

TUGGING AT THEIR HEARTSTRINGS: PARTNER'S KNOWLEDGE OF AFFECTIVE META-BASES PREDICTS USE OF EMOTIONAL ADVOCACIES IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

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Traditional studies of attitude change have focused on attempts between strangers, but what about in close relationships? The present article examines whether accuracy regarding a partner's meta-attitudinal bases can influence persuasion attempts. Because meta-bases reflect information-processing goals, we hypothesized that given partners with more affective meta-bases, greater accuracy regarding partners' meta-bases would predict use of emotional advocacies and their perceived persuasiveness. Self and partner ratings of meta-bases were assessed, and emotional advocacies as well as cognitive ones were provided to participants to present to their partners. Results revealed that the correspondence between perceptions of partner's affective meta-bases and use of emotional advocacies was greater among those whose partners rated themselves as having more affective meta-bases compared to those whose partners rated themselves as having less affective meta-bases. Results remained significant when controlling for perceived similarity. Implications of meta-bases for understanding interpersonal influence are discussed.

Keywords: interpersonal perception, knowledge, meta-attitudinal bases, attitudes, romantic relationships

Does knowing your partner more accurately influence the way(s) in which you try to persuade or influence your partner's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors?

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For example, you might want to influence your partner's consumption behavior (e.g., choice of brands, products) or their health behaviors (e.g., flu vaccination, health checkups, blood donations, condom use), and knowing that they are typically more emotional, decide to share advertisements or messages that are more emotional in nature to ensure that they are more likely to be influenced. Such a scenario is but one of many examples that showcase how the advocacies that we face and the ensuing decisions about the advocacies we use can be directly or indirectly influenced by our relationships (Fitzsimons et al., 2015). That is, it is rarely the case that relationship partners are in perfect harmony, which means partners may engage in constant negotiation to fulfill each other's needs and wants. In other words, to effectively manage relationships, partners continually adjust and coordinate their attitudes. This is especially synonymous with an interdependence perspective (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978), which proposes that couples engage in acts of persuasion and influence that bring about desired attitude change within romantic partnerships (Davis & Rusbult, 2001; Oriña et al., 2002).

Although close relationships represent an important context whereby interpersonal influence takes place, studies that have investigated interpersonal influence in the context of close relationships have typically relied on retrospective reports of social influence tactics that are focused from an individual-level perspective. For example, participants were asked to remember and report on specific influence strategies and tactics (e.g., social support, expressing negative affect, discussions, modeling, power) in domains such as health behaviors (e.g., Tucker & Mueller, 2000) or purchasing decisions (Kirchler, 1993). Furthermore, from the perspective of the target of influence attempts, since many of the decisions individuals make can be directly or indirectly influenced by their romantic partner and not just a function of their own personal attitudes, beliefs and preferences, scholars must go beyond the individual to understand the process of influence and persuasion. To complement the approach of assessing retrospective reports of influence attempts, the current research was guided by theories based on the affective-cognitive nature of attitudes and examined whether the accuracy of partners' information-processing styles leads to the actual use of emotional advocacies within a dyadic context.

ACCURACY AND SELF-OTHER AGREEMENT

Person perception has been shown to be fundamental to social beings in terms of our everyday life by virtue of self- and other perceptions of the people around us (Connelly & Ones, 2010; Kim et al, 2019). This enables us to make sense of and predict the behavior of people whom we interact with in our everyday life (e.g., Vazire & Mehl, 2008). Thus, the accuracy of self-other perceptions would be vital in person perception processes, and such accuracy has been defined as self-other agreement, or the degree of concordance between one person's (Person A) self-perception and another's perception about Person A (Kenny, 1994).

Past research on self-other agreement has shown that self-other agreement in a multitude of domains matters for relationships. These domains include Big

5 personality (e.g., Kenny et al., 1994; Oltmanns et al., 2020; Vazire & Carlson, 2011), empathy (Roth & Altmann, 2021), dark triad traits (Lammle et al., 2021), first impressions (Human et al., 2012), and leadership (Berson & Sosik, 2007), among others. The importance of examining ratings from both the self and the other cannot be overstated, as the agreement between self and other ratings predicts work performance, health behaviors, academic performance, and daily behavior, as well as relationship outcomes (Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2006; Roberts et al., 2007). However, to our knowledge, there have only been a few studies examining self–other agreement in the domain of persuasion and attitude change or social influence. For example, some research has shown that leaders who were more self-aware of how their subordinates viewed their leadership style employed more effective influence tactics that improved work outcomes (Berson & Sosik, 2007). However, this study was focused more on meta-perception (the extent to which people know how people come across to others; Laing et al., 1966), rather than the extent to which people know how others perceive themselves. Yet, according to a partner verification perspective (e.g., De La Ronde & Swann, 1998; Swann et al., 1994), higher self–other agreement between romantic partners allows for greater understanding and prediction by one another, and it stands to reason that such accuracy could also help people choose the appropriate appeal that matches their partner’s interest in a particular type of information.

META-ATTITUDINAL BASES

What individual characteristics of the partner would one consider when trying to persuade the partner? One approach that has been established to be useful for increasing persuasion is individual differences in the affective–cognitive nature of attitudes (see Haddock & Maio, 2019). Much research has shown message-matching effects, such that individuals who tend to hold affective attitudes across various objects are more receptive to messages that target their emotions, whereas others who hold cognitive attitudes across various objects are more receptive to persuasion that targets their beliefs (e.g., Huskinson & Haddock, 2004; see also Fabrigar & Petty, 1999). Similarly, individuals with an affective orientation were more impacted by affective (e.g., warm–cold) attributes whereas individuals with a cognitive orientation were more impacted by cognitive (e.g., competent–incompetent) attributes in their attitudes toward other individuals (Aquino et al., 2016) and social groups (Wolf et al., 2017).

Among the various dimensions along which people differ in the affective–cognitive nature of their attitudes, one construct that has emerged to be predictive of persuasion and attitudes-relevant behavior is meta-attitudinal bases. Meta-attitudinal bases (meta-bases for short; See et al., 2008; See, Petty, et al., 2013) refers to the extent to which people perceive their attitudes to be dominated by their emotions or their beliefs. Individuals with more affective meta-bases perceive that they rely on emotions to a greater extent (i.e., their attitudes toward various attitude objects are driven by emotion); individuals with more cognitive meta-bases perceive that they rely on beliefs to a greater extent (i.e., their attitudes are driven by beliefs).

Of particular relevance to the current research, these individual differences in terms of the interest in processing affective or cognitive information result in behavioral consequences ranging from subtle ones, such as longer amounts of time invested in reading emotions-focused information to more overt expressions of preference for emotional arguments. For example, prior research has shown that individuals who had affective meta-bases were more persuaded to be in favor of blood donation after reading an emotions-focused message compared to a beliefs-focused one (See et al. 2008), and spent more time reading information that they expected to elicit emotions (See, Petty, et al., 2013). In addition, individuals who had affective meta-bases rated emotions-focused arguments as more interesting, more meaningful to them, and more worth remembering compared to beliefs-focused arguments (Keer et al., 2013). In short, the more affective an individual's meta-bases, the greater the extent to which they would show behavior that corresponds to their interest in processing and relying on emotions.

SELF-OTHER AGREEMENT ON META-BASES AND PARTNER PERSUASION

In the research described above, the effects of receiving a tailored versus a non-tailored message on the recipient were investigated. This *individual-as-recipient* approach has been the focus in the bulk of attitudes research. However, in a persuasion context, one can also play the role of a message source who presents advocacies to others. The current research focuses on this *individual-as-source* approach, which has received much less attention, even though having a partner who is perceived to advocate for their position effectively has been shown to impact the extent to which one is persuaded and arrives at an agreement with the partner (Shestowsky et al., 1998). Some emerging research has identified important antecedents to individuals' tendencies to advocate in favor of their own attitudes, such as certainty (Cheatham & Tormala, 2017; Gal & Rucker, 2010), but to our knowledge, no research has examined an individual's use of emotional appeals to advocate for their own attitudes as they spontaneously try to convince their targets, much less within a dyadic context. As explained below, we suggest that when attempting to influence their partners, people would infer their partner's meta-bases with varying degrees of accuracy, such that the more accurate they are about their partner's highly affective meta-bases, the more they would tailor their influence by selecting an emotional advocacy.

Research has shown that individuals exhibit behavioral tendencies (e.g., investing more time in emotional information) that correspond with their self-perceived meta-bases (e.g., See, Petty, et al., 2013). Given the interdependent nature of being in a close relationship, there are more occasions and opportunities for close partners to notice and accurately infer each other's behavior and personality, which enhances self-other agreement, even for traits that are low on observability, such as neuroticism (Connelly & Ones, 2010). In turn, this also creates and reinforces idiosyncratic shared realities, such that higher self-other agreement would lead to greater intimacy in the relationship, as it is important that close others see us as we

see ourselves (De La Ronde & Swann, 1998). This has also been shown to be true in the domain of meta-bases, where higher levels of self–other agreement regarding partners’ affective tendencies are associated with greater relationship quality (Tan et al., 2015), thus suggesting that one can observe the behavioral consequences of their partner’s affective meta-bases and become aware of the extent to which their partners endorse these affective tendencies.

Beyond predicting relationship quality, self–other agreement for meta-bases could have important consequences for influence attempts. According to interdependence theory, relationship partners have extensive opportunities to facilitate or obstruct each other’s goal pursuits (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978) and the more accurately one understands their partner, the better equipped they are to help their partner achieve goals, whereas the lack of validation of one’s self-views by a partner hinders the ability for an actor to help their partner achieve goals. This is especially so when partners are responsive to each other’s needs and wants and are motivated to monitor and meet them when possible (Clark & Mills, 1979). Applied to persuasion attempts, inaccuracy in recognizing partner’s self-views and persisting in one’s own self-view (i.e., lower self–other agreement) could result in use of advocacies that are mismatched and not tailored to their partners’ information-processing goals.

CURRENT RESEARCH

The current research aimed to study the effect of accuracy about partner’s affective meta-bases, or self–other agreement of affective meta-bases, on message choice/persuasiveness to understand tailoring persuasion attempts in the dyadic context. Thus, participants were presented with advocacies that differed only in their affective qualities such that these advocacies either matched or mismatched with their partner’s processing interests, as captured by meta-bases. Beyond the affective quality of the message, we intended for the other qualities, including the message’s position, to be similar across messages. Put differently, we did not intend for the messages to advocate for a position that was completely opposite to the partner’s own attitudes. This is because we are interested in participants’ influence attempts when their partners are attitudinally dissimilar, instead of being in complete agreement with themselves. Such dissimilarity can arise not only between negative and positive attitudes but also between mildly positive and extremely positive attitudes or between attitudes of the same valence but different accessibility. Thus, to encourage perceptions of attitude dissimilarity, participants were informed that the computer not only recorded their numerical responses on attitude scales but also the speed of their responses and the pressure with which they keyed in their responses.

It is worth noting that in the current research, we focused on *spontaneous* advocacy, whereby participants were asked to present advocacies without being prompted by their close relationship partner. Because of the spontaneity of influence attempts as the focus of our study, and with prior research suggesting that the effect of cognitive meta-bases on advocacy intentions only occurred when an

individual expected to be thoughtful about their advocacies upon being prompted to advocate (Teeny & Petty, 2018), we focused our attention on affective meta-bases. While it is possible that cognitive meta-bases might be influenced by similar processes in other domains where an individual is prompted by the message recipient to be deliberative (e.g., an employer asking an employee to explain why they deserve a pay raise), we did not make predictions for cognitive meta-bases for relationship partners who had not been prompted to be deliberative.

Overall, we predicted an interaction effect, such that higher self–other agreement between one's perception of partner's affective meta-bases (i.e., other-ratings) and their partner's rating of affective meta-bases (i.e., self-ratings) would positively predict the probability of choosing emotional advocacies, but only when both perceptions of affective meta-bases and partner's self-ratings of meta-bases were high. However, given partners with less affective meta-bases, it is unclear what the partner's information-processing goals are. Thus, the selection of advocacy might be based on other factors, such as cultural norms regarding the topic. (e.g., "joint finances is an emotionally fraught issue for everyone") or norms regarding how to appeal to one's romantic partner ("when it comes to my partner, I should always wear my heart on my sleeve") rather than their partner's behavioral expressions of their self-perceived meta-bases. We expect the same pattern for when the dependent measure assesses the extent to which one finds the emotional advocacy persuasive. In summary, higher accuracy regarding their partner's *high* affective meta-bases would make it more likely that an individual will choose an emotional advocacy and rate it as persuasive.

We also wanted to show that the effect of understanding a partner's meta-bases is distinguishable from similar individual differences in the literature, in particular need for affect (NA; Maio & Esses, 2001) and cognition (NC; Cacioppo & Petty, 1982). NA measures the extent to which individuals approach and avoid emotionally arousing stimuli, whereas NC measures the extent to which individuals engage in cognitive complexity. However, it is possible that individuals high in NC like to think about *both* emotions and beliefs (e.g., Petty et al., 1993). It is also possible that high NA individuals seek out affect-laden stimuli to experience emotions, but these emotions do not form the basis for evaluative purposes and for information processing in terms of meta-bases. Hence, we ran models controlling for NA and NC, as well as supplementary analyses examining both self and partner effects of NA and NC to rule out the effects of these individual differences on emotional advocacy.

In addition, we wanted to demonstrate how meta-base accuracy was not simply a proxy for relationship quality, and hence we also controlled for relationship closeness, as prior research has shown that closeness could be linked to partner understanding and self–other agreement (Pollmann & Finkenauer, 2009). Furthermore, we also controlled for the interaction of self-rated meta-base and perception of partner's meta-base (perceived similarity) across all analyses, as research has shown that similarity is closely related to accuracy, and that perceived similarity could constitute a form of shared reality (Luo & Klohnen, 2005). Finally, given the difficulty in recruiting pairs of romantic partners in an in-lab setting, we focused

on replicating the same pattern of results across two attitude objects, and across two dependent measures for each object, within the same study.

METHOD

SEPARATE PILOT TEST

To determine the messages that were going to be used as dependent variables in the main study, we measured how participants rated messages that the researchers constructed on their affective–cognitive quality, their position, and their cogency in a separate sample. Ultimately, we chose to use messages that were about joint finances and working overseas, as they fulfilled all of the criteria mentioned earlier. In summary, results showed that as intended, the cognitive messages appealed to reasoning more than emotions; the affective messages appealed more to emotions than reasoning; both affective and cognitive messages did not differ in the extent to which they advocated for joint finances and working overseas (i.e., they were perceived to be similarly against or in favor of the issues); both affective and cognitive messages did not differ in their cogency as well (i.e., they were of similar quality). In short, the messages differed in their affective and cognitive content, but not their position or quality.¹

PARTICIPANTS

Given the absence of past empirical work on this topic, we collected as many couples as possible throughout the academic year to maximize power (Lane & Hennes, 2018). Furthermore, to provide context regarding sensitivity analyses for estimating power in multilevel dyadic studies, Finkel et al. (2015) suggested that a sample size of 116 couples, with an ICC of 0.45, would have 80% power to detect a correlation of 0.20. We sought to recruit a similar number of couples, but we also tolerated what ended up being a smaller sample size due to the academic year ending. Participants were 101 heterosexual dating couples ($M_{age} = 22.61$ years, $SD = 1.98$; $M_{duration} = 22.18$ months, $SD = 26.06$) who were students at a public university in Singapore, with 2 couples being excluded as they were already married. This resulted in a final sample of 99 couples. Results did not change when we included the two married couples. Potential participants were recruited through flyers and e-mail messages as well as through social media platforms and through 1our, a paid study recruitment website. This research was supported by a Humanities and Social Sciences Seed Fund,

1. We embrace the open-science policy: We provide a comprehensive overview of all variables assessed as well as our data-analysis script on the Open Science Framework (OSF). These can be assessed at the following link: https://osf.io/v6bxe/?view_only=0ce250e7396d407aba8c992277cf8f0d

Results of the separate pilot study can be found on this page. However, we are not able to share the data for the following reasons: Relationship duration is included in the data set and given that this is a strongly identifiable variable, sharing our data might enable participants to find their own and their partner's data. This could compromise our confidentiality promise to our participants (see also Finkel et al., 2015), and makes data sharing a sensitive endeavor. The messages that were used in the study can be found in the Appendix.

though the funding source was not involved with study design, collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. Participants were paid \$10 each.²

PROCEDURE

All participants had to be in a romantic relationship at the time of participation. Upon arriving at the laboratory, couple members were directed to separate cubicles, and instructed not to communicate with each other during the duration of the study. After informed consent, all participants proceeded to complete NC, NA, and closeness measures in a random order. Next, they were asked to complete assessments of their own as well as their partner's meta-bases for seven attitude objects, including Joint Finances and Working/Studying Overseas. The order in which the scales were presented was random across all participants.

Upon answering the questions related to the attitude objects, all participants were asked to wait while the computer tabulated the responses from them and their partners. They were then given false feedback and told that based on the computer's processing of their numerical responses and the speed of their responses, as well as the same input from their partner, it turns out that they disagreed with their partner on the issues of Joint Finances and Working/Studying Overseas. We used the layperson's term "disagree" rather than "attitudinally dissimilar," as we did not think the latter term would be accessible to participants. All participants were presented with a total of four messages, that is, one affective and one cognitive for each of the aforementioned issues (see Appendix). To clarify further, in the entire study, only these four messages were presented to participants. They were asked to rate the persuasiveness of each message for their partner, and also to choose one out of the two messages for each issue that they would use to convince their partner. Finally, participants completed demographic questions before being fully debriefed and thanked for their participation.

MEASURES

Meta-bases. Participants reported their *own* meta-bases with respect to the following issues: Child Discipline, Drinking, Gaming, Health Screening, and Immigration. These were used to create the individual difference index. These items were selected because of their relevance to romantic relationships or because they were demonstrated to be contentious issues in prior research (e.g., Kurdek, 1994). To ensure that the index reflected an individual difference rather than simply reactions to particular topic, following prior research (e.g., Haddock & Zanna, 1998; Huskinson & Haddock, 2004; See et al., 2008), the target objects of working overseas and joint finances were excluded from this index. Participants used an 11-point scale (1 = *not at all driven by*, 11 = *completely driven by*) to answer two questions for each issue. For cognitive meta-bases, participants answered the question,

2. The current investigation was not preregistered. Both authors were responsible for study conceptualization, data collection, data preparation, and report writing, and the first author was responsible for data analysis.

"To what extent do you think your attitudes toward [issue—e.g., drinking] are driven by your beliefs?" For affective meta-bases, participants answered the question, "To what extent do you think your attitudes toward [issue—e.g., drinking] are driven by your emotions?" Scores were standardized and then averaged across the attitude issues for affective meta-bases, and cognitive meta-bases, respectively. Thus, higher scores on the affective meta-bases index reflected greater perceptions of reliance on emotions in one's own attitudes, and higher scores on the cognitive meta-bases index reflected greater perceptions of reliance on beliefs in one's own attitudes.

Perceived Partner's Bases. Next, participants also reported their perceptions of their partner's meta-bases for each issue. That is, they answered the question "To what extent do you think your partner's attitudes toward [issue—e.g., drinking] are driven by their beliefs?" As a measure of perceived partner affective meta-bases, the questions asked, "To what extent do you think your partner's attitudes toward [issue—e.g., drinking] are driven by their emotions?" As above, scores were standardized, and separate composite scores of perceptions of partner's affective and cognitive meta-bases were created.

Advocacy Persuasiveness. Participants were simultaneously shown both an affective and a cognitive message, accompanied by an image, pertaining to the issue of Joint Finances and then to the issue of Working Overseas. The affective Joint Finances message described it as a practice that would foster a sense of unity and togetherness, whereas the cognitive Joint Finances message described it as a practice that would help couples plan their budget better. The affective Working Overseas message described it as an enriching emotional experience whereas the cognitive Working Overseas message described it as a way to build up professional networks. After being shown both types of messages, participants indicated the extent to which their partner would find one message to be more persuasive than the other, on a continuous range from 1 to 7 (1 = *Message 1 is definitely more persuasive than Message 2*, 2 = *Message 1 is somewhat more persuasive than Message 2*; to 7 = *Message 2 is definitely more persuasive than Message 1*). Ratings closer to 7 reflect greater extent of perceived persuasiveness of Message 2 (Affective) over Message 1 (Cognitive), whereas ratings closer to 1 reflect greater extent of perceived persuasiveness of Message 1 (Cognitive) over Message 2 (Affective) for their partner.

Advocacy Choice. Participants were next asked to select between the cognitive–affective messages for both joint finances and working overseas (0 = *Cognitive*, 1 = *Affective*) for their partner to read.

Need for Cognition and Need for Affect. Participants completed the 18-item NC scale (Cacioppo et al., 1984; $\alpha = .83$) using a 5-point response scale ranging from 1 (*extremely uncharacteristic*) to 5 (*extremely characteristic*), with higher scores reflecting greater motivation to engage in effortful cognition ($M = 3.36$, $SD = .57$). They also completed the 10-item NA scale (Appel et al., 2012; $\alpha = .78$) using a 7-point scale

ranging from -3 (*strongly disagree*) to 3 (*strongly agree*), with higher scores reflecting greater approach motivation toward emotional stimuli ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 1.04$).

Closeness. The Inclusion-of-Other-in-the-Self (IOS) Scale (Aron et al., 1992), a single-item pictorial measure, was used to measure relationship closeness. The IOS Scale presents seven Venn diagrams representing varying degrees of overlap between one circle labeled "self" and another circle labeled "other" (i.e., relationship partner). These seven diagrams range from complete non-overlap (1) to nearly complete overlap (7) between the two circles and participants indicated which diagram best described their relationship ($M = 5.18$, $SD = 1.31$).

RESULTS

DATA ANALYTIC PROCEDURE

We used SPSS GENLIN to conduct an Actor–Partner Interdependence Model (APIM) analysis to examine the effect of accuracy regarding partner meta-base on message choice using the Generalized Estimating Equations (GEE) methodology for binary data (Loeys et al., 2014) and the standard APIM to examine the accuracy effect on message persuasiveness. These statistical approaches allowed us to address the nonindependence of the dyadic data presented by couples (Kenny et al., 2006). Specifically, our models tested for the effects of one's perception of partner's meta-base, partner-rated meta-base, and self-rated meta-base, as well as the key interaction of perception of partner's meta-base and partner-rated meta-base (i.e., self–other agreement). Meta-bases were separated by affect and cognition, and separate models were estimated for message choice and message persuasiveness. Gender interactions were tested, and no significant gender interactions were found and were subsequently removed from ensuing models. Furthermore, our hypothesized interaction remained significant with or without controlling for all our control variables (NC, NA, perceived similarity, closeness) across all our models (see Tables 1 and 2).

ADVOCACY CHOICE

Consistent with our hypothesis, results revealed that there was a significant interaction effect of perception of partner's affective meta-base by partner-rated affective meta-base on message choice regarding joint finances, $b = 1.03$, $p = .01$, Odds Ratio (O.R.) = 2.80; Confidence Interval (CI) = [.23, 1.84]. There were no main effects of self-rated affective meta-base, $b = .28$, $p = .45$; CI = [−.44, .98], perception of partner's affective meta-base, $b = .55$, $p = .08$; CI = [−.06, 1.16], or partner-rated affective meta-base, $b = −.10$, $p = .72$; CI = [−.63, .44].

A follow-up examination of the simple slopes at high (+1 SD) and low (−1 SD) levels of partner-rated affective meta-base revealed that at high levels of partner-rated affective meta-base, higher accuracy was associated with a significantly greater probability of choosing the affective message, $b = 1.17$, $p = .005$, O.R. = 3.22.

TABLE 1. Unstandardized Parameter Estimates from Models of Perceived Partner Affective Meta-base, Self-Rated Affective Meta-base, Partner-Rated Affective Meta-base, Need for Affect, Closeness, and Emotional Advocacy Choice

Model	B	SE	95% CI
JOINT FINANCES			
PPMB	0.51	0.32	-0.11 to 1.13
SRMB	0.26	0.37	-0.47 to 0.99
PRMB	-0.14	0.28	-0.71 to 0.42
Self NA	0.06	0.18	-0.30 to 0.42
Partner NA	0.19	0.17	-0.15 to 0.52
Self IOS	0.07	0.13	-0.20 to 0.33
Partner IOS	0.14	0.14	-0.13 to 0.40
PPMB X SRMB	-0.30	0.41	-1.10 to 0.51
PPMB X PRMB	1.03**	0.43	0.14 to 1.81
WORKING OVERSEAS			
PPMB	0.65	0.42	-0.19 to 1.48
SRMB	-0.30	0.42	-1.13 to 0.52
PRMB	-0.47	0.28	-1.01 to 0.08
Self NA	0.15	0.15	-0.14 to 0.44
Self NA	-0.03	0.16	-0.34 to 0.27
Self IOS	-0.04	0.12	-0.28 to 0.20
Partner IOS	-0.09	0.11	-0.31 to 0.13
PPMB X SRMB	-0.29	0.43	-1.13 to 0.54
PPMB X PRMB	1.54**	0.50	0.57 to 2.51

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; NA = Need for Affect; IOS = Closeness; PPMB = Perceived Partner Affective Meta-base; SRMB = Self-Rated Affective Meta-base; PRMB = Partner-Rated Affective Meta-base.

At low levels of partner-rated affective meta-base, perceived partner affective meta-base was not associated with the probability of affective message choice, $b = -.07$, $p = .85$, O.R. = .93 (see Figure 1).

Similarly, results revealed that there was a significant interaction effect of perception of partner's affective meta-base by partner-rated affective meta-base on message choice regarding working overseas, $b = 1.51$, $p = .003$, O.R. = 4.53; CI = [.52, 2.51]. There were no main effects of self-rated affective meta-base, $b = -.24$, $p = .55$; CI = [-1.02, .54], perception of partner's affective meta-base, $b = .59$, $p = .15$; CI = [-.20, 1.37], and partner-rated affective meta-base, $b = -.44$, $p = .11$; CI = [-.97, .09].

Again, a follow-up examination of the simple slopes at high (+1 SD) and low (-1 SD) levels of partner-rated affective meta-base revealed that at high levels of

TABLE 2. Unstandardized Parameter Estimates from Models of Perceived Partner Affective Meta-base, Self-Rated Affective Meta-base, Partner-Rated Affective Meta-base, Need for Affect, Closeness, and Emotional Advocacy Persuasiveness

Model	B	SE	95% CI
JOINT FINANCES			
PPMB	0.43	0.32	-0.20 to 1.08
SRMB	0.02	0.34	-0.65 to 0.69
PRMB	0.06	0.26	-0.45 to 0.57
Self NA	0.09	0.15	-0.25 to 0.34
Partner NA	0.05	0.15	-0.25 to 0.34
Self IOS	0.07	0.12	-0.16 to 0.30
Partner IOS	0.03	0.12	-0.19 to 0.26
PPMB X SRMB	-0.20	0.37	-0.93 to 0.53
PPMB X PRMB	1.00**	0.42	0.19 to 1.81
WORKING OVERSEAS			
PPMB	0.75*	0.31	0.14 to 1.37
SRMB	-0.67*	0.33	-1.32 to -0.02
PRMB	-0.20	0.32	-0.45 to 0.80
Self NA	-0.002	0.15	-0.29 to 0.29
Partner NA	0.19	0.15	-0.10 to 0.47
Self IOS	-0.02	0.35	-0.24 to 0.20
Partner IOS	-0.09	0.11	-0.31 to 0.13
PPMB X SRMB	-0.08	0.35	-0.77 to 0.61
PPMB X PRMB	1.38***	0.37	0.64 to 2.12

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$; NA = Need for Affect; IOS = Closeness; PPMB = Perceived Partner Affective Meta-base; SRMB = Self-Rated Affective Meta-base; PRMB = Partner-Rated Affective Meta-base.

partner-rated affective meta-base, higher accuracy was associated with a significantly greater probability of choosing the affective message, $b = 1.50$, $p = .003$, O.R. = 4.48. At low levels of partner-rated affective meta-base, perceived partner affective meta-base was not associated with the probability of affective message choice, $b = -.33$, $p = .51$, O. R. = .72 (see Figure 2).

ADVOCACY PERSUASIVENESS

To reiterate, ratings closer to 7 reflected greater extent of perceived persuasiveness of Message 2 (Affective) over Message 1 (Cognitive), whereas ratings closer to 1 reflected greater extent of perceived persuasiveness of Message 1 (Cognitive) over Message 2 (Affective) for their partner. Consistent with the hypothesis,

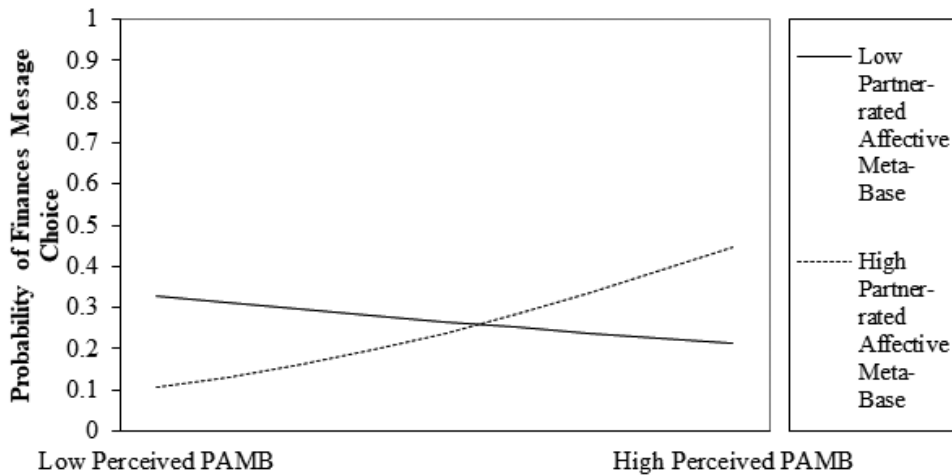


FIGURE 1. Probability of choice of joint finance message as a function of self-rated partner affective meta-bases and perceived partner affective meta-bases (PAMB).

results revealed that there was a significant interaction effect of perception of partner's affective meta-base by partner-rated affective meta-base on persuasiveness regarding the advocacy on joint finances, $b = 1.04$, $p = .01$; CI = [.23, 1.84]. There were no main effects of self-rated affective meta-base, $b = .06$, $p = .86$; CI = [-.59, .71], perception of partner's affective meta-base, $b = .41$, $p = .19$; CI = [-.20, 1.03], and partner-rated affective meta-base, $b = .10$, $p = .69$; CI = [-.39, .59].

A follow-up examination of the simple slopes at high (+1 SD) and low (-1 SD) levels of partner-rated affective meta-base revealed that at high levels of partner-rated affective meta-base, higher accuracy was significantly positively associated with advocacy persuasiveness, $b = 1.04$, $p = .009$. At low levels of partner-rated affective meta-base, perceived partner affective meta-base was not associated with advocacy persuasiveness, $b = -.21$, $p = .60$ (see Figure 3).

Similarly, results revealed that there was a significant interaction effect of perception of partner's affective meta-base by partner-rated affective meta-base on persuasiveness regarding the advocacy on working overseas, $b = 1.37$, $p < .001$; CI = [.64, 2.10]. There was a main effect of self-rated affective meta-base, $b = -.69$, $p = .03$; CI = [-1.33, -.06], and perception of partner's affective meta-base, $b = .80$, $p = .009$; CI = [.21, 1.40]. There was no main effect of partner-rated affective meta-base, $b = -.14$, $p = .57$; CI = [-.62, .34].

Again, a follow-up examination of the simple slopes at high (+1 SD) and low (-1 SD) levels of partner-rated affective meta-base revealed that at high levels of partner-rated affective meta-base, higher accuracy was significantly associated positively with advocacy persuasiveness, $b = 1.63$, $p < .001$. At low levels of

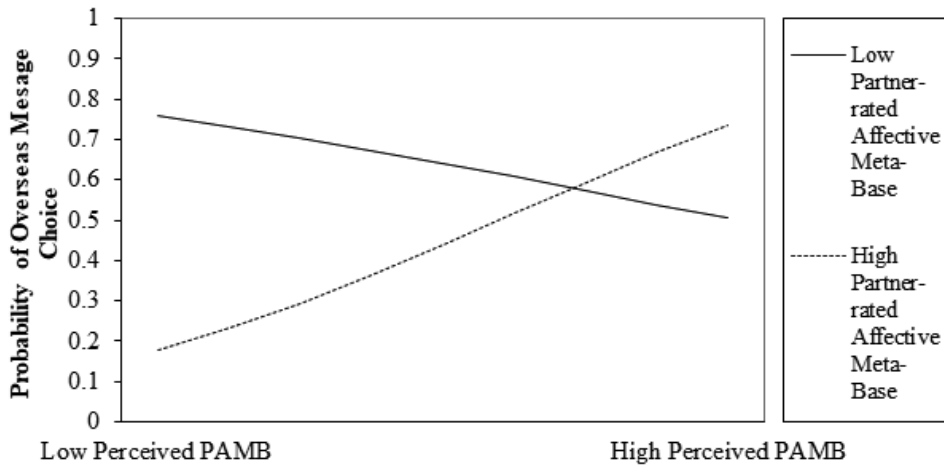


FIGURE 2. Probability of choice of working overseas message as a function of partner-rated affective meta-base and perceived partner affective meta-bases (PAMB).

partner-rated affective meta-base, perceived partner affective meta-base was not associated with message persuasiveness, $b = -.02$, $p = .95$ (see Figure 4).

We also conducted similar analyses for cognitive meta-bases on both cognitive message choices and persuasiveness. The interaction effects between perception of partner's cognitive meta-bases by partner-ratings of cognitive meta-base on both cognitive message choice and persuasiveness were not found to be significant.

ANCILLARY ANALYSIS

In addition to our primary analyses, we conducted ancillary analyses controlling for actor and partner effects of NA in conjunction with models containing affective meta-bases, as well as actor and partner effects of NC in conjunction with models containing cognitive meta-bases. Furthermore, we also conducted analyses controlling for actor and partner effects of relationship closeness as relationship closeness could be related to self-other agreement and accuracy (see Tables 1 & 2). Our key interaction of perception of partner's affective meta-base and partner's self-rated affective meta-base remained significant, and there were no significant actor and partner effects of NA, NC, and relationship closeness across these analyses. Finally, we ran models replacing partner-rated affective meta-base with partner-rated NA, but the interaction between perception of partner's affective meta-base and partner-rated NA was not significant across all the outcome variables, showing that rather than just a general motivation to experience emotion in terms of

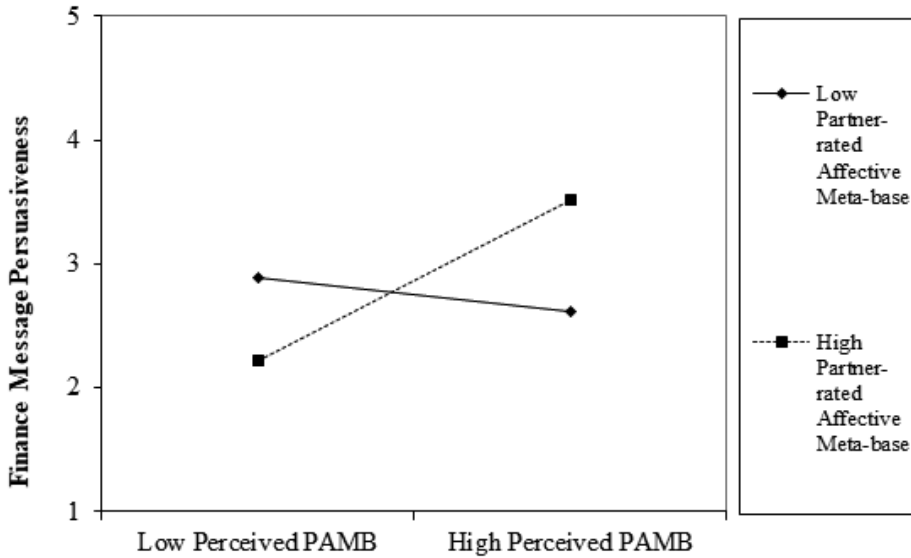


FIGURE 3. Persuasiveness of affective joint finance message as a function of partner-rated affective meta-base and perceived partner affective meta-base (PAMB).

NA, accuracy regarding partner's affective meta-bases (i.e., information-processing styles) was crucial for emotional advocacies.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined whether accuracy regarding a romantic partner's information-processing style in terms of meta-bases would predict choice of advocacies when trying to influence their partner and the perceived persuasiveness of such advocacies. Our results show that as hypothesized, when one perceived their partner as being generally more affective in their meta-bases, and these perceptions matched their partner's high self-ratings regarding their affective meta-bases, such accuracy was associated with a higher probability of choosing affective messages over cognitive messages. Furthermore, these affective messages were rated as being more persuasive in their influence on their partner. Moreover, the effect of such accuracy was significant over and above self-rated and partner-rated meta-bases variables, as well as perceived similarity between the couples. Finally, we obtained the same pattern of results with two different attitude objects instead of merely one. This gave us some confidence regarding the reliability of our findings that our results were not merely obtained by chance.

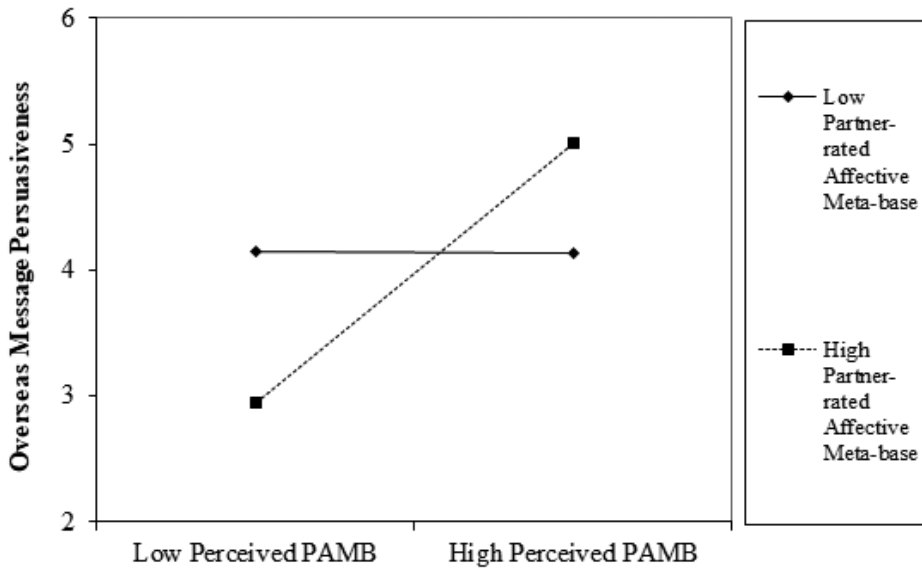


FIGURE 4. Persuasiveness of affective working overseas message as function of partner-rated affective meta-base and perceived partner affective meta-base (PAMB).

IMPLICATIONS

As mentioned earlier, consistent with our hypothesis, there was an interaction effect such that more correspondence between one's perception of partner's affective meta-bases (i.e., other-ratings) and their partner's rating of affective meta-bases (i.e., self-ratings) predicted higher probabilities of choosing emotional advocacies as well as greater perceptions of their persuasiveness, but only when both perception of affective meta-bases and partner's self-ratings of meta-bases were high. The current findings are consistent with theorizing on shared reality (e.g., Hardin and Higgins, 1996) and self-validation, such that validation from partner's self-perceptions that they rely on affect, is needed for an individual to select an emotional advocacy for their partner. Our approach underscores how interpersonal influence can be a dyadic process, rather than a general process where an actor would use any and all information when attempting to change their partner's mind.

Interestingly, the current findings also suggest that when individuals have partners who have less affective meta-bases, the accuracy of these perceptions did not matter. If anything, it appeared that individuals who seemed to accurately perceive their partners to have less affective meta-bases did not refrain from choosing emotional advocacies for their partners. As mentioned before, individuals who have less affective meta-bases might not be signaling clearly to their partners what their information processing goals are. Consequently, they do not validate (or

invalidate) these perceptions, and do not have a shared reality with their partners about their meta-bases. Instead, partners might turn to other sources, such as cultural norms regarding the topic, to engage in persuasive appeals.

Given that decision making does not happen in isolation from others (Simpson et al., 2012), accuracy of such perceptions should enable one to tailor a discussion to match their partner's individual differences in meta-bases. Thus, it can be argued that meta-bases are functional and reflective of relevant information that individuals attend to in order to inform their influence attempts. Interestingly, prior research has shown that individuals who feel subjectively closer to their partners also reference their relationship more by emphasizing their partners' love for them and their shared future as a couple (Oriña et al., 2002). The current research suggests that accurate knowledge of whether their partners' reliance on love or more pragmatic concerns might further influence the type of relationship referencing that individuals engage in during persuasion attempts.

The present findings contribute to a growing amount of research that examines the antecedents to advocacy intentions and behaviors. While the extant literature yielded important findings on what factors predict overall levels of advocacy intentions (e.g., Cheatham & Tormala, 2017; Gal & Rucker, 2010; Teeny & Petty, 2018), the current research examined the actual use of emotional advocacies over cognitive appeals, and within the context of close relationships. At the same time, prior research has suggested that the effect of cognitive meta-bases on the tendencies to advocate only occurred when an individual expected to be thoughtful about their advocacies (Teeny & Petty, 2018). Accordingly, in the present research, participants were not prompted by their close relationship partner to present advocacies. It is possible that prompting participants to make advocacies, especially in a way that makes them feel pressure to provide a thoughtful or reason-based advocacy to their romantic partner, could elicit the effects of cognitive meta-bases. Relatedly, it is possible that effects involving cognitive meta-bases might occur in other contexts, such as a business negotiation, instead of close relationships. Furthermore, cognitively based attitudes are multifaceted in nature compared to affectively based attitudes (Drolet & Aaker, 2002; Edwards, 1990), and thus might require more specific targeting. For example, our cognitive message for joint finances focused on convenience, but a partner's beliefs about joint finances might be based on safety/security instead. Thus, it is possible that people might still be more likely to choose a cognitive message but only when it is more specifically tailored to the particular belief of their partners, given greater accuracy in knowledge of cognitive meta-bases.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

It is important to note that there are limitations in the present study. Firstly, we gave our participants false feedback that there were disagreements on certain issues between both members of the couple; it is possible that the advocators might not have fully believed our manipulation that the disagreement between issues needed a *positive* advocacy from the other partner. However, given that our results

replicate across two different topics, we have confidence that it is indeed accuracy of partner's meta-base that is driving effects regarding advocacy choice and persuasiveness. Nonetheless, future research should include suspicion checks as well as negatively valence advocacies to give greater validity regarding our findings.

Second, it was a correlational study; hence, unidentified third variables like relationship quality or responsiveness might have driven the results as well. Thus, future research should examine mediators of the reported associations, with one candidate being perceived partner responsiveness (Reis et al., 2004). Our results showed that relationship closeness had no significant effect on persuasion, but future research could investigate *interactive* effects of quality of relationship (e.g., attachment styles, power) and examine whether this could consequently increase the partner's propensity to listen to any arguments and, ultimately, result in increased persuasion.

Next, given that our findings were based on participants who were exclusively non-married couples, it would be important to replicate our findings across couples who are married as well. Married couples are typically older, and might evidence higher relationship commitment, in terms of duration as well as closeness, compared to our participant sample. Furthermore, research has also shown that self-other agreement on personality traits increases as people get closer to one another, with this being especially true for romantic partners who have been together for a long period of time (Connelly & Ones, 2010). Nonetheless, given our results showing that closeness was not associated with our relevant dependent variables on persuasion, we expect our results might generalize across diverse couple types.

Furthermore, the present research examined disagreements that the couples were told that they had, not disagreements that the couples had raised organically. While we were careful to communicate to participants that their lack of agreement with their partner was computed from more indicators than they could keep track of (i.e., not just numerical responses but also the speed of those responses), further research can examine contexts where the disagreement is more organic and overt. Nonetheless, because we found that accuracy predicted the tailoring of influence attempts to their partner, it is possible that such accuracy transfers to different interpersonal influence processes, both in terms of negotiating disagreements and making joint new decisions. By extension, this could impact on different domains, such as purchasing behavior and health-related behaviors. Future research could also utilize an observational approach that could code for influence attempts in terms of negotiating disagreements and making new joint decisions.

Finally, the present research did not examine actual attitude change after receiving the influence attempt. Thus, while the findings suggest that people do attempt to tailor their advocacies to their partner's self-perceived meta-bases, it was unclear whether such attempts were more effective at changing attitudes. While such matching has been shown to be effective in prior research (e.g., See et al., 2008), more recent findings also suggest that similar matching effects can backfire (Millar & Millar, 1990; See, Valenti, et al., 2013). Thus, future research should explore whether such tailoring is associated with long-term attitude change and also how individuals could resist influence or persuasion from their partners.

CONCLUSION

Notwithstanding the limitations raised, the results of our research document an underexplored process informing the interpersonal nature of influence as it unfolds in romantic couples. Our results show that accuracy of knowledge about partners' meta-attitudinal bases, specifically, the extent to which partners rely on affect in their attitudes, has an effect on the ways in which individuals choose their advocacies, and sheds new light on how message-tailoring attempts can be impacted in romantic relationships.

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APPENDIX

AFFECTIVE JOINT FINANCE MESSAGE

For many, having a joint bank account serves as a symbolic gesture, showing the union of two individuals into a single entity. Couples that have joint accounts find it more pleasant to plan for future goals together, as they feel a stronger sense of unity and togetherness. Having a joint account also reinforces trust and understanding between couples, and increases commitment in couples to contribute to the relationship. A joint account can also prevent unpleasant arguments about money between couples.

COGNITIVE JOINT FINANCE MESSAGE

Many couples decide to pool their finances together in a joint account because it is more convenient, for paying bills, shared expenses, and legal matters to name a few. Having a joint bank account allows for couples to budget better and make better plans due to the increased transparency in their financial matters. Having a joint account also means that the couple pays less administrative fees. In cases of the death of a spouse, the surviving spouse still has access to the joint account.

AFFECTIVE GOING OVERSEAS MESSAGE

Going overseas can help one build self-confidence and life satisfaction as one conquers the obstacles that living in a new country brings. Fresh and exciting experiences can help one gain new perspectives on life, and a change in environment could do wonders for one's mood and happiness. Getting to know another culture first hand can also be an emotionally rewarding experience as well. Living overseas for a period can help one discover themselves and align them towards their life goals.

COGNITIVE GOING OVERSEAS MESSAGE

Going overseas can broaden one's horizons and expose one to experiences that one would otherwise not get staying in their home country. Going abroad can allow one to gain insight into how other cultures define, understand, and work their way through potential problems. Staying abroad can widen one's social network as well, allowing one to build up useful business contacts for the future. Understanding the social and political landscapes of another country can prove useful for future career opportunities.

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