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Predicting Satisfaction and Commitment in Adult Romantic Involvements: An Assessment of the Generalizability of the Investment Model

CARYL E. RUSBULT
DENNIS J. JOHNSON
GREGORY D. MORROW
University of Kentucky

A cross-sectional survey of adult romantic involvements was conducted to assess the generalizability of investment model predictions (Rusbult, 1980a; 1983). According to the investment model, satisfaction with a relationship should be greater to the extent that a relationship provides high rewards and low costs, whereas commitment increases not only due to greater relationship satisfaction, but also to increases in the investment of resources in relationships and declines in the quality of available alternative partners. Consistent with model predictions, satisfaction was positively related to level of rewards, and commitment was positively associated with satisfaction, negatively associated with alternative quality, and positively associated with investment size. Greater reward value, too, promoted greater commitment to maintain relationships. However, costs did not powerfully or consistently affect satisfaction or commitment to relationships. The generalizability of the model for selected demographic subsamples—females and males, married and single persons, younger and older persons, persons with greater and lesser education and income, and for relationships of greater and lesser duration—is also evaluated. The obtained findings provide good support for the generalizability of the investment model.

Social scientists who study close relationships have become increasingly concerned with identifying the determinants of commitment to maintain relationships (e.g., Becker, 1960; Johnson, 1973; 1982; Levinger, 1974; 1979; Rusbult, 1980a; 1983). Of the extant models of commitment, Rusbult's investment model has been shown to be particularly robust in its ability to predict commitment in a wide range of settings—in dating relationships (Rusbult, 1980a; 1983), in friendships (Rusbult, 1980b), and on the job (Farrell and Rusbult, 1981; Rusbult and Farrell, 1983). The investment model extends concepts developed within the exchange tradition (c.f., Blau, 1964; Homans, 1961; LaGaipa, 1977), particularly those of interdependence theory (Kelley and Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut and Kelley, 1959). As in interdependence theory, the investment model

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distinguishes between *satisfaction*—positivity of affect or attraction to one's relationship—and *commitment*—the tendency to maintain a relationship and feel psychologically attached to it. (Using Johnson's [1982] terminology, the present definition of commitment includes both personal and structural commitment.)

The investment model asserts that individuals should feel more satisfied with their relationships to the extent that they provide high rewards (e.g., a bright or physically attractive partner, attitudinal similarity with partner), involve low costs (e.g., infrequent arguments, physical proximity), and exceed their comparison level, or expectations regarding the quality of close relationships. Commitment to maintain relationships should be affected by three factors. First, to the degree that a relationship is satisfying, commitment should be stronger. Second, persons should feel more committed to the extent that they have only poor alternatives to their current involvements (i.e., a less-satisfying relationship with someone else, spending time alone and not liking it). Third, commitment should be greater to the degree that the individual has invested numerous resources in the relationship either intrinsically (e.g., time, effort, self-disclosure) or extrinsically (e.g., mutual friends, shared memories or material possessions).[1]

Prior research provides very good support for model predictions. Rusbult (1980a) conducted two studies, a role-playing experiment and a cross-sectional survey, as initial tests of the model, and Rusbult (1983) carried out a seven-month longitudinal study to explore more dynamic, process-oriented aspects of the model. In all three studies, the findings were generally consistent with predictions. Greater rewards and (generally) lower costs induced higher satisfaction, and stronger commitment resulted from greater satisfaction, poorer alternatives and greater investment size. Surprisingly, while rewards were positively predictive of commitment, costs were unrelated to, or only weakly related to level of reported commitment. Also, as was noted above, the investment model has been shown to predict commitment to friendships as well as job commitment and turnover. Such generalizability is impressive in light of arguments that different types of relationships—married versus unmarried, exchange versus communal, shorter-term versus longer-term—may be maintained by very different processes (Clark and Mills, 1979; Duck, 1984). Unfortunately, the generalizability of the investment model may be limited in one respect: Prior studies of romantic involvements have been limited to college-age dating relationships. We do not yet know whether the investment model can effectively predict satisfaction and commitment in more longstanding relationships.

The present study, a cross-sectional community survey of ongoing, adult romantic involvements, is designed to replicate and extend previous investment model research in several respects. First, since the generalizability of previous research was limited by its focus on college-age dating relationships, the present study examines a more heterogeneous population of adults involved in more longstanding romantic involvements. Second, the present study explores the predictive power of the model for selected subsamples of the overall population (e.g., married versus single persons, males versus females). In light of the prior predictive power of the model, it was expected that investment model predictions would hold equally well across all demographically-defined subsamples. Third, the present study examines the direct relationship between investment model variables and a variety of demographic characteristics—gender, age, income, education, marital status and duration of relationship. Our examination of the impact of these particular demographic characteristics is frankly exploratory (i.e., we extended no a priori hypotheses regarding their impact). These factors were investigated because they are most commonly examined in sociological research and because they have previously been shown to be associated with other important behaviors in close relationships (e.g., Albrecht et al., 1979; Ewer et al., 1979; Fengler, 1973; Lurie, 1974; Schoen, 1975).

METHOD

Respondents and Procedure

Six hundred individuals were randomly selected from the Lexington, Kentucky telephone directory. Each was mailed a packet containing a cover letter, an "Interpersonal Behavior Questionnaire" and a stamped return envelope. One-half of the packets requested that the adult female of the house complete the questionnaire; if no adult female lived at that residence then the adult male was asked to do so. The other half of the packets reversed these

[1] Predictions concerning the effects of satisfaction and alternative quality on commitment to relationships were originally derived from interpersonal interdependence theory (Thibaut and Kelley, 1959; Kelley and Thibaut, 1978), and are congruent with Levinger's (1979) social exchange view on the dissolution of pair relationships. The prediction concerning the impact of investment size is original to the investment model, although it is congruent with other exchange theories (c.f., Blau, 1964; Homans, 1961).

instructions. If individuals failed to respond to the first mailing, a second packet was sent, followed finally by a third set of materials.[2]

Five hundred packets were sent via bulk mail, which constituted the most cost-effective method of distribution. Items that are bulk-mailed, however, are not forwarded or returned to the sender if they reach an invalid address. Therefore, to obtain an accurate return rate estimate, 100 packets were mailed first class. Of these 100, 11 were returned because of invalid addresses and 38 were completed and returned to the investigator. Thus, the estimated overall response rate was 43 percent—38 out of 89.[3] An additional 171 persons responded to the bulk mailing. The total response, then, was 209 persons, 130 of whom were currently involved in serious relationships (79 persons were not currently involved). These 130 persons were the respondents in the study. 58 percent were female, 95 percent were caucasian and 74 percent were married. Their mean age was around 33, they had an average of 3 years of college education and their mean personal income was approximately $14,000.[4]

Questionnaire

The questionnaire included measures of all model variables—reward value, cost value, investment size, alternative quality, satisfaction and commitment.[5] Respondents also provided information regarding demographic characteristics. Unless otherwise indicated, items were 5-point Likert scales. First, demographic information regarding gender, age (10 categories), race, education (7 categories) and personal income (10 categories) was obtained. Respondents also indicated whether they were married, dating regularly or not involved. Those who were not currently involved were asked to complete this general information and return the questionnaire. Respondents who were married or dating someone regularly completed the remainder of the questionnaire. In order to obtain comparable measures of all model variables, we asked that respondents adopt a similar time perspective—to describe their relationships as they stood just prior to their most recent period of dissatisfaction.[6] In addition, we felt that respondents would not readily understand and be capable of answering questions concerning rewards, costs, investments and alternatives, so both specific and general items were provided, following the procedure utilized in Rusbult (1980a). In essense, the specific items "taught" respondents the meaning of the constructs tapped in the general items.

The specific items assessing rewards and costs concerned, for example, the partner's personality, sense of humor and intelligence, and the partners' sex life, way of handling conflicts and division of household tasks or child care. Two general items assessed relationship

[2] Dillman's (1978) "total design" techniques of questionnaire construction and follow-up mailings were utilized in an attempt to maximize response accuracy and rate.

[3] Our response rate estimate must be based *only* upon this 100 packet sample because it is impossible to determine how many of the bulk-mailed packets were "terminated" due to changed or invalid addresses. Though we know from our first class mailing that approximately 11 percent of our packets were terminated due to invalid addresses, we have no way of determining what percentage were terminated due to changed addresses. Thus, we cannot directly extrapolate response rates from the first class mailing to estimate the response rate for the bulk-mailing.

[4] The representativeness of this sample is not a serious concern because we are testing theoretical *relationships* among variables rather than assessing the *incidence* of a phenomenon in the general population (Kidder, 1981). Nevertheless, these figures do compare favorably to those obtained for the same geographic region in a recent 51 percent response rate mailed questionnaire reported by Rusbult and Zembrodt (1982) (53% female, 95% caucasian, 63% married, mean age of 37, and mean education of 2.5 years of college) and to those obtained in a recent 63 percent response rate telephone survey conducted by the University of Kentucky Survey Research Center (54% female, median age between 25 and 40, median education between one and three years of college). Percent married was higher in the present survey than in the Rusbult-Zembrodt survey because the present survey included only persons who were *currently* involved in serious relationships, whereas the former survey included all persons who had *at some time* been involved in serious relationships. Data regarding income levels were not comparable, since the present survey assessed personal income and the comparison surveys assessed household income. Thus, the sample obtained in the present study appears to be demographically similar to that obtained in comparable research using the same population.

[5] We will not examine the effects of variations in comparison level on satisfaction or commitment because it is extremely difficult for persons to separate that which exists objectively (reward value, cost value) from that which they expect more generally (comparison level).

[6] This time perspective was employed because: (a) it allowed us to assess respondents' feelings about their relationships during similar relationship "states" (i.e., during a nontroubled period); and (b) this survey was designed to provide data for two projects, and such a time perspective was essential for the second project. A full 60 percent of the respondents described problems that had occurred within the last month, so we can feel relatively confident that findings reported below do not result from the "warm glow" of retrospective reports of the status of relationships in the distant past.

rewards: "The good traits your partner possesses and the good things about your relationship are termed 'rewards.' How rewarding [is] your relationship?" and "In general, how [do] the rewards you [get] out of your relationship compare to those of other people's relationships?" Two general items assessed costs: "The bad traits your partner possesses and the bad things about your relationship are termed 'costs.' How costly [is] your relationship?" and "In general, how [do] the costs you [get] out of your relationship compare to those of other people's?"

The specific items assessing investment size concerned, for example, shared friends and material possessions, financial security, self-disclosures, effort expenditure and number of children. The general measures were: "Generally speaking, how much [have] you invested in your relationship (e.g., time, energy, self-disclosures, shared experiences, emotional investments)?" and "All things considered, how much [have] you 'put into' your relationship?"

The specific items assessing alternative quality concerned, for example, the importance of romantic involvement, estimated time to begin dating again if relationship were to end, confidence of finding another appealing partner, enjoyment of time spent alone and likelihood of finding an appealing alternative partner in regard to a variety of specific traits (e.g., personality, physical attractiveness, sex life). The general measures of alternative quality were: "Generally speaking, how appealing [are] your alternatives (a different relationship or spending time without a romantic relationship)?", "Generally speaking, how [do] your alternatives compare to your relationship?", and "All things considered, how satisfying would it [be] to adopt your alternatives instead of your relationship?"

Only general measures of satisfaction and commitment were obtained. The satisfaction measures were: "In general, to what extent [are] you attracted to your partner?"; "In general, how [does] your relationship compare to other people's?"; and "All things considered, how satisfied [are] you with your relationship?". The general commitment measures were: "For how much longer [do] you want your relationship to last?"; "How committed [are] you to maintaining your relationship?"; "How likely [is] it that your relationship [will] end in the near future?"; and "To what extent [do] you feel 'attached' to your partner?"

Reliability and Validity of Measures

Reliability coefficients calculated for the set of global items designed to measure each model construct revealed sizeable alphas for the measures of rewards (.85), costs (.63), alternatives (.81), investments (.77), satisfaction (.78) and commitment (.82). Therefore, the general measures of each variable were averaged to form a single estimate of each factor. These averaged measures were employed in the analyses. To assess the validity of our general measures, we computed the correlations between each general measure and the specific items associated with that measure. These analyses revealed generally good convergence. The general rewards measure was significantly correlated with all specific reward/cost items (median $r = .29$), the costs measure was correlated with 8 of 11 specific reward/cost items (median $r = -.23$), the alternatives general measure was correlated with 13 of 14 specific alternatives items (median $r = .22$), and the investments general measure was correlated with 8 of 12 specific investments items (median $r = .17$).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Predicting Satisfaction

The investment model asserts that higher reward value and lower cost value should induce greater satisfaction with relationships. To evaluate these relationships, zero-order correlations and multiple correlations between satisfaction and reward and cost value were calculated for the sample as a whole and for selected demographic subsamples (for age, education, income and duration, a median split was used to divide the overall sample into subgroups). A summary of the results of these analyses is presented in Table 1.[7] The combined impact of reward value and cost value on satisfaction was significant for the sample as a whole and for all subsamples (refer to *Mult. R, df,* and *F*).[8] Greater reward value consistently encouraged greater satisfaction (refer to *REW r*). Greater cost value was associated with reduced satisfaction among males, single persons, younger persons, persons with greater

[7] To determine whether the retrospective nature of respondents' descriptions of their relationships could have affected our findings, we divided our sample into two groups—those who described their relationships as they stood within one month and those who described their relationships (and problems in their relationships) in the more distant past. We performed zero-order correlations among all investment model variables separately for these two subsamples, and found virtually identical patterns of results for the two groups.

[8] The degrees of freedom for the various analyses differ slightly across analyses due to missing data on some variables.

Table 1. Correlations Between Satisfaction and Reward and Cost Value[a]

Satisfaction with:	*REW r*	*CST r*	*Mult. R*	*df*	*F*
Overall Sample	.67**	−.11	.55	2,119	25.44**
Gender					
Females	.80**	.01	.73	2,67	13.09**
Males	.32**	−.33**	.62	2,49	15.44**
Marital Status					
Married	.50**	−.09	.51	2,88	15.83**
Single	.93**	−.33**	.73	2,27	15.29**
Age					
Under 35	.71**	−.47**	.71	2,63	32.77**
35 or Older	.65**	.02	.45	2,52	6.48**
Education					
Less Than Bachelor's	.81**	.09	.73	2,65	36.38**
Bachelor's or More	.45**	−.40**	.71	2,50	25.69**
Income					
Less Than $15,000	.66**	.09	.74	2,59	36.17**
$15,000 or More	.70**	−.37**	.68	2,52	23.76**
Duration of Relationship					
Less Than 10 Years	.81**	.16	.76	2,60	40.86**
10 Years or More	.42**	−.45**	.76	2,45	30.87**

[a] REW = reward value and CST = cost value.
* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.

education or income and for persons in longer-term involvements (refer to *CST r*). These findings are consistent with investment model predictions. Costs were not significantly related to reported satisfaction for the overall sample, however, or for the remaining six demographic subsamples (females, married persons, older persons, persons with lesser education, persons with lower incomes and persons in shorter-term relationships). These nonsignificant effects will be discussed below.

Predicting Commitment

Impact of satisfaction, alternatives and investments. The model asserts that commitment should be great to the degree that satisfaction is high, alternatives are poor and investment size is great. A summary of zero-order and multiple correlations assessing these predictions for the overall sample and for subsamples is presented in Table 2. The combined impact of these variables on commitment was statistically signifi-

Table 2. Correlations Between Commitment and Satisfaction, Alternative Quality and Investment Size[a]

Commitment with:	*SAT r*	*ALT r*	*INV r*	*Mult. R*	*df*	*F*
Overall Sample	.64**	−.44**	.50**	.69	3,118	35.86**
Gender						
Female	.67**	−.43**	.51**	.71	3,66	21.96**
Male	.52**	−.54**	.47**	.65	3,48	11.55**
Marital Status						
Married	.67**	−.39**	.67**	.75	3,87	36.37**
Single	.50**	−.51**	.09	.58	3,26	4.34*
Age						
Under 35	.50**	−.54**	.11	.62	3,62	12.68**
35 or Older	.78**	−.32**	.85**	.88	3,51	59.36**
Education						
Less Than Bachelor's	.70**	−.42**	.53**	.73	3,64	24.56**
Bachelor's or More	.52**	−.53**	.42**	.62	3,49	10.41**
Income						
Less Than $15,000	.67**	−.35**	.73**	.78	3,58	29.82**
$15,000 or More	.58**	−.57**	.20*	.63	3,54	11.66**
Duration of Relationship						
Less Than 10 Years	.74**	−.45**	.50**	.77	3,59	28.18**
10 Years or More	.54**	−.40**	−.06	.56	3,44	6.59**

[a] SAT = satisfaction, ALT = alternative quality and INV = investment size
* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.

cant for the overall sample and for all subsamples. Higher levels of commitment were consistently induced by higher satisfaction and by poorer alternatives. Greater investment size consistently encouraged stronger commitment (10 of 13 *r*'s were significant), but the investment-commitment relationship was not significant for single persons, younger persons and persons in longer-term relationships. (We are not seriously troubled by these few nonsignificant effects of investment size, since they are generally in the predicted direction).

Impact of rewards, costs, alternatives and investments. Higher rewards, lower costs, poorer alternatives and greater investments should also promote stronger commitment. A summary of correlational tests of these predictions is presented in Table 3. The combined effect of these four predictors was significant for all groups. Of course, the correlations between commitment and alternative quality and investment size remain as described above. Greater rewards fairly consistently encouraged greater commitment, but this effect was not significant for males and persons with greater education. For the overall sample and for several subsamples, costs were not significantly related to reported commitment. Examination of Table 3 pairs of correlations reveals that costs exerted a negative impact on commitment for some subgroups while exerting a positive impact for their counterparts; higher costs encouraged lower commitment for younger persons, persons with greater education, persons with higher incomes and persons in longer-term involvements, whereas higher costs encouraged *greater* commitment for older persons, persons with less education and persons with lower income.

The Impact of Costs

The nonsignificant and/or inconsistent effects of costs on satisfaction and commitment bear further examination. Such findings are not unique to this investigation: Several empirical investigations have reported nonsignificant effects of costs or related variables (e.g., conflict) on feelings for partners (e.g., Argyle and Furnham, 1983; White, 1983), and several theorists have also suggested that such findings should not be surprising (e.g., Braiker and Kelley, 1979; Scanzoni, 1979). Also, Rusbult (1980a) found that while variations in costs affected satisfaction, the effects of costs on commitment were weak. And finally, Rusbult (1983) found that variations in costs affected neither satisfaction nor commitment. Why? We explore four possible explanations.

First, *adherence to the romantic ideal*—the belief that one accepts a partner for richer or poorer, in sickness and health (given rewards and costs)—may prevent individuals from becoming less satisfied with and committed to their relationships as the costs of doing so increase. If this were so, we should observe a nonsignificant or positive effect of cost value on satisfaction and commitment among subgroups who are known to believe more strongly in the romantic ideal—males and

Table 3. Correlations Between Commitment and Reward Value, Cost Value, Alternative Quality and Investment Size[a]

Commitment with:	*REW r*	*CST r*	*ALT r*	*INV r*	*Mult. R*	*df*	*F*
Overall Sample	.29**	.04	−.44**	.50**	.62	4,117	18.44**
Gender							
Female	.38**	.15	−.43**	.51**	.65	4,65	11.75**
Male	.15	−.17	−.54**	.47**	.63	4,47	7.67**
Marital Status							
Married	.31**	.06	−.39**	.67**	.70	4,86	21.06**
Single	.32**	.04	−.51**	.09	.64	4,25	4.29**
Age							
Under 35	.42**	−.42**	−.54**	.11	.60	4,61	8.60**
35 or Older	.25**	.29*	−.32**	.85**	.86	4,50	34.72**
Education							
Less Than Bachelor's	.45**	.27*	−.42**	.53**	.69	4,63	14.24**
Bachelor's or More	.14	−.31**	−.53**	.42**	.61	4,48	7.12**
Income							
Less Than $15,000	.36**	.33**	−.35**	.73**	.77	4,57	20.60**
$15,000 or More	.21*	−.29**	−.57**	.20*	.59	4,53	7.23**
Duration of Relationship							
Less Than 10 Years	.52**	.15	−.45**	.50**	.71	4,58	14.92**
10 Years or More	.21*	−.34**	−.40**	−.06	.55	4,43	4.64*

[a] REW = reward value, CST = cost value, ALT = alternative quality and INV = investment size.
* $p < .05$.
** $p < .01$.

younger persons (Hatkoff and Lasswell, 1979; Rubin, 1973). Both of these relationships were negative, however, in the present study.

Second, it is possible that the *reward-cost differential* predicts satisfaction and commitment more effectively than do rewards and costs individually; that is, that it is not absolute level of costs, but level of costs *relative* to level of rewards that predicts satisfaction and commitment. However, we calculated a reward-cost differential score for each respondent, performed further analyses, and found that: (a) reward value *alone* predicted satisfaction better than did the reward-cost differential for the overall sample (the respective R's were .67 and .24) and for most subsamples (9 of 12), and reward value *alone* predicted commitment better than did the reward-cost differential for the overall sample (R's were .29 and .17) and for most subsamples (7 of 12); and (b) the prediction of satisfaction from reward value and cost value was superior to that from the reward-cost differential for the overall sample (R's were .55 and .24) and for most subsamples (9 of 12), and the prediction of commitment from reward value and cost value (plus alternatives and investments) was superior to that from the reward-cost differential (plus alternatives and investments) for the overall sample (the R's were .62 and .61) and for most subsamples (10 of 12).

Third, it is possible that there is a *threshold effect* for cost value; perhaps variations in costs do not affect degree of satisfaction and commitment when costs are low, but come to exert negative effects at higher levels. We divided our sample into low and high cost groups (median split) and calculated correlations between cost value and satisfaction and commitment for both groups. Indeed, we found that for the low cost group, variations in cost value did not significantly affect satisfaction ($r = -.13$) or commitment ($r = -.03$), whereas change in costs exerted significant negative effects on satisfaction ($r = -.32$) and commitment ($r = -.32$) for the high cost group. The "threshold effect" explanation, thus, shows promise in accounting for our unexpected findings.

Fourth, it may be that *reward and cost value interact* in influencing satisfaction and commitment, high costs inducing reduced satisfaction and commitment only in the presence of low rewards. We further divided our sample into low and high reward groups (median split), and calculated correlations between cost value and satisfaction and commitment for four subgroups—high cost/high reward, high cost/low reward, and so on. Consistent with this explanation, we found that while cost value exerted significant negative effects on satisfaction and commitment in high cost-low reward involvements (r's = $-.45$ and $-.36$), these relations were not significant in high cost/high reward involvements (r's = $-.12$ and $-.27$), low cost/low reward involvements (r's = $-.35$ and $-.13$), or low cost/high reward involvements (r's = $-.01$ and $-.07$).

Thus, two of our four potential explanations for the aberrant effects of cost value on satisfaction and commitment seem promising: There appears to be a threshold effect for the impact of costs on satisfaction and commitment, and reward and cost value appear to interact in affecting satisfaction and commitment, high costs producing reduced satisfaction and commitment especially given the precondition of low reward value. This phenomenon, and particularly these two potential explanations of the phenomenon, merit further investigation.

The Impact of Demographic Characteristics

Further analyses assessed the relationship between demographic characteristics and model variables. These analyses are summarized in Table 4. Collectively, demographic factors accounted for only four to eight percent of the variation in investment model variables (*Mult.* R's ranged from .20 to .29). Out of a total of 36 zero-order relationships, only 13 achieved statistical significance: married persons reported poorer quality alternatives and stronger commitment than did single persons; greater age and higher income were associated with lower reward value and lower cost value; greater education was associated with lower reward value, better alternatives and higher satisfaction; and longer relationship duration was associated with higher reward value, higher cost value, greater investment size and stronger commitment.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the present study provides very good support for investment model predictions. In addition, these findings replicate results obtained in previous research on college-age romantic involvements (Rusbult, 1980a; 1983), and demonstrate the generalizability of the model across a wide range of close relationships—those of females and males, married and single persons, younger and older persons, persons with greater and lesser education and income, and for relationships of greater and lesser duration. Commitment is positively associated with satisfaction, negatively associated with alternative quality and positively associated with investment size. Both satisfaction and commitment were posi-

Table 4. Relationship Between Demographic Characteristics and Investment Model Variables[a]

	REW	*CST*	*ALT*	*INV*	*SAT*	*COM*
Gender						
(Female *X*)	4.10	2.32	1.83	4.39	4.22	4.36
(Male *X*)	4.14	2.06	1.94	4.51	4.40	4.46
Marital Status						
(Married *X*)	4.05	2.16	1.78**	4.49	4.28	4.50**
(Single *X*)	4.30	2.37	2.22	4.27	4.34	4.08
Age (r)	−.36**	−.28**	−.10	−.06	−.03	.13
Education (r)	−.15*	−.10	.16*	.04	.15*	−.02
Income (r)	−.29**	−.29**	.07	.00	.00	.05
Duration of Relationship (r)	.22**	.27**	.05	.16*	−.08	.25**
Mult. R	.20	.21	.27	.29	.25	.26

[a] REW = reward value, CST = cost value, ALT = alternative quality, INV = investment size, SAT = satisfaction and COM = commitment. Table values are means (gender, marital status), zero-order correlations (age, education, income, duration of relationship), or *Multiple R*'s of the six demographic factors on each investment model variable (*Mult. R* row).

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

tively related to relationship rewards, whereas neither satisfaction nor commitment was consistently negatively associated with relationship costs. We explored four possible explanations of the failure of costs to exert consistent negative effects on satisfaction and commitment, and found support for two explanations: There may be a *threshold effect* for the impact of costs, whereby costs only exert negative effects at higher levels, and *rewards and costs may interact*, with high costs inducing reduced satisfaction and commitment only in the presence of low rewards. A final goal of the present study was to explore the effects of several demographic characteristics on investment model variables. Demographics appear to exert a much weaker impact on satisfaction and commitment than do investment model variables: Only 13 of 36 relationships between demographic variables and investment model variables were statistically significant.

Two limitations of the present research should be noted: First, since the study is essentially correlational, it cannot be stated with confidence that specified variables *cause* particular effects. Nearly all survey research suffers this limitation, and we feel that the benefits gained by studying real, ongoing relationships outweigh by far the costs of causal ambiguity. Furthermore, in research in which model variables were experimentally manipulated (Rusbult, 1980a), variations in model variables did cause predicted changes in satisfaction and commitment. Second, the present research may be limited by its small sample size and low response rate. However, this research was designed *not* to precisely estimate population parmeters (e.g., what is the *real* level of investment size in the average American marriage), but rather to evaluate relationships among variables. Large, representative samples are considered to be more important for the former type of research than the latter (Kidder, 1981).

Thus, the investment model appears to be a powerful model, the model appears to generalize across a wide range of demographic subgroups, and there do not appear to be major differences in absolute level of model variables across a variety of demographic subgroups. Consistent with previous research on college-age close relationships, the present study demonstrates that satisfaction and commitment are not isomorphically related—individuals persist in their romantic involvements not simply because their relationships are gratifying, but also, importantly, because they have invested heavily in their relationships and have nowhere else to turn (or no great motivation to turn elsewhere). Thus, the investment model and the present investigation make an important contribution to our understanding of close relationships.

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