To Give or Not to Give? Sacrificing for Avoidance Goals Is Not Costly for the Highly Interdependent

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Abstract

Is sacrificing to avoid negative outcomes in relationships always costly? The current study draws upon research and theory on approach-avoidance motivation and self-construal to test the hypothesis that individual differences in interdependent self-construal shape the outcomes of sacrificing in pursuit of avoidance goals. Seventy-three individuals in dating relationships participated in a 14-day daily experience study. Results of multilevel mediated moderation analyses showed that individuals who construed the self in less interdependent terms felt inauthentic when they sacrificed for avoidance goals, in turn, detracting from their emotional well-being and the quality of their relationships. In contrast, people high in interdependence did not feel less authentic when sacrificing for avoidance goals and were buffered against the emotional and relationship costs experienced by people low in interdependence. These findings identify a set of individuals for whom sacrificing for avoidance goals is not costly.

Keywords

As social beings, we sometimes feel bound by our obligations to others. We regularly commit time, effort, and other resources to meet other people's needs. This can be especially true in romantic relationships in which a partner's needs and goals are intrinsically tied to our own (Aron, Mashek, & Aron, 2004). Sometimes, we engage in these behaviors despite considerable personal inconvenience—that is, we *sacrifice* our own self-interest to promote the well-being of a partner or a relationship (Impett & Gordon, 2008). Studies find that the more willing people are to make sacrifices for a spouse or a dating partner, the happier they are with their relationships and the more likely they are to stay together over time (Van Lange et al., 1997; Wieselquist, Rusbult, Foster, & Agnew, 1999).

Although sacrifice is a beneficial component of relationships, not all sacrifices are equal. Research guided by an approach-avoidance perspective has revealed that people's underlying *motivations* for sacrifice shape their emotional experiences and their feelings about their relationships. This work has shown that the highest benefits are reaped when individuals sacrifice for approach goals, such as to please their partners or to create intimacy in their relationships, as opposed to avoidance goals, such as to avoid disappointing their partners or to avoid conflict (Impett, Gable, & Peplau, 2005; Neff & Harter, 2002). However, since romantic relationships require sacrifice, there will inevitably be times when people give up their own interests in order to avoid negative consequences. Thus, it

is important to investigate potential factors that might buffer people against experiencing the personal and interpersonal costs of avoidance goal pursuit.

In this article, we suggest that individual differences in *interdependent self-construal*—that is, the extent to which people value social relationships and connections with others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991)—will shape the personal and interpersonal outcomes of sacrificing to avoid negative outcomes in relationships. We hypothesize that people who are lower in interdependence will feel as though they are not being authentic or "true" to themselves when they sacrifice to avoid negative outcomes and, in turn, will experience lower emotional well-being and poorer quality relationships. In contrast, we expect that sacrificing for avoidance goals will not feel inauthentic or be experienced as costly for highly interdependent people since doing so allows them to maintain the social harmony that they so highly value.

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Avoidance Motivation and Sacrifice

Several theories of motivational processes postulate the existence of distinct approach and avoidance motivational systems (Carver, Sutton, & Scheier, 2000). According to this perspective, some goals are focused on approaching positive outcomes while others are focused on avoiding negative outcomes. This framework has been applied broadly in psychology to such topics as the neuropsychology of motivation (Carver & White, 1994; Gray, 1987), regulatory focus (Higgins, 1998), personal striving (Elliot & Sheldon, 1997), academic achievement (Elliot & Church, 1997), and social regulation (Elliot, Gable, & Mapes, 2006; Gable, 2006). This perspective has also been applied to close relationships (Gable & Impett, 2012), and in particular, to the study of sacrifice (Impett & Gordon, 2008). Several studies have now shown that whereas sacrificing for approach goals is linked with positive emotions and enhanced relationship satisfaction, sacrificing for avoidance goals is typically associated with negative emotions and increased conflict (Impett et al., 2005; Neff & Harter, 2002).

A critical reason why sacrificing for avoidance goals can be so costly stems from the fact that doing so can feel *inauthentic*. Authenticity has been defined as behaving in a manner that is consistent with one's own inner feelings, attitudes, and beliefs and is an important component of psychological well-being and interpersonal functioning (Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Sheldon, Ryan, Rawsthorne, & Ilardi, 1997; Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliouisis, & Joseph, 2008). Existing research has shown that individual differences in authenticity are negatively associated with activation of the behavioral inhibition system (Pinto, Maltby, & Wood, 2011). That is, individuals who tend to engage in inhibitory behaviors to avoid confrontations with others report experiencing lower levels of authenticity (see also Lopez & Rice, 2006). Within romantic relationships in particular, research suggests that when people sacrifice their own interests to avoid negative outcomes in their relationships, they feel that doing so is a betrayal of their own self-needs (Neff & Harter, 2002; Roloff & Cloven, 1990). For example, Neff and Harter (2002) found that individuals who felt inauthentic when giving up their own needs did so for avoidance goals such as wanting to avert an argument with their partner. In turn, feeling that one has failed to act authentically when making a sacrifice for a romantic partner fuels negative emotions and detracts from closeness (Impett et al., 2012; Kogan et al., 2010).

No existing research, however, has explicitly tested whether decreased feelings of authenticity are a critical reason why sacrificing for avoidance goals detracts from personal well-being and the quality of romantic relationships. If, as the literature suggests, feeling inauthentic is the reason why people experience poorer well-being and relationship quality when they sacrifice for avoidance goals, we should only expect to see this effect among people low in interdependence because they are the ones who should feel the most inauthentic when sacrificing for a romantic partner. We turn to the literature on self-construal to develop the rationale for our prediction that highly interdependent people will not feel inauthentic when sacrificing for avoidance goals, and will therefore not experience the negative outcomes that we expect will be reported by less interdependent people.

The Role of Interdependent Self-Construal

Research stemming from cultural psychology (e.g., Janoff-Bulman & Legatt, 2002) suggests that high levels of interdependence might be a critical factor that buffers people against the typical harmful effects of sacrificing to avoid negative outcomes in relationships. Interdependence, which emphasizes the importance of maintaining harmony in social relationships, is the prevalent conception of the self in many Eastern cultures (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994). In contrast, in many Western cultures, people are more likely to have an independent self-construal, which emphasizes the importance of maintaining autonomy and uniqueness from others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994). Although cross-cultural research has typically focused on broad differences in self-construal between Eastern and Western cultures, there is also a great deal of variability in self-construal within culture (Oyserman & Coon, 2008; Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002), and both types can coexist within the same individual (Singelis, 1994). This work suggests that rather than reflecting categorical East–West differences, independent and interdependent self-construal can be viewed as individual difference variables on which even people from the same culture might vary.

Individual differences in interdependence should be particularly relevant to understanding why some people feel less authentic and experience poorer personal and interpersonal well-being when making a sacrifice for avoidance goals, while others do not. People who construe the self in more interdependent terms tend to have a better sense of who they are and feel more self-confident when they are reminded of their relationships than those with a less interdependent self-construal (Gabriel, Renaud, & Tippin, 2007). Furthermore, individuals who are higher in levels of relational self-construal tend to view themselves more authentically in their relationships (Cross, Gore, & Morris, 2003). This indicates that people who are higher in interdependence tend to view their relational selves as their true selves, and thus we expected that they might not suffer a blow to their feelings of authenticity when they sacrifice to avoid negative outcomes.

In addition to having their personal feelings of authenticity left intact, we expected that highly interdependent people would be buffered against experiencing the personal and interpersonal costs of avoidance goal pursuit. Cross-cultural research has revealed that people from more independent cultures report feeling relatively unhappy when they engage in obligatory actions for others, whereas people from more interdependent cultures are more likely to find pleasure in meeting other people's needs (Janoff-Bulman & Legatt, 2002). Although no research has specifically examined the role of self-construal in sacrifice, recent research from the literature on close relationships has shown that people who are motivated by communal norms and have compassionate caregiving goals

find great pleasure in giving to others, even when doing so is construed as a duty and comes at the expense of the self (Crocker & Canevello, 2008; Kogan et al., 2010; Le, Impett, Kogan, Webster, & Cheng, in press).

Overview of the Current Study

We conducted a 14-day daily experience study to investigate whether individual differences in interdependent self-construal shape the outcomes of sacrificing in pursuit of avoidance goals. We tested three central predictions. First, we expected that whereas people low in interdependence would experience lower emotional well-being and relationship quality when they sacrifice for avoidance goals, people high in interdependence would be buffered against experiencing these negative outcomes.

Second, we predicted that whereas people low in interdependence would feel less authentic when sacrificing for avoidance goals, sacrificing to avoid negative outcomes would not be associated with authenticity for people high in interdependence. Third, we hypothesized that the interaction between interdependent self-construal and avoidance sacrifice goals would be mediated by feelings of authenticity for the sacrifice. That is, we expected that individuals lower in interdependence would feel less authentic when they sacrifice for avoidance goals, whereas avoidance goal pursuit would not be associated with authenticity for relatively more interdependent individuals, explaining why the pursuit of avoidance goals is costly for people low in interdependence but not for people high in interdependence. Finally, because giving and making sacrifices to pursue positive outcomes is the norm and expectation in relationships (e.g., Clark, Lemay, Graham, Pataki, & Finkel, 2010; Gable, 2006, Impett et al., 2005), we expected that most people would sacrifice for approach goals and reap the associated benefits, including feeling more authentic and experiencing greater emotional and relationship well-being. Therefore, we did not expect to find an interaction between interdependence and approach goals in predicting the daily outcomes of sacrifice.

Method

Participants and Procedure

Participants were 73 undergraduates (47 women, 26 men) currently involved in dating relationships from a large Canadian university who received course credit for participation. Participants ranged in age from 17 to 29 ($M = 19.5$, standard deviation [SD] = 2.3) and were from a variety of ethnic backgrounds: 36% East/South/Southeast Asian, 36% Eastern/ Western European, 7% South American, 6% Middle Eastern, 1% African, and 14% were mixed race or "Other."

Participants completed the study entirely online. Upon signing up for the study, participants were provided a web link to the background survey. A day after completing the background survey, participants began the daily diaries, which they completed everyday for 14 consecutive days. The mean number of diaries completed on time was 10.6 ($SD = 3.4$), producing a total of 772 diaries. All measures were completed on 7-point scales. We used measures with only a few items or a single item in the diary study to increase efficiency and minimize participant attrition (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003).

Individual Differences in Self-Construal

Participants completed a standard 24-item measure (Singelis, 1994) assessing the extent to which they construe the self as independent (e.g., *I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects*, $\alpha = .76$) and interdependent (e.g., *It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group*, $\alpha = .74$). The subscale scores for independence and interdependence were computed by averaging the items that represented independence and interdependence, respectively, for each participant. In all analyses, both independence and interdependence were simultaneously entered so we could examine the unique predictability of interdependence after controlling for independence.

Daily Measures

Sacrifice Goals. Each day, participants were asked: "Today did you have the opportunity to do anything that you did not particularly want to do for your partner? Or did you have the opportunity to give up something that you did want to for the sake of your partner?" (Impett et al., 2005, 2012; Kogan et al., 2010). On days participants indicated they had the opportunity to sacrifice, they indicated whether or not they chose to sacrifice for their partner. For each sacrifice, participants completed a measure of daily sacrifice goals (Impett et al., 2005), rating the importance of four reasons in influencing their decision to sacrifice, with 2 items capturing *approach goals* (i.e., *to make my partner happy* and *to create more satisfaction in our relationship*, $\alpha = .62$) and 2 items capturing *avoidance goals* (i.e., *to prevent my partner from feeling upset* and *to avoid conflict in our relationship*, $\alpha = .75$). We also asked two questions regarding sacrifice *cost* (*I put a lot of time and effort into making this sacrifice*) and *typicality* (*I frequently make sacrifices like this one for my partner*).

Emotions. Participants reported the emotions they felt on the day they made a sacrifice using an existing measure (Impett et al., 2012; Srivastava, Tamir, McGonigal, John, & Gross, 2009). Specifically, they reported whether they felt each of the four positive emotion clusters: "happy/pleased/joyful," "affectionate/ loving/caring," "grateful/appreciative/thankful," and "cared about/loved/connected" ($\alpha = .94$) and four negative emotion clusters: "sad/depressed/down," "resentful toward my partner," "lonely/isolated," and "angry/irritable/frustrated" ($\alpha = .76$).

Authenticity. Participants reported how authentic they felt while making a sacrifice for their partner with a 1-item measure of authenticity, *I felt authentic (true to myself) while making this sacrifice* (Impett et al., 2012; Kogan et al., 2010).

Relationship Quality. Each day, participants reported whether they experienced "satisfaction," "closeness," and "love" which we combined into a measure of positive relationship quality ($\alpha = .97$), as well as "conflict," "disappointment with partner," "rejected by partner," and "taken for granted by partner" which we combined into a measure of negative relationship quality ($\alpha = .93$).

Results

Data Analyses

We conducted the analyses using multilevel modeling with the HLM computer program (HLM 6.08; Raudenbush, Bryk, Cheong, & Congdon, 2004) to account for the fact that diary entries (Level 1) were nested within people (Level 2). We report results using robust standard errors. We conducted mediated moderation analyses using steps outlined by Muller, Judd, and Yzerbyt (2005) adapted for a multilevel context (Zhang, Zyphur, & Preacher, 2009). Table 1 includes key variables included in each of the steps we used to test mediated moderation (excluding Level 2 aggregates for main effects and interactions, none of which were significant). First, we assessed whether there was a significant interaction between interdependence and avoidance goals on the criterion variables, emotional well-being, and relationship quality (see Table 1, Step 1). Second, we assessed whether there was a significant interaction between interdependence and avoidance goals on the mediator, authenticity (see Table 1, Step 2). Third, we assessed the significance of the (partial) effect of authenticity on the criterion as well as the interaction of the residual effect of interdependence and authenticity on the criterion after controlling for authenticity (see Table 1, Step 3). Finally, we assessed whether the interaction between interdependence and avoidance goals on the residual direct effect of the criterion was reduced after accounting for the effect of authenticity on the criterion and the interaction between interdependence and authenticity (see Table 1, Step 3).

Due to the multilevel structure of our data, we partitioned all Level 1 predictors into both their within- and between-variance components, which were person-mean centered and aggregated respectively, for both main effects and interactions, with all entered simultaneously into the model (Zhang et al., 2009). Person-mean centering and grand-mean centering goals and self-construal, respectively, allowed us to interpret our interactions relative to within-person changes in goals from people's own mean levels of goals and to do so for people who varied from the sample average of interdependence. Our hypotheses concern the cross-level interaction between interdependence (Level 2) and avoidance sacrifice goals (Level 1), that is, the within-person effects of avoidance goals for people of varying levels of interdependence. We also controlled for this interaction at the between-subjects level in all mediated moderation analyses as well as the following: the main effects of avoidance sacrifice goals, approach sacrifice goals, independence and interdependence, and the interactions between independence

and avoidance sacrifice goals, independence and approach sacrifice goals, and interdependence and approach sacrifice goals. We controlled for independent self-construal because it can coexist with interdependence within a person (Singelis, 1994) and is associated with lower relationship quality (Dion & Dion, 2006). We controlled the approach goals since they are typically positively associated with the avoidance goals (Gable, 2006; Impett et al., 2010). Finally, we tested simple slopes at 1 *SD* above and below the mean of interdependence to see how our effects differed for people who were high versus low in interdependence (Aiken & West, 1991).

Self-Construal and the Costs of Avoidance Goal Pursuit

Consistent with our first hypothesis, the results revealed a significant interaction between interdependence and avoidance sacrifice goals in predicting all four of the daily outcomes (see Table 1, Step 1). Analyses of the simple effects, shown in Table 2, revealed that people low in interdependence experienced lower positive emotions, higher negative emotions, lower positive relationship quality, and higher negative relationship quality when they sacrificed in pursuit of avoidance goals. In contrast, avoidance sacrifice goals were not significantly associated with any of these daily outcomes for people high in interdependence.

We also received support for our second hypothesis that interdependence would interact with avoidance sacrifice goals in predicting authenticity for daily sacrifice (see Table 1, Step 2). Follow-up analyses of the simple effects, shown in Table 2, revealed that whereas people low in interdependence felt less authentic when they sacrificed to avoid negative outcomes, avoidance sacrifice goals were not significantly associated with authenticity for people high in interdependence.

Finally, we received support for our third hypothesis that authenticity would mediate the interaction between interdependence and avoidance goals in predicting the daily outcomes. The results revealed that authenticity predicted higher positive emotions, lower negative emotions, higher positive relationship quality, and lower negative relationship quality (see Table 1, Step 3). Most critically, authenticity partially mediated the interactions between interdependence and avoidance sacrifice goals, with reductions in the prediction of all four daily outcomes. Specifically, people low in interdependence experienced less positive emotions, more negative emotions, lower positive relationship quality, and higher negative relationship quality because they felt less authentic when sacrificing to avoid negative outcomes in their relationships, whereas feelings of authenticity were not significantly associated with emotional well-being and relational quality for people high in interdependence.[1]

As expected, neither independence nor interdependence significantly interacted with approach goals to predict any of the daily outcomes, suggesting that sacrificing to pursue positive outcomes in one's relationship was equally beneficial to people who construe the self in more versus less independent and interdependent terms.[2]

Table 1. Results of Multilevel Mediated Moderation Analyses.

Predictors	Step 1 Outcome: Positive Emotions	Step 1 Outcome: Negative Emotions	Step 1 Outcome: Positive Relationship Quality	Step 1 Outcome: Negative Relationship Quality	Step 2 Outcome: Authenticity	Step 3 Outcome: Positive Emotions	Step 3 Outcome: Negative Emotions	Step 3 Outcome: Positive Relationship Quality	Step 3 Outcome: Negative Relationship Quality
Approach	.29† (.15)	−.10 (.14)	.41** (.12)	−.28* (.13)	.62*** (.12)	.11 (.17)	.10 (.14)	.19 (.13)	−.09 (.13)
Avoidance	−.08 (.10)	.06 (.10)	−.07 (.09)	.15† (.09)	−.34* (.13)	−.003 (.11)	−.04 (.10)	.06 (.08)	.06 (.09)
Independence	.46* (.22)	−.52* (.26)	.58* (.28)	−.29 (.21)	−.09 (.20)	.43† (.24)	−.28 (.30)	.44* (.21)	−.05 (.24)
Interdependence	−.58 (.37)	1.05* (.47)	−1.07** (.36)	.20 (.41)	.29 (.25)	−.61† (.31)	1.08** (.38)	−1.11** (.29)	.27 (.34)
Approach × Independence	.28 (.24)	−.33 (.21)	.28 (.18)	−.19 (.25)	.26 (.18)	.26 (.24)	−.28 (.21)	.13 (.16)	−.18 (.21)
Approach × Interdependence	−0.27 (.34)	.16 (.33)	.04 (.27)	.17 (.26)	−0.21 (.24)	−.53 (.38)	.25 (.32)	.16 (.29)	.11 (.27)
Avoidance × Independence	−.22† (.13)	.31* (.15)	−.32* (.12)	.42** (.13)	−.38** (.14)	−.11 (.16)	.19 (.17)	−.15 (.12)	.35* (.15)
Avoidance × Interdependence	.36* (.18)	−.45* (.20)	.42* (.17)	−.46* (.19)	.57* (.26)	.30 (.24)	−.32 (.24)	.21 (.16)	−.28 (.21)
Authenticity						.30** (.09)	−.32** (.08)	.32*** (.08)	−.33*** (.07)
Authenticity × Interdependence						.31† (.16)	−.15 (.14)	−.07 (.15)	−.03 (.14)

Note. Numbers outside parentheses are unstandardized HLM coefficients; numbers inside parentheses are standard errors. All Level 1 variables (approach, avoidance, and authenticity) represent their person-mean centered components.

***p < .001. **p < .01. *p < .05. †p < .10.

653

Table 2. Results of Simple Slopes Analyses.

	Daily Outcomes				
	Positive Emotions	Negative Emotions	Positive Relationship Quality	Negative Relationship Quality	Authenticity
Predictor: avoidance goals					
Low interdependence	−.27* (.12)	.29** (.11)	−.33* (.14)	.43** (.15)	−.64*** (.13)
High interdependence	.25 (.20)	−.35 (.24)	.28 (.18)	−.22 (.21)	.18 (.31)

Note. Numbers outside parentheses are unstandardized HLM coefficients; numbers inside parentheses are standard errors.
***$p < .001$. **$p < .01$. *$p < .05$.

Ruling Out Alternative Hypotheses

Our findings suggest that people low in interdependence experience personal and relationship costs when sacrificing for avoidance goals due to decreased feelings of authenticity, whereas people high in interdependence were buffered against experiencing these costs. However, it could also be that when people low in interdependence sacrifice for avoidance goals, they experienced decreased well-being or relationship quality, which in turn, lead them to feel less authentic. To rule out this alternative pathway, we conducted a set of reverse mediation analyses. These results indicated that when the cross-level interaction between interdependence and avoidance goals (predictor) and each of the four daily outcomes (now as mediators) were entered as predictors of authenticity (along with all other control variables included in the original hypothesized mediated moderation analyses), both remained significant and in all cases except for positive emotions, resulted in lower proportions of reduction in the total effects (19%–31%, indirect effect *b*s ranged from −0.04 to 0.48, all *p*s > .05). These results contrast with our hypothesized results, which indicated greater reductions in the magnitude of the total effects (17–50%). In short, our theoretical model received much more support than the alternative possibility that sacrificing for avoidance goals detracts from the well-being and relationship quality of people lower in interdependence, in turn leading them to feel less authentic.

Discussion

Sacrifice is both necessary and inevitable in romantic relationships as partners learn to coordinate their personal interests to develop a life together. An emerging body of work speaks to the critical role of sacrifice in sustaining romantic bonds (Impett et al., 2005, 2012; Kogan et al., 2010). At the same time, not all sacrifices are beneficial for relationships. Given that research has shown the costly nature of sacrificing to avoid negative outcomes in romantic relationships (Impett et al., 2005), we sought to investigate if construing the self as interdependent with others would buffer people against experiencing these costs. In this 2-week daily experience study, people who were lower in interdependence felt inauthentic when they sacrificed for avoidance goals, and this lack of authenticity, in turn, detracted from their emotional well-being and the quality of

their relationships. In contrast, sacrificing for avoidance goals did not feel inauthentic for highly interdependent people nor was it experienced as costly since they were likely able to maintain the social harmony that they so highly value.

The findings from this study extend the literature on sacrifice and close relationships, and suggest that decisions about whether or not to sacrifice one's own interests for a romantic partner can be quite complex. Initial research focused on the relationship benefits of sacrifice, showing that people who are more willing to sacrifice have happier relationships that are more likely to withstand the test of time (Van Lange et al., 1997). Then, research from an approach-avoidance motivational perspective further showed that people's underlying goals for sacrifice are important to consider, with approach goals predicting increased satisfaction and closeness, and avoidance goals predicting decreased satisfaction and heightened conflict (Impett et al., 2005, 2012; Neff & Harter, 2002). This study adds even more nuance to this growing literature by showing that sacrificing to avoid negative outcomes in relationships is not always costly. People who construed the self as interdependent with others were protected against the typical costs of avoidance goal pursuit when making daily sacrifices in their relationships.

From a different conceptual vantage point, the findings are important for the literature on approach-avoidance motivational theory. In particular, the current study supports previous research suggesting that interdependent people are not harmed from pursuing avoidance personal goals (Elliot, Chirkov, Kim, & Sheldon, 2001), and shows that this is true in the relationally relevant domain of sacrifice. Given the typically pernicious effects of avoidance goal pursuit across multiple life domains (e.g., achievement, social), future research is needed to identify other factors that might buffer people against experiencing the costs of pursuing avoidance goals.

Future Directions

Future research should test similar ideas in a cross-cultural sample, especially in light of findings by Elliot et al., (2001) showing that the pursuit of avoidance personal goals is associated with lower well-being in individuals from the United States, but with higher well-being in individuals from South Korea and Russia. Indeed, the current findings are consistent with cross-cultural research showing that people from

collectivistic cultures have strong beliefs in the importance of sacrificing individual goals to fulfill social responsibilities (Miller, Chakravarthy, & Das, 2008). Just as the highly interdependent are buffered against the costs of sacrificing for avoidance goals, it is also possible that people from Eastern cultures may also experience similar buffering effects. Cross-cultural data are needed to test this possibility.

It is also important to acknowledge that while our theoretical predictions and findings concerned interdependence in the specific context of romantic relationships, we used a measure of collective interdependence. In some ways, the use of this measure strengthens our findings in that we were able to demonstrate effects using a collective interdependence scale in the specific relational context of sacrifice. Nonetheless, future work is needed to replicate these findings using a measure of relational interdependent self-construal (Cross, Bacon, & Morris, 2000).

This study included only one member of romantic couples, preventing us from knowing how one person's goals for sacrifice influence the recipient's response. Existing research has indicated that sacrificing to avoid negative outcomes can be a negative experience for the recipient as it detracts from satisfaction and fuels relationship conflict (Impett, 2012). However, it is possible that the romantic partners of highly interdependent people who sacrifice for avoidance goals may also be buffered against experiencing negative outcomes. In fact, romantic partners might even experience boosts in well-being and relationship satisfaction to the extent that they are able to pick up on their partner's motivation to avoid turmoil and maintain harmony in the relationship.

Finally, the data from this study were correlational. A large number of studies have shown that it is possible to prime or experimentally manipulate interdependent self-construal (Gardner, Gabriel, & Lee, 1999; Oyserman & Lee, 2008). Based on this work, it may be possible to boost people's feelings of interdependence to the ultimate benefit of their relationships. If we can get people to construe the self in more interdependent terms, we may be able to prevent them from experiencing some of the costs of giving in to a partner to avoid negative outcomes—a virtual inevitability in relationships.

Conclusion

While the overwhelming majority of existing research has documented the harmful nature of avoidance goal pursuit, the current study calls into doubt the inevitability of that claim. For people who view the self as interdependent with others and when they engage in behaviors that benefit their partner or their relationship, the pursuit of avoidance goals is not always costly. Thus, when we face situations of conflicting interests in our relationships, the decision to give or not to give should be based not only on *why* we choose to give, but also on *who* we are and how we *construe* ourselves vis-à-vis others.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes

1. We tested an alternative mediated moderation model by assessing the significance of the main effect of avoidance goals at Step 2 and the interaction between interdependence and authenticity at Step 3. This alternative model would indicate that interdependence moderates ''Path b'' of the indirect effect (the association between authenticity and well-being), rather than "Path a" (the association between avoidance goals and authenticity) as we hypothesized. The results in Table 1 indicate that our hypothesized model received stronger support than the alternative model.

2. Although the focus of the current article was on individual differences in interdependence, we should note that results for independent self-construal complemented the results for interdependent self-construal. Specifically, independence interacted with avoidance goals to significantly predict emotional well-being and relationship quality during sacrifice. Simple effects revealed that whereas sacrificing for avoidance goals was associated with poorer daily emotional well-being and relationship quality, there were no significant effects for people low in independence. Furthermore, independence interacted with avoidance goals to predict authenticity, such that people high in independence felt less authentic when sacrificing for avoidance goals, whereas there was no effect for people low in independence. Finally, the interactions between independence and avoidance goals in predicting daily personal well-being and relationship quality were all partially mediated by authenticity.

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