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Responses to Dissatisfaction in Romantic Involvements: A Multidimensional Scaling Analysis

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Two multidimensional scaling studies were conducted to develop a comprehensive, inductively derived typology of responses to dissatisfaction in romantic involvements. Study 1 examined the responses of an undergraduate population, and Study 2 explored the reactions of a more heterogeneous, adult sample. The studies revealed similar patterns of results. In both Study 1 and Study 2, four general categories of response to dissatisfaction were observed: (a) *exit*—ending or actively abusing the relationship; (b) *voice*—actively attempting to improve conditions; (c) *loyalty*—passively waiting for conditions to improve; and (d) *neglect*—passively allowing the relationship to deteriorate. Two dimensions were distinguished among the response categories—constructiveness/destructiveness and activity/passivity. Voice and loyalty were judged to be constructive behaviors, while exit and neglect were viewed as relatively more destructive. And exit and voice were seen as fairly active, while loyalty and neglect were judged to be more passive (this effect was stronger in Study 1 than in Study 2). These findings provide good support for the Rusbult, Zembrodt, and Gunn (*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 1982, **43**, 1230–1242) model of responses to dissatisfaction in romantic involvements.

"There must be fifty ways to leave your lover."
Paul Simon, 1975

How do individuals respond when they become dissatisfied with their romantic involvements? Do they passively wait for conditions to improve,

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openly discuss their complaints, argue, plead, cajole, threaten, develop extrarelationship involvements . . . or abandon their partners? Social scientists have developed a variety of theories intended to explain the *development* of interpersonal relationships (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Clore & Byrne, 1974; Levinger & Snoek, 1972; Rusbult, 1980; Saegert, Swap & Zajonc, 1973). Unfortunately, the manner in which relationships *decline* has not been explored in as systematic a fashion.

Numerous researchers have studied *single* responses to relationship decline—separation or divorce (Bentler & Newcomb, 1978; Brown & Manela, 1978; Hill, Rubin, & Peplau, 1976; Kerckhoff, 1976; Levinger, 1976; Todres, 1978), conflict resolution style (Billings, 1979; Epstein & Santa-Barbara, 1975; Feldman & Jorgensen, 1974; Gottman, Markman, & Notarius, 1978; Gottman, Notarius, Markman, Bank, Yoppi & Rubin, 1976; Murphy & Mendelson, 1973), and extrarelationship affairs (Bell, Turner, & Rosen, 1975; Glass & Wright, 1977; Hunt, 1969; Jaffe & Kanter, 1976; Maykovich, 1976; Singh, Walton, & Williams, 1976). And others have examined related phenomena such as communication style (Birchler, Weiss, & Vincent, 1975; Fineberg & Lowman, 1975; Krain, 1975; Rausch, 1972; Rice, 1976; Strong, 1975), self-disclosure processes (Burke, Weir, & Harrison, 1976; Critelli & Dupre, 1978), attributional behaviors (Harvey, Wells, & Alvarez, 1978; Orvis, Kelley, & Butler, 1976), and power relations (Peplau, 1979; Raven, Centers, & Rodriguez, 1975; Scanzoni, 1979). While this literature identifies a variety of important interpersonal behaviors, and explores the characteristics and determinants of numerous responses to relationship decline, its focus on single responses in isolation of one another undermines the development of theoretical typologies sufficient to describe the full range of possible reactions to dissatisfaction. In the absence of such typologies, it is difficult to develop a comprehensive theory-based understanding of decline processes.

Alternatively, a few authors have *deductively* generated typologies of response to dissatisfaction from theories of marital processes. For example, Chafetz (1979) identified four power processes spouses utilize in attempts to alter their partners' behaviors (e.g., authority, power, manipulation), Strong (1975) posited five necessary skills for marital conflict resolution (e.g., speaking, identifying alternative choices, introspection), and Harshman (1974) described five characteristic responses to marital difficulties (e.g., divorce, continuation of status quo, renegotiation with accommodation). More recently, Rusbult and her colleagues (Rusbult, Zembrodt, & Gunn, 1982) developed a model of responses to dissatisfaction based loosely on the work of Hirschman (1970; 1974), identifying four categories of behavior: (a) *exit*—ending the relationship; (b) *voice*—actively and constructively expressing dissatisfaction, with the intent of improving conditions; (c) *loyalty*—remaining passively loyal to the relationship, waiting for conditions to improve; and (d) *neglect*—passively allowing

the relationship to atrophy. They argue that the four responses differ from one another along two dimensions—constructiveness/destructiveness and activity/passivity. Voice and loyalty are *constructive,* positive, and optimistic in regard to the relationship's future, while exit and neglect are more *destructive.* And exit and voice are *active* behaviors, while loyalty and neglect are relatively more *passive.*

But in a discussion of this "top down" method of theory construction, Falbo notes that, "while this *deductive* approach is a popular and respected means of studying social phenomena, such methods tend to restrict the types of [responses] considered" (Falbo, 1977, p. 537, italics not in original). That is, it is impossible to know whether a deductively developed typology is a comprehensive and accurate description of reality, or whether it is a reflection of the theorist's personal, idiosyncratic, and possibly inaccurate view of the domain of study. A less deductive approach might produce a more representative typology of the responses individuals actually enact when they become unhappy with their romantic involvements.

The present studies were designed to derive a *comprehensive* typology of responses to dissatisfaction in romantic relationships through the application of more *inductive* methods. To this end, it seemed useful to adopt a family of data collection/analysis methods known as multidimensional scaling (MDS). MDS is used to geometrically describe the underlying structure of a specified set of behaviors; that is, MDS methods serve to identify the conceptual dimensions individuals perceive as "defining" a domain of responses. MDS techniques are characterized by two important qualities: (a) the methods and results are shielded from influence by the researcher's personal theory or preconceptions on the topic of study; and (b) the procedures are capable of revealing critical dimensions that are not necessarily registered in the awareness of subjects. These qualities are particularly useful in early stages of theory development because they allow for a highly inductive and descriptive approach to the study of a new domain of behaviors.

The results of the present studies may be used to answer two important questions. The first and most important question concerns the essential categories of response—what typology of responses characterizes the manner in which individuals react to dissatisfaction in their romantic involvements? A second question concerns the labeling of these response categories—what dimensions distinguish among the various types of response, and in what way(s) are the responses similar to one another?

Each of two studies was carried out in three phases. In Phase 1, samples of verbal descriptions of responses to dissatisfaction were obtained. In Phase 2, subjects were asked to judge the degree of similarity/dissimilarity among these responses. These data were used to compute a multidimensional configuration (i.e., "picture") of the domain of responses to

dissatisfaction. A variety of potential labels for the resultant configurations were then developed. In Phase 3, individuals reported the extent to which each response "possessed" each potential label. These data were combined with the Phase 2 configurations to attach labels to the dimensions of the derived multidimensional configurations. The obtained results constitute an inductively derived typology of responses to dissatisfaction in romantic involvements.

STUDY 1

Phase 1

Respondents were 50 undergraduates (25 male, 25 female) from introductory psychology classes at the University of Kentucky. Each individual was asked to write a brief essay in response to the following:

> Please think of a time in your life when you became dissatisfied with a romantic relationship in which you were involved. In as much detail as possible, describe the situation and your feelings, and especially your response to the situation (what did you do about your unhappiness? what did you do about the relationship?).

The portions of the essays that described the individual's response to dissatisfaction were typed on index cards, and any features that might have revealed the identity of the respondent were eliminated.

Phase 2

In Phase 2, subjects judged the degree of similarity/dissimilarity among the Phase 1 descriptions of response to dissatisfaction. An averaged dissimilarities matrix was computed, and a multidimensional scaling analysis was performed on these data.

Subjects. One hundred male and 100 female undergraduates participated in Phase 2 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for an introductory psychology course at the University of Kentucky. Subjects were recruited for participation in groups of eight same-sex persons and were randomly assigned to one of 20 "target" responses, equal numbers of males and females on each target.

Procedure. Subjects were asked to familiarize themselves with the 50 responses to dissatisfaction obtained in Phase 1, and then to rank-order those responses in terms of their similarity (in regard to response to dissatisfaction) to their target responses. Twenty targets were randomly selected from the full set of 50 responses. After completing their rank-orderings, subjects were asked to write a description of what criteria they had employed to distinguish responses at one end of the continuum from those at the other end. Subjects were then debriefed and thanked for their participation.

Data analysis. The resultant rank-order data were used to create a complete, symmetrical dissimilarities matrix by computing the average distance between each pair of responses across targets and across subjects. These data were analyzed using the computer program MDSCAL (Kruskal, 1964). Solutions were obtained in one to five dimensions. The resultant stress values are displayed in Table 1.

Stress, a measure of "badness of fit", represents the difficulty of arraying the responses in a configuration of a specified dimensionality. In this case, stress is low; the responses were easily arrayed in a configural fashion. It should be clear that as more dimensions are employed in the computation of a multidimensional configuration, the stress of fit naturally decreases. Therefore, the choice of a particular multidimensional solution is based upon two criteria—accuracy and parsimony. The three-dimensional solution did not appear

TABLE 1
STRESS VALUES FOR DERIVED CONFIGURATIONS IN ONE THROUGH FIVE DIMENSIONS—STUDY 1

Dimensionality	Stress
5	.026
4	.029
3	.037
2	.046
1	.114

to appreciably reduce the stress of fit below that of the two-dimensional solution, so the solution in two dimensions was judged to be the best description of the data.

This two-dimensional configuration geometrically describes the relationships among the descriptions of response to dissatisfaction, and displays the dimensions which define this domain of behaviors. However, the critical defining dimensions must be labeled and validated if this "picture" is to be theoretically useful. Phase 3 was designed to achieve this end.

Phase 3

Twenty attributes were identified as potential labels for the Phase 2 derived configuration. Two raters judged the degree to which each Phase 1 response possessed the attribute described in each potential label. These judgments were averaged, and multiple regression-type analyses were used to fit the Phase 3 labels data to the Phase 2 derived configuration.

Procedure and potential labels. Two raters, naive to the results of the Phase 2 analyses, familiarized themselves with the 50 Phase 1 responses and then judged the extent to which each response possessed each of 20 attributes. Each attribute was printed at the top of a record sheet, along with a 9-point Likert-type scale to be used in rating each response. Each set of judgments required approximately 30 min to complete.

The 20 attributes selected as potential labels were identified from Phase 2 subjects' statements regarding the attributes they utilized in constructing their rank-orderings of the responses. They identified the following potential labels: "person actively tried to improve conditions" (18%), "person ended the relationship" (16%), "person discussed his/her dissatisfaction with the partner" (11%), "person's actions were constructive/destructive in regard to the future of the relationship" (7%), "person was committed to maintaining the relationship" (7%), "person was loyal" (6%), "people separated, broke up, or decided to 'just be friends'" (5%), "person passively allowed conditions to worsen" (5%), "person tried to change the relationship" (4%), "person (or his/her behavior) was hostile" (4%), "person tried hard to solve problems" (4%), "person was active/passive" (3%), "person said or did cruel things to partner" (3%), "person accepted problems in relationship or partner" (2%), "person hoped and believed the relationship would improve" (1%), "people compromised" (1%), "person was optimistic about the future of his/her relationship" (1%), "person blamed partner for problems" (1%), "problem was satisfactorily resolved" (1%), and "both versus one person worked to solve problems" (1%).

Data Analysis and Discussion

A series of reliability analyses revealed significant *alphas* for the two raters' judgments (see Table 2—*Reliability*), so the Phase 3 data were averaged across raters for each potential label. The computer program PREFMAP (Carroll & Chang, 1970) was used to relate the Phase 3

TABLE 2
DIRECTION COSINES AND CORRELATIONS OF IDEAL POTENTIAL LABEL VECTORS—STUDY 1

Potential Label	Reliability	r	F	Dimensions 1	Dimensions 2
Exit					
Person ended relationship	.96	.92	131.11	.90	.18
People separated, broke up, or decided to "be friends"	.92	.92	121.06	.89	.23
Voice					
Person discussed dissatisfaction	.90	.86	68.37	−.64	.57
People compromised	.90	.92	127.98	−.87	.29
Person tried to change relationship	.92	.84	56.65	−.72	.43
Both/one person worked to solve problem	.91	.83	51.64	−.76	.32
Person actively tried to improve conditions	.77	.87	72.03	−.66	.56
Problem was satisfactorily resolved	.96	.96	268.09	−.10	.30
Person tried hard to solve problem	.93	.93	140.96	−.88	.28
Loyalty					
Person was committed	.96	.95	148.72	−.95	−.03
Person accepted problems	.88	.91	119.21	−.83	−.39
Person was loyal	.91	.93	140.69	−.90	−.23
Neglect					
Person passively waited for conditions to worsen	.91	.73	26.67	.55	−.48
Person (or behavior) was hostile	.87	.87	70.49	.87	−.01
Person said/did cruel things	.89	.82	46.49	.80	−.14
Constructive/destructive					
Person hoped and believed relationship would improve	.94	.97	390.07	−.97	.02
Person's actions were constructive/destructive	.95	.96	259.36	−.94	.15
Person was optimistic about future	.89	.96	275.60	−.96	.01
Active/passive					
Person was active/passive	.88	.91	117.68	.20	.89
Other					
Person blamed partner for problem	.78	.25	1.50	.24	.07

potential labels data to the Phase 2 derived configuration. PREFMAP computes the multiple correlation between the potential labels data and the derived configuration coordinates for the 50 responses (the coordinates represented the locations of each response in the derived configuration). In other words, the program assesses the relationship between averaged ratings of each response for a given potential label, and the locations of each response in the Phase 2 configuration. Each response has two location scores—one for its location on Dimension 1, one for its location on Dimension 2. The results of these analyses are displayed in Table 2.

These statistics (r and F) describe the strength of relationship between the derived configuration and each potential label; they demonstrate how well each potential label "explains" the derived configuration. Potential labels with F ratios greater than 10.0 were selected as good descriptors of the configuration.[1] The only potential label that did not adequately describe the configuration was "person blamed partner for problems." This label will not be considered further. All other potential labels were highly correlated with the derived configuration (i.e., they "described" the configuration well).

PREFMAP also computes the ideal vectors for each potential label. These vectors describe the best-fitting alignment of each potential label in the derived configuration; they represent each potential label in relation to the essay responses, and "draw" the ideal vector onto the Phase 2 configuration. The results of these analyses are also presented in Table 2 (*Dimension* 1 and *Dimension* 2).

The PREFMAP analyses revealed four primary clusters of vectors, as displayed in Table 2. The averaged vectors for each of these clusters, superimposed on the Phase 2 derived configuration, are displayed in Fig. 1. These four clusters appear to be consistent with the Rusbult et al. (in press) model of responses to dissatisfaction, and have therefore been termed "exit," "voice," "loyalty," and "neglect" (see Table 2). The potential labels falling within each of these four clusters or quadrants are as described in the Rusbult et al. model—the exit quadrant includes responses in which individuals ended their involvements, the voice quadrant includes responses where the persons actively tried to improve conditions (e.g., discussed dissatisfaction, compromised, tried to change relationship), the loyalty quadrant includes responses where the individuals remained passively loyal to their relationships, and the neglect quadrant includes responses in which individuals passively allowed conditions to worsen (i.e., behaved in a passively cruel or hostile manner).

Two additional dimensions describe this configuration and distinguish among the response categories—constructiveness/destructiveness and activity/passivity. The voice and loyalty responses were judged to be more constructive and optimistic, while the exit and neglect responses were viewed as relatively more destructive. And the exit and voice responses were judged to be more active, while the loyalty and neglect responses were seen as fairly passive. These results, too, are consistent with the Rusbult et al. model.

[1] The input data for the computation of the Phase 2 multidimensional configuration were ordinal. This level of measurement is acceptable for multidimensional scaling analyses. However, since the derived configuration coordinates on which these Phase 3 regression analyses were performed were based (one step removed, in the Phase 2 input) on ordinal data, these statistics should be considered descriptive rather than inferential. Therefore, the criterion that labels yield F ratios greater than 10.0 was arbitrarily established.

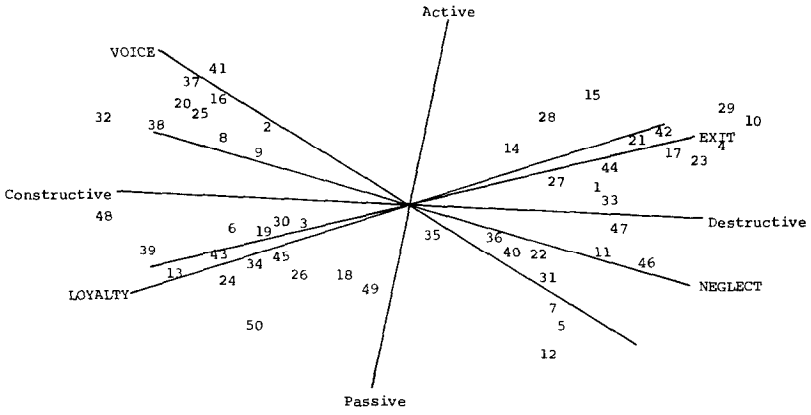

FIG. 1. Ideal label vectors in the derived configuration—Study 1.

The specific responses falling within each quadrant were also generally consistent with the Rusbult et al. model. The responses themselves will be explored in greater detail in the discussion, but one unexpected finding should be noted here—the exit quadrant included not only responses wherein the relationship was actually ended, but also contained other sorts of actively destructive reactions such as, "I slapped her around a bit, I'm ashamed to say" and "I began to start fights over trivial things." Although these responses *are* active and destructive (i.e., exit-like), such behaviors are not entirely consistent with the current Rusbult et al. definition of exit (i.e., clearly ending the relationship).

Several responses noted in other deductively developed typologies are evident in the derived configuration. For example, Strong's (1975) recommended conflict behaviors are apparent in the voice quadrant—listening, speaking, deciphering basic needs, and so forth. Chafetz' (1978) behavior change processes also appear to be voice-like—authority, power, influence, and manipulation (the latter may border on neglect). And Harshman's (1974) typology of responses captures three of the four quadrants—renegotiation with accommodation and working through to constructive integration are examples of voice, continuation of status quo is loyalist behavior, divorce is exit, and trial separation may be a combination of exit and voice. Thus, the results of Study 1 provide good support for the Rusbult et al. exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect typology, and also appear to incorporate responses described in alternative typologies.

STUDY 2

Study 2 was different from Study 1 in several respects. First, Study 1 examined the responses to dissatisfaction of undergraduates, who were relatively young and (perhaps) inexperienced. In contrast, Study 2 explores the reported responses of an older and more demographically heterogeneous

adult population. Second, in Study 1 the Phase 2 subjects made judgments regarding relatively simple stimuli—one or two sentence descriptions of the responses themselves. In Study 2, these stimuli were more complex, and included not only the individual's response to dissatisfaction, but also the complete verbal description of the surrounding situation. Third, while Study 1 utilized two trained raters to make Phase 3 potential labels judgments, Study 2 employed as raters a larger group of undergraduate subjects. Finally, the Study 2 set of potential labels was larger and somewhat different from the first set so as to assess the explanatory power of a larger number of attributes.

Phase 1

Respondents. Random digit dialing was employed as a means of obtaining a reasonably representative sample of verbal descriptions of response to dissatisfaction. A computer-generated list of 88 telephone numbers in Lexington, Kentucky was developed, and three attempts were made to contact a respondent at each number.[2] Out of 88 telephone numbers, 42 residential phones were contacted. The 46 failed contacts included 5 business phones, 16 nonworking numbers, 21 phones where no one answered on any of three calls, and 4 lines that were busy on all three calls. Of the 42 contacts, 8 persons refused to participate, and 6 terminated during the interview. The 6 who terminated during the interview did so because they had "*never* been unhappy about anything" in their relationships. The overall response rate, thus, was 28 out of 42 calls, or 67%. The 10 males and 18 females who participated in Phase 1 had a mean age of 36.57 years (range 20 to 67) and 2.75 years of formal education past high school (range -3 to $+8$). Eighty-nine percent were caucasian ($n = 25$) and 11% were black ($n = 3$). Thirty-nine percent were married ($n = 11$), 29% were single ($n = 8$), 21% were divorced ($n = 6$), and 11% were widowed ($n = 3$).

Procedure. The interviewer explained the purpose and method of the study, and obtained basic demographic information from each person contacted. Individuals were told that their responses would be tape-recorded, and were assured that their anonymity would be protected. If the respondent agreed to participate in the study he/she was asked to respond to the following:

> Please think of a time in your life when you became dissatisfied with a romantic relationship in which you were involved. In as much detail as possible, describe the situation and your feelings, and especially your response to the situation (what did you do about your unhappiness? what did you do about the relationship?).

Individuals who experienced difficulty in responding were encouraged with a pre-specified set of prompts designed to elicit desired verbalization. Individuals were prompted only if they failed to spontaneously describe both the causes of their dissatisfaction and the manner in which they responded to their dissatisfaction. Prompts were employed in only 43% of the contacts. The three most common prompts were designed to (a) help identify a period of dissatisfaction, however trivial or serious; (b) elicit discussion of the cause of this dissatisfaction; and (c) encourage discussion of the respondent's reaction to his/her dissatisfaction. After describing their relationships, respondents were debriefed and thanked

[2] The list of random numbers was developed for the present study by staff at the University of Kentucky Survey Research Center. The telephones employed in the study were equipped with recording devices that "beeped" every 15 sec, in accordance with standard guidelines concerning the conduct of telephone surveys.

for their cooperation. Individuals' responses were tape-recorded and later transcribed. Any features of these responses which might have revealed the identity of the respondent were eliminated.

Phase 2

Subjects. Thirty-nine males and 45 females participated in Phase 2 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for an introductory psychology course at the University of Kentucky. Subjects participated in the experiment in groups of 10 to 12 persons. Subjects were randomly assigned to one of 12 target responses, with approximately equal numbers of males and females on each target.

Procedure. The procedure for Study 2 was identical to that of Study 1. Subjects were asked to read over the 28 responses from Phase 1, and then to rank-order them in terms of their similarity (of response to dissatisfaction) to one of 12 target responses. The 12 target responses were randomly selected from the full set of 28. After completing the rank-ordering, subjects were asked to write a description of what criteria they had employed to distinguish among responses. Subjects were then debriefed and thanked for their participation.

Data analysis. The Phase 2 rank-order data were utilized to create a complete, symmetrical dissimilarities matrix by computing the average distance between each pair of responses across targets and across subjects. As in Study 1, the program MDSCAL was employed to compute solutions in one to five dimensions. The stress values for each solution are presented in Table 3. These values suggest that the two-dimensional solution is the most accurate yet parsimonious means of representing the relations among the responses to dissatisfaction.

Phase 3

Subjects. Fifty-eight males and 58 females participated in Phase 3 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for an introductory psychology course at the University of Kentucky. A group of four same-sex subjects was recruited for each session. Subjects were randomly assigned three of 25 potential labels.

Procedure. The experimenter explained that she was interested in discovering how well each of a variety of labels "described" a set of essay reports of response to dissatisfaction. The judgment task was discussed in some detail, and an example was reviewed. Materials were then distributed, and subjects proceeded to complete judgments for three different potential labels.

Each subject was given (a) the set of 28 responses from Phase 1, which were printed on index cards; and (b) a large sheet of cardboard with the potential label printed at the top, and nine numbered rectangles at the bottom. Subjects familiarized themselves with the 28 Phase 1 responses, and then sorted the responses into piles on the rectangles in

TABLE 3
STRESS VALUES FOR DERIVED CONFIGURATIONS IN ONE THROUGH FIVE DIMENSIONS—STUDY 2

Dimensionality	Stress
5	.053
4	.063
3	.076
2	.096
1	.155

accordance to the 9-point potential label scale. In completing this task, subjects essentially performed relative judgments of all 28 descriptions of response to dissatisfaction on 9-point Likert-type scales.

After completing judgments for one potential label, the experimenter removed the cardboard sheet (an assistant recorded these data) and gave the subject a second sheet with a different scale printed on it. The subject performed a second set of judgments of the same 28 descriptions of response to dissatisfaction, this time in regard to a new potential label. Subjects finished three sets of judgments during the session. After completing judgments of the 28 responses in regard to three potential labels, subjects were debriefed and thanked.

Potential labels. The 25 attributes selected as potential labels for the derived configuration were identified from three sources: (a) statements from Phase 2 subjects regarding the attributes they employed in constructing their rank-orderings of the responses; (b) the set of potential labels utilized in Study 1; and (c) a number of theoretical statements concerning reactions to dissatisfaction (e.g., Chafetz, 1978; Harshman, 1974; Levinger, 1976; Murphy & Mendelson, 1973; Orvis et al., 1976; Rusbult et al., 1982; Strong, 1975). The following potential labels were developed based on the responses of Phase 2 subjects: "person discussed his/her dissatisfaction with the partner" (25%), "person ended the relationship" (22%), "person was loyal" (10%), "both versus one person worked to solve problems" (9%), "person passively allowed conditions to worsen" (9%), "person's actions were constructive/destructive in regard to the future of the relationship" (8%), "people compromised" (7%), "person was/was not very unhappy" (4%), "relationship had a number of problems" (3%), and "relationship duration" (3%). These potential labels fairly closely parallel the attributes employed in Study 1, but the following labels were added based upon the findings of that study: "person accepted problems in relationship or partner" (loyalty), "person was quietly loyal and expected that conditions would improve" (loyalty), "person was committed to maintaining the relationship" (loyalty), "person didn't care about the relationship or what happened to it" (neglect), "person's actions were not effective in eliminating problems" (neglect), "person hoped and believed the relationship would improve" (constructiveness/destructiveness), "person was active/passive" (activity/passivity), and "person definitely took action to change the relationship" (activity/passivity). Many responses discussed by other authors are already encompassed in this list, but several scales were added in order to assess responses described by Chafetz (1978) ("person tried to persuade partner to change," "person used power or authority to get partner to change," "person used subtle manipulation"), Rice (1976) ("person threatened partner to induce compliance"), Harshman (1974) ("person didn't try to improve the relationship"), and attribution researchers such as Orvis et al. (1976) ("person viewed problem as situational/personal," "person blamed self/partner for problems).

Data Analysis and Discussion

The Phase 3 data were averaged across subjects for each potential label. As in Study 1, the computer program PREFMAP was used to relate the Phase 3 potential labels data to the Phase 2 derived configuration. The results of these analyses are presented in Table 4. Potential labels with F ratios greater than 10.0 were selected as good descriptors of the configuration. The potential labels that did not adequately describe the configuration were the two activity/passivity labels and the potential labels listed under "Other" (refer to Table 4). These labels will not be considered further. All other potential labels were highly correlated with the derived configuration.

Four clusters of measures emerged in the PREFMAP analyses (refer

TABLE 4
DIRECTION COSINES AND CORRELATIONS OF IDEAL POTENTIAL LABEL VECTORS—STUDY 2

Potential Label	*r*	*F*	Dimensions 1	2
Exit				
Person ended relationship	.96	130.35	.95	.31
Person didn't try to improve relationship at all	.90	51.27	.95	.30
Voice				
Person discussed dissatisfaction	.90	47.75	−.95	−.31
People compromised	.94	102.85	−.99	−.09
Both/one person worked to solve problem	.94	103.12	−.99	−.22
Person tried to persuade partner to change	.80	22.30	−.86	−.51
Loyalty				
Person was loyal	.89	46.67	−.99	.14
Person accepted problems	.79	20.82	−.79	.61
Quiet loyalty, expecting improvement	.90	56.33	−.97	.26
Person was committed	.93	81.75	−.83	.56
Person was not very unhappy	.88	41.22	−.48	.88
Neglect				
Person passively allowed conditions to worsen	.85	31.28	.89	−.46
Person didn't care about relationship and what happened to it	.86	35.19	.83	−.56
Person's actions were not effective in eliminating problems	.94	102.01	.91	−.42
Relationship had numerous problems	.83	27.02	.50	−.87
Constructive/destructive				
Person's actions were constructive/destructive	.94	93.37	−.99	−.04
Person hoped and believed relationship would improve	.90	51.28	−.99	−.13
Active/passive				
Person was active/passive	.21	0.58	−.66	−.75
Person definitely took action to change relationship	.62	7.86	−.77	−.64
Other				
Person used power or authority to get partner to change	.21	0.58	−.78	−.63
Person used subtle manipulation	.42	2.68	.93	−.36
Person threatened partner	.62	7.98	.86	−.51
Person viewed problem as situational/personal	.31	1.35	−.89	.45
Person blamed self/partner for problems	.41	2.56	−.66	.75
Relationship duration	.43	2.86	−.92	−.38

to Table 4). The averaged vectors for each of these clusters, superimposed on the Phase 2 derived configuration, are displayed in Fig. 2. As in Study 1, these clusters are consistent with the Rusbult et al. (1982) model of responses to dissatisfaction. The exit quadrant includes responses in which persons ended their involvements and did not try to improve conditions, the voice quadrant includes responses where the persons

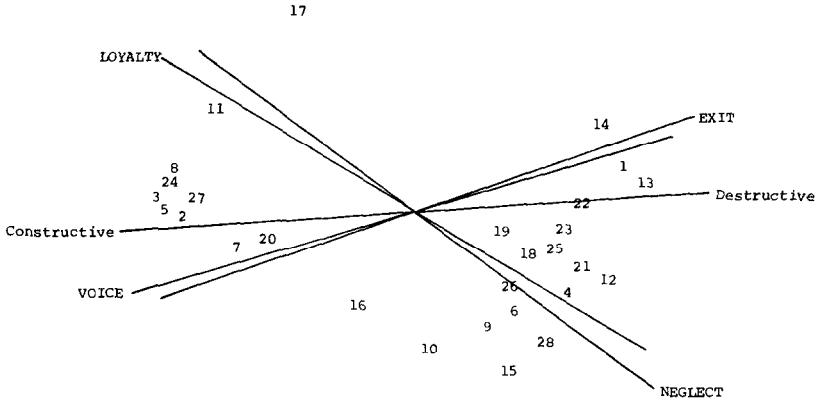

FIG. 2. Ideal label vectors in the derived configuration—Study 2.

actively tried to improve conditions (e.g., discussed dissatisfaction, compromised, tried to persuade partner to change), the loyalty quadrant includes responses where individuals remained passively loyal to their relationships (e.g., accepted problems, expected improvement, were committed to maintaining their relationships), and the neglect quadrant includes responses in which persons passively allowed conditions to worsen (e.g., did not care about relationships, behaved ineffectually). Unexpectedly, the degree of unhappiness measure aligned with the loyalty vectors (loyalists were not very unhappy), and the number of problems label aligned with the neglect vector (persons who neglected were judged to have relationships with numerous problems).

As in Study 1, the constructiveness/destructiveness potential labels effectively distinguished among the response categories. The voice and loyalty response quadrants were judged to be more constructive, while the exit and neglect quadrants were viewed as somewhat more destructive. However, the activity/passivity labels did not adequately describe the configuration of responses. The configuration *did* reveal two active response categories (exit and voice) and two passive response categories (loyalty and neglect), but in Study 2 the response quadrants were arrayed differently relative to one another. In Study 1, the responses were arrayed, moving clockwise around the configuration, exit, neglect, loyalty, and voice; Study 1 revealed two contiguous constructive responses, two contiguous destructive responses, two contiguous active responses, and two contiguous passive responses. In Study 2, the responses' clockwise alignment was exit, neglect, voice, and loyalty—the voice and loyalty quadrants were reversed. This issue will be further addressed in the discussion.

DISCUSSION

The present studies were designed to develop a *comprehensive* typology of responses to dissatisfaction in romantic involvements through the

application of *inductive* methodologies. The primary goal of the studies was to identify the major categories of response to relationship decline. The results of both Study 1 and Study 2 suggest that a typology including four general response categories may be a useful means of representing individuals' perceptions of this domain of behaviors. Consistent with previous research by Rusbult and her colleagues (Rusbult et al., 1982), these categories have been termed exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect.

The *exit* responses were highly destructive and pessimistic in regard to the future of the relationship, and included behaviors such as not trying at all to improve conditions, divorcing, breaking up, or separating. In Study 1, the exit quadrant of the derived configuration also contained other actively destructive behaviors, responses in which the relationship was not actually ended but was abused in an active and destructive manner. Thus, it may be advisable to modify the current Rusbult et al. definition of exit to include not just breakups, but also active relationship/partner abuse. The following are examples of exit responses[3]:

I ended it. (Study 1, Response 10)

I told him I couldn't take it any more, and that it was over. (Study 1, Response 23)

I slapped her around a bit, I'm ashamed to say. (Study 1, Response 15)

I divorced him . . . . (Study 2, Response 1)

It drove me crazy, so I left . . . . (Study 2, Response 22)

The second category of response was *voice*. The voice responses were viewed as constructive, optimistic, and active, and included behaviors such as attempting to change the relationship, discussing problems, compromising, both persons trying to work things out, and adopting active problem-solving orientations. In Study 1, these responses were judged to produce the most satisfactory resolutions. In Study 2, Chafetz' (1978) persuasion measure also aligned with the voice cluster; attempts to persuade one's partner to change were viewed as voice-like. The following are examples of voice responses:

We talked things over and worked things out. (Study 1, Response 32)

I wrote him a letter to try to find out what was going on. (Study 1, Response 2)

I tried my hardest to make things better. (Study 1, Response 38)

We sat down and talked it out . . . . (Study 2, Response 7)

We compromised . . . . (Study 2, Response 24)

[3] For Study 1, the full response is cited. For Study 2 examples, we cite only the segment of the full response that describes the individual's response to dissatisfaction.

A third category of response was *loyalty*. Loyalists were relatively passive, were accepting of whatever minor problems they perceived were present in their relationships, were highly committed to maintaining their relationships, and expected that conditions would improve with little active intervention on their part. In Study 2, the measure of degree of unhappiness also clustered with the loyalty vector—loyalists were judged to be not terribly unhappy with their relationships. (It is presumed that decreases in happiness, or the presence of more severe problems, might encourage alternative responses to dissatisfaction.) The following are examples of loyalty:

> I supported him, even when my friends criticized him. (Study 1, Response 39)
>
> I loved her so much that I ignored her faults. (Study 1, Response 13)
>
> I just waited to see if things would get any better, and went out with him when he asked me. (Study 1, Response 26)
>
> I prayed a lot, and left things in God's hands. (Study 1, Response 3)
>
> We was raised that our husband was the head of the household. If he made a decision, we had to accept it. I went along with that, and I was never unhappy . . . . (Study 2, Response 17)

Finally, a variety of responses may be described as *neglect*, which represents destructive passivity. Neglectful individuals ignored their partners and relationships, behaved in a cruel or hostile manner, didn't care about their relationships or what happened to them, engaged in behaviors that were not effective in eliminating problems, and generally just allowed conditions to worsen. In Study 2, the number of problems label also aligned with the neglect cluster; neglectful persons' relationships were perceived to be full of problems. The following are examples of neglect:

> I guess I just kind of quit—I didn't try to salvage it—I just didn't know what to do and feel it was right. (Study 1, Response 46)
>
> I began to stay away from him as much as possible. (Study 1, Response 11)
>
> We seemed to drift apart—we might have exchanged five to ten words in a week. (Study 1, Response 22)
>
> Mostly my response was silence to anything he might say, ignoring him if we were around other people, etc. (Study 1, Response 7)
>
> I just started treating her, you know . . . . I guess it was pretty bad . . . . We didn't treat each other very well . . . . (Study 2, Response 4)
>
> I didn't really care whether the relationship ended or got better. I think I just kind of coped with it. I played duplicate bridge and read a lot . . . . (Study 1, Response 6)

Thus, the exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect typology appears to provide a simple yet rich description of the behaviors individuals enact when

they become dissatisfied with their romantic involvements. The above discussion characterizes these response categories as "pure" types—each response is presented as independent of all other categories. In fact, these categories are continuous and overlapping. A few examples of combined responses should suffice to illustrate this point:

> *Neglect/Exit*—We didn't communicate with each other and I felt like I couldn't show my feelings, so I stopped seeing the guy. (Study 1, Response 33)
>
> *Voice/Loyalty*—I swallowed my pride and asked for another chance. (Study 1, Response 9)
>
> *Neglect/Loyalty*—I cried a lot and was depressed a lot. (Study 1, Response 35)
>
> *Neglect/Voice*—. . . . we're having a lot of trouble, and it just stems from a lack of communication, and we're just nitpicking each other over every little thing . . . . We're talking about it and trying to work things out. My wife's wanting to go to a marriage counselor . . . . (Study 1, Response 16)

A second question addressed in these studies concerned the factors that distinguish responses at one end of the configuration from responses at the opposite end. Rusbult, Zembrodt, and Gunn (1982) suggested that two dimensions—constructiveness/destructiveness and activity/passivity—define this domain of behaviors. Their assertion concerning *constructiveness/destructiveness* was clearly substantiated in both Studies 1 and 2. Labels designed to measure this dimension correlated highly with the derived configurations, and their ideal vectors aligned with the configurations as expected—the voice and loyalty responses were on the constructive sides of the configurations, and the exit and neglect responses were on the destructive portions of the configurations.

However, support for assertions regarding the *activity/passivity* dimension was not as strong. This dimension did distinguish among responses in Study 1—exit and voice were viewed as active, and loyalty and neglect were seen as more passive. And Study 2 revealed two clusters of active responses (exit and voice) and two clusters of passive responses (loyalty and neglect), although these clusters were not arrayed relative to one another in the same manner as in Study 1 (the two active responses and the two passive responses were not on the same halves of the configuration, but instead, were opposite one another). It is difficult to explain this discrepancy based on the results of the present studies. First, it may be that the Study 1 Phase 2 judgments were more stable, since they were based upon 20 targets and 50 responses, while the Study 2 judgments were based upon only 12 targets and 28 responses. Such increased measurement accuracy as may have been possible in Study 1 might increase the likelihood that not only the dominant distinguishing dimension (constructiveness/destructiveness) would be revealed, but also more subtle differences among responses, such as activity/passivity. Alternatively, it

could be that the Study 2 responses were more difficult to rank order in Phase 2 than were those utilized in Study 1. The second study's responses included not only the individual's response to dissatisfaction, but also a description of the problem and surrounding circumstances. The Study 2 stress values *were* slightly greater than were those for Study 1, a fact which supports this explanation. Finally, it is possible that the difference between the results of the studies reflects real differences between the responses of undergraduates and those of other adults. Perhaps the undergraduate population evidenced a greater range of responses, from extremely passive to extremely active. The nonstudent adult population may not have exhibited such range, and their responses may have differed more saliently on other dimensions—for example, the expression of anger (i.e., voice and neglect responses *do* express anger openly, exit and loyalty responses do not). However, these comments are clearly speculative, and such issues remain to be explored in future research.

Two final comments are in order regarding the taxonomy advanced herein. First, although the exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect typology appears to be a parsimonious system for categorizing responses to dissatisfaction, it is not intended as a replacement of existing typologies. As noted previously, the responses cited in alternative typologies are evident in the present system. For example, Harshman's (1974) renegotiation with accommodation is voice, his continuation of status quo is loyalty, Chafetz' (1978) behavior change processes and Strong's (1975) conflict behaviors are voice-like, and so forth. Secondly, we do not wish to argue that every piece of research on reactions to dissatisfaction should simultaneously examine all four responses. Much of the extant research is not intended to be a comprehensive representation of what people do when they become unhappy, but rather, is designed as a means of obtaining in-depth information regarding a single reaction to decline (e.g., divorce, conflict resolution). The present typology may supplement this literature by pointing out where, within a larger theoretical system, each single response lies in relation to alternative reactions.

Several directions for future research seem promising. First, temporal sequencing of the responses ought to be examined. Within a given conflict, do persons respond initially with loyalty, later engage in voice, and finally resort to neglect or exit? And do characteristic responses to dissatisfaction differ throughout the course of a relationship? Secondly, it would be interesting to study exchange features of response to dissatisfaction. If one person engages in neglect, how is the partner likely to respond? Do individuals respond in kind, or do they enact complementary behaviors? Finally, researchers should explore the relationship between generalized dissatisfaction and additional situational and personal characteristics (e.g., severity of problems, relationship duration, personality factors, age, race).

In general, the present research provides good support for the Rusbult, Zembrodt, and Gunn (1982) model of responses to dissatisfaction in romantic involvements. This typology also incorporates responses to decline outlined in alternative approaches (e.g., Chafetz, 1978; Harshman, 1974; Strong, 1975). The exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect response categories appear to be somewhat independent, conceptually distinct types of reaction to dissatisfaction that differ from one another in terms of constructiveness/destructiveness and activity/passivity (although support for the latter dimension is weaker). This research contributes to our understanding of interpersonal relationships by focusing on the manner in which individuals respond to *dis*satisfaction in romantic involvements. Since the Rusbult et al. typology is a simple extension of concepts developed in the exchange tradition within social psychology (Blau, 1964; Hirschman, 1970; Homans, 1961; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), it should be relatively simple to "connect" the model to existing exchange theories of developing relationships (e.g., Altman & Taylor, 1973; Levinger, 1976; Levinger & Snoek, 1972; Rusbult, 1980). The exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect typology should thus prove to be a useful basis for the further study of decline processes in romantic involvements.

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