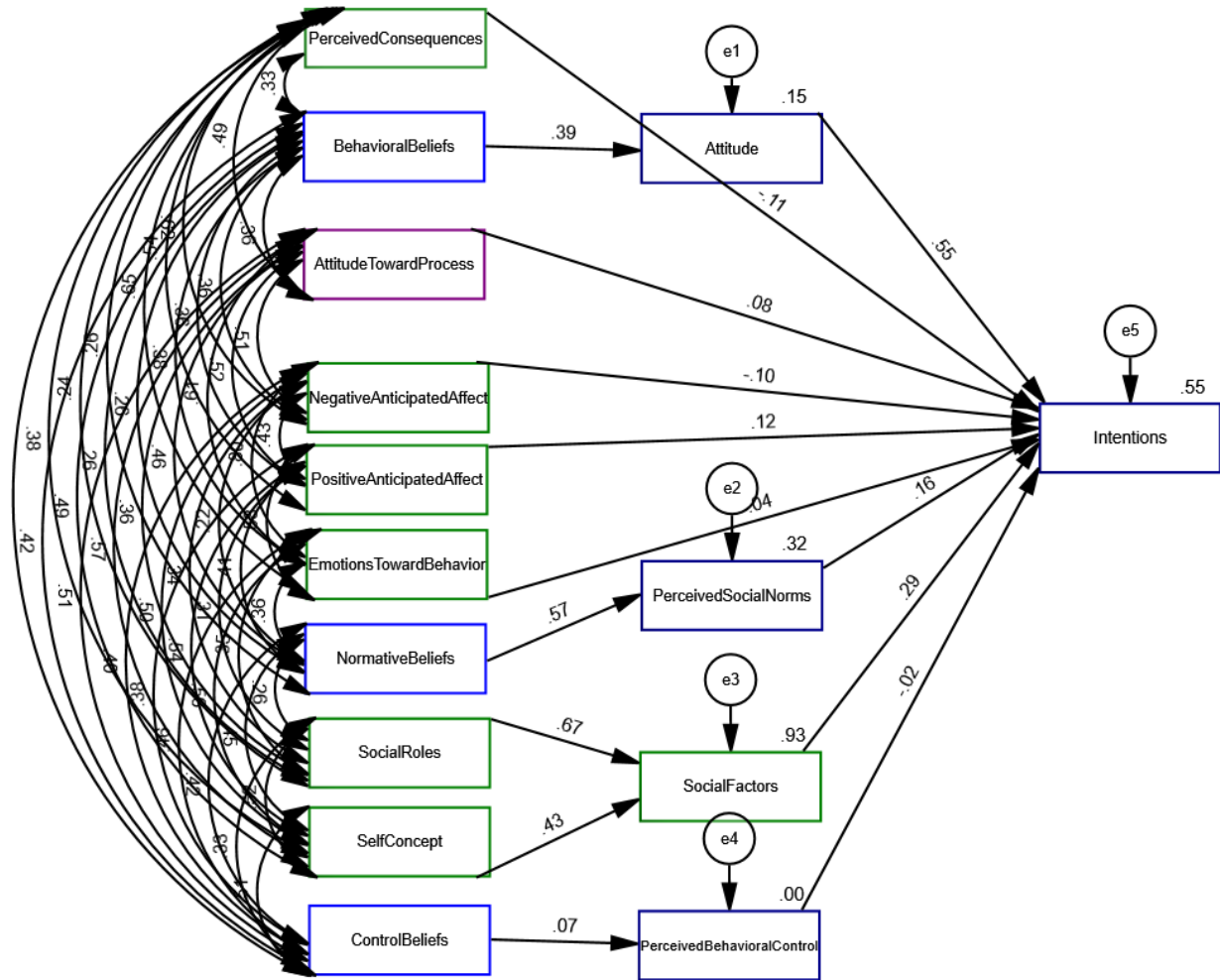
<sup>3</sup> The assumption of multivariate normality was violated in the test of the model. In accordance with suggestions for testing non-normally distributed data within AMOS© path analysis, a non-parametric bootstrapping analysis was performed (Byrne, 2016). The bootstrapping analysis did not change the interpretation of the path results and thus is not reported.

significantly associated with intentions to break up with a romantic partner,  $\beta = .044, p = .290$ ) and hypothesis 14 (perceived control over breaking up with a romantic partner will have a significant, positive association with intentions to break up with a romantic partner,  $\beta = -.022, p = .303$ ).

The proposed model did not reach any standard levels of “good” fit. Many researchers classify levels of good fit as a non-significant chi-square, goodness-of-fit index (GFI)  $\geq .90$ , comparative fit index (CFI)  $\geq .95$ , standardized root mean square residual (SRMR)  $< .08$ , and root mean square error of approximation  $\leq .08$  (Awang, 2015; Byrne, 2016). The initial test of the proposed model revealed  $\chi^2(46) = 1720.57, p < .001$ , goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = .840, comparative fit index (CFI) = .843, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .169, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .191, indicating the model could be reconsidered for better fit.

**Figure 4**

*Initial Path Analysis Results from the Proposed Integrative Framework for Understanding and Romantic Relationship Dissolution (Intentions)*



The model was reconsidered and revised. The results of the initial path analysis demonstrated non-significant contributions of emotions and perceived control to intentions to break up, as well as a low association between control beliefs and perceived behavioral control over breaking up. Consequently, these relationships were deleted in the revised model. Moreover, social roles and self-concept were deleted. Both the contributions of social roles and self-concept to “social factors” were significant, however, because social factors is comprised of

social role items, self-concept items, personal norm and moral obligation items, it is more appropriate to examine just the composite social factors contribution to intentions. This approach is consistent with Triandis' theoretical conception of how social factors beyond social norms contribute to intentions to behave (Triandis, 1977).

Further revisions to the initial path model were made based upon careful consideration of the modification indices and the theoretical frameworks involved. The revisions included adding indirect effects between a) perceived consequences and attitude, b) attitude toward the process and attitude, c) negative anticipated affect and attitude, d) positive anticipated affect and attitude, as well as e) social factors and perceived social norms (see Figure 5).

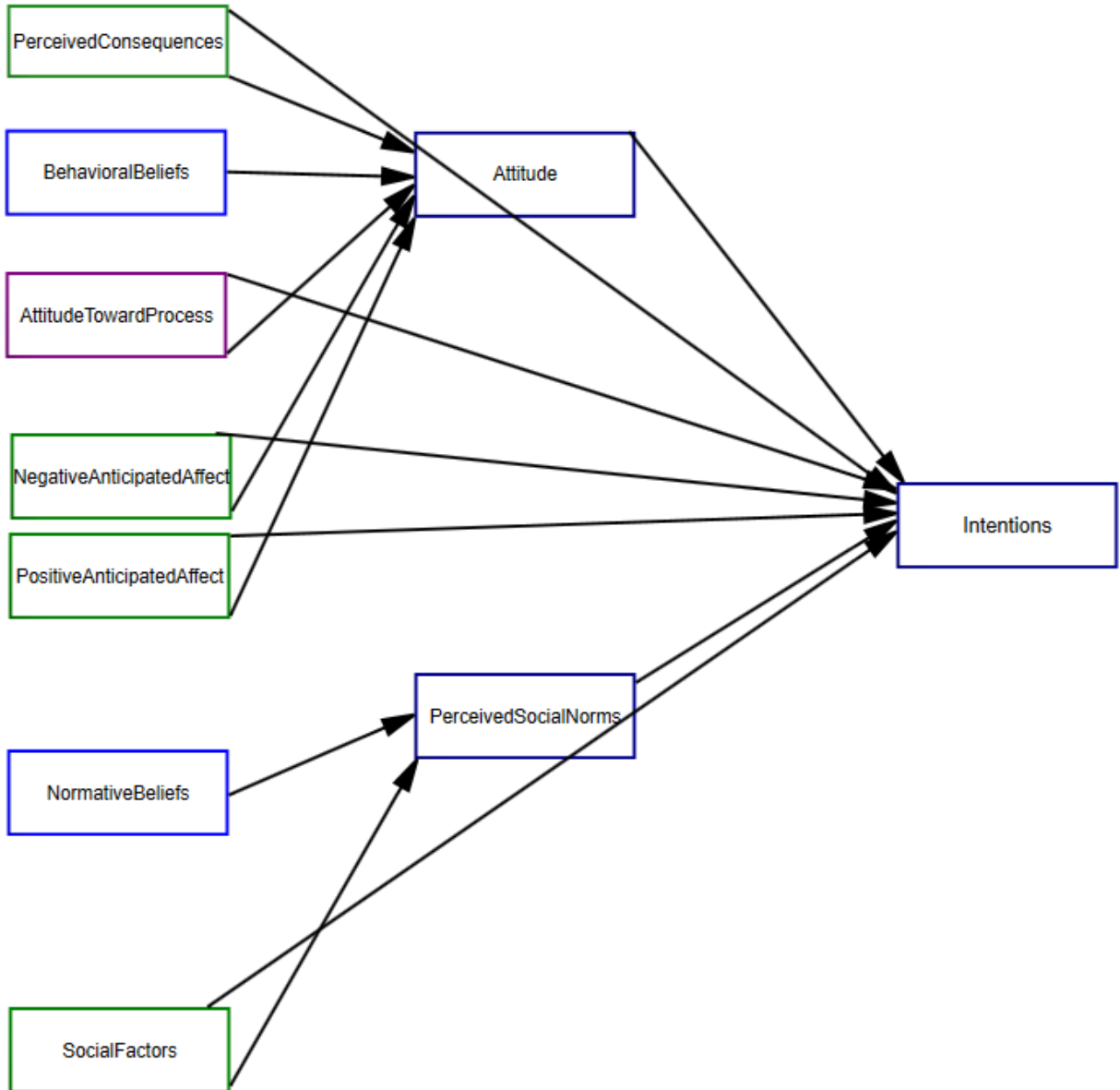
Based on the reasoning outlined in the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011), theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977), and theory of goal pursuit (attitude toward the process; Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990), these added indirect effects make conceptual sense. Triandis' probability of perceived outcomes and value of consequences is similar to Fishbein and Ajzen's belief strength and evaluation of outcomes, suggesting that attitude may be related to perceived consequences. Attitude toward the process reflects feelings toward pursuing breaking up with a romantic partner regardless of attaining that outcome, which can be related to the overall attitude indicating a degree of favorableness toward breaking up. Anticipated affect describes anticipated feelings towards a behavior, and as Triandis (1977) notes, attitude should be considered with relation to affective tones, which is inconsistent with the Fishbein and Ajzen (2011) perspective. Therefore, attitude (favorableness of breaking up) could be related to the anticipated feelings associated with breaking up (anticipated affect), particularly within the context of romantic relationship dissolution.



In addition, it is likely that social factors (self-concept, social roles, personal norms, moral obligations) are associated with perceived social norms. Both the theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977) and reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) mention the potential importance of personal norms and moral obligations in contributing to an individual's social influences. Moreover, Triandis' (1977) theory of interpersonal behavior also considers how self-concept and social roles may relate to social aspects that influence interpersonal behaviors (e.g., social expectations and norms). The revised model including indirect effects a-e is presented in Figure 5.

**Figure 5**

*The Revised Model for Understanding and Predicting Romantic Relationship Dissolution Intentions*



A test of the revised model indicated a substantially improved fit with the data,  $\chi^2(10) = 217.87, p < .001$ , goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = .962, comparative fit index (CFI) = .960, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .029, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .144.

With the revised model, the chi-square value is still significant, and the root mean square error of approximation is considered high. It is generally understood that chi-square values are affected by sample size. For complex models with a large sample size (>200), the chi-square is almost always significant and is thus often disregarded as an indication of fit (Awang, 2015; Byrne, 2016; Kenny, 2015). The root mean square error of approximation is influenced by the chi-square value, as RMSEA's computational formula is  $\frac{\sqrt{\chi^2 - df}}{\sqrt{[df(N - 1)]}}$  (Kenny, 2015).

Although many researchers report and use strict cut-off values for fit indices like RMSEA, others note that these cut-off values are arbitrary and do not necessarily reflect poor model fit (Lai & Green, 2016). Instead of evaluating a model based on an inconsistent fit index, researchers should specify and revise models according to substantive theory (Lai & Green, 2016). The model revisions (a-e) were conscientiously made in accordance with critical consideration of the involved theories. There were suggested model modifications from the AMOS© output that improved fit indices beyond the revised model<sup>4</sup>, however, the choice was made to not further revise the model to include them. This decision was made based on the lack of conceptual support for the suggested relationships (e.g., the suggested relationship between behavioral beliefs and perceived social norms is inconsistent with ideas outlined in the reasoned action approach, Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011; social factors/norms and attitudes are conceptually independent contributors to intentions in both the reasoned action approach and theory of interpersonal behavior, Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011; Triandis, 1977). Adding the suggested indirect effects to appease the fit indices would not align with the notion that models should be revised

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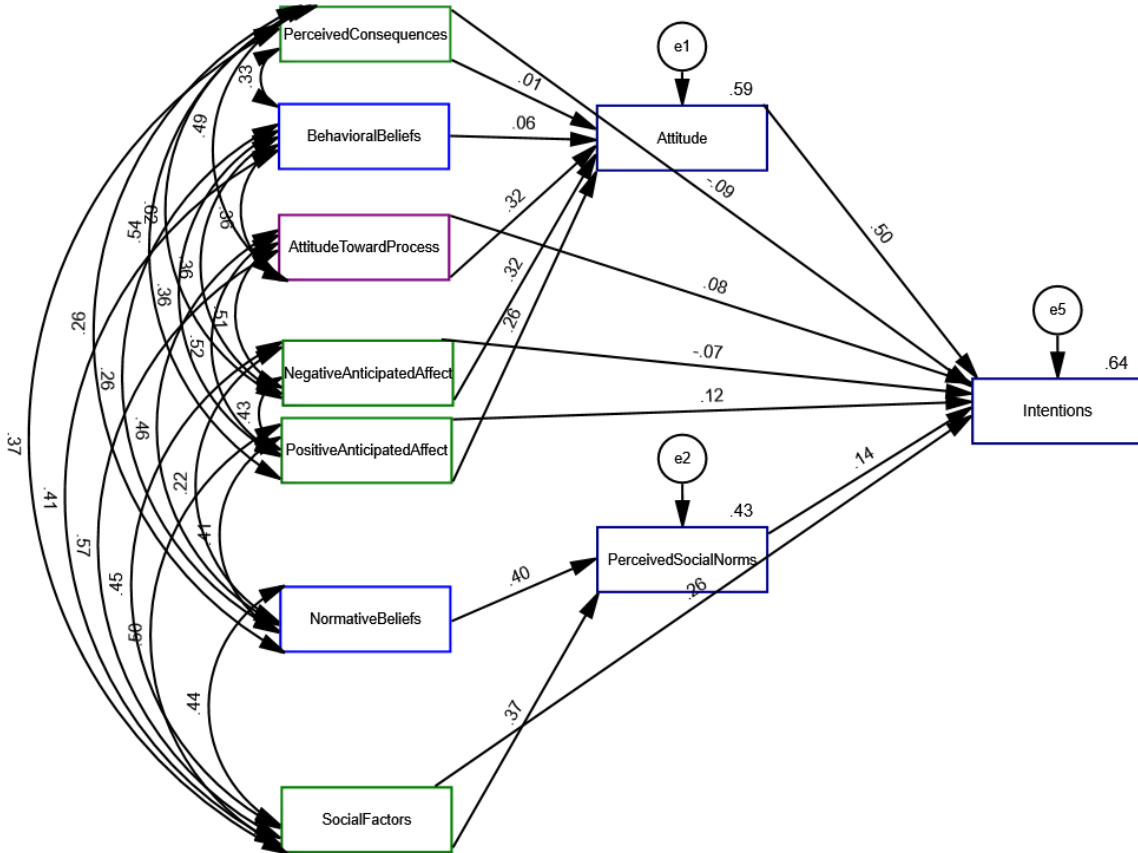
<sup>4</sup> The suggested model modifications that were not incorporated were: 1) adding an indirect effect between behavioral beliefs and perceived social norms, 2) deleting the indirect effect between perceived consequences and attitude, 3) adding an indirect effect between attitude and perceived social norms, and 4) adding an indirect effect between social factors and attitude. If these modifications were made, the fit indices would be GFI = .988, CFI = .99, SRMR = .02, RMSEA = .08.

based on theoretical understanding (Lai & Green, 2016). Thus, the revised model will be discussed without additional alterations.

The revised model and its standardized coefficients are depicted in Figure 6. All direct and indirect effects are significant at  $p \leq .01$ , except the indirect effect of perceived consequences on attitude which is non-significant ( $p = .605$ ; see Table 34). Overall, the revised model accounts for 64% of variance in predicting intentions to break up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months. Further consideration of the results of the path analyses is presented in the Discussion section.

**Figure 6**

*Path Analysis Results from the Revised Model of Understanding and Predicting Romantic Relationship Dissolution Intentions*



**Table 34**

*Path Analysis Results from the Revised Model of Understanding and Predicting Romantic Relationship Dissolution Intentions*

Path/Parameter	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i> S.E.	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	Relevant Hypothesis
Behavioral Beliefs → Attitude	.001	.000	.064	2.849	.004	H2, S
Normative Beliefs → Perceived Social Norms	.015	.001	.401	15.075	***	H8, S
Attitude Toward Process → Attitude	.369	.030	.316	12.200	***	N/A
Negative Anticipated Affect → Attitude	.259	.022	.322	11.832	***	N/A
Positive Anticipated Affect → Attitude	.475	.047	.259	10.042	***	N/A
Social Factors → Perceived Social Norms	.426	.031	.370	13.891	***	N/A
Perceived Consequences → Attitude	.001	.002	.014	.518	.605	N/A
Perceived Consequences → Intentions	-.006	.002	-.090	-3.409	***	H1, NS
Attitude Toward Process → Intentions	.098	.033	.083	2.986	.003	H4, S
Attitude → Intentions	.506	.030	.500	16.778	***	H3, S
Negative Anticipated Affect → Intentions	-.058	.023	-.072	-2.577	.010	H5, NS
Positive Anticipated Affect → Intentions	.219	.049	.118	4.482	***	H6, S
Perceived Social Norms → Intentions	.133	.022	.142	6.175	***	H9, S
Social Factors → Intentions	.284	.029	.263	9.776	***	H12, S

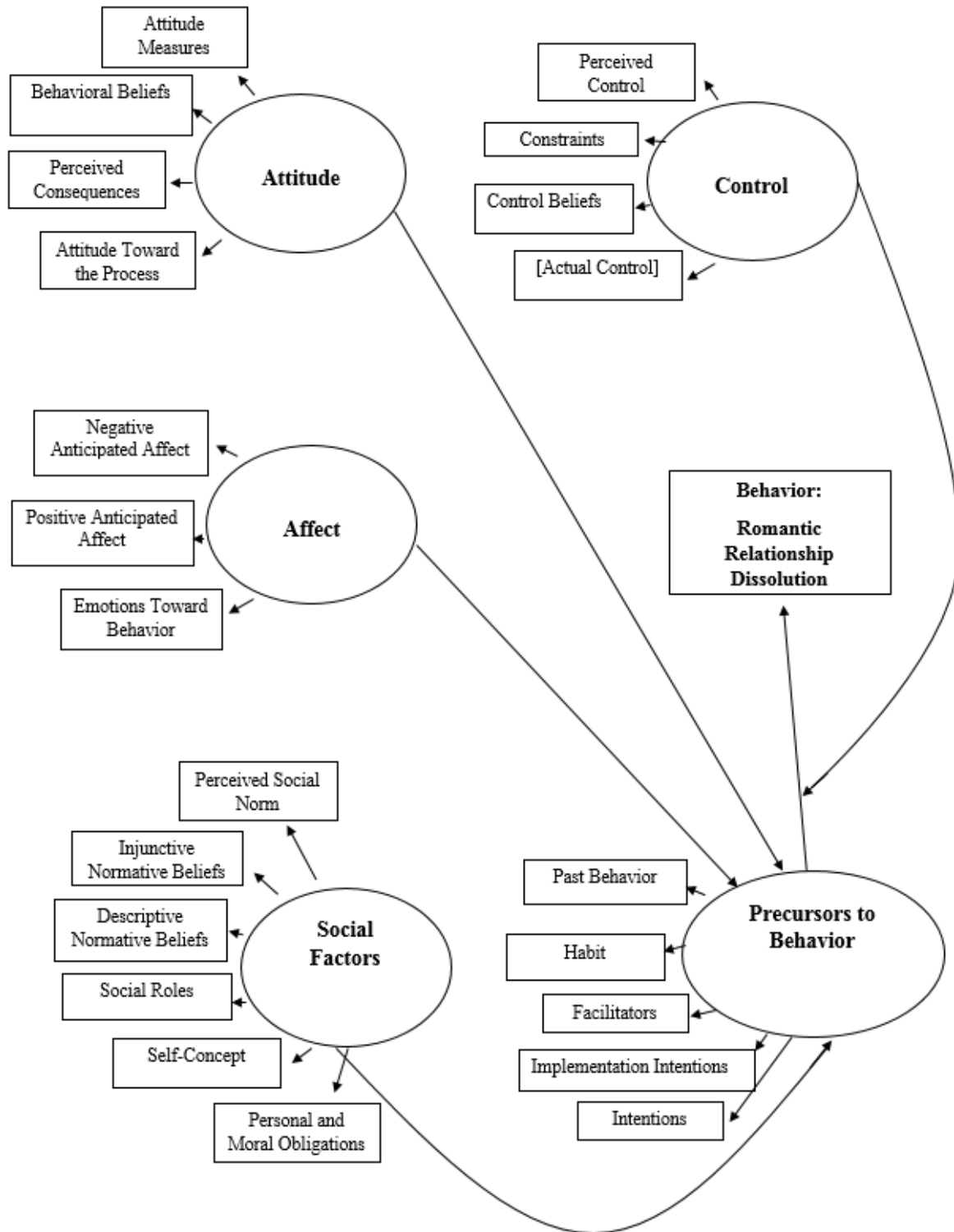
*Note.* \*\*\* indicates  $p < .001$ . In “relevant hypothesis” column, S = hypothesis supported, NS = hypothesis not supported, N/A = hypothesis was not created for the specified relationship.

## **Structural Equation Modeling**

As a supplementary analysis to the path analyses conducted on the responses to the survey, a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach was pursued to explore differences in the patterns of overarching concepts leading to intentions. SEM differs from traditional path analysis in that it relies upon latent constructs that do not have measurement error associated with them, rather than relying on observed variables with measurement error (Byrne, 2016). Latent variables represent hypothetical constructs based on other variables, whereas the observed variables in path analysis are directly measured or observed. An *a priori* model was specified that included the latent variables of attitude, affect, and social factors which led to the latent variable “precursors to behavior”. The latent variable precursors to behavior led to the observed behavior of breaking up with a romantic partner. Additionally, a latent variable of “control” was specified to moderate the relationship between precursors to behavior and dissolution behavior. This specified model is depicted in Figure 7.

**Figure 7**

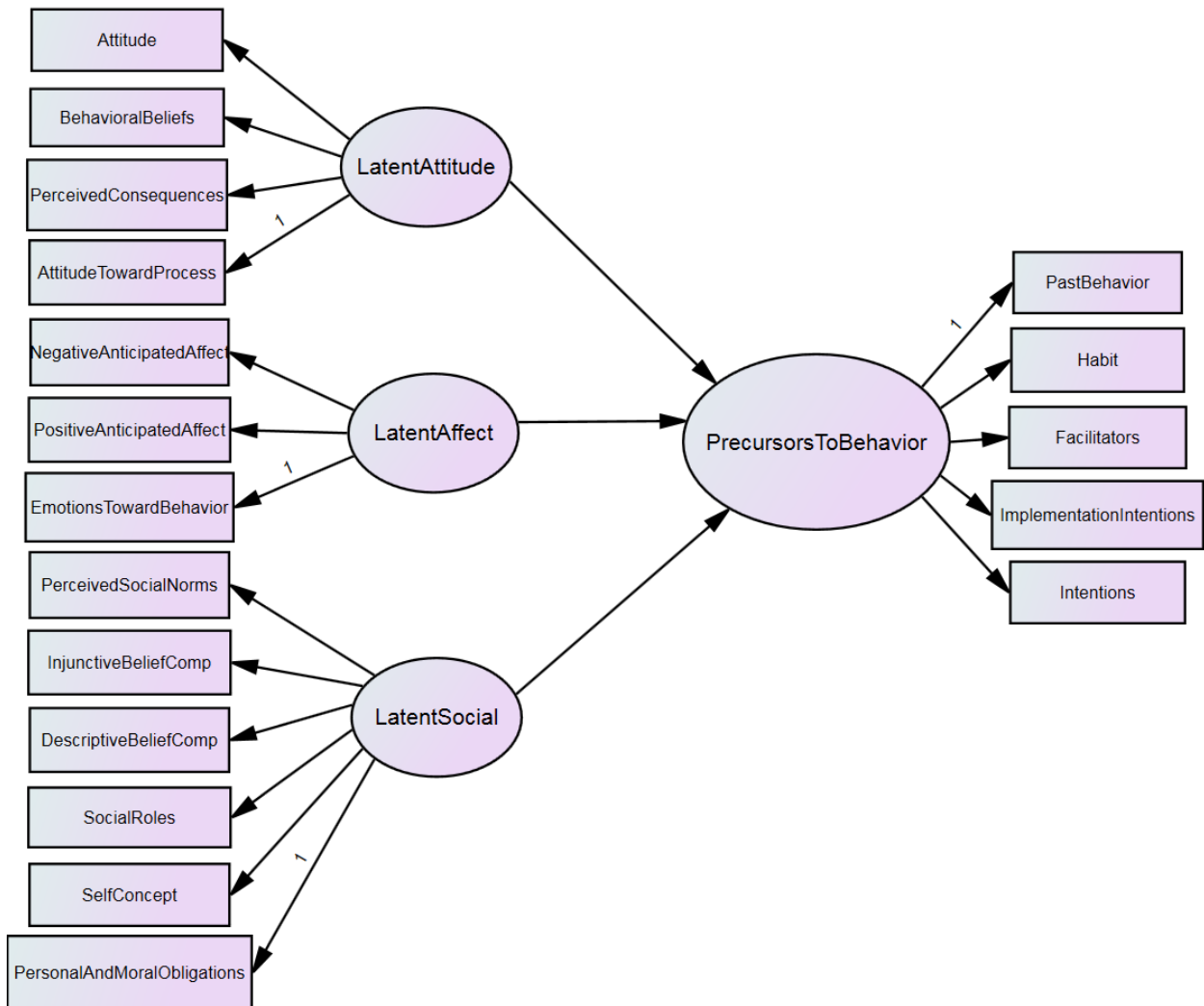
*Proposed Structural Equation Model Through Dissolution Behavior*



With the limited number of individuals in our follow-up survey who engaged in dissolution behavior (17 participants), there was inadequate power to test the full model that included break up behavior. Consequently, the SEM analysis included the latent attitude, affect, and social variables for their contributions to the precursors to dissolution behavior latent construct. This version of the model is presented in Figure 8.

**Figure 8**

*Proposed Structural Equation Model Through Precursors to Dissolution Behavior*



Before testing the model, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted using AMOS©. This analysis helped to determine if the specified indicators for the latent variables attitude,



affect, social, and precursors to behavior loaded on their respective latent construct. Several indicators had a factor loading of  $< .60$  with their respective latent construct, indicating the measures do not adequately represent that latent variable (Awang, 2015). Specifically, behavioral beliefs did not load on the latent construct attitude (factor loading .50). Descriptive beliefs (.37) and social roles (.51) did not load on the latent construct social factors. Furthermore, past behavior (.27), habits (.45), facilitators (.33), and implementation intentions (.01) did not load on the latent construct precursors to behavior. Consequently, these indicators were deleted for the subsequent SEM analysis. Because the proposed latent construct precursors to behavior did not have substantial factor loadings from its indicator variables with the exception of intentions, the SEM analysis examined the resulting latent attitude, affect, and social factor contributions to the observed variable “intentions” to break up (based on the six intention items).

An initial test of this SEM model revealed  $\chi^2(46) = 633.66$ ,  $p < .001$ , goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = .903, comparative fit index (CFI) = .918, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .072, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .123, indicating the model could be revised for better fit. Modification indices suggested that (low) negative anticipated affect and positive anticipated affect were redundant indicators of the latent construct “affect”. This suggested redundancy is generally consistent with our conceptual understanding of anticipated affect (i.e., an individual who anticipates breaking up will make them extremely sad is likely to also anticipate breaking up would not make them extremely happy). So, the model was modified to set these two indicators as a free parameter estimate (Awang, 2015; Byrne, 2016). Modification indices also suggested that injunctive normative beliefs and perceived social norms were redundant indicators of the latent “social” construct. This association is consistent with our theoretical understanding of normative beliefs and perceived social norms, so the model

was further revised to set these two indicators as a free parameter estimate. These changes slightly improved the fit of the SEM model,  $\chi^2(46) = 500.61$ ,  $p < .001$ , goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = .921, comparative fit index (CFI) = .936, standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = .063, and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .112.

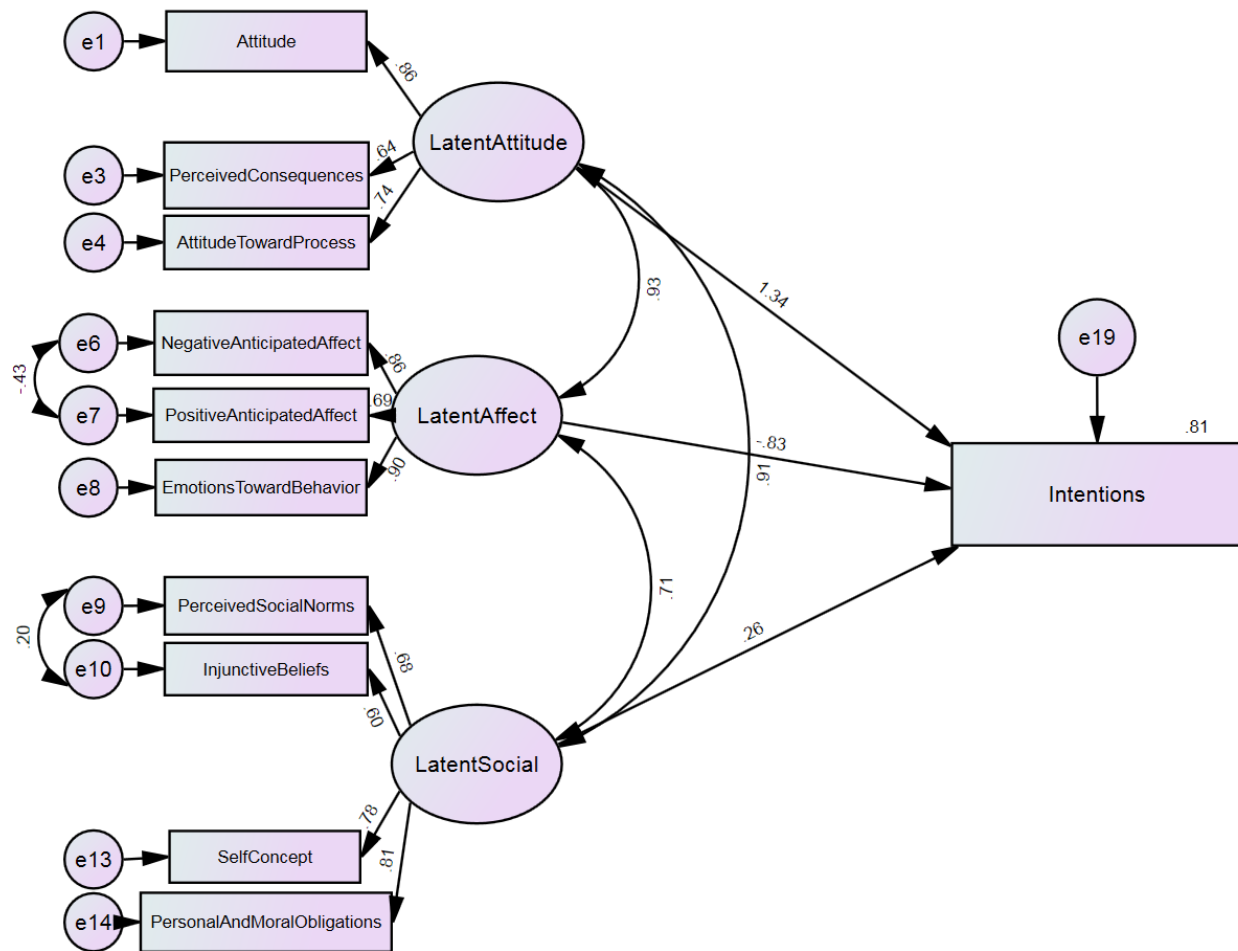
The resulting SEM model and its standardized coefficients are shown in Figure 9. The assumption of multivariate normality was violated in the test of this SEM model. To address this violation, a bootstrapping analysis was performed (Awang, 2015; Byrne, 2016). The bootstrapping analysis altered the pattern of results, suggesting this correction is necessary for appropriate interpretation of results (Awang, 2015; Byrne, 2016). Accordingly, the results from the bootstrapping analysis are presented in Table 35. All paths specified in the SEM model were statistically significant ( $p \leq .01$ ) with the bootstrapping analysis, except for the contribution of latent social factors to intentions to break up ( $p = .817$ ).

It appears that the latent attitude and affect constructs contributed substantially to intentions to break up with a romantic partner, whereas the latent social factors construct was perceived as less important. Nevertheless, before careful interpretation of the results from the SEM analysis, reliability and validity of the involved measurement models should be established (Awang, 2015; Byrne, 2016). To assess reliability, the composite reliability (CR) and the average variance extracted (AVE) were calculated for each measurement model in the depicted structural equation model framework. A composite reliability value of  $\geq .6$  and an average variance extracted value of  $\geq .5$  for each measurement model is an acceptable indication of reliability (Awang, 2015; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The measurement models for latent attitude (CR = .794, AVE = .566), affect (CR = .86, AVE = .675), and social factors (CR = .811, AVE = .522) all reached acceptable levels of composite reliability and average variance extracted.

Discriminant validity was assessed next to determine how distinct the involved latent constructs were. Discriminant validity is attained when the square root of AVE is greater than the correlations between latent constructs (Awang, 2015; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As can be seen in Table 36, the specified measurement models do not have acceptable levels of discriminant validity. The latent constructs are highly correlated with each other, and as such, the pattern of results from the SEM analysis should be considered with much caution. Consequently, the results of the SEM analysis will not be discussed in further detail.

**Figure 9**

*The Revised Structural Equation Model and Standardized Coefficients Leading to Intentions to Break Up*



**Table 35***SEM Bootstrap Results and Confidence Intervals*

Parameter			$\beta$	90% CI Lower	90% CI Upper	<i>p</i>
Attitude Toward Process	<---	Latent Attitude	.741	.697	.772	.005
Perceived Consequences	<---	Latent Attitude	.644	.594	.686	.003
Attitude	<---	Latent Attitude	.857	.822	.878	.008
Emotions Toward Behavior	<---	Latent Affect	.902	.869	.924	.004
Positive Anticipated Affect	<---	Latent Affect	.689	.635	.743	.002
Negative Anticipated Affect	<---	Latent Affect	.861	.832	.885	.002
Personal And Moral Obligations	<---	Latent Social	.813	.779	.840	.003
Self-Concept	<---	Latent Social	.783	.749	.809	.003
Injunctive Beliefs	<---	Latent Social	.598	.544	.651	.002
Perceived Social Norms	<---	Latent Social	.675	.633	.711	.002
Intentions	<---	Latent Attitude	1.337	.442	10.287	.011
Intentions	<---	Latent Affect	-.828	-6.154	-.321	.003
Intentions	<---	Latent Social	.259	-4.125	.709	.817

*Note.* CI = confidence interval.

**Table 36***Discriminant Validity and Inter-Construct Correlations of SEM Measurement Models*

	Attitude	Affect	Social
Attitude	<b>.752</b>		
Affect	.928	<b>.82</b>	
Social	.910	.712	<b>.722</b>

*Note.* The bolded, diagonal values represent  $\sqrt{AVE}$ .

**Hypotheses About Dissolution Behavior**

As mentioned above, it was not feasible to explore direct influences on dissolution behavior or the intention-dissolution relationship (hypotheses 15-21) within the path analyses or structural equation modeling due to the few individuals who actually engaged in romantic relationship dissolution (i.e., individuals who broke off the relationship with their romantic partner). However, correlational analyses were conducted to see if relationships between the variables of interest exist for participants who completed the follow-up behavior assessment ( $N = 656$ ). The 656 participants who completed the behavior assessment were placed into two categories: 1) participants who did not engage in the behavior of breaking up with their committed romantic partner ( $N = 639$ ), or 2) participants who ended the relationship by breaking up with their committed romantic partner ( $N = 17$ ). The 639 individuals in Category 1 included the 611 participants still in a committed relationship with their partner, 10 participants who were broken up with, 12 participants who reported a mutual break up, and the six participants with an

“Other” relationship status (e.g., still in a relationship but have not spoken with their partner in a while).<sup>5</sup>

With the correlation analyses, we examined the association between intentions to break up and the behavior of breaking up with a committed romantic partner (intentions were predicted to have a significant, positive association with breaking up, H15). We also conducted correlational analyses with the factors that were predicted to moderate the intention-behavior relationship: emotions (H16), perceived behavioral control (H17), facilitators (H18), constraints (H19), and implementation intentions (H20). Lastly, we correlated break up habits with dissolution behavior (habits were proposed to have a significant, positive association directly with breaking up, H21). These correlations are presented in Table 37. Intentions to break up, emotions towards breaking up, and break up habits were all significantly correlated with breaking up with a romantic partner, providing preliminary evidence that these factors can contribute to breaking up or influence the intention-dissolution relationship.

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<sup>5</sup> If participants who were broken up with ( $N = 10$ ), had a mutual break up ( $N = 12$ ), or indicated an Other relationship status ( $N = 6$ ) are excluded from analyses, the correlations increase slightly (e.g., the correlation between intentions and dissolution behavior increases from .26 to .275). Overall though, the interpretations of results do not change.

**Table 37**

*Correlations with Variables Predicted to Relate to Dissolution Behavior or The Intention-Dissolution Relationship*

Factor	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Relationship Dissolution	.26**	.15**	.05	.06	-.02	.04	.10**
2 Intentions	–	.54**	-.023	.23**	-.28**	.02	.35**
3 Emotions Toward Dissolution		–	.07	.24**	-.41**	-.01	.22**
4 Perceived Behavioral Control			–	.22**	-.02	.06	.05
5 Facilitators				–	-.08*	.05	.21**
6 Constraints					–	.16**	-.10**
7 Implementation Intentions						–	.06
8 Habits							–

*Note.*  $p < .05^*$ ,  $p < .01^{**}$ . The correlations presented are for the 656 participants who completed the follow-up behavior assessment. These participants were placed into two behavioral categories: 1) participants who did not engage in the behavior of breaking up with their committed romantic partner ( $N = 639$ ), or 2) participants who ended the relationship by breaking up with their committed romantic partner ( $N = 17$ ).

## Discussion

Study 2 provided a test of the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution (intentions) and the hypotheses derived from the framework. Overall, the findings improve understanding of the factors that contribute most to intentions to break up with a committed romantic partner. Moreover, the results provide unique information about the predictive value of the theoretical components involved in the theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977), the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011), and goal setting theories (Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990; Gollwitzer, 1999). This information advances theoretical considerations of behavioral intention models. Importantly, these discoveries provide

insights for romantic relationship behaviors while offering many research avenues for future exploration of romantic relationship dissolution.

### **Hypotheses, Findings, and Interpretations Associated with The Integrative Framework for Understanding and Predicting Romantic Relationship Dissolution Intentions**

Many hypotheses set forth by the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution (intentions) were supported. In particular, hypotheses 2-4 relating to behavioral beliefs, attitudes, and attitudes toward the process, hypothesis 6 regarding positive anticipated affect, and hypotheses 8-13 concerned with normative beliefs, perceived social norms, social roles, self-concept, social factors, and control beliefs were supported. Hypotheses 15, 16, and 21 received preliminary support, indicating that intentions may predict dissolution behavior (H15), emotions may moderate the intention-dissolution relationship (H16), and habits may directly influence break up behavior (H21).

The hypotheses concerning perceived consequences (H1), behavioral beliefs (H2), attitudes (H3), attitude toward the process (H4), negative anticipated affect (H5), positive anticipated affect (H6), normative beliefs (H8), perceived social norms (H9), and social factors (H12) were tested both within the initial path analysis and the path analysis of the revised model for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution intentions (Figures 4 and 6). Interpretation of support for these hypotheses did not change between the initial test and revised model of the framework.

The hypotheses concerning emotions towards the behavior of breaking up (H7), social roles (H10), self-concept (H11), control beliefs (H13), and perceived behavioral control (H14) were tested only within the initial test of the framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution (Figure 4). The hypotheses regarding the intention-behavior



relationship (H15), moderators of the intention-behavior relationship (emotions, perceived behavioral control, facilitators, constraints, implementation intentions; H16-20), and influence of habits on break up behavior (H21) were not directly tested within the path analyses or structural equation modeling, but instead were examined through correlational analyses to look at potential support for the hypotheses. The hypotheses, findings, and interpretations associated with the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution are further discussed below.

*Perceived consequences.* The perceived consequences concept from the theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis) was predicted to have a significant, positive association with intentions to break up with a committed romantic partner (H1). Instead, the association between perceived consequences and intentions was negative and significant. Triandis' theory of interpersonal behavior states that the weight of the behavioral antecedents differs depending on the behavior, situation, and person (Triandis, 1977). For intentions to break up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months, it appears that other theoretical components (i.e., attitudes, social influences) contribute more to intentions to break up than the probability and value of perceived outcomes associated with breaking up. This may be because individuals intending to break up are considering information consistent with dissolution as more influential (e.g., a favorable view of breaking up, anticipated feelings of happiness from breaking up, important others supporting the break up), rather than information that would hinder going through with breaking up (e.g., the probability and value of consequences such as being lonely). The negative coefficient could further suggest that for individuals with higher intentions to break up, perceived consequences of breaking up (e.g., being lonely) are more salient. Moreover, the negative coefficient could suggest that when participants think about breaking up, considering all

factors involved in the model, the individuals intending to break up may “suppress” their consideration of these perceived consequences.<sup>6</sup> That is, those who have some intention of breaking up with their romantic partner are considering dissolution despite the associated consequences or outcomes such as being alone and losing a friend.

Perceived consequences was also examined in terms of its potential relation to attitudes. Within the revised model for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution (Figure 5), an indirect effect was added that suggested the relationship between perceived consequences and intentions to break up could be partially explained by attitudes toward breaking up. This association was added due to the similarity in assessment between Triandis’ (1977) probability of perceived consequences/value of consequences and Fishbein and Ajzen’s (2011) behavioral beliefs/outcome evaluations that contribute to an individual’s attitude. Notwithstanding the overlap in assessment between perceived consequences and behavioral beliefs, the test of the revised model did not reveal a significant association between perceived consequences and attitudes. This may be because the probability and value of perceived consequences assessed (e.g., likelihood of being lonely, losing a friend) differed in nature than the belief strength and outcome evaluations assessed with the behavioral beliefs that motivated attitudes (e.g., likelihood of having more freedom, more time to focus on myself). Alternatively,

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<sup>6</sup> The negative coefficient for perceived consequences may be considered striking. Recall that perceived consequences is correlated with intentions at  $r = .21, p < .001$  (Table 32). Yet, the beta coefficient between perceived consequences and intention is  $-.09$  (Figure 6). One might be concerned that this discrepancy between the positive correlation and negative beta coefficient is a result of multicollinearity with attitude. However, Field (2015) suggests that multicollinearity poses substantial cause for concern when the correlation coefficient is above  $.8$ , the variance inflation factor (VIF) is  $>10$ , and the tolerance is below  $.1$  or  $.2$ . Collinearity statistics revealed that perceived consequences and attitude are correlated at  $r = .39, p < .001$ , VIF = 1.18, Tolerance =  $.85$ . Thus, multicollinearity is not a substantial concern for interpreting this negative coefficient (Field, 2015).

this finding could suggest that perceived consequences and behavioral beliefs tap into different constructs despite similarity in assessment. Nevertheless, the finding that the perceived consequences measure had a negative coefficient in the path analysis prediction of intentions poses an interesting perspective of the role of perceived consequences for intentions toward romantic relationship dissolution, even though the finding was inconsistent with the theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977).

*Behavioral beliefs.* Behavioral beliefs were proposed to have a significant, positive association with attitudes toward breaking up with a romantic partner (H2). This hypothesis was supported, however, the contribution of behavioral beliefs to attitudes in the revised model (Figure 6) was not as strong as it was in the initial path analysis test of the framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution intentions (Figure 4). Within the revised model, attitudes were more strongly associated with attitude toward the process, negative anticipated affect, and positive anticipated affect than behavioral beliefs. This indicates that attitudes towards breaking up with a romantic partner may be more strongly related to feelings towards pursuing breaking up (attitude towards the process) or feelings associated with breaking up and its consequences (anticipated affect) than the evaluative nature of the assessed behavioral beliefs (e.g., belief strength and evaluation of having more freedom as a result of breaking up). These findings are intriguing in that they support the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) while also suggesting that evaluative components of attitude may have less impact for actions that have a clear affective tone.

*Direct attitudes.* In total, attitudes toward breaking up held more weight in contributing to break up intentions than any other predictor (i.e., perceived consequences, attitude toward the process, anticipated affect, emotions toward breaking up, perceived social norms, social factors,

perceived behavioral control). This finding supports H3, which predicted that attitudes toward breaking up would have a significant, positive association with intentions to break up with a romantic partner. The significant relationship between attitudes toward breaking up and intentions to break up also supports the reasoned action approach notion that attitudes are a substantial contributor to behavioral intentions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011).

As depicted in Figures 5 and 6, the revised model for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution intentions highlighted some indirect effects including attitudes towards breaking up. That is, the relationships between attitude toward the process, negative anticipated affect, and positive anticipated affect with intentions to break up were partially mediated by attitudes toward breaking up. The notable associations of attitude with anticipated affect and attitude towards the process is interesting given the reasoned action perspective that an individual's attitude represents an evaluation (favorableness or unfavorableness) associated with engaging in a behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011).

It is mentioned within the reasoned action approach that anticipated affect assesses anticipated feelings about a behavior (e.g., breaking up) and its consequences. Anticipated affect is not expected to differ much from the behavioral beliefs that contribute to attitudes (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). However, within the revised model, we can see attitudes were more strongly associated with anticipated feelings about the process of breaking up or its consequences than the assessed behavioral beliefs, suggesting that attitudes within the context of romantic relationship dissolution may be less evaluative and more affective in nature.

*Attitude toward the process.* Participants' attitudes toward the *process* of breaking up were predicted to have significant, positive association with intentions to break up with a romantic partner (H4). This hypothesis received support. This pattern is consistent with the

theory of goal pursuit, which states that attitudes toward the process can add to our understanding of goal pursuit through the inclusion of a feeling or motivational component that is not attached to whether or not the goal (dissolution behavior) is actually achieved (Hinsz & Ployhart, 1998). The relationship between attitudes toward the process and intentions was partially mediated by attitudes towards breaking up with a romantic partner. Thus, it appears that the degree of favorableness toward breaking up is related to how participants think about the necessary steps involved in the process of breaking up with their romantic partner.

*Negative anticipated affect.* Beyond feelings associated with the process of breaking up, lower levels of negative anticipated affect regarding breaking up were proposed to have a significant, positive association with intentions to break up with a romantic partner (H5). Contrary to H5, our results revealed a significant, negative association of negative anticipated affect and intentions to break up with a romantic partner. Comparable to the relationship between perceived consequences and intentions to break up, this finding suggests that individuals intending to break up with their romantic partner may perceive the negative anticipated affect associated with breaking up as more salient, and disregard or suppress their considerations of the negative anticipated feelings while pursuing the intention.<sup>7</sup> That is, when considering all other factors involved in the model, participants with some intention to break up may have greater negative anticipated feelings about breaking up, perhaps because they are considering breaking

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<sup>7</sup> The correlation between (low) negative anticipated affect and intentions to break up is positive at  $r = .44, p < .001$ . (Table 32). Yet, the beta coefficient between negative anticipated affect and intention is  $-.07$  (Figure 6). As with perceived consequences, one might be concerned that the discrepancy between a positive correlation and negative beta coefficient is a result of multicollinearity with attitude. However, collinearity statistics indicate that negative anticipated affect and attitude are correlated at  $r = .63, p < .001$ , VIF = 1.65, Tolerance = .61, suggesting that multicollinearity is not a substantial concern (Field, 2015).

up. The suppression of heightened negative anticipated affect seems reasonable in the context of intentions toward breaking up, as individuals tend to consider cognitions that are consistent with their behavior as more favorable (Triandis, 1977).

*Positive anticipated affect.* Positive anticipated affect was also proposed to have a significant, positive association with intentions to break up with a romantic partner (H6). Hypothesis 6 did receive support in the path analysis. Consistent with Triandis' notion that affective beliefs can influence intentions and interpersonal behavior, the feelings an individual anticipates having as a result of breaking up (e.g., anticipated happiness) can influence the individual's intentions to break up with a committed romantic partner. This finding, as well as that of negative anticipated affect, supports prior research documenting that anticipated affect can account for important variance in predicting intentions and behavior (Abraham & Sheeran, 2003; Richard, van der Pligt, & de Vries, 2010; Sandberg & Conner, 2008). Fishbein and Ajzen's (2011) reasoned action approach also acknowledges that anticipated affect can account for extra variance in predicting intentions, but lists some reservations given that anticipated affect is generally assessed through "chosen emotions" instead of affective patterns identified in a belief elicitation, and associated with alternative behaviors (such as NOT breaking up). Within our study, anticipated affect items were developed from responses based on a belief elicitation and phrased in regard to the behavior in appropriate terms of target, action, context, and time. Moreover, although the effect of anticipated affect on intentions to break up was partially mediated by attitude, a significant independent contribution of anticipated affect to intentions still remained. Thus, even though the feelings an individual anticipates regarding breaking up is related to their overall evaluation of breaking up (e.g., degree of favorableness towards breaking

up), participants' positive and negative anticipated affective feelings still have a unique impact on their intentions to break up with a romantic partner.

*Emotions.* Despite the significance of anticipated affect in contributing to intentions to break up with a romantic partner, positive *emotions* towards the behavior of breaking up were not significantly associated with intentions (failing to support hypothesis 7; tested within the initial framework represented in Figure 4). Unlike how Triandis (1977) conceptualizes emotions towards the behavior, a distinction was made between anticipated affect and emotions within this study. The anticipated affect items involved anticipated feelings about the behavior and its consequences, whereas the emotion items assessed stronger, more intense feelings or experiences toward the behavior of breaking up. Given the emotional nature of breaking up (Eastwick et al., 2007), it may be surprising that emotions toward breaking up did not significantly contribute to intentions to break up. However, the assessment of emotions in this study was such that participants noted that their breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months would mainly lead them to be sad, angry, depressed, heartbroken, etc. with little variance in reported emotions ( $M = 1.79$ ,  $SD = .64$ ). Positive emotions toward breaking up may not have contributed to intentions to break up because participants consistently felt that breaking up would be negative, reflecting a restriction of range and floor effect.

*Normative beliefs.* In addition to perceived consequences, attitudes, and affective factors, social factors were also predicted to relate to intentions to break up with a committed romantic partner. Participants' normative beliefs were predicted to have a significant, positive association with the perceived social norms that contribute to intentions (H8). Consistent with the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011), this hypothesis was supported. The normative beliefs and referents identified in Study 1's belief elicitation (e.g., my friends break up with their

romantic partner, my family members think I should break up with my romantic partner) contributed substantially to participants' descriptive and injunctive perceived social norms.

*Perceived social norms.* The perceived social norms regarding breaking up were hypothesized to have a significant, positive association with intentions to break up (H9). Indeed, how participants perceive similar others behave and how participants perceive important others think they should behave does contribute to intentions to break up with their committed romantic partner. As noted in the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) and theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977), intentions are highly influenced by social expectations and aspects of behavior. Our findings support this claim, while also recognizing the contribution of other socially-related factors in regard to romantic relationship dissolution intentions.

*Social roles, self-concept, and social factors.* In particular, social roles (H10) and self-concept (H11) were proposed to have a significant, positive association with the “social factors” that are categorized to contribute to intentions in the theory of interpersonal behavior (i.e., social factors beyond norms; Triandis, 1977). These hypotheses were examined and supported by the initial path analytic test of the integrative framework (Figure 4). The composite social factors (which included social roles, self-concept, as well as personal and moral obligations) was examined within the revised model for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution intentions (Figures 5 and 6). The composite social factors score significantly contributed to intentions to break up with a romantic partner, supporting hypothesis 12. This relationship between social factors and intentions was partially mediated by perceived social norms, which is unsurprising given that social roles, self-concept, and personal or moral obligations are often shaped by social expectations (Triandis, 1977). Nonetheless, the additional contribution of the assessed social factors provides supplementary information about what leads



an individual to decide to break up. How participants see breaking up with regard to their social roles (e.g., if breaking up is consistent with their gender, work, role as a partner), self-concept (if they are the kind of person who would break up), and personal or moral obligations (feeling a duty or responsibility to break up) contributes to their intentions to break up with a committed romantic partner.

These socially-related aspects account for substantial variance in predicting dissolution intentions, supporting the theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977). The reasoned action approach acknowledges that variables relating to self-identity (e.g., roles, self-concept) and moral obligations can account for increased variance in predicting intentions, but the approach questions whether or not measurements of these concepts actually assess self-identity and moral norms versus assessing attitude or perceived social norms (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). Although the mentioned social factors are all empirically correlated, the findings suggest that the assessments of social roles, self-concept, and personal or moral obligations used in the study provide information beyond attitudes and perceived social norms. If the assessed social factors were simply measuring attitudes or perceived social norms, it is likely the path analysis of the revised model would have revealed a stronger (full) mediation by perceived social norms or attitudes in the relationship between social factors and intentions. Because strong mediation was not observed, these supported hypotheses suggest that there is added variance in the prediction of romantic relationship dissolution that is captured by the consideration and inclusion of these social factors.

*Control beliefs.* Beyond perceptions of social norms or social factors, perceived behavioral control was also proposed to influence break up intentions within the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution. First, control

beliefs were predicted to have a positive, significant association with perceived control over breaking up (H13). This hypothesis was tested within the initial test of the framework (Figure 4) and was supported. This finding is in line with the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011), although the relationship between control beliefs and perceived behavioral control was not as strong as expected. This weak relationship could be a result of the beliefs used within the power of control/belief strength measures. For example, perhaps the likelihood and power of a partner cheating (a control belief that would facilitate breaking up), or a romantic partner being a friend (a control belief that may impede breaking up) was not strongly associated with thinking about the ability to break up within this sample. Instead, perhaps participants' capacity and autonomy over breaking up with their partner is more closely associated with other beliefs regarding their relationship or break up capabilities (e.g., I will and can do what's right for me regardless of relationship constraints or facilitators).

*Perceived behavioral control.* A direct assessment of perceived behavioral control (e.g., My breaking up is under my control) was hypothesized to have a significant, positive association with intentions to break up with a romantic partner (H14). This prediction was tested within the initial test of the framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution intentions (Figure 4) and contrary to notions mentioned within the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011), this hypothesis was not supported. This may be because participants perceive they are capable and in control of breaking up with their romantic partner within the next six months ( $M = 5.28$ ,  $SD = 1.38$ ), so other factors (e.g., attitudes) are more important in contributing to the intent to break up. Alternatively, the lack of an effect from perceived behavioral control may be due to floor effects for the behavioral intentions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). The generally low intentions ( $M = 1.51$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ) may have restricted perceived

behavioral control's influence on the decision to dissolve the romantic relationship. Regardless, the findings from this study indicate that perceptions of the control over dissolution behavior did not have predictive value for intentions to break up with a romantic partner.

### **Hypotheses, Findings, and Interpretations Associated with the Intention to Dissolution Behavior Relationship**

Other hypotheses were proposed from the integrative framework that involved the relationship between intentions and dissolution behavior. Hypothesis 15 predicted a significant, positive association between intentions to break up and dissolution behavior (i.e., an individual breaking up with their romantic partner). Hypotheses 16-20 predicted that emotions (H16), perceived behavioral control (H17), facilitators (H18), constraints (H19), and implementation intentions (H20) would moderate the intention-behavior relationship. Hypothesis 21 predicted that break up habits would have a significant, positive association directly with dissolution behavior. Although hypotheses 15-21 could not be tested within the path analyses given the requirements for sample size (i.e., minimum of 20 observations per estimated parameter; Kline, 2015), correlational relationships between the variables of interest were examined for the individuals who completed the follow-up behavior assessment.

*Intentions.* Indeed, intentions to break up were significantly correlated with dissolution behavior, providing support for hypothesis 15. Intentions are the primary behavioral antecedent in both the theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977) and reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). Thus, our findings are consistent with the view that intentions are highly associated with related behavior. This association between intentions to break up and break up behavior is critical to the integrative framework for understanding and predicting

romantic relationship dissolution, as the majority of the framework's concepts contribute to break up intentions that are expected to predict break up behavior.

*Emotions as a potential moderator of the intention to dissolution relationship.* Emotions toward relationship dissolution were significantly correlated with intentions and breaking up, indicating the potential for emotions to moderate the intention-behavior relationship (H16). This potential for a moderating influence of emotions toward behavior supports Triandis' (1977) notion that affect and emotions impact interpersonal behaviors. Furthermore, the potential for moderating influences of emotions is noted within the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011), considering the prevalent notions of being "overcome by emotion" when thinking about specific situations or behaviors. This certainly can apply to romantic relationship dissolution, as we can imagine individuals being overwhelmed by love and not breaking up with their romantic partner when they had intended to, or getting into a fit of anger and breaking up with their partner when they had not originally planned to do so. Unfortunately, our assessment of emotions toward the behavior cannot accurately capture being overcome by emotion, as those experiences are often "in the heat of the moment". Regardless, it is important to acknowledge the possibility for emotions to interact with the intention-behavior relationship in that fashion.

Perceived behavioral control, facilitators, and constraints as potential moderators of the intention to dissolution relationship. Perceived behavioral control was not correlated with intentions or dissolution behavior, indicating that perceived behavioral control would not moderate the intention-dissolution behavior relationship (H17). Facilitators and constraints were not correlated with dissolving a romantic relationship either, indicating that these factors may also not moderate the intention-dissolution behavior relationship (H18, H19). These findings are inconsistent with the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) and the theory of

interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977), which both state that facilitators or constraints to behavior can strengthen or weaken the intention-behavior relationship. Perhaps for romantic relationship dissolution, the assessed facilitators to breaking up (e.g., partner cheating) and constraints to breaking up (e.g., receiving love from partner) influence other theoretical components (e.g., intentions) instead of substantially altering participants' ease or difficulty in engaging in dissolution behavior. The lack of a correlation between perceived behavioral control, facilitators, and constraints with dissolution behavior could also suggest that breaking up is quite volitional. The 17 individuals who broke up with their partner reported some-to-moderate levels of control over breaking up ( $M = 5.71$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ), despite having strong constraints to dissolution ( $M = 6.34$ ,  $SD = .64$ ). This finding can suggest that individuals decide to break up with their romantic partner for personal (perhaps attitudinal) reasons, regardless of the facilitators and constraints they may encounter.

*Implementation intentions as a potential moderator of the intention to dissolution behavior relationship.* Intentions to develop plans or strategies before breaking up were also not correlated with break up behavior, or intentions to break up, suggesting that implementation intentions may not moderate the intention-dissolution behavior relationship either (H20). Even though creating specific plans to end a relationship has been noted as a prevalent indicator of relationship "leave behavior" (VanderDrift, Agnew, & Wilson, 2009), the 17 participants who broke up with their romantic partner indicated they would exert only some effort and time into developing plans or strategies to break up ( $M = 5.21$ ,  $SD = .96$ ). This amount of indicated effort and time for developing plans to break up is similar to the individuals who remained in their romantic relationship ( $M = 4.82$ ,  $SD = 1.56$ ). Accordingly, existing strategies to break up may not have strongly influenced the dissolution behavior. A different assessment of implementation

intentions, such as in the traditional “If I encounter X situation, then I will do Y to break up with my romantic partner” format (Gallo & Gollwitzer, 2007), may reveal stronger associations or influences on break up behavior. These issues provide avenues for future consideration of the role of implementation intentions for relationship initiation, maintenance, and dissolution.

*Habits as a potential contributor to dissolution behavior.* The last hypothesis predicted that past break up behavior, or habits, would directly influence dissolution behavior (H21). Break up and relationship habits were significantly correlated with intentions and dissolution behavior (Table 37), providing initial support for hypothesis 21. This finding is consistent with Triandis’ theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977), which states that habits and past behavior are likely to influence future behavior. For romantic relationship dissolution behavior, it appears that how individuals have dealt with their relationship in the past can influence how they engage with their current or future relationships.

*Summary.* Taken as a whole, the test of the integrative framework and its associated hypotheses substantially increased our empirical and conceptual understanding of romantic relationship dissolution. The path analyses (Figures 4 and 6) revealed information about the factors that significantly added to the understanding and prediction of romantic relationship dissolution intentions (attitudes, attitude toward the process, perceived consequences, negative anticipated affect, positive anticipated affect, perceived social norms, additional social factors), as well as the factors that did not significantly contribute to dissolution intentions (emotions toward the behavior, perceived behavioral control). Further, the path analyses informed model modifications involving indirect effects. These indirect effects demonstrated that attitude partially mediated the relationships between attitude towards the process, negative anticipated affect, positive anticipated affect and intentions, in addition to demonstrating that perceived

social norms partially mediated the relationship between social factors and intentions. As indicated by most fit indices, the revised model (Figures 5 and 6) enhanced the fit with the data. Overall, the test of the integrative framework suggested that a comprehensive understanding of romantic relationship dissolution intentions relies upon careful consideration of the influences of attitudinal, affective, and social factors.

### **Key Contributors to Intentions to Dissolve Romantic Relationships**

Results from the current research indicate that attitudinal, affective, and social factors play critical roles in romantic relationship dissolution. Based on the current study's empirical results and information provided in previous research, we can envision how these factors might interact with the decision to end a romantic relationship. Individuals who have unfavorable attitudes of staying in a romantic relationship, or favorable attitudes toward breaking up, have lower levels of relationship commitment (Cui et al., 2011). Low commitment or intent to stay in the relationship can prompt an individual to break up with their romantic partner (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011; Rusbult, 1980; Triandis, 1977). Furthermore, if the behavioral beliefs upon which attitudes are often based support positive and strong outcome evaluations associated with breaking up (e.g., it is likely my breaking up will result in more free time, the opportunity to see friends more, spending less money), then the decision to break up becomes more favorable and encouraging (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011).

The degree to which individuals view breaking up as positive also seems to influence how people think about the *process* of breaking up and anticipated *feelings* as a result of ending the romantic relationship. When individuals think about the process of breaking up, it is likely a dynamic experience – the act of ending a romantic relationship can cause pain, while also producing feelings of relief and freedom (Symoens et al., 2013; also supported by Study 1's

belief elicitation responses). If a person contemplating breaking up is able to dissociate the potential consequences or negative feelings associated with the process of ending the romantic relationship, dissolution is more probable (Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990; Higgins, 2005; Hinsz & Ployhart, 1998). This is supported by the notion of value from fit (regulatory focus theory; Higgins, 2005). If breaking up feels right to the person and “fits” with how the person likes or wants to act, there is an added value from engaging in (or intending to engage in) the process of relationship dissolution.

Anticipated feelings associated with breaking up with a romantic partner further contribute to dissolution intentions. Although anticipated affect has not been previously examined within the context of predicting romantic relationship dissolution intentions, anticipated affect is known to strengthen intentions to behave through associating the behavior with a pleasant affect (Abraham & Sheeran, 2003). When individuals considering relationship dissolution anticipate feeling happy, content, and loved even in the face of breaking up with a romantic partner, dissolution intentions and behavior are more likely. In general, many individuals anticipate breaking up will be more distressing than it ends up being (affective forecasting error; Eastwick et al., 2007).

In addition to attitudinal and affective factors contributing to romantic relationship dissolution intentions, social factors and norms also matter. Several categories of social influences were examined in this research: social roles, self-concept, personal norms or moral obligations, injunctive and descriptive perceived social norms. Social roles indicate behaviors that are appropriate for a person within a specific position or role (Triandis, 1977). When breaking up with a romantic partner is fitting, proper, or appropriate for certain roles the



individual is in (e.g., relationship role, gender, status as an employee), intentions to dissolve the relationship are reinforced.

Similar to social roles, ideas about the self-concept related to breaking up can influence dissolution intentions and behaviors. Individuals involved in romantic relationships often expand their self-concept to integrate beliefs or preferences held by their close others (viewing themselves as “we”; Aron, Lewandowski, Mashek, & Aron, 2013; Slotter, Emery, & Luchies, 2014). Sometimes breaking up with a partner results in a loss of self-concept clarity (e.g., “we” used to go running together and now I don’t run; Slotter et al., 2014). However, breaking up can also result in feeling “more like me again” (e.g., I never liked running and now I don’t have someone pressuring me to do so). When an individual perceives that breaking up will lead them to re-attain positive beliefs and preferences that are more self-consistent, or when an individual interprets their self-concept as consistent with the type of person who would break up with their romantic partner, then desire and willingness to dissolve the romantic relationship can increase.

Both social roles and self-concept can relate to personal norms or moral obligations concerning breaking up. Personal norms and moral obligations reflect beliefs about who we are and what we should do, often shaped by social influences like religion and culture (Fine & Harvey, 2013; Triandis, 1977). When individuals perceive that it is their personal or moral obligation to break up, and believe they have a personal responsibility or duty to do so, intentions to end the romantic relationship become stronger. A strong sense of personal responsibility to break up can also increase motivation to follow through with the dissolution behavior (increased motivation to comply; Godin, Conner, & Sheeran, 2010).

Along with personal norms or moral obligations, injunctive and descriptive norms also influence intentions to break up with a romantic partner. In situations for which important others

believe an individual should dissolve the relationship with their romantic partner (e.g., parents and friends disapprove of the relationship), and the individual contemplating breaking up is motivated to act in accordance with what those important others think, intentions to break up can increase and dissolution behavior can become more likely (Felmlee, 2001). Furthermore, observing close others who are respected and similar to the individual break up with their romantic partner can foster the acceptance and willingness to break up (normative integration; McDermott, Fowler, & Christakis, 2013). When people see others break up, it reduces pressure for them to stay in a romantic relationship (Booth, Edwards, & Johnson, 1991), as well as demonstrates that relationship dissolution can be beneficial (e.g., if the people who broke up experience less stress and fighting; McDermott et al., 2013).

In total, there are many ways that attitudinal, affective, and social factors can impact or motivate an individual's decision to break up with their committed romantic partner. Even though some cognitive factors (e.g., perceived behavioral control) and emotions toward the behavior did not substantially influence intentions to break up or the intention-dissolution relationship within our study, it is important to recognize that these factors can still impact romantic relationship dissolution intentions and behaviors (e.g., within a different context, sample, or assessment). Altogether, the test of the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution informed our understanding of key contributors to romantic relationship dissolution intentions. In addition, the integrative framework advanced our theoretical understanding of behavioral intentions and related models.

### **Advancement to Theoretical Understanding of Behavioral Intention Models**

The integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution (Figure 3) relied heavily upon theoretical constructs involved in the reasoned action

approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) and theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977). Beyond the inclusion of the main factors from those theories, the integrative framework also made a few unique contributions to the theoretical antecedents of intentions and behavior. Notably, the integrative framework a) distinguished between anticipated affect and emotions toward the behavior, b) identified different pathways for affect and emotion (i.e., emotion was also predicted to moderate the intention-behavior relationship), c) added attitude toward the process (Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990) as an antecedent to intentions, and d) included implementation intentions (Gollwitzer, 1999) as a moderator to the intention-behavior relationship. The theoretical integration and contributions a-d can inform future examinations of intentional behavior.

To elaborate, the integration of both the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) and theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977) highlights contributors to intentions and behavior that each theory would not fully capture on its own. For instance, beyond the theoretical antecedents to behavior used in both the reasoned action approach and theory of interpersonal behavior, the theory of interpersonal behavior emphasizes perceived consequences, emotions toward the behavior, an expansion of social influences (social roles, self-concept, personal and moral obligations), habits, and external facilitators/constraints. Within the context of romantic relationship dissolution, we can see that these additional factors helped us understand what motivates an individual's decision to end their romantic relationship. Perceived consequences, for example, illustrated that even though participants can readily imagine consequences associated with breaking up (as supported by Study 1's belief elicitation), they also may suppress the thought of those consequences when making the difficult decision to break up. This information contributes to our understanding of break up intentions beyond other major

contributors (e.g., attitude, affect, perceived social norms, social factors), and provides a different perspective than the assessed behavioral beliefs. Consequently, including perceived consequences in behavioral intention models can enhance understanding of intentions and related behavior.

Emotions toward the behavior did not significantly contribute to intentions to dissolve a romantic relationship within the path analysis of the integrative framework, but we can imagine that if assessed or captured differently (e.g., with ecological momentary assessment), emotions could be strongly associated with relationship intentions and behaviors. This idea was prevalent within Study 1's belief elicitation, as responses to questions about breaking up were overwhelmingly associated with emotional tones. Emotions towards breaking up were also positively correlated with intentions to break up ( $r = .54, p < .001$  for both the initial sample of 1003 participants and the follow-up sample of 656 participants) and dissolution behavior ( $r = .15, p < .001$ ). Future applications of behavioral intention models should continue to explore emotions as a contributor to intentions or behavior, perhaps attempting to capture emotional experiences (e.g., love, anger) in a more time-relevant fashion (e.g., the day of breaking up).

Considerations of extended social factors also offered a more comprehensive view of influences on intentions and behavior. To illustrate, from the belief elicitation responses in Study 1, it was not clear that social roles or self-concept would relate to participants' thoughts about breaking up with a committed romantic partner. However, social roles and self-concept were related to other social concepts that impacted dissolution intentions and behavior (i.e., personal or moral obligations, perceived social norms). Even with the limited assessment of social roles and self-concept, ideas about appropriate role behaviors and how the romantic partners envision

themselves in terms of breaking up shaped social influences that largely impact intentions to break up with a romantic partner.

Personal norms or moral obligations further improved the consideration of dissolution intentions, beyond the assessment of injunctive and descriptive perceived social norms. Personal norms or moral obligations are mentioned in both the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) and theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977) as potentially important for impacting intentions and behaviors. Yet, these personal norms or obligations are rarely assessed. Consistent with previous findings, the inclusion of moral beliefs can account for additional variance in understanding intentions and behaviors (Godin et al., 1996). Other research applying behavioral intention models should consider including a personal norm or moral obligation component, as perceiving a sense of duty or responsibility seems to be a substantial motivator in deciding whether or not to act (particularly within interpersonal situations). Altogether, it is evident that an expanded “social factors” component has explanatory benefits for understanding behavioral intentions.

Perhaps surprisingly, break up and relationship habits were correlated with dissolution behavior. Generally, habits are most beneficial in contributing to behavior when the behavior is stable or consistent (e.g., a routine) and occurs repeatedly in a similar situation (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011; Triandis, 1977). It can be difficult to imagine *breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months* as a habitual behavior. However, our assessment of habits included not only consideration of past break up behavior, but also how “dealing with relationships in the same way” would impact breaking up. This consideration of relationship habits was included to address shortcomings associated with the specificity and common lack of awareness regarding habituated behavior (Hinsz et al., 2007). If individuals are not aware of or

do not carefully consider their past relationship behaviors, it is unlikely they would respond in a fashion consistent with the explicit assessment of relationship (dissolution) behavior. Future applications of behavioral intention models that include habits should consider not only differences in habit strength and awareness of the specific behavior, but also assessment of highly relevant habits (Hinsz et al., 2007).

Other theoretical factors expanded upon within the theoretical integration include facilitators, constraints, and perceived behavioral control. Facilitators and constraints are independently considered within the theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977), and considered as part of the control beliefs that impact perceived behavioral control in the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). The integration of the two theories provides the ability to examine all unique components regarding the facilitators or barriers of behavior: power of control and control belief strength as contributors to perceived control, perceived behavioral control as a contributor to both intentions and the intention-behavior relationship, and facilitators or constraints as additional moderators to the intention-behavior relationship.

Interestingly, within our examination of romantic relationship dissolution intentions and the preliminary examination of the relationship between intentions and dissolution behavior, we did not find significant influences of perceived behavioral control, facilitators, or constraints regarding breaking up with a committed romantic partner. Despite the indication participants have perceived control over breaking up, and the responses in Study 1 and Study 2 indicating facilitators or constraints *would* make breaking up with a partner more easy or difficult, perceived behavioral control did not contribute to intentions and no support was provided for moderating effects of control, facilitators, or constraints on the intention-behavior relationship. This finding is in opposition to the detailed theoretical understanding of how capacity,

autonomy, and internal/external factors impact intentions and performance of behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011; Triandis, 1977).

The lack of an effect from facilitators, constraints, or perceived behavioral control implies that not only is breaking up with a romantic partner a reasoned action and interpersonal behavior, but it is also a decision under volitional control. Individuals use other behavioral intention antecedents (e.g., attitudes, affect, social influences) to inform their decision on whether or not to break up with their committed romantic partner. Then, as observed with the preliminary evidence from the Study 2 follow-up behavior assessment, individuals intending to break up with their romantic partner do engage in intentional dissolution behavior, despite the potential existence of facilitators or constraining factors. Other applications of behavioral intention models should examine this further within the context of romantic relationships. A larger sample may reveal different results, as well as if a different kind of romantic relationship is considered. For example, the impact of perceived behavioral control, facilitators, and constraints to breaking up may be more apparent within the context of marital dissolution (divorce).

Beyond the benefits associated with the integration of the reasoned action approach (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) and theory of interpersonal behavior (Triandis, 1977), the integrative framework also added considerations of anticipated affect, attitude toward the process, and implementation intentions. Including anticipated affect accounted for variance in predicting intentions to break up that our attitude or emotions toward the behavior assessment did not capture. Anticipated affect was assessed on a unipolar scale, asking participants to indicate the presence of one feeling at a time. This type of assessment allows us to determine the presence of both negative and positive affect (e.g., if participants anticipate being both happy and sad when

considering romantic relationship dissolution). Emotions toward the behavior, however, was assessed using a bipolar scale that asked participants to indicate their emotions towards breaking up on a continuum (e.g., breaking up would be extremely lonely to extremely loving). Triandis (1977) recommends using a bipolar scale for emotions, arguing that asking respondents to choose on a bipolar scale captures what is most salient and reflective of their actual affect towards the behavior. Because ending a romantic relationship is likely to involve mixed feelings (Symoens et al., 2013), assessing negative and positive anticipated affect on unipolar scales may have shown us a more comprehensive picture of feelings related to breaking up. As an example, we learned that positive anticipated feelings contributed to intentions to break up, while negative anticipated feelings were potentially suppressed for individuals intending to break up.

Attitude toward the process was another theoretical antecedent included in the framework to predict intentions to break up with a romantic partner. Conceptually distinct from attitudes that are evaluative in nature and reflect a degree of favorableness towards behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011), attitudes toward the process of breaking up aimed to determine participants' feelings toward the process of engaging in romantic relationship dissolution. It has been noted that attitude toward the process reflects distinct motivational characteristics for engaging in behavior, such as the value from fit (Higgins, 2005) or intrinsic motivation (Hinsz & Ployhart, 1998). A more positive outlook on the process of breaking up contributed to dissolution intentions beyond attitude or anticipated affect, suggesting that attitude toward the process does influence goal (or behavioral) pursuit. In all, the inclusion of attitude toward the process and anticipated affect can improve the understanding of intentional behavior, particularly when applying behavioral intention models to interpersonal behaviors highly associated with feelings.



Implementation intentions was also a concept included in the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution. These implementing intentions indicated a plan or strategy to break up. Although implementation intentions were not correlated with dissolution behavior in the follow-up behavior assessment, implementation intentions can be extremely effective in promoting behavior (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). Our measures of implementation intentions assessed anticipated time, effort, and intention regarding developing plans or strategies for breaking up. More explicit assessments of implementation intentions (e.g., asking participants to specifically describe a suitable situation and process for which they intend to break up with their romantic partner) may reveal stronger associations with dissolution intentions or behaviors. When someone considers where, when, and how they will end a romantic relationship, it can make dissolution more salient and accessible (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). Accordingly, researchers investigating (romantic relationship) decisions or behaviors may wish to continue exploring the influence of implementation intentions on behavior pursuit.

Overall, the formulation and test of the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution provides important insights and directions for the study of behavioral intention models. Notably, the integrative framework emphasized an inclusive approach to understanding factors that contribute to intentions and behavior. The integrative framework was designed using well-established predictors of intentional behavior, and attempted to account for meaningful variance in romantic relationship dissolution (intentions) with these predictors. Other behavioral intention approaches (e.g., the reasoned action approach; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011) are designed to account for as much variance as possible with a parsimonious set of representative factors. With behaviors as intricate as

romantic relationship dissolution, even a small amount of variance can be important for understanding the reasons and motivations that contribute to the end of a romantic relationship.

### **Implications for Romantic Relationship Behaviors**

Besides informing theoretical considerations of dissolution behavior, the concepts outlined within the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution can be applied to romantic relationship behaviors. For instance, if an individual wishes to end a romantic relationship with their committed partner, it could be helpful to reconsider feelings toward the process of breaking up. Instead of viewing the process of breaking up as unpleasant, individuals could view the process of breaking up as an educational or life experience that can improve their capacity to engage in difficult interpersonal communications (and perhaps enhance post-dissolution growth; Tashiro & Frazier, 2003).

As a different example, individuals could reevaluate the behavioral beliefs and perceived consequences associated with breaking up. Instead of focusing on negative outcomes of dissolution behavior (e.g., being lonely, losing connections), individuals wishing to break up could emphasize positive outcomes (e.g., more freedom, spending less money). Furthermore, individuals wanting to break up with their romantic partner could consider specific plans to end the relationship (i.e., implementation intentions; Gollwitzer, 1999; Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006; VanderDrift et al., 2009). The implementation intentions should indicate details about the location, time, and execution of how the break up will occur, with contingency strategies to prepare for possible behavioral interferences (e.g., how the person will continue breaking up with their partner even if the partner re-confesses their love and promises to be different). Future research should explore such applications of the framework's findings, perhaps also within professional contexts (e.g., clinicians counseling individuals needing to get a divorce).

In addition to applying the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution to promote break up behavior when desired, the concepts and empirical findings from the framework can also help us understand how to better maintain fulfilling and healthy romantic relationships. To illustrate, our findings support research suggesting that social norms would be a strong contributor to relationship intentions and behaviors (e.g., Sprecher & Felmlee, 2000). If individuals are looking to maintain a fulfilling romantic relationship with their current partner, they may wish to surround themselves with positive relationship role models (e.g., individuals like them who engage in healthy relationship behaviors like respect and trust; individuals important to them – like parents and friends – who support their relationship status). Positive social surroundings could also impact the personal and moral beliefs leading to remaining in a fulfilling romantic relationship. Even in situations where individuals do not believe they are worthy of love or worthy of their romantic partner (e.g., “I don’t deserve them”), positive social influences could reinforce moral beliefs relevant to a fulfilling relationship. The reinforced beliefs could be comparable to “I owe it to myself to be happy” (and my partner makes me happy), “I have a personal responsibility to be the best partner I can be”, or “It is my duty to continue this committed romantic relationship that provides companionship, love, and support”.

Other findings from this research indicate that participants already take action regarding their desire to have fulfilling and healthy dating relationships. If participants are involved in fulfilling relationships, then there would be little reason and intention to break up (as observed with many of this study’s respondents). Still, there were individuals in our sample who indicated higher intentions to break up. If these respondents felt compelled to break up with their partner, perhaps because it was important and personally healthy to do so, the results suggest they would

do so in spite of the anticipated consequences and negative feelings they would experience. Therefore, much like other forms of responsibility, individuals intending to break up may do so in spite of the negative affect and perceived consequences involved, because this challenging action is the more meaningful and personally fulfilling choice for them in the long run.

### **Additional Considerations and Future Research**

So far, we have seen how this research has improved our understanding of romantic relationship dissolution intentions and behavior, advanced theoretical considerations of behavioral intention models, and provided some insights for romantic relationship behaviors. Beyond these advances, the conceptualization and test of the integrative framework offers other benefits in relation to existing romantic relationship dissolution research. First, the conceptualization included factors that are not well-researched within the context of romantic relationship dissolution. The consideration and inclusion of attitude toward the process, negative and positive anticipated affect, social roles, personal or moral obligations, and implementation intentions are rather new in terms of directly examining their contribution to intentions to end a romantic relationship.

Second, the investigation of romantic relationship dissolution intentions and behavior was from a prospective view, rather than a retrospective view. The majority of research on relationship dissolution is conducted retrospectively, accompanied by some limitations of retrospective research. For example, retrospective views are often associated with hindsight bias (an individual's belief they had predicted an outcome they may not actually have; Bradfield & Wells, 2005) or recall bias such as remembering past transgressions in a way favorable to oneself (Luchies et al., 2013). In addition, retrospective research often lacks sufficient ability to identify cause and effect (Briere, 1992) and is subject to recall issues associated with passing of time

(e.g., issues with reliability and validity of long-term recall; Maughan & Rutter, 1997). These biases could easily apply to retrospective accounts of romantic relationship dissolution (e.g., forgetting details about an attitude or perceived norm before breaking up, remembering the break up in a fashion that favors oneself, post-hoc convictions that the break up was planned and the right thing to do). The prospective nature of these dissertation studies may have limited the biases associated with retrospective recall. Future research can compare the theoretical antecedents' contribution to dissolution from both prospective and retrospective views.

The last additional benefit we will mention from the test of the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution was that it was conducted with a large sample ( $N > 1000$  participants) that included individuals of differing sexual orientations (e.g., around 220 individuals identified as bisexual). The size and diversity of the sample allows for future exploration of dissolution behavior and potential differences.

Of course, even with the large sample size, limitations were observed within this research as well. Notable limitations include the infrequency of dissolution behavior, restriction of range with some variables (e.g., intentions, attitudes), and the belief elicitation being conducted with a different sample of respondents than the test of the integrative framework. Out of the 656 individuals who participated in the follow-up behavior assessment, only 17 individuals engaged in the behavior of breaking up with their romantic partner, with 39 participants experiencing dissolution altogether. Even though this limited our investigation of the integrative framework components directly related to dissolution behavior, this finding provides grounds for optimism about modern romantic relationships. Committed relationships are commonly positive, as they can provide many psychological, social, and physical health benefits (Fine & Harvey, 2013; Cutrona & Gardner, 2006; Pauley et al., 2015; Sedikides et al., 1994; Stanton et al., 2014).

Accordingly, remaining in committed relationships is a seemingly profound norm for this relatively heterogeneous sample.

Consistent with the infrequent dissolution behavior, intentions to break up with a committed romantic partner were relatively low. This restriction of range, both within the intentions and behavior assessment, can limit predictive validity. It can be difficult to sufficiently assess predictive contributions when there is limited variance in intentions or behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011). Often, restriction of range is a reflection of the measures used in the study (e.g., if we were to ask participants about their thoughts toward general relationship dissolution, without specifying the target, action, context, and time of breaking up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months). However, the measures used for all theoretical antecedents in this study were compatible with the behavioral intention in question (i.e., intending to break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months). This specificity and compatibility can help with capturing as much variance as possible within the existing intentions and assessed behavior, even in situations where the behavior is rather infrequent (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011).

The final limitation to be discussed concerns the belief elicitation conducted in Study 1 that informed the measures for the integrative framework (Study 2). It could be considered that conducting the belief elicitation with an undergraduate sample is a limitation to the research, as the undergraduate sample was younger in age with a shorter average relationship duration than that of Study 2. Although this may be true, the responses to the belief elicitation in Study 1 were largely consistent with prevalent themes noted in dissolution literature (e.g., Fine & Harvey, 2013). The consistency of dissolution beliefs with prevalent themes suggests that undergraduates may not differ much from an older, online sample within the context of (non-marital) romantic

relationship dissolution. Arguably, the evidence provided by the belief elicitation is a strength to the current research. The measures for the integrative framework of understanding and predicting romantic relationship were based on critical consideration of beliefs elicited by individuals in committed relationships who were prompted to think about relationship dissolution. The assessment of these beliefs helped us understand what other people associate with breaking up, rather than determining relevant beliefs or measures based on our own knowledge, experiences, and biases.

Future research can aim to address the noted limitations, as well as explore other research avenues associated with the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution. To assist with addressing the noted limitations, researchers may wish to solicit samples of individuals currently contemplating breaking up. In doing so, it is likely the intentions and overall rates of dissolution will be greater. Similarly, research could also conduct additional or longer duration follow-ups for dissolution behavior assessment. The current study used a two-month follow-up for initial behavior assessment, but there are also plans for a six-month follow-up which is consistent with the target, action, context, and time of questions used in this study.

Other avenues of future research include addressing research questions derived from the background research, conceptualization, and test of the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution (Semanko & Hinsz, 2021). For instance, the test of the integrative framework can investigate if the concepts of intention and perceived social norms account for the variance associated with common measures of relationship commitment (e.g., personal, moral, and structural commitment; Johnson, Caughlin, & Houston, 1999). Furthermore, the test of the integrative framework included questions about “head” and “heart”

identifiers, to allow for the possibility of exploring whether head identifiers more strongly relate to cognitive theoretical antecedents in comparison to heart identifiers which have been linked to more emotional decision making processes (Fetterman & Robinson, 2013).

Moreover, future research can replicate the test of the integrative framework for understanding romantic relationship dissolution with a validation sample. The validation sample will help solidify the critical contributors to romantic relationship dissolution (intentions and behavior), and provide more direction on how to best revise the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution to make it more generalizable. Testing the integrative framework within other contexts (e.g., intent to end a close friendship, intent to get married, intent to get a divorce, intent to engage in a rebound relationship) can also provide information concerning the theoretical antecedents to intentions and behavior that are considered most important within other relationship contexts. In addition, the concepts involved within the integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution could be considered within a dyadic context. Because breaking up with a romantic partner is an interpersonal behavior, it is likely that influences of or interactions with the partner's beliefs and behaviors exist and impact the course of the romantic relationship.



## CONCLUSION

Romantic relationship dissolution is a seemingly complex decision and taxing behavior. The present research investigated salient beliefs associated with breaking up (Study 1) and tested a unique integrative framework for understanding and predicting romantic relationship dissolution intentions and behavior (Study 2). Study 1 responses revealed that romantic relationship dissolution is often considered with affective tones and frequently associated with negative outcomes (e.g., loneliness and sadness). Further, relationship dissolution is often accompanied by substantial thinking, such as thorough consideration of the dissolution process, evaluation of associated outcomes, and creation of strategies for ending the romantic relationship. These results support the notion that breaking up is an emotionally challenging event (Brumbaugh & Fraley, 2015; Eastwick et al., 2007; Sbarra, 2006; Spielmann et al., 2016), while also providing evidence that breaking up with a committed romantic partner is a decision that involves considerable thought.

Study 2 tested a unique integrative framework for understanding and predicting intentions to break up with a romantic partner, examining attitudinal, affective, social, and cognitive contributors to relationship dissolution. Path analyses highlighted that attitudinal (attitude towards breaking up, attitude toward the process of breaking up), affective (positive anticipated affect), and social factors (social roles, self-concept, personal or moral obligations, perceived social norms) contributed most to intentions to break up with a committed romantic partner. The results further indicated that individuals intending to break up may be highly aware and sensitive to the perceived consequences and negative anticipated affect related to romantic relationship dissolution, yet they may disassociate those thoughts and feelings from the willingness to break up with their romantic partner. These findings advance our empirical and

theoretical understanding of breaking up, while offering suggestions for future applications of behavioral intention models, implications for romantic relationship behaviors, and supplementary research directions. In addition to providing valuable insights regarding the underlying reasons and motivations for breaking up, the observed patterns of results emphasize a critical takeaway from the current research: breaking up with a committed romantic partner is an interpersonal behavior, reasoned action, and intricate decision.

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## APPENDIX A. STUDY 1 BELIEF ELICITATION QUESTIONS

**Instructions.** Please take some time to tell us what you think about the possibility of your breaking up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months. There are no right or wrong responses; we are merely interested in your personal opinions. In response to the questions that follow, please list the thoughts that come immediately to your mind. Write each thought on a separate line. That is, please press ‘enter’ when you are done with each thought. The textbox will allow you to write as many ideas as you want.

Note that the questions you will be asked may appear similar, but are different in important ways. We have provided you with sufficient time (more than 1 minute per question) to describe your responses in detail. This survey will not allow you to advance to the next question until that time has passed, but please feel free to use as much time as you need to answer the questions. All of your responses are confidential.

This survey will take about 60 minutes of your time. You will receive 1 point on SONA for every 15 minutes of your participation. Your SONA credit will be granted within 24 hours of your study completion.

Again, your answers are important, so please consider the questions carefully and provide your thoughtful responses. Please list the thoughts that come immediately to your mind, and write each thought on a separate line by pressing “enter”.

### **Beliefs/Evaluation of Outcome**

1. Please list the characteristics, qualities, and attributes you associate with your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months.
2. What do you perceive as the causes of your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?
3. What are some of the specific consequences you associate with your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?

### **Behavioral Beliefs**

1. What do you see as the advantages of your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?
2. What do you see as the disadvantages of your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?
3. What else comes to mind when you think about your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?

## **Normative Beliefs**

When it comes to your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months, there might be individuals or groups who would think you should or should not perform this behavior.

1. Please list the individuals or groups you think would approve or think you should break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months.
2. Please list the individuals or groups you think would disapprove or think you should NOT break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months.
3. Please list any other people or groups you might want to talk to if you were to break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months.
4. Sometimes, when we are not sure what to do, we look to see what others are doing. When it comes to your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months, please list the individuals or groups whose behavior you might look to for guidance.

## **Control Beliefs/Facilitators**

1. Please list any factors or circumstances that would make it easy or enable you to break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months.
2. Please list any factors or circumstances that would make it difficult for you to break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months.
3. Are there additional things that constrain or limit your ability to break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?
4. Are there additional things that would encourage your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?
5. Are there additional things that would enhance your ability to break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

## **Roles**

When it comes to your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months, there may be certain social roles that impact *your breaking up* with your committed romantic partner or *your NOT breaking up* with your committed romantic partner.

1. Please list the social roles you hold that would influence your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months.
2. What do you see as your role in breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?
3. I believe someone like me should/should not break up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months.

**Self-Concept** (person's ideas about who they are, including self-esteem and self-attributions)

1. Please list specific beliefs/ideas you hold about yourself that would influence your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months.
2. Do you think you are the kind of person who would break up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?
3. Do you perceive your moral obligations would influence your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?
4. What are the personal and moral beliefs that you believe would influence your NOT breaking up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

**Habits**

1. How many times have you broken up with a committed romantic partner in the past?

**Past Behavior**

1. How recently have you broken up with a committed romantic partner?
2. Do you perceive your recent breaking up with a committed romantic partner would influence your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?
3. Please describe how your past breaking up with a committed romantic partner may or may not contribute to your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months.

**Emotions-Affect** (affect toward behavior refers to emotions a person feels at the thought of the behavior)

1. What emotions or feelings do you associate with your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?
2. What emotions or feelings would you *anticipate* you would feel if you broke up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?
3. What emotions or feelings do you associate with your NOT breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?
4. What emotions or feelings would you *anticipate* you would feel if you did NOT break up your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

**Attitude Toward the Process**

1. How would your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months, ignoring whether or not you actually do so, make you feel?
2. What are the qualities, characteristics, and attributes you associate with the process of breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months, regardless of whether or not you want to?

### **Implementation Intentions**

1. If you were to break up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months, would you develop plans or strategies before doing so?
2. How much time would you put into developing plans or strategies before your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?  
No time \_ Some time \_ Moderate amount of time \_ Extreme amount of time
3. How much effort would you put into developing plans or strategies before your breaking up with a committed romantic partner within the next six months?  
No effort\_ Some effort \_ Moderate effort \_ Extreme effort

## APPENDIX B. PAST BEHAVIOR AND HABITS QUESTIONS

(Triandis, 1977; Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990; Hinsz, Nickell, & Park, 2007)

### Past Behavior/Frequency

How often do you break up with your committed romantic partner?

- a. Never
- b. Almost never
- c. Some of the time
- d. Half of the time
- e. Most of the time
- f. Almost Always
- g. Always
- h. I have never broken up with a committed romantic partner before

I always break up with my committed romantic partner.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree
- h. I have never broken up with a committed romantic partner before

### Habits

Do you perceive your past breaking up with a committed romantic partner would influence your breaking up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Definitely no
- b. Moderately no
- c. Somewhat no
- d. Neither no nor yes
- e. Somewhat yes
- f. Moderately yes
- g. Definitely yes
- h. I have never broken up with a committed romantic partner before

How much would your habits in your relationships matter for breaking up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all
- b. Just a little
- c. Somewhat
- d. Moderately
- e. Quite a bit
- f. Very much
- g. Completely

How often would your habits in your relationships help you break up with your romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Never
- b. Almost never
- c. Some of the time
- d. Half of the time
- e. Most of the time
- f. Almost Always
- g. Always

How often does your dealing with relationships in the same way help you in breaking up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Never
- b. Almost never
- c. Some of the time
- d. Half of the time
- e. Most of the time
- f. Almost Always
- g. Always

#### Additional Questions

How many times have you broken up with a committed romantic partner in your lifetime? Please respond with a specific numerical value (that is, please provide a unique numerical value and not a range of numbers).

\_\_\_\_\_

How recently have you broken up with a committed romantic partner? Please provide a specific numerical value in MONTHS (that is, please provide a unique numerical value in months and not a range of numbers).

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C. SOCIAL ROLE QUESTIONS

(Bamberg & Schmidt, 2003; Triandis, 1977)

For me as someone who is seeking a committed romantic partner, it is \_\_\_\_\_ for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely inappropriate
- b. Moderately inappropriate
- c. Somewhat inappropriate
- d. Neither inappropriate nor appropriate
- e. Somewhat appropriate
- f. Moderately appropriate
- g. Extremely appropriate

For me as someone who is seeking a committed romantic partner, it is \_\_\_\_\_ for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely unfitting
- b. Somewhat unfitting
- c. Moderately unfitting
- d. Neither unfitting nor fitting
- e. Somewhat fitting
- f. Moderately fitting
- g. Extremely fitting

For me as someone who is seeking a committed romantic partner, it is \_\_\_\_\_ for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely improper
- b. Moderately improper
- c. Somewhat improper
- d. Neither improper nor proper
- e. Somewhat proper
- f. Moderately proper
- g. Extremely proper



For me as a *worker (college student)*, it is \_\_\_\_\_ for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely inappropriate
- b. Moderately inappropriate
- c. Somewhat inappropriate
- d. Neither inappropriate nor appropriate
- e. Somewhat appropriate
- f. Moderately appropriate
- g. Extremely appropriate

For me as a *worker (college student)*, it is \_\_\_\_\_ for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely unfitting
- b. Somewhat unfitting
- c. Moderately unfitting
- d. Neither unfitting nor fitting
- e. Somewhat fitting
- f. Moderately fitting
- g. Extremely fitting

For me as a *worker (college student)*, it is \_\_\_\_\_ for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely improper
- b. Moderately improper
- c. Somewhat improper
- d. Neither improper nor proper
- e. Somewhat proper
- f. Moderately proper
- g. Extremely proper

For me as a (male/female/other gender identity), it is \_\_\_\_\_ for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely inappropriate
- b. Moderately inappropriate
- c. Somewhat inappropriate
- d. Neither inappropriate nor appropriate
- e. Somewhat appropriate
- f. Moderately appropriate
- g. Extremely appropriate

For me as a (male/female/other gender identity), it is \_\_\_\_\_ for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely unfitting
- b. Somewhat unfitting
- c. Moderately unfitting
- d. Neither unfitting nor fitting
- e. Somewhat fitting
- f. Moderately fitting
- g. Extremely fitting

For me as a (male/female/other gender identity), it is \_\_\_\_\_ for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely improper
- b. Moderately improper
- c. Somewhat improper
- d. Neither improper nor proper
- e. Somewhat proper
- f. Moderately proper
- g. Extremely proper

## APPENDIX D. SELF-CONCEPT QUESTIONS

(Triandis, 1977; Lewandowski, Aron, Bassis, & Kunak, 2006)

Are you the kind of person who would break up with their committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Definitely no
- b. Moderately no
- c. Somewhat no
- d. Neither no nor yes
- e. Somewhat yes
- f. Moderately yes
- g. Definitely yes

I am the kind of person who would break up with their committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

To what extent do you feel you would become more of who you are, as a result of breaking up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all
- b. Just a little
- c. Somewhat
- d. Moderately
- e. Quite a bit
- f. Very much
- g. Completely

## APPENDIX E. AFFECT (EMOTION) TOWARDS THE BEHAVIOR QUESTIONS

(Triandis, 1977)

My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be:

<b>SAD</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<b>HAPPY</b>
	extremely	quite	slightly	neither	slightly	quite	extremely	

My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be:

<b>LONELY</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<b>LOVING</b>
	extremely	quite	slightly	neither	slightly	quite	extremely	

My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be:

<b>BORING</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<b>EXCITING</b>
	extremely	quite	slightly	neither	slightly	quite	extremely	

My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be:

<b>ANGRY</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<b>ENTHUSED</b>
	extremely	quite	slightly	neither	slightly	quite	extremely	

My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be:

<b>DEPRESSING</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<b>JOYFUL</b>
	extremely	quite	slightly	neither	slightly	quite	extremely	

My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be:

<b>ANXIETY PROVOKING</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	<b>COMFORTING</b>
	extremely	quite	slightly	neither	slightly	quite	extremely	

My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be:

**HEART-BREAKING**

**HEART-MENDING**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
extremely	quite	slightly	neither	slightly	quite	extremely

My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be:

**UNPLEASANT**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
extremely	quite	slightly	neither	slightly	quite	extremely

**PLEASANT**

My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be:

**UNENJOYABLE**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
extremely	quite	slightly	neither	slightly	quite	extremely

**ENJOYABLE**

My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be:

**UNCOMFORTABLE**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
extremely	quite	slightly	neither	slightly	quite	extremely

**COMFORTABLE**

## APPENDIX F. ANTICIPATED AFFECT QUESTIONS

(Sandberg & Conner, 2008; Hinsz, Nickell, & Park, 2007)

### Negative Anticipated Affect

For examining negative anticipated affect's contribution to intentions to break up, all negative anticipated affect questions were reverse scored.

How **sad** do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all sad
- b. Just a little sad
- c. Somewhat sad
- d. Moderately sad
- e. Quite sad
- f. Very sad
- g. Extremely sad

How **lonely** do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all lonely
- b. Just a little lonely
- c. Somewhat lonely
- d. Moderately lonely
- e. Quite lonely
- f. Very lonely
- g. Extremely lonely

How **angry** do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all angry
- b. Just a little angry
- c. Somewhat angry
- d. Moderately angry
- e. Quite angry
- f. Very angry
- g. Extremely angry

How **depressed** do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all depressed
- b. Just a little depressed
- c. Somewhat depressed
- d. Moderately depressed
- e. Quite depressed
- f. Very depressed
- g. Extremely depressed

How **anxious** do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all anxious
- b. Just a little anxious
- c. Somewhat anxious
- d. Moderately anxious
- e. Quite anxious
- f. Very anxious
- g. Extremely anxious

How **heartbroken** do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all heartbroken
- b. Just a little heartbroken
- c. Somewhat heartbroken
- d. Moderately heartbroken
- e. Quite heartbroken
- f. Very heartbroken
- g. Extremely heartbroken

How **ashamed** do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all ashamed
- b. Just a little ashamed
- c. Somewhat ashamed
- d. Moderately ashamed
- e. Quite ashamed
- f. Very ashamed
- g. Extremely ashamed

How **regretful** do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all regretful
- b. Just a little regretful
- c. Somewhat regretful
- d. Moderately regretful
- e. Quite regretful
- f. Very regretful
- g. Extremely regretful

How **guilty** do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all guilty
- b. Just a little guilty
- c. Somewhat guilty
- d. Moderately guilty
- e. Quite guilty
- f. Very guilty
- g. Extremely guilty

How **afraid** do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all afraid
- b. Just a little afraid
- c. Somewhat afraid
- d. Moderately afraid
- e. Quite afraid
- f. Very afraid
- g. Extremely afraid

Positive Anticipated Affect

How **happy** do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all happy
- b. Just a little happy
- c. Somewhat happy
- d. Moderately happy
- e. Quite happy
- f. Very happy
- g. Extremely happy



How **loved** do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all loved
- b. Just a little loved
- c. Somewhat loved
- d. Moderately loved
- e. Quite loved
- f. Very loved
- g. Extremely loved

How **joyful** do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all joyful
- b. Just a little joyful
- c. Somewhat joyful
- d. Moderately joyful
- e. Quite joyful
- f. Very joyful
- g. Extremely joyful

How **excited** do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all excited
- b. Just a little excited
- c. Somewhat excited
- d. Moderately excited
- e. Quite excited
- f. Very excited
- g. Extremely excited

How **comforted** do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all comforted
- b. Just a little comforted
- c. Somewhat comforted
- d. Moderately comforted
- e. Quite comforted
- f. Very comforted
- g. Extremely comforted

How **content** do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all content
- b. Just a little content
- c. Somewhat content
- d. Moderately content
- e. Quite content
- f. Very content
- g. Extremely content

How **proud** do you anticipate you would feel if you broke up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all heartbroken proud
- b. Just a little heartbroken proud
- c. Somewhat heartbroken proud
- d. Moderately heartbroken proud
- e. Quite heartbroken proud
- f. Very heartbroken proud
- g. Extremely heartbroken proud

## APPENDIX G. PERCEIVED CONSEQUENCES QUESTIONS

(Triandis, 1977)

Perceived consequences was calculated as the sum of the cross products of probability of perceived outcomes and value of consequences. For examining perceived consequences' contributions to intentions, the 'probability of perceived outcomes' questions were reverse scored. In addition, the items regarding 'losing relationships with my partner's family' were not included in the perceived consequences composite, due to low internal consistency with the other measures.

### Probability of Perceived Outcomes

If I break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, the likelihood I would **be lonely** is:

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

If I break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, the likelihood I would **lose a friend** is:

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

If I break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, the likelihood I would **be sad** is:

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

If I break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, the likelihood I would **no longer have someone to talk to/share things with** is:

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

If I break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, the likelihood I would **lose relationships with my partner's family** is:

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

Value of Perceived Consequences (Triandis, 1977)

**Being lonely** after breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. Extremely bad
- b. Moderately bad
- c. Somewhat bad
- d. Neither bad nor good
- e. Somewhat good
- f. Moderately good
- g. Extremely good

**Losing a friend** after breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. Extremely bad
- b. Moderately bad
- c. Somewhat bad
- d. Neither bad nor good
- e. Somewhat good
- f. Moderately good
- g. Extremely good

**Being sad** after breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. Extremely bad
- b. Moderately bad
- c. Somewhat bad
- d. Neither bad nor good
- e. Somewhat good
- f. Moderately good
- g. Extremely good

**No longer having someone to talk to/share things with** after breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. Extremely bad
- b. Moderately bad
- c. Somewhat bad
- d. Neither bad nor good
- e. Somewhat good
- f. Moderately good
- g. Extremely good

**Losing relationships with my partner's family** after breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be \_\_\_\_\_.

- a. Extremely bad
- b. Moderately bad
- c. Somewhat bad
- d. Neither bad nor good
- e. Somewhat good
- f. Moderately good
- g. Extremely good

## APPENDIX H. PERSONAL AND MORAL OBLIGATION QUESTIONS

Moral Obligation (Hom & Hulin, 1981) Personal Norm (Bamberg & Schmidt, 2003)

Personal/Moral Obligation Scale Items

Do you feel a moral obligation to break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months? That is, do you think it is something you ought to do?

- a. Extremely weak moral obligation to break up
- b. Moderately weak moral obligation to break up
- c. Somewhat weak moral obligation to break up
- d. Neither weak nor strong moral obligation to break up
- e. Somewhat strong moral obligation to break up
- f. Moderately strong moral obligation to break up
- g. Extremely strong moral obligation to break up

Do you perceive your moral obligations would influence your breaking up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Definitely no
- b. Moderately no
- c. Somewhat no
- d. Neither no nor yes
- e. Somewhat yes
- f. Moderately yes
- g. Definitely yes

How strongly do you feel a **personal** obligation to break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all
- b. Just a little
- c. Somewhat
- d. Moderately
- e. Quite a bit
- f. Very much
- g. Completely

How strongly do you feel you **owe it to yourself** to break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Not at all
- b. Just a little
- c. Somewhat
- d. Moderately
- e. Quite a bit
- f. Very much
- g. Completely

I believe it is my duty to break up with my committed romantic partner.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

I have a personal responsibility to break up with my committed romantic partner.

- a. Not at all personally responsible
- b. Just a little personally responsible
- c. Somewhat personally responsible
- d. Moderately personally responsible
- e. Quite a bit personally responsible
- f. Very much personally responsible
- g. Extremely personally responsible

#### Additional Questions

Do you feel a moral obligation to NOT break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months? That is, do you think it something you ought NOT do?

- a. Extremely strong moral obligation to NOT break up
- b. Moderately strong moral obligation to NOT break up
- c. Somewhat strong moral obligation to NOT break up
- d. Neither strong nor weak moral obligation to NOT break up
- e. Somewhat weak moral obligation to NOT break up
- f. Moderately weak moral obligation to NOT break up
- g. Extremely weak moral obligation to NOT break up

Do you perceive your moral obligations would influence your NOT breaking up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

- a. Definitely yes
- b. Moderately yes
- c. Somewhat yes
- d. Neither yes nor no
- e. Somewhat no
- f. Moderately no
- g. Definitely no

Do you feel you would have a moral obligation to break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months if they behaved in an offensive fashion in your relationship?

- a. Definitely no
- b. Moderately no
- c. Somewhat no
- d. Neither no nor yes
- e. Somewhat yes
- f. Moderately yes
- g. Definitely yes

Do you feel you would have a moral obligation to NOT break up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months if they behaved in an offensive fashion in your relationship?

- a. Definitely yes
- b. Moderately yes
- c. Somewhat yes
- d. Neither yes nor no
- e. Somewhat no
- f. Moderately no
- g. Definitely no

If I break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, I would have a “moral stomach-ache”.

- a. Extremely likely
- b. Moderately likely
- c. Somewhat likely
- d. Neither likely nor unlikely
- e. Somewhat unlikely
- f. Moderately unlikely
- g. Extremely unlikely



Breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would violate my principles.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Moderately agree
- c. Slightly agree
- d. Neither agree nor disagree
- e. Slightly disagree
- f. Moderately disagree
- g. Strongly disagree

## APPENDIX I. BEHAVIORAL BELIEFS AND ATTITUDE QUESTIONS

Fishbein and Ajzen (2011)

Behavioral beliefs were calculated as the sum of the cross product of outcome evaluation and belief strength questions. For evaluating behavioral beliefs in their contribution to attitudes about breaking up, three negative outcome items were reverse scored in behavioral belief strength. These items are denoted with an asterisk.

Outcome Evaluation

My having **more freedom** is:

- a. Extremely bad
- b. Moderately bad
- c. Somewhat bad
- d. Neither bad nor good
- e. Somewhat good
- f. Moderately good
- g. Extremely good

My having **more time to focus on myself** is:

- a. Extremely bad
- b. Moderately bad
- c. Somewhat bad
- d. Neither bad nor good
- e. Somewhat good
- f. Moderately good
- g. Extremely good

My **seeing friends more** often is:

- a. Extremely bad
- b. Moderately bad
- c. Somewhat bad
- d. Neither bad nor good
- e. Somewhat good
- f. Moderately good
- g. Extremely good

My having **less distraction from work (school) and activities** is:

- a. Extremely bad
- b. Moderately bad
- c. Somewhat bad
- d. Neither bad nor good
- e. Somewhat good
- f. Moderately good
- g. Extremely good

My **spending less money** is:

- a. Extremely bad
- b. Moderately bad
- c. Somewhat bad
- d. Neither bad nor good
- e. Somewhat good
- f. Moderately good
- g. Extremely good

My having **more free time** is:

- a. Extremely bad
- b. Moderately bad
- c. Somewhat bad
- d. Neither bad nor good
- e. Somewhat good
- f. Moderately good
- g. Extremely good

My **losing a friend to talk to and share things with** is:

- a. Extremely bad
- b. Moderately bad
- c. Somewhat bad
- d. Neither bad nor good
- e. Somewhat good
- f. Moderately good
- g. Extremely good

**My having to cut off a relationship with my partner's family is:**

- a. Extremely bad
- b. Moderately bad
- c. Somewhat bad
- d. Neither bad nor good
- e. Somewhat good
- f. Moderately good
- g. Extremely good

**My losing connections with mutual friends is:**

- a. Extremely bad
- b. Moderately bad
- c. Somewhat bad
- d. Neither bad nor good
- e. Somewhat good
- f. Moderately good
- g. Extremely good

**Behavioral Belief Strength**

If I break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, I will have **more freedom**.

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

If I break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, I will have **more time to focus on myself**.

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

If I break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, I will **see my friends more** often.

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

If I break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, I will have **less distraction from work (school) and activities**.

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

If I break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, I will **spend less money**.

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

If I break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, I will **have more free time**.

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

If I break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, I will **lose a friend to talk to and share things with**.\*

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

If I break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, I will **cut off relationships with my partner's family**.\*

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

If I break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, I will **lose connections with mutual friends**.\*

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

Direct Attitude Scale (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011)

My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months is:

- a. Extremely bad
- b. Moderately bad
- c. Somewhat bad
- d. Neither bad nor good
- e. Somewhat good
- f. Moderately good
- g. Extremely good

My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months is:

- a. Extremely negative
- b. Moderately negative
- c. Somewhat negative
- d. Neither negative nor positive
- e. Somewhat positive
- f. Moderately positive
- g. Extremely positive

My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months is:

- a. Extremely unfavorable
- b. Moderately unfavorable
- c. Somewhat unfavorable
- d. Neither unfavorable nor favorable
- e. Somewhat favorable
- f. Moderately favorable
- g. Extremely favorable

**APPENDIX J. NORMATIVE BELIEFS AND PERCEIVED SOCIAL NORM  
QUESTIONS**

Direct Perceived Norm Scales (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011)

[Injunctive]

Most people who are important to me think I should break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely false
- b. Moderately false
- c. Somewhat false
- d. Neither false nor true
- e. Somewhat true
- f. Moderately true
- g. Extremely true

Most people whose opinions I value would approve of my breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely improbable
- b. Moderately improbable
- c. Somewhat improbable
- d. Neither improbable nor probable
- e. Somewhat probable
- f. Moderately probable
- g. Extremely probable

Most people important to me would \_\_\_\_\_ of me breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disapprove
- b. Moderately disapprove
- c. Somewhat disapprove
- d. Neither disapprove nor approve
- e. Somewhat approve
- f. Moderately approve
- g. Strongly approve



[Descriptive]

Most people I respect and admire will break up with their committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

Most people like me will break up with their committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

Most people I talk to will break up with their committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

## Normative Beliefs

Normative beliefs were calculated as the sum of the cross products of all motivation to comply/belief strength (injunctive beliefs) and identification with the referents/belief strength (descriptive beliefs).

[Motivation to Comply]

When it comes to committed romantic relationships, I want to do what my **friends** think I should do.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

When it comes to committed romantic relationships, I want to do what my **parents** think I should do.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

When it comes to committed romantic relationships, I want to do what my **family members** think I should do.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

When it comes to committed romantic relationships, I want to do what my romantic **partner's family members** think I should do.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

When it comes to committed romantic relationships, I want to do what my romantic **partner** thinks I should do.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

[Injunctive Belief Strength with Referents]

My **friends** think that I should break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely improbable
- b. Moderately improbable
- c. Somewhat improbable
- d. Neither improbable nor probable
- e. Somewhat probable
- f. Moderately probable
- g. Extremely probable

My **parents** think that I should break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely improbable
- b. Moderately improbable
- c. Somewhat improbable
- d. Neither improbable nor probable
- e. Somewhat probable
- f. Moderately probable
- g. Extremely probable

My **family members** think that I should break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely improbable
- b. Moderately improbable
- c. Somewhat improbable
- d. Neither improbable nor probable
- e. Somewhat probable
- f. Moderately probable
- g. Extremely probable

My romantic **partner's family members** think that I should break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely improbable
- b. Moderately improbable
- c. Somewhat improbable
- d. Neither improbable nor probable
- e. Somewhat probable
- f. Moderately probable
- g. Extremely probable

My romantic **partner** thinks that I should break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely improbable
- b. Moderately improbable
- c. Somewhat improbable
- d. Neither improbable nor probable
- e. Somewhat probable
- f. Moderately probable
- g. Extremely probable

[Identification with Referents]

When it comes to committed romantic relationships, how much do you want to be like your **friends**?

- a. Not at all
- b. Just a little
- c. Some
- d. Moderately
- e. Quite a bit
- f. Very much
- g. Completely

When it comes to committed romantic relationships, how much do you want to be like **your family members**?

- a. Not at all
- b. Just a little
- c. Some
- d. Moderately
- e. Quite a bit
- f. Very much
- g. Completely

When it comes to committed romantic relationships, how much do you want to be like your **parents**?

- a. Not at all
- b. Just a little
- c. Some
- d. Moderately
- e. Quite a bit
- f. Very much
- g. Completely

When it comes to committed romantic relationships, how much do you want to be like **your romantic partner's family members**?

- a. Not at all
- b. Just a little
- c. Some
- d. Moderately
- e. Quite a bit
- f. Very much
- g. Completely

When it comes to committed romantic relationships, how much do you want to be like your romantic **partner**?

- a. Not at all
- b. Just a little
- c. Some
- d. Moderately
- e. Quite a bit
- f. Very much
- g. Completely

[Descriptive Belief Strength]

My **friends** would break up with their committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely improbable
- b. Moderately improbable
- c. Somewhat improbable
- d. Neither improbable nor probable
- e. Somewhat probable
- f. Moderately probable
- g. Extremely probable

My **family members** would break up with their committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely improbable
- b. Moderately improbable
- c. Somewhat improbable
- d. Neither improbable nor probable
- e. Somewhat probable
- f. Moderately probable
- g. Extremely probable

My **parents** would break up with their committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely improbable
- b. Moderately improbable
- c. Somewhat improbable
- d. Neither improbable nor probable
- e. Somewhat probable
- f. Moderately probable
- g. Extremely probable

My romantic **partner's family** members would break up with their committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely improbable
- b. Moderately improbable
- c. Somewhat improbable
- d. Neither improbable nor probable
- e. Somewhat probable
- f. Moderately probable
- g. Extremely probable

My romantic **partner** would break up with their committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely improbable
- b. Moderately improbable
- c. Somewhat improbable
- d. Neither improbable nor probable
- e. Somewhat probable
- f. Moderately probable
- g. Extremely probable

**APPENDIX K. PERCEIVED BEHAVIORAL CONTROL, FACILITATORS, AND  
CONSTRAINTS QUESTIONS**

Direct Perceived Control Scale (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011)

The question ‘confident that I can break up’ was not included in the direct perceived control composite for analyses, due to low internal consistency with the other measures.

I am confident that I can break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely false
- b. Moderately false
- c. Somewhat false
- d. Neither false nor true
- e. Somewhat true
- f. Moderately true
- g. Extremely true

My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months is up to me.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

If I really wanted to, I could break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely



My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months is under my control.

- a. Not at all under my control
- b. Just a little under my control
- c. Somewhat under my control
- d. Moderately under my control
- e. Quite a bit under my control
- f. Very much under my control
- g. Completely under my control

### Control Beliefs

Control beliefs were calculated as the sum of the cross products of all power of control and belief strength items (for both ‘facilitators’ and ‘constraints’). The power of control items for ‘constraints’ were reverse scored. In addition, the questions concerning ‘connections to romantic partner’s family’ were not included in the composite scale due to low relation with the other items.

### Power of Control (Facilitators)

**My romantic partner cheating** would make it easy for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

**My romantic partner lying** would make it easy for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

**My living long distance from my romantic partner** would make it easy for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

**My having trust issues with my romantic partner** would make it easy for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

**My fighting with my romantic partner** would make it easy for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

**My being treated poorly by my romantic partner** would make it easy for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

## Belief Strength

That I will **be cheated on** by my romantic partner in the next six months is:

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

That I will **be lied to** by my romantic partner in the next six months is:

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

That I will **be long-distance from my romantic partner** in the next six months is:

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

That I will **experience trust issues** with my romantic partner in the next six months is:

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

That I will **fight with my romantic partner** in the next six months is:

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

That I will **be treated poorly by my romantic partner** in the next six months is:

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

Power of Control (Constraints)

**My receiving love from/loving my romantic partner** would make it difficult for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

**My connections to romantic partner's family/my partner's connections to my family** would make it difficult for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

**My spending time with my romantic partner** would make it difficult for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

**My being happy with my romantic partner** would make it difficult for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

**My romantic partner being my best friend** would make it difficult for me to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

Belief Strength

That I will **be loved by/love my romantic partner** within the next six months is:

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

That I will have **connections to romantic partner's family/my partner will have connections to my family** within the next six months is:

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

That I will **spend time with my romantic partner** within the next six months is:

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

That I will be **happy with my romantic partner** in the next six months is:

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

That **my romantic partner will be my best friend** in the next six months is:

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

## APPENDIX L. INTENTION QUESTIONS

Behavioral Intentions (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011; Hinsz, Nickell, & Park, 2007)

I \_\_\_\_\_ intend to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Definitely do not
- b. Moderately do not
- c. Somewhat do not
- d. Neither do not nor do
- e. Somewhat do
- f. Moderately do
- g. Definitely do

I will break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

I am willing to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely false
- b. Moderately false
- c. Somewhat false
- d. Neither false nor true
- e. Somewhat true
- f. Moderately true
- g. Extremely true

I plan to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

I want to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

I desire to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree



## APPENDIX M. ATTITUDE TOWARD THE PROCESS QUESTIONS

(Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990; Hinsz & Ployhart, 1998; Higgins, 2005)

My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, regardless of whether or not we actually break up, **would feel right to me.**

- a. Extremely false
- b. Moderately false
- c. Somewhat false
- d. Neither false nor true
- e. Somewhat true
- f. Moderately true
- g. Extremely true

My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, regardless of whether or not we actually break up, **would be how I like to do things.**

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely

My breaking up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, regardless of whether or not we actually break up, **would fit with how I act.**

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

My **going about breaking up** with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, would make me feel:

- a. Extremely bad
- b. Moderately bad
- c. Somewhat bad
- d. Neither bad nor good
- e. Somewhat good
- f. Moderately good
- g. Extremely good

The **procedures that would be involved in me breaking up** with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be:

- a. Extremely unpleasant
- b. Moderately unpleasant
- c. Somewhat unpleasant
- d. Neither unpleasant nor pleasant
- e. Somewhat pleasant
- f. Moderately pleasant
- g. Extremely pleasant

The **procedures that would be involved in me breaking up** with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be:

- a. Extremely unenjoyable
- b. Moderately unenjoyable
- c. Somewhat unenjoyable
- d. Neither unenjoyable nor enjoyable
- e. Somewhat enjoyable
- f. Moderately enjoyable
- g. Extremely enjoyable

The **process of me breaking up** with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be:

- a. Extremely unpleasant
- b. Moderately unpleasant
- c. Somewhat unpleasant
- d. Neither unpleasant nor pleasant
- e. Somewhat pleasant
- f. Moderately pleasant
- g. Extremely pleasant

The **process of me breaking up** with my committed romantic partner within the next six months would be:

- a. Extremely unenjoyable
- b. Moderately unenjoyable
- c. Somewhat unenjoyable
- d. Neither unenjoyable nor enjoyable
- e. Somewhat enjoyable
- f. Moderately enjoyable
- g. Extremely enjoyable

## APPENDIX N. IMPLEMENTATION INTENTION QUESTIONS

(Gollwitzer, 1999)

If I were to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, I would develop plans or strategies before doing so.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

How much time would you put into developing plans or strategies before your breaking up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

No time \_ Some time \_ Moderate amount of time \_ Extreme amount of time

How much effort would you put into developing plans or strategies before your breaking up with your committed romantic partner within the next six months?

No time \_ Some time \_ Moderate amount of time \_ Extreme amount of time

If I were to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, I would intend to develop plans before doing so.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

If I were to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months, I would plan on developing strategies before doing so.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

## APPENDIX O. ADDITIONAL COMMITMENT QUESTIONS

(Johnson, Caughlin, & Huston, 1999)

### Personal Commitment (intention)

How much do you WANT to stay in a committed romantic relationship with your partner at this stage?

- a. Not at all
- b. Just a little
- c. Somewhat
- d. Moderately
- e. Quite a bit
- f. Very much
- g. Completely

### Moral Commitment (personal norm)

How much do you feel that you SHOULD stay in a committed romantic relationship with your partner at this stage?

- a. Not at all
- b. Just a little
- c. Somewhat
- d. Moderately
- e. Quite a bit
- f. Very much
- g. Completely

### Structural Commitment (obligation)

How much do you feel that you HAVE to stay in a committed romantic relationship with your partner at this stage?

- a. Not at all
- b. Just a little
- c. Somewhat
- d. Moderately
- e. Quite a bit
- f. Very much
- g. Completely

How much do you feel that it is NECESSARY for you to stay in a committed romantic relationship with your current partner?

- a. Not at all
- b. Just a little
- c. Somewhat
- d. Moderately
- e. Quite a bit
- f. Very much
- g. Completely

## **APPENDIX P. HEAD VS. HEART LOCATOR QUESTIONS**

### **Head vs. Heart Locator** (Fetterman & Robinson, 2013)

Irrespective of what you know about biology, which body part do you more closely associate with yourself?

1 = brain; 2 = heart

Irrespective of what you know about biology, which body part do you more closely associate with yourself?

1 = head; 2 = heart

## APPENDIX Q. FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE/ASSESSMENT OF BEHAVIOR

Are you still in a committed romantic relationship with the person you were dating at the time you completed the 'Breaking Up' study?

- a. Yes, we are still in a committed romantic relationship
- b. No, my partner broke up with me
- c. No, I broke the relationship off with my partner
- d. No, we had a mutual break-up
- e. Other

If you selected 'other' in the previous question, please explain: \_\_\_\_\_.

[IF STILL TOGETHER]

What is the current length of your committed romantic relationship with your partner? Please provide a specific numerical value in months (that is, please provide a unique numerical value in months and not a range of numbers).

\_\_\_\_\_ months

Please answer the following questions and then 'submit' your responses.

I \_\_\_\_\_ intend to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Definitely do not
- b. Moderately do not
- c. Somewhat do not
- d. Neither do not nor do
- e. Somewhat do
- f. Moderately do
- g. Definitely do

I will break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely unlikely
- b. Moderately unlikely
- c. Somewhat unlikely
- d. Neither unlikely nor likely
- e. Somewhat likely
- f. Moderately likely
- g. Extremely likely



I am willing to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Extremely false
- b. Moderately false
- c. Somewhat false
- d. Neither false nor true
- e. Somewhat true
- f. Moderately true
- g. Extremely true

I plan to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

I want to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

I desire to break up with my committed romantic partner within the next six months.

- a. Strongly disagree
- b. Moderately disagree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Neither disagree nor agree
- e. Slightly agree
- f. Moderately agree
- g. Strongly agree

[If BROKE UP]

How long ago did the committed romantic relationship with your partner end? Please provide a specific numerical value in weeks (that is, please provide a unique numerical value in weeks and not a range of numbers).

\_\_\_\_\_ weeks