

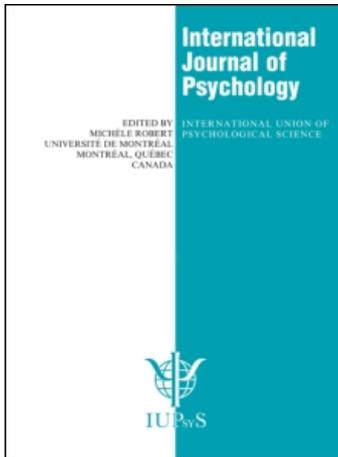
This article was downloaded by: [HEAL-Link Consortium]

On: 5 March 2010

Access details: Access Details: [subscription number 786636647]

Publisher Psychology Press

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



International Journal of Psychology

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713659663>

Love, commitment, and response to conflict among Cypriot dating couples: Two models, one relationship

Georgia Panayiotou^a

^a University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

Online publication date: 04 December 2009

To cite this Article Panayiotou, Georgia(2005) 'Love, commitment, and response to conflict among Cypriot dating couples: Two models, one relationship', International Journal of Psychology, 40: 2, 108 – 117

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/00207590444000230

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00207590444000230>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.informaworld.com/terms-and-conditions-of-access.pdf>

This article may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

Love, commitment, and response to conflict among Cypriot dating couples: Two models, one relationship

Georgia Panayiotou

University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

Rusbult's investment model of close relationships posits that commitment is a function of satisfaction with the relationship, investments made, and attractiveness of alternatives. Relationship quality is also affected by how partners handle distress and conflict. They may practise exit (leave the situation), voice (speak out their concerns), loyalty (wait loyally for the problem to pass), or neglect (passive-aggressive or avoidant tactics). Sternberg's triangular theory of love, on the other hand, posits that the ingredients of a successful relationship are passion, intimacy, and commitment. All three are required to produce long-lasting consummate love, whereas the absence of any of the components leads to other types of relationships such as friendships and infatuations. These models have received cross-cultural validation in previous research. Their applicability to dating relationships in Cyprus was tested in this study. The primary aim was to examine the applicability of these models to dating relationships in Cyprus and the second aim was to examine whether a combination of these models predicts relationship commitment better than either model alone. An additional goal was to add to the particularly scarce research on intimate relationships among Cypriots. Results indicate that both models are predictive of commitment, but that the triangular model does not add to the predictive power of the investment model. On the contrary, the concept of investment, as measured by the investment model, appears to be important in the understanding of commitment in dating relationships. Conflict resolution styles were also related to relationship quality, consistent with the predictions of the investment model, but in variance with findings regarding married couples in Cyprus. Results are discussed in light of the relevant models, and in comparison to findings of prior research regarding the application of the investment model to marital relationships. The role of the cultural context is also addressed.

Le modèle d'investissement des relations intimes de Rusbult postule que l'engagement dépend de la satisfaction vis-à-vis la relation, des investissements effectués et de l'attraction des alternatives. La qualité de la relation est aussi affectée par la façon dont les partenaires font face à la détresse et aux conflits. Ils peuvent manifester divers types de comportements: de sortie (quitter la situation), de voix (exprimer leur préoccupations), de loyauté (attendre fidèlement que le problème passe) ou de négligence (exercer des tactiques passive-agressives ou évitantes). Pour sa part, la théorie triangulaire de l'amour de Sternberg postule que les ingrédients du succès de la relation résident dans les composantes de la passion, de l'intimité et de l'engagement. Ces trois composantes sont requises pour favoriser la durée de l'amour; tandis que l'absence d'une de ces composantes mène à d'autres types de relation tels que l'amitié ou le béguin. Ces deux modèles ont été validés par des recherches antérieures menées dans diverses cultures. La présente étude visait d'abord à examiner leur applicabilité aux relations matrimoniales à Chypre. Un second objectif était d'examiner si une combinaison de ces modèles prédit mieux l'engagement dans la relation que chacun des modèles à lui seul. Un troisième objectif était d'introduire les recherches particulièrement rares sur les relations intimes chez les Chypriotes. Les résultats indiquent que les deux modèles sont prédictifs de l'engagement, mais que le modèle triangulaire n'ajoute pas de puissance prédictive au modèle de l'investissement. Par ailleurs, le concept d'investissement, tel que mesuré par le modèle d'investissement, semble être important pour comprendre l'engagement dans les relations matrimoniales. Les styles de résolution des conflits étaient également reliés à la qualité de la relation, en accord avec les prédictions du modèle d'investissement, mais tout en montrant de la variance avec les données relatives aux couples mariés à Chypre. Les résultats sont discutés à la lumière des modèles et en comparaison avec les résultats de recherche antérieurs ayant appliqué le modèle d'investissement aux relations maritales. Le rôle du contexte culturel est aussi abordé.

Correspondence should be addressed to Georgia Panayiotou, Dept of Psychology, University of Cyprus, PO Box 20537, 1678 Nicosia, Cyprus (E-mail: georgiap@ucy.ac.cy).

*E*l modelo de inversión de Rusbult de las relaciones íntimas propone que el compromiso es una función de la satisfacción con la relación, inversiones realizadas y atractivo de las opciones. La forma en la que los miembros de la pareja manejan el sufrimiento y el conflicto también afecta la calidad de la relación. Podrían practicar abandono (dejar la situación), voz (externar sus preocupaciones), lealtad (esperar lealmente a que pase el problema), o negligencia (tácticas pasivo-agresivas o de evitación). La teoría triangular del amor de Sternberg, por otra parte, postula que los ingredientes de una relación exitosa son pasión, intimidad y compromiso. Se requieren los tres para producir un amor duradero y consumado, en tanto que la ausencia de cualquiera de los componentes conduce a otro tipo de relaciones, como la amistad y la infatuación. La investigación antecedente ha validado estos modelos de cultura a cultura. Su aplicación a las relaciones de noviazgo en Chipre se sometió a prueba en el presente estudio. El primer propósito fue examinar la aplicabilidad de estos modelos a las relaciones de noviazgo en Chipre y el segundo fue explorar si una combinación de estos modelos predice mejor el compromiso con la pareja que cualquiera de ambos modelos por separado. Una meta adicional fue contribuir a la escasa investigación sobre relaciones íntimas entre chipriotas. Los resultados indican que ambos modelos predicen el compromiso, pero que el modelo triangular no añade al poder de predicción del modelo de Inversión. Al contrario, el concepto de inversión, medido por el modelo de inversión, es al parecer importante para el entendimiento del compromiso en las relaciones de noviazgo. Los estilos de solución de conflicto también se relacionan con la calidad de las relaciones, consistentes con lo que predice el modelo de Inversión, pero diferentes de los hallazgos relativos a las parejas casadas en Chipre. Se discuten los resultados a la luz de los modelos, y en comparación con los hallazgos de investigaciones previas respecto a la aplicación del modelo de inversión a las relaciones maritales. También se aborda el papel que desempeña el contexto cultural.

In Western cultures, marriage is generally believed to be the ideal outcome of romantic relationships. Romantic love is said to be an essential basis of marital success (Dion & Dion, 1993; Fox, 1975). In fact, in many cases individuals search for years to find that “special someone,” the partner with whom one is destined to be. How does one know, however, when one has come across the right mate, the one with whom he/she is “meant” to be? In other words, why do some romantic relationships lead to marriage and last a lifetime while others fail miserably, often causing partners great distress?

Research in both marital and pre-marital relationships has been aiming to discover the factors that lead to greater relationship satisfaction, ultimately increasing commitment to the relationship (Berry & Willingham, 1997; Cramer, 2000). Studies in several countries indicate that relationship satisfaction is one of the main characteristics of successful, long-term relationships (Oner, 2001; Sprecher, 2001), although the way satisfaction is defined depends on many factors, such as the cultural context (Fox, 1975; Lin & Rusbult, 1995; Xiaohe & Whyte, 1990). Some research indicates that romantic love is an important ingredient of such satisfaction at the beginning stages of relationships but may not be predictive of long-term relationship outcome (Sprecher & Metts, 1999).

Rusbult, in work based on interdependence theory (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978), has proposed the investment model (Rusbult, 1980, 1983;

Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998b); this suggests that commitment in a close relationship, i.e., the sense that the relationship is important to the self, that one is dependent on it, and wants to put effort into maintaining it, depends on several factors, the main one of which is satisfaction. Satisfaction level will be greater when a relationship is perceived to fulfil important needs—when rewards are high and costs are few (Rusbult, Johnson, & Morrow, 1986a).

The model also suggests that commitment is affected by the quality of alternatives that are available to the present relationship. According to the theory, feelings of commitment will be stronger when alternatives to the relationship are perceived to be of poorer quality. Alternatives include such options as forming new relationships with other partners or the option of noninvolvement. To the extent that an individual feels that his or her alternatives to the present relationship are not appealing, commitment will be enhanced. On the other hand, when alternatives are readily available and are perceived to be desirable, commitment level should decline.

Commitment can also be influenced by the investment that one has made in a relationship. An individual may become committed to the extent that he or she has invested numerous and important resources. The larger the investment size, the more likely it is that an individual will remain in and feel committed to a relationship, so as not to risk losing these important resources. Investments include not only material possessions

such as a house and money, but also such psychological assets as memories and shared friends, which one would lose if he/she decided to exit the commitment (Rusbult, 1980, 1983).

Several studies have provided support for the investment model for a number of different relationship types, including dating relationships, marriage, friendships, and even employment satisfaction and commitment (Rusbult, 1983; Rusbult & Farrell, 1983). Using such a model to explore dating relationships in Cyprus would lend further support to the robustness of this theory and would offer the possibility of examining the similarities of relationships in this culture to those for which the model has been previously used.

Sternberg (1986, 1997, 2000) has proposed a different theory to explain relationship quality, based on the emotional needs of individuals. In the triangular theory of love (1986), he posits that there are three primary ingredients of love: intimacy, commitment, and passion. These components alone or in combination result in eight different types of love relationships, such as liking (intimacy only), infatuation (passion only), companionate love (intimacy plus commitment) and romantic love (passion plus intimacy). All three are needed to create the consummate love that leads to a satisfying long-term relationship. The components can change over the course of relationships, and in fact follow varying developmental trajectories, with passion, for example, reaching a peak quickly, and commitment rising relatively slowly in successful relationships. These trajectories change depending on whether the relationship is succeeding or failing. Relationship turmoil may arise when the partners have different triangles, i.e., experience different levels of each component compared to one another. Sternberg (2000) asserts that commitment and intimacy may require effort and persistence. Effort is needed to maintain the relationship (commitment) and to work for the partner's welfare (intimacy). In contrast, individuals have little conscious control over the passion they experience, which is portrayed even in common-sense conceptions as being beyond one's control. Based on this conception, it can be expected that high levels of passion during the early stages of a relationship can serve as a motivating factor for partners to put in the effort required to increase intimacy and commitment.

The model has received validation through several studies. Acker and Davis (1992) provided support for the developmental course of the components of love, indicating that commitment increases as relationships become more serious, whereas passion, at least among women, declines

over the course of the relationship. Gao (2001) provided support for the model in China, and reported on differences in levels of each component that can be explained by the differential emphasis on collectivism-individualism between China and the USA. Furthermore, it has been found that the degree to which one experiences each component of the triangle may be related to personality traits. For instance, conscientiousness is related to commitment, intimacy, and surprisingly, also to passion among women (Engel, Olson, & Patrick, 2002). Sternberg's model is important (Tzeng & Gomez, 1992) because of its emphasis on the role of emotional variables in relationship success. Other researchers concur in supporting the significance of emotional variables, such as intimacy, in relationship stability (Fitzpatrick & Sollie, 1999).

The relationship between the triangular and the investment models has not to date been investigated empirically to any substantial degree. Panayiotou and Cox-Boyd (2002) examined the relationship between the investment model and the passion dimension of the triangular model with married couples in Cyprus. They found that passion does not contribute to the predictive ability of the investment model, as the construct it measures seems to be subsumed under the concept of satisfaction. It would be of interest to examine if such effects could be replicated during the dating phase of a relationship, when passion should be at a climax. Furthermore, the intimacy dimension of the triangular model should also be examined in relation to the investment model. Some critics of interdependence theory point out, in fact, that a limitation of the model is that it de-emphasises the role of emotions in relationships. This criticism suggests the need to attempt an integration of the triangular with the investment model.

In addition to the variables examined by these two models, other aspects of how partners relate to each other have been found to determine relationship quality. One of them has to do with the way partners handle the conflict or disagreements that inevitably arise within a close relationship (Arriaga & Rusbult, 1998; Cramer, 2000; Rusbult et al., 1986a). It is often the case that what is good for one partner conflicts with the wishes and desires of the other or with the good of the relationship. Under such circumstances, one may need to accommodate, i.e., to sacrifice one's immediate needs for the long-term sake of the relationship.

According to Rusbult and Zembrodt (1983) and Rusbult, Zembrodt, and Gunn (1982), accommodation can take on four different styles that vary

along the dimensions of active/passive and constructive/destructive. Exit represents leaving the relationship or acting in a way that threatens it, and hence is active but destructive. Voice represents efforts to resolve the problem, so that it is active and constructive. Loyalty represents waiting loyally for things to improve, so that it is passive and constructive, whereas neglect represents allowing the relationship to deteriorate by not combating problems, so that it is passive but destructive. Accommodation style depends in part on personality (Berry & Willingham, 1997; Gaines et al., 1997; Rusbult, Zembrodt, & Iwaniszek, 1986b) and in part on the relationship itself. Satisfied couples and those with higher investments and greater commitment are more likely to utilize constructive styles, whereas those who are less satisfied are likely to rely more on neglect. Research within the investment model has found that those with better alternatives are more likely to use exit (Rusbult, Bissonnette, Arriaga, & Cox, 1998a; Rusbult et al., 1982, 1986a).

To date, however, the cross-cultural validity of the association between these styles and relationship quality has not been verified. This is essentially because of the different cultural norms regarding appropriate styles of communication and emotional expression. For instance, being assertive (voice) is much more valued in Western, individualist cultures than it is in Eastern collectivist cultures, where submissiveness to the group is expected (Thompson, Ishii, & Klopf, 1990; Thompson & Klopf, 1995; Wong & Piran, 1995). Panayiotou and Cox-Boyd (2002) found that these accommodation styles were not strongly related to marital satisfaction and commitment in Cyprus and, in fact, the only significant relationship was between voice and commitment, but in the opposite direction from that predicted by the model: The more one of the partners relied on voice, the less satisfied both partners were. This finding was explained in terms of the cultural preference for acquiescence over assertiveness in the Cypriot culture. This pattern, however, may not hold among dating couples, who represent a younger generation, and whose relationships have not yet evolved into the social contract of marriage. These attributes may allow them greater freedom of expression, and greater emphasis on personal satisfaction, in comparison to married couples.

Research on relationships in Cyprus is unfortunately scarce. A search of the literature using PsycINFO reveals no published studies on the dynamics of intimate relationships and marriage in Cyprus. This line of research, of which the present

study is a part, represents the first attempt to systematically study relationships in Cyprus. Cyprus, now a member of the European Union, represents a culture that is becoming progressively Westernized. However, it maintains some characteristics of collectivist cultures, such as frequent contact among members of the extended family, and an emphasis on social acceptance and approval. It would be of interest to know how such an environment affects romantic relationships and especially to trace any potential differences between older married couples and young dating individuals in their conceptions of satisfaction and commitment.

In summary, the present study examines the applicability of the investment model and the triangular theory to premarital romantic relationships in Cyprus. It attempts to provide answers to a number of research questions: (1) First, it examines the applicability of each model to premarital relationships in Cyprus. Finding that commitment relates to model variables as predicted by the theories would add to the cross-cultural validity of both models. (2) Next, the two models are juxtaposed, in order to see if their predictive ability can be enhanced through their combination. (3) Gender differences in what predicts relationship quality are also examined. (4) Finally, the study attempts to extend the previous findings in Cyprus with married couples, and particularly to investigate whether the unexpected effects regarding the role of accommodation styles in relationship quality also exist among dating couples. The prediction is that dating couples may be at a stage of the relationship where interest lies more in personal emotional satisfaction rather than on long-term sustenance of a social contract. As a consequence, voice and loyalty are expected to be predictive of relationship quality, as suggested by the investment model, to a greater degree than among the married couples studied in Panayiotou and Cox-Boyd (2002).

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 110 heterosexual individuals (55 couples) ranging in age from 15–43, who were currently involved in a romantic relationship. None of the participants were currently married. They participated in the study voluntarily and were recruited by publicizing the study among the acquaintances of undergraduate psychology

students at the University of Cyprus. Participant characteristics were as follows. They resided in mostly urban locations (82.5%). Their current relationship ranged in duration from 1 month to 36 years. Of the participants, 42.2% had a high school education, 41.2% had some college education but no college degree, 15.5% had a university degree, and 3.1% had a graduate degree. In terms of family situation, 95% came from intact families of origin, whereas 5% had parents who were divorced. Low divorce rates among the families of origin in this sample are typical of Cyprus culture (10% of marriages resulted in divorce in 1994, and rates were much lower before the 1990s—Hatzivassilis, 1997), particularly within the generations represented in the parents of this study's participants.

Instruments

Investment Model Scale. Participants responded to Rusbult's measures of commitment, investment, satisfaction, and alternatives based on the Investment Model Scale (Rusbult et al., 1998b) and Rusbult's measures of exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect. Cronbach's alpha was computed for each subscale of the Investment Model Scale, to evaluate reliability. For the commitment scale (5 items) $\alpha=.40$, for the satisfaction scale (5 items) $\alpha=.93$, for the investment scale (4 items) $\alpha=.56$, and for the alternatives quality scale (4 items) $\alpha=.51$. Internal reliabilities were comparable to those obtained in Panayiotou and Cox-Boyd (2002) except for the commitment subscale, which was substantially lower here. Further examination of the inter-item correlations for this subscale showed that a specific item ("how committed do you feel in your relationship") showed very poor correlations with the rest. Removing this increased α to .75. Hence, this item was removed from further analyses. For the alternatives scale, reliability was improved to .55 by removing item 3, "prior to your current relationship, how did you feel about being alone," which showed low correlations with the other items. After these adjustments, measures showed acceptable internal consistency, which was comparable or better to that obtained in other cross-cultural studies such as Lin and Rusbult (1995) and Van Lange, Rusbult, Drigotas, Arriaga, and Witcher (1997).

Triangular Love Scale. Participants also took Sternberg's measures of passion, intimacy, and commitment from the Triangular Love Scale (Sternberg, 2000). Sternberg's measure includes

15 questions for each component; originally, participants were asked to rate each question twice, once on how important a certain attribute is to one's relationship and once on how characteristic it is. Only the question of how characteristic attributes were was utilized in the present study. Participants responded to each question on a Likert-type scale where 1=*do not agree* and 9=*strongly agree*. Cronbach's α coefficients were as follows: the passionate love measure (15 items) had $\alpha=.91$, the commitment measure had $\alpha=.95$, and the intimacy measure had $\alpha=.51$. The relatively low reliability of the intimacy subscale of the Triangular Love Scale was corrected by removing one item that showed low correlations with the rest (item 7—*I give considerable emotional support to my partner*). This adjustment improved the reliability of this subscale to .66.

Demographics and relationship characteristics. In addition to the above, participants responded to questions on the perceived seriousness of their current relationship and other relationship characteristics such as relationship duration, in addition to personal demographics such as gender and age. Respondents stated that in the last 5 years they had a mean of 2.4 romantic relationships ($SD=2.3$). They also had to state on a Likert-type scale how serious their current relationship was compared (a) to their previous ones and (b) to a relationship that in their opinion is so serious that it leads to marriage. The scale ranged from 1 (*less serious*) to 7 (*more serious*). To the first question, responses had a mean of 6.43 ($SD=1.18$), whereas to the second question $M=5.45$, $SD=1.61$. There were no significant gender differences in these responses. There was a significant positive correlation between these two responses, $r=.35$, $p<.01$. Number of prior relationships correlated negatively and significantly, $r=-.24$, $p<.05$, with how serious this relationship was compared to one that could lead to marriage.

Procedure

Trained undergraduate research assistants administered the questionnaires to each participant. Participants responded to questionnaires with the research assistant present during the session to answer questions. An effort was made to administer the questionnaires to the two partners simultaneously, to avoid any chance of them discussing the questions among themselves, but in the few cases when this was impossible the partners were administered the questionnaires at

different times. During simultaneous administrations participants were seated in separate rooms and were instructed not to discuss questions among themselves. During nonsimultaneous administrations, the need not to discuss responses before both partners had finished the study was stressed. At the end of the session, questionnaires were sealed in anonymous envelopes in the presence of the respondent.

Data analyses

Data were analysed using Pearson correlations to test whether the models predict commitment as expected. Further correlations examined the relationship between demographic relationship characteristics and model variables. Characteristics examined were duration of relationship and seriousness (measured by two items asking participants to judge relationship seriousness in comparison to prior relationships and to a relationship that would lead to marriage). Multiple regression analyses were conducted to predict commitment and satisfaction from the other relationship and conflict resolution variables. Similar regressions were conducted for men and women separately to examine gender differences in what predicts commitment.

RESULTS

Fit of the investment and triangular model among dating couples

To test the applicability of the two models among dating couples in this culture, bivariate correlations among the components of the models were computed as shown in Table 1. Commitment (investment model) was significantly positively

correlated with satisfaction and investment and was negatively correlated with alternatives quality, as would be predicted by the model. Alternatives quality was negatively correlated with all other components of the model, which in turn were positively related amongst themselves. In accord with the triangular model, both passion and intimacy were significantly correlated with commitment as measured by this model. The table also shows the correlations across models, i.e., among the components of the investment model and those of the triangular model. Commitment (investment model) was positively and significantly correlated with commitment (triangular model), passion, and intimacy, which in turn were positively correlated with satisfaction and investment and negatively correlated with alternatives quality.

To further test the validity of the investment model, a variable Com2 was computed using the proposed formula in the investment model (Com2=satisfaction + investment - alternatives quality). The correlation between Com2 and self-reported commitment (investment model) was $r=.65, p<.0001$; between Com2 and commitment (triangular model), $r=.58, p<.000$.

Additional evidence regarding the validity of each model in this cultural context can be found by examining the correlations between model variables and self-reported seriousness and duration of the relationship. As Table 2 shows, relationship seriousness (as compared to previous relationships) was significantly and positively correlated with all investment model variables, except alternatives quality, as well as with passion and commitment as measured by the triangular model. Similarly, relationship seriousness as compared to a relationship that leads to marriage was significantly related to the same variables plus intimacy and loyalty. Relationship duration was not significantly related to any model variables.

TABLE 1
Correlations among subcomponents of the investment and triangular models

	<i>Investment model</i>				<i>Triangular model</i>		
	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Alt qual</i>	<i>Inv</i>	<i>Com</i>	<i>Com</i>	<i>Int</i>	<i>Pass</i>
Investment model							
Alt quality	-.16		-.14	-.27**	-.07	-.30*	-.20*
Investment	.35**	.14		.31**	.40**	.24*	.28*
Commitment	.66**	-.27**	.31**		.61**	.33**	.43**
Triangular model							
Commitment	.63**	-.07	.40**	.61**		.61**	.72**
Intimacy	.52**	-.30*	.24*	.33**	.61**		.58**
Passion	.68**	-.20*	.28*	.43**	.72**	.58**	

Sat: Satisfaction; Alt qual: Alternatives quality; Inv: Investment; Com: Commitment; Int: Intimacy; Pass: Passion. Correlation is significant at the ** .01 level; * .05 level.

TABLE 2

Correlations between relationship variables, adaptation styles, and relationship duration and reported seriousness

	<i>Seriousness/ previous relationships</i>	<i>Seriousness/ marriage</i>	<i>Duration</i>
Duration	.04	.17	
Age	-.0	.230*	.12
Investment model			
Commitment	.328**	.536**	.06
Satisfaction	.355**	.560**	-.048
Investment	.390**	.469**	.02
Alternatives	.043	-.036	-.076
Triangular model			
Passion	.398**	.382**	.07
Intimacy	.225	.280*	.20
Commitment	.358**	.576**	.45
Exit	.024	-.0	.039
Loyalty	.75	.269**	.00
Voice	.00	.50	-.26
Neglect	-.064	-.6	.00

Correlation is significant at the ** .01 level; * .05 level.

Predicting commitment from the two models combined

The components of the two models were next combined in regression analyses to examine whether they help to increase the predictive power of each other. First, commitment as measured by the investment model was used as the dependent variable. The satisfaction component of the investment model emerged as the only significant predictor of commitment (investment and alternatives quality were marginally significant, $p=.1$), $R^2=.37$, $p<.0001$. Next, commitment, as measured by the triangular model, was used as the dependent variable. Passion and investment emerged as the only significant predictors ($R^2=.86$, $p<.0001$).

Gender differences in what predicts commitment

Gender differences in which model variables predict commitment were also examined in separate regressions conducted on the men and women separately. Commitment (based on the investment model) was the dependent variable. First, only investment model variables were entered as predictors. This regression showed that, for women, satisfaction was the only significant predictor, $R^2=.20$, $p<.01$. For men, satisfaction and alternatives quality emerged as significant predictors, $R^2=.57$, $p<.0001$. When triangular model variables were also included, the model did not reach statistical significance for men, and the only marginally significant predictor of commitment

TABLE 3

Correlations among adaptation styles and relationship variables

	<i>Exit</i>	<i>Loyalty</i>	<i>Voice</i>	<i>Neglect</i>
Loyalty	-.39**			
Voice	-.64**	.39**		
Neglect	.62**	-.22*	-.74**	
Investment model				
Commitment	-.14	.07	.19	-.13
Satisfaction	-.316	.29**	.37**	-.33**
Alternatives quality	.23*	.04	-.21*	.23*
Investment	.17	.22*	-.05	.08
Triangular model				
Passion	-.23*	.36**	.27**	-.27**
Intimacy	-.29**	.19	.17	-.21*
Commitment	-.20	.35**	.23*	-.28**

Correlation is significant at the ** .01 level; * .05 level.

($p<.1$) was passion. For women, all three predictors of the investment model were significant, $R^2=.52$, $p<.001$.

Association between accommodation style and relationship quality

Bivariate correlations were computed between the four styles of accommodation and model variables. Correlations are shown in Table 3. As predicted by the investment model, voice and loyalty were positively and significantly related to increased satisfaction and commitment, whereas exit and neglect were related to lower satisfaction and increased attractiveness of alternatives. Furthermore, exit and neglect were negatively related to passion and intimacy, whereas voice was positively related to passion. To examine whether accommodation styles predict relationship quality, adaptation styles were entered as predictors in a linear regression with commitment (investment model) as the dependent variable. None of the adaptation styles was significantly predictive of commitment.

DISCUSSION

The first goal of this study was to examine the applicability of the investment and triangular models among Cypriot dating couples. Bivariate correlations indicated that both models are valid ways of predicting commitment in this relationship type, and in this cultural context. Correlations between variables of the two models provided concurrent validity support for both models, indicating that they both represent measures of the same constructs. Based also on the correlations

computed between relationship seriousness and model variables, it appears that as satisfaction, investment, passion, and intimacy increase, partners perceive the relationship as more serious and potentially longer-lasting. Overall, these results provide support for the validity of both models in the context of Cypriot dating relationships.

With regards to the second goal of examining how the predictive validity of the models is improved when these models are combined, regressions in which all model variables were entered showed that intimacy and passion do not add to the predictive power of the investment model. To the contrary, the addition of the investment component of the investment model increases the variance in commitment that the triangular model is able to explain. These findings indicate that investment contributes unique variance to the prediction of commitment from the triangular model that is not subsumed under its other components, whereas the triangular model does not add to the predictive validity of the investment model. Hence, investment size is a significant component of relationship quality, at least among dating couples, that needs to be taken into consideration when examining the reasons that make some relationships last long-term.

Gender differences in what determines commitment among Greek Cypriots are also of interest. For men, it appears that commitment is predicted both by satisfaction and alternatives quality (which in the triangular model may be translated into the concept of passion), whereas for women it is determined by all investment model variables, and mostly by satisfaction. The separate regressions indicate that for men, the notions of satisfaction and alternatives quality that emerge within the investment model may both constitute the construct of passion, i.e., exclusive erotic preference for the particular partner, in the triangular model, whereas for women passion may already be subsumed by the constructs measured by the investment model. The significant role of alternatives quality for men is a replication of the findings with married males as well, and appears to have been found in other Western countries (Fitzpatrick & Sollie, 1999). It appears that one of the main variables that lead Cypriot men to enter and remain in a committed relationship is the decision that their current partner represents a superior selection compared to alternatives.

What was also of great interest was the role of accommodation in relationship quality, given the prior finding that accommodation does not significantly relate to commitment or satisfaction

among Cypriot *married* couples. Panayiotou and Cox-Boyd (2002) believed this to be due to different cultural standards of emotional expression between Cypriots and North Americans. This finding was not replicated among the dating couples in this study. These couples showed correlations between accommodation styles and relationship quality that were very similar to those obtained in the USA (Rusbult & Zembrodt, 1983), with exit and neglect being associated with less commitment and satisfaction and voice and loyalty being related with higher levels of these dimensions. The reason for this discrepancy may be that dating couples were generally younger, representing a generation with somewhat "globalized" attitudes toward love and marriage, abiding to a greater degree to the Western standards of personal satisfaction and the romantic ideal. Unlike married couples in Cyprus (particularly those in arranged marriages), who appeared in the previous study to restrain emotional expression (voice) in order to maintain relationship stability, young dating couples appear to put a greater emphasis on personal gratification and relationship quality, even with a possible cost to relationship duration. This is to be expected, given that these individuals have not yet entered the formal social contract of marriage. Being, as they are, in the process of exploring their compatibility and the level of satisfaction they obtain from their relationship, they appear more willing to express themselves and discuss their concerns, rather than suppressing possible disagreements for the sake of maintaining relationship duration, as was observed among married couples.

The present findings add to the scarce knowledge regarding romantic and marital relationships in Cyprus. As discussed in Panayiotou and Cox-Boyd (2002), Cypriots used to marry through arranged marriages, to partners often recommended by their parents. Recent generations progressively rely on Western conceptions of passionate romance as the basis for marriage. Alongside this change there has been a small but steady rise in divorce rates (Hatzivassilis, 1997), which is explained by popular lore as the tragic consequence of love-based marriages. This may in fact be accurate, since it appears that individuals' perspectives on love and marital satisfaction progressively reflect the notion of personal gratification rather than that of a serious social contract that needs to be honoured. The findings of the present study and its predecessor with married couples reflect this sociocultural change. Young dating couples appear to adhere to the importance of personal expression and

gratification, which they see as closely connected to their perception of how serious and potentially long-lasting a relationship is: Styles of adaptation that rely on positive ways of coping and focus on relationship quality, namely voice and loyalty, were found to relate substantially to satisfaction and commitment; men in particular rely heavily on passion and alternatives quality as a determinant of commitment. On the contrary, the married couples examined in the previous study, who represent an older generation and a different developmental stage (already in the formal contract of marriage), appeared to rely less on adaptation styles geared toward quality and mostly on approaches necessary to maintain relationship continuation. Thus, voice was related negatively to satisfaction and commitment. It would be of interest to examine these generational differences longitudinally to find out if the young couples in the present study shift in their perceptions of love and marriage when they do enter a formal marital relationship. If this is found to be the case, it would indicate that both sociocultural trends, namely the Westernized conception of love and the traditional view of marriage as a social contract, exist simultaneously but are expressed differently at different stages of relationships. If, on the other hand, it is found that the young generation maintains its view of relationships as being based on romantic love and gratification, this would indicate that traditional perspectives are fading and being replaced by Western, individualistic values.

In sum, the present findings provide further support for the validity and cross-cultural generalizability of both the investment and the triangular models. Furthermore, they indicate that the cultural differences that appeared to exist in the reliance upon accommodation styles among married couples are not found among dating partners. Hence, the stage of the relationship and the cultural norms and values within which it takes place need to be taken into consideration when examining the determinants of relationship quality. Limitations of this study include the fact that the sample size used was rather small, and not stratified to reflect sociodemographic differences in the Cypriot culture. Also, the study was unfortunately conducted in a vacuum of previous research on relationships in Cyprus, which precludes comparison with prior findings. Further, to examine the developmental changes in love and commitment, and to draw firm conclusions on the differences between dating and married couples, one should rely on a longitudinal design. Future research may investigate relationship development

longitudinally, in order to examine whether the differences discovered here between dating and married couples are the consequence of the evolution of the same relationship through time, or mostly an effect of studying two different generations with different values and definitions of love.

Manuscript received November 2003
Revised manuscript received March 2004

REFERENCES

- Acker, M., & Davis, M. H. (1992). Intimacy, passion and commitment in adult romantic relationships: A test of the triangular love theory. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *9*, 21–50.
- Arriaga, X. B., & Rusbult, C. E. (1998). Standing in my partner's shoes: Partner perspective taking and reactions to accommodative dilemmas. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *24*, 927–948.
- Berry, D. S., & Willingham, J. K. (1997). Affective traits, responses to conflict, and satisfaction in romantic relationships. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *31*, 564–576.
- Cramer, D. (2000). Relationship satisfaction and conflict style in romantic relationships. *Journal of Psychology*, *134*, 337–341.
- Dion, K. K., & Dion, K. L. (1993). Individualistic and collectivistic perspectives on gender and the cultural context of love and intimacy. *Journal of Social Issues*, *4*(1), 53–69.
- Engel, G., Olson, K., & Patrick, C. (2002). The personality of love: Fundamental motives and traits related to components of love. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *32*, 839–853.
- Fitzpatrick, J., & Sollie, D. L. (1999). Influence of individual and interpersonal factors on satisfaction and stability in romantic relationships. *Personal Relationships*, *6*, 337–350.
- Fox, G. L. (1975). Love match and arranged marriage in a modernizing nation: Mate selection in Ankara, Turkey. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *37*, 180–193.
- Gaines, S. O. Jr., Reis, H., T., Summers, S., Rusbult, C. E., Cox, C. L., Wexler, M. O., Marelich, W. D., & Kurland, G. J. (1997). Impact of attachment style on reactions to accommodative dilemmas in close relationships. *Personal Relationships*, *4*, 93–113.
- Gao, G. (2001). Intimacy, passion, and commitment in Chinese and US American romantic relationships. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *25*, 329–342.
- Hatzivassilis, V. (1997). *To diazygio stin Kypro htes kai simera kai i parenthesis*. Nicosia, Cyprus: Hatzivassilis.
- Kelley, H. H., & Thibaut, J. W. (1978). *Interpersonal relations: A theory of interdependence*. New York: Wiley.
- Lin, Y. W., & Rusbult, C. E. (1995). Commitment to dating relationships and cross-sex friendships in America and China. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *12*, 7–26.
- Oner, B. (2001). Factors predicting future time orientation for romantic relationships with the opposite sex. *Journal of Psychology*, *135*, 430–438.

- Panayiotou, G., & Cox-Boyd (2002). Commitment and response to interpersonal conflict among Cypriot couples: An application of the Investment Model. *Manuscript under review*.
- Rusbult, C. E. (1980). Commitment and satisfaction in romantic associations: A test of the investment model. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 26*, 172–186.
- Rusbult, C. E. (1983). A longitudinal test of the investment model: The development (and deterioration) of satisfaction and commitment in heterosexual involvements. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 45*, 101–117.
- Rusbult, C. E., Bissonnette, V. L., Arriaga, X. B., & Cox, C. L. (1998a). Accommodation processes during the early years of marriage. In T. N. Bradbury (Ed.), *The developmental course of marital dysfunction* (pp. 74–113). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Rusbult, C. E., & Farrell, D. (1983). A longitudinal test of the investment model: The impact on job satisfaction, job commitment, and turnover of variations in rewards, costs, alternatives, and investments. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 68*, 429–438.
- Rusbult, C. E., Martz, J. M., & Agnew, C. R. (1998b). The Investment Model Scale: Measuring commitment level, satisfaction level, quality of alternatives, and investment size. *Personal Relationships, 5*, 357–391.
- Rusbult, C. E., Johnson, D. J., & Morrow, G. D. (1986a). Determinants and consequences of exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect. *Human Relations, 39*, 45–63.
- Rusbult, C. E., & Zembrodt, I. M. (1983). Responses to dissatisfaction in romantic involvements: A multi-dimensional scaling analysis. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 19*, 274–293.
- Rusbult, C. E., Zembrodt, I. M., & Gunn, L. K. (1982). Exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect: Responses to dissatisfaction in romantic involvements. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 43*, 1230–1242.
- Rusbult, C. E., Zembrodt, I. M., & Iwaniszek, J. (1986b). The impact of gender and sex-role orientation on responses to dissatisfaction in close relationships. *Sex Roles, 15*, 1–20.
- Sprecher, S. (2001). Equity and social exchange in dating couples: Associations with satisfaction, commitment and stability. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 63*, 599–613.
- Sprecher, S., & Metts, S. (1999). Romantic beliefs: Their influence on relationships and patterns of change over time. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 16*, 834–851.
- Sternberg, R. J. (1986). A triangular theory of love. *Psychological Review, 93*, 119–135.
- Sternberg, R. J. (1997). Construct validation of a triangular love scale. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 27*, 313–335.
- Sternberg, R. J. (2000). *Cupid's arrow: The course of love through time*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Thompson, C. A., Ishii, S., & Klopff, D. W. (1990). Japanese and Americans compared on assertiveness/responsiveness. *Psychological Reports, 66*, 829–830.
- Thompson, C. A., & Klopff, D. W. (1995). Social style among North American, Finnish, Japanese, and Korean university students. *Psychological Reports, 77*, 60–62.
- Tzeng, O. C. S., & Gomez, M. (1992). Structural components paradigm of love. In O. C. S. Tzeng (Ed.), *Theories of love development, maintenance, and dissolution: Octagonal cycle and differential perspectives*. New York: Praeger.
- Van Lange, P. A. M., Rusbult, C. E., Drigotas, S. M., Arriaga, X. B., & Witcher, B. S. (1997). Willingness to sacrifice in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 72*, 1373–1395.
- Wong, O. C., & Piran, N. (1995). Western biases and assumptions as impediments in counseling traditional Chinese clients. *Canadian Journal of Counseling, 29*, 107–119.
- Xiaohe, X., & Whyte, M. K. (1990). Love matches and arranged marriages: A Chinese replication. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 52*, 709–722.