

MINDFUL SILENCE: MINDFULNESS IS A PROTECTIVE FACTOR AGAINST THE
NEGATIVE OUTCOMES OF SELF-SILENCING

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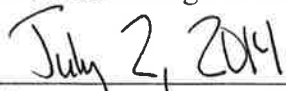

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To my wife Elisa. You are my never ending source of strength and joy.

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ABSTRACT

Trait self-silencing (Jack, 1991) is consistently associated with depression and relationship dissatisfaction (Harper & Welsh, 2007). Individuals who self-silence lose their identity in relationships, resulting in a loss of intimacy (Jordan, 2010). Existing research on self-silencing focuses on aggregate measures of self-silencing. We examined self-silencing using a daily diary methodology, enabling us to study both the daily effects of trait self-silencing and the consequences of daily instances of self-silencing. We predicted that mindfulness, defined as nonjudgmental present moment awareness (Bishop et al., 2004), would buffer individuals from the negative effects of trait and daily self-silencing. We also examined romantic partners' perceptions of participants' trait self-silencing. Sixty-seven undergraduate students and 60 of their partners participated in the study. We found that trait self-silencing predicted relationship conflict, relationship dissatisfaction, negative affect, and daily self-silencing. Furthermore, trait self-silencing moderated the relationship between daily self-silencing and negative affect while the self-silencing subscale moderated the relationship between daily self-silencing and daily relationship satisfaction. Daily self-silencing was more harmful when individuals were high in trait self-silencing. We also found that mindfulness moderated the relationship between trait self-silencing and measures of relationship satisfaction and depression. We argue that mindful self-silencing may not be associated with the same negative consequences as trait self-silencing. Individuals who are nonjudgmental and aware may be able to self-silence more strategically and effectively, without negative outcomes on their relationship satisfaction and their mood. This is

consistent with research indicating that mindfulness is associated with more effective emotion regulation (Corcoran, Farb, Anderson, & Segal, 2010) and communication patterns in relationships (Barnes et al., 2007). Silencing the self, when accomplished with an attitude of acceptance and awareness, may not be harmful.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“Intimacy within inequality,” (Jack, 2001, p. 524) results when people sacrifice their own needs or suppress their emotions in order to preserve their relationships. Women in particular are often motivated to conform to feminine gender norms of compliance, submissiveness, and nurturing, and in the process they often silence their own emotions and desires for the sake of others’ (Piran & Cormier, 2005). When a woman inhibits her voice in order to preserve the harmony of a relationship, however, her efforts may actually reduce her authenticity and create a dynamic of inequality, resulting in an inadvertent sabotaging of the relationship (Jordan, 2010).

Jack (1991, 1999) describes this behavior as self-silencing, and she argues that this tendency may help to explain the higher rates of depression amongst women. Self-silencing creates a loss of identity and an inability to effectively express oneself in relationships, which sometimes leads to disempowerment and hopelessness. Researchers offered this theory in reaction to the stereotyped concept of dependent or passive coping that was once thought to represent the typical female coping response to stress. In contrast, Jack suggests that women spend a great deal of time and energy actively suppressing their own emotions and beliefs in order to avoid conflict and protect their relationship. However, efforts to enhance the relationship come at the cost of silencing one’s own voice. Therefore, the relationship is preserved, but at the expense of an equal representation of needs.

Previous research indicates that self-silencing is problematic in many ways in relationships and in response to stress. However, as we discuss below, relationships are complex and self-silencing may function differently for different people. There perhaps could be times when individuals silence themselves in a strategic way which could be effective and healthy. Further, there is little evidence yet that self-reported trait self-silencing actually corresponds with

self-silencing behaviors when measured in everyday life. In the present study, we intensively assessed individuals in committed relationships, using a daily diary recorded over a two-week period, while also assessing partner perceptions of participants' self-silencing. In this way, we were able to document the real world effects of self-silencing in everyday life.

First, we examined the consequences of trait self-silencing on daily outcomes, such as daily self-silencing or negative affect. Second, we explored the consequences of daily self-silencing and whether those consequences were moderated by trait self-silencing. Third, we investigated whether partners' perception of individuals' self-silencing was a better predictor of outcomes than individuals' self-report. Fourth, given that a mindful approach to life and to relationships likely provides greater perspective and a buffer against the negative consequences of self-silencing (Barnes et al., 2007; Gambrel & Keeling, 2010), we tested the degree to which mindfulness buffers the effect of self-silencing on emotional and relationship functioning.

Silencing the Self Theory

Jack and Dill (1992) formulated the Silencing the Self Scale (STSS) to empirically explore the construct of self-silencing. The STSS has four rationally-derived subscales to describe the four basic elements of self-silencing. These subscales are Externalized Self-Perception (ESP; holding one's self to standards set by others), Care as Self-Sacrifice (CSS; caring for others by putting their needs before one's own), Silencing the Self (SS; suppressing opinions or emotions in order to be accepted and protect one's relationship), and the Divided Self (DS; becoming hostile and angry internally while being agreeable on the outside).

The STSS was developed from qualitative research on the experiences of depressed women (Jack 2001; Jack, 2011). These interviews revealed a trend in which women would often sacrifice their own needs in order to establish a safe and secure relationship or care for others'

needs (Flett, Besser, Hewitt, & Davis, 2007). In doing so, however, these women would lose their sense of identity and self in their relationships, thus creating a dynamic “that is unattainable and self-defeating” (Jack, 1999, p. 99). As women would lose their authentic selves they would also lose their ability to fully connect and feel happy (Jack & Ali, 2010). Meanwhile, their denial of their own needs would lead to anger, which they would also suppress (Piran & Cormier, 2005), and the sense that one’s true self was incompatible with a secure relationship would lead to sadness.

Etiology of Self-Silencing

The development of self-silencing behaviors can be understood within several perspectives. Self-silencing behavior may emerge as a result of anxious attachment patterns formed early in life (Hautamaki, 2010; Remen, Chambless, & Rodebaugh, 2002; Thompson, 1995; Zoellner & Hedlund, 2010). Children who are unable to easily establish intimacy and attachment with their caregivers or whose requests for attention and affection are rejected may suppress their own needs for fear of being rejected. Consistent with this argument, self-silencing is correlated with anxious/ ambivalent attachment styles (Hautamaki, 2010; Remen et al., 2002). Self-silencing may also come from anxious attachment patterns that develop in adult relationships if a person perceives his/her romantic partner as critical or intolerant (Thompson, Whiffen, & Aube, 2001). Just as in childhood, a person may then be cautious about expressing his or her needs for fear of being rejected.

Jack and Ali (2011) suggested that cognitive schemas may also help to understand self-silencing behaviors. Women may internalize cultural beliefs that promote the qualities of submission and compliance over strength and assertiveness. In line with this understanding, scores on the STSS correlate with individuals’ endorsement of stereotypically feminine

behaviors and roles (Schrack, Sharp, Zvonkovic, & Reifman, 2012; Witte & Sherman, 2002), as well as with suppression of anger (Piran & Cormier, 2005).

An additional way of understanding Self-Silencing is through relational cultural theory (Jordan, 2010). Relational cultural theory understands women to be relatively underprivileged members of society who are more dependent upon relationships to survive. Women are often tasked with the responsibility of maintaining the cohesiveness of families (Jack, 1999; Jordan, 2010), a role that is devalued in favor of autonomy and independence. Support for this theory comes from findings that women tend to rate their relationships as bigger sources of stress than do men (Jack, Pokharel, & Subba, 2010), and women whose greatest stressors are relationship stressors score higher on the STSS (Ali, Oatley, & Toner, 2002).

A final way of understanding the development of self-silencing comes through understanding women's increased risk of exposure to poverty, violence, and other human rights violations (Astubry, 2010; Smolak, 2010; Zoellner, & Hedlund, 2010). Within this context, women often learn that expression of their needs may be met with punishment or suppression. Therefore, self-silencing may serve as an attempt to protect oneself from further injustice (Astbury, 2010; Jack et al., 2010; Zoellner, & Hedlund, 2010), and in fact self-silencing is positively correlated with exposure to abuse in both childhood and adulthood (Arata & Lindman, 2002; unpublished data, cited in Thompson et al., 2001).

In summary, self-silencing can be understood through a lens that incorporates attachment, sociopolitical, or relational perspectives. The silencing the self theory posits that that some women exert tremendous time and energy to censor and suppress their needs and emotions in order to conform to expectations from society or their intimate partners (Jack & Ali, 2010). While these efforts allow depressed women to maintain relationships and protect themselves,

they paradoxically result in a loss of authenticity that can undermine intimate relationships and lead to further depression.

Negative Consequences of Self-Silencing

The result of self-silencing, Jack (1999, 2011) argues, is that women lose a part of themselves. This creates confusion about one's identity, and the loss of a sense of identity in an intimate relationship predicts dysphoria (Drew, Heesacker, Frost, & Oelke, 2004). Additionally, Jack argues that self-silencing creates a suppression of anger which in turn can trigger depressogenic self-critical and hopeless thoughts. Consistently, following a perceived rejection, self-silencing behaviors predict feelings of hostility (Romero-Canyas, Reddy, Rodriguez, & Downey, 2013). Others argue that the time and energy required to filter and suppress one's emotions and beliefs can be emotionally exhausting (Harper & Welsh, 2007; Jack, 1999; Little, Welsh, Darling, & Holmes, 2011).

Self-silencing therefore correlates with depression in a number of studies. Scores on the STSS are concurrently and positively related to depression for Asian-American, Caucasian, and African-American male and female undergraduate students (Gratch, Bassett, & Attra, 1995; Page, Stevens, & Galvin, 1996; Schrick et al., 2012); depressed adult women (Ali et al., 2002); a non-clinical sample of women of various professions and ethnicities (Jack, 2001); married men and women (Uebelacker, Courtnage, & Whisman, 2003); adolescents who are in romantic relationships (Harper & Welsh, 2007), and an ethnically diverse sample of women who had used alcohol or illicit substances during their pregnancy (Grant, Jack, Fitzpatrick, & Ernst, 2011). Furthermore, each subscale of the STSS is correlated with depression (Flett et al., 2007; Grant et al., 2011). Self-silencing may also predict future depression: Little et al. (2011) found that self-silencing in adolescents aged 14 to 21 predicted increases in depression one year later. Levels of

self-silencing may also impede the progress of psychotherapy interventions targeting depression (Ali et al., 2002).

In addition to depression, self-silencing is linked to feelings of anger (Flett et al., 2007; Jack, 2001; Zaitsoff, Geller, & Srikameswaran, 2002), anxiety, low self-esteem (Schrack et al., 2012) irritable bowel syndrome (Jack, 2001; Piran & Cormier, 2005), overall distress (Hurst & Beesley, 2013), eating disorders (Jack, 2001; Piran & Cormier, 2005; Smolak & Munstertieger, 2002; Zaitsoff et al., 2002), lower self-esteem, less academic engagement, and perfectionism (Flett et al., 2007; Schrack et al., 2012).

It is possible that the negative effects of self-silencing result from the ways in which individuals in a relationship interact during times of conflict, more so than from general patterns of interactions. Specifically, when a conflict arises and emotions are heightened, how an individual relates to their emotions is significant both for addressing the conflict and for the individual's psychological health. Further evidence for the relationship between self-silencing and conflict resolution comes from research demonstrating that trait self-silencing mediates the relationship between perceived sexism and psychological distress, which suggests that self-silencing does not allow individuals to process that stressor in an adaptive way (Hurst & Beesley, 2013). However, there is little research indicating which types of coping strategies those high in trait self-silencing are more prone to use. Theoretically, self-silencing is linked with internalizing strategies, such as suppression or distraction, rather than external strategies like problem-solving (Jack, 1991), and individuals higher in trait self-silencing rate their communication in relationships as worse than those low in trait self-silencing (Harper & Welsh, 2007). Therefore, self-silencing likely predicts strategies that are internally focused and do not involve outward problem solving or direct communication. There is no research, however, that

documents whether self-reported trait self-silencing predicts specific instances of self-silencing behaviors in everyday life. In the present study, we examined the association between trait self-silencing and daily self-silencing behaviors in everyday life, and in particular, coping behaviors in response to perceived conflicts.

Understanding how self-silencing predicts response to conflicts is important in understanding the role that it plays in relationship satisfaction. Self-silencing is correlated with marital dissatisfaction for adults (Uebelacker et al., 2003) and relationship dissatisfaction for adolescent girls (Harper & Welsh, 2007). Relatively high levels of self-silencing also are associated with poorer communication (Harper & Welsh, 2007) and less intimacy in relationships (unpublished data, cited in Thompson et al., 2001). Furthermore, self-silencing mediates the relationship between marital conflict and depression for both men and women (Whiffen, Foot, & Thompson, 2007). Again, this data suggests that individuals high in trait self-silencing are vulnerable to depression when they experience conflicts in their relationships. Those who are high in self-silencing may not express their voice in conflicts and thus lose their sense of identity in relationships (Jack, 1991; Jordan, 2010). This may create a pattern where relationship conflicts become even more likely in the future, because particular, un-resolved themes may continue to re-emerge in conflicts, causing the self-silencer to grow more unhappy in the relationship. Romantic conflicts may be even more distressing for those high in self-silencing than those who are not, as the self-silencers are not able to express themselves in an effective manner and may feel particularly helpless during conflicts (Jordan, 2010).

Additionally, STSS scores predict individuals' partners' feelings of frustration and discomfort following conflict (Harper & Welsh, 2007). Therefore, not only does self-silencing hurt an individual's ability to resolve conflicts, it also may have a negative effect on one's

partner. In fact, scores on the STSS are inversely related to relationship satisfaction for one's partner (Thompson, 1995), so the higher an individual scores in self-silencing the more likely their partner is dissatisfied with the relationship.

It is important to note, however, that the reviewed findings above are based on individuals' report of their own "typical" levels of self-silencing, rather than examining specific instances of self-silencing in everyday life. There is very little evidence that higher scores on the STSS actually correspond to daily self-silencing behaviors. The only study examining this issue found that individuals high on the STSS were more likely to give in to their partners during a stressful conversation (Harper & Welsh, 2007). However, there is no evidence of STSS predicting self-silencing behaviors over time. It is possible that some people think they put others' needs first or suppress their emotions, when in reality, they do not. Rather, self-reports on the STSS might more accurately represent a schema of one's efficacy with expressing their emotions. It is therefore important to document whether the trait self-report measure of self-silencing predicts self-silencing behavior in everyday life. Additionally, by examining the consequences of trait and daily self-silencing, we can determine whether the consequences of daily self-silencing are similar to the consequences of trait self-silencing. Furthermore, trait self-silencing might exacerbate the effects of any given instance of self-silencing in daily life.

It is important to examine the consequences of daily self-silencing within romantic relationships, as it may not be inherently harmful. Often, it can be very helpful to inhibit a mood-congruent action, for example when one chooses not to yell at one's partner when one feels misunderstood. The negative consequences of self-silencing may only occur if it becomes a long-term pattern, or if it represents a cognitive schema of oneself as being submissive and of lacking a voice in the relationship. Therefore, it is likely that self-silencing behaviors are more

detrimental for individuals who self-report as high in self-silencing tendencies, rather than for individuals who use self-silencing techniques for strategic purposes in specific situations.

In summary, trait levels of self-silencing are linked with many negative consequences, including depression, anxiety, and problematic regulation of anger. Trait levels of self-silencing also predict maladaptive responses to conflicts and negatively affect relationship satisfaction. However, there is no research examining how trait levels of self-silencing predict instances of self-silencing behaviors, or how those behaviors function within romantic relationships.

Methodological Issues

Methodologically, the existing research is predicated upon asking individuals to rate their perception of their own levels of self-silencing; researchers then examine those scores in relation to a host of negative outcomes. This is problematic for a number of reasons. First, in global self-report measures of behaviors, individuals are often poor retrospective judges of their aggregate trait-level of coping across time and settings. Stone et al. (1998) found that individuals' self-reports of coping strategies during just the previous 48 hours were flawed, with approximately 30% failing to report coping strategies that they endorsed when given ecological momentary assessments during the preceding 2 days. Given that aggregating and reporting on coping over 48 hours is already difficult, one would imagine errors and bias would be even stronger when aggregating over a longer period of time, as we require people to do on trait measures of coping such as the STSS.

Second, Schwartz, Neale, Marco, Shiffman, and Stone (1999) found that self-report of aggregate styles of coping are not accurate predictors of future coping strategies. Previous research (Porter et al., 2000) also found that, while men and women tend to rate their trait coping styles along gender stereotypes (e.g. women rely more on catharsis and social support), this data

does not correspond to in-the-moment, naturalistic assessment. In fact, when coping is assessed in a naturalistic manner, the differences between men and women disappear. This is important in interpreting trait self-reports of self-silencing, which we conceptualize as a gender-socialized strategy.

Additionally, the reliance solely upon aggregate self-reports of coping strategies does not account for context-specific instances of self-silencing in which that type of behavior may be appropriate, such as suppressing certain comments or thoughts during a job interview. Furthermore, some individuals may be more prone to a particular coping strategy like self-silencing at work, while tending to use other strategies in intimate relationships. Trait self-silencing reports lose vital contextual information about the specific, everyday antecedents and consequences of self-silencing behaviors. Only when we look at coping behaviors with a repeated measures design can we begin to see within-persons differences as well as between-person differences (Affleck, Zautra, Tennen, & Armeli, 1999).

In summary, relying solely upon self-reports of aggregate trait coping patterns is often problematic as individuals tend to inaccurately rate their coping when doing so both retrospectively or prospectively. People also tend to rate their coping on a trait level more consistently with gender norms, which may be reflective of stereotypes rather than the realities of their own actions. Lastly, aggregate trait-level self-reports do not take context into account and thus may fail to capture the nuanced ways in which coping strategies are used in specific, often appropriate contexts.

Mindfulness and Self-Silencing

There are likely individual differences in when, how, and for what reasons people use self-silencing. Hence, self-silencing probably has different motivations and consequences for

different people. One individual variable that may be important in moderating the effects of self-silencing is mindfulness. Mindfulness is generally considered to involve a focus on the present moment and nonjudgmental awareness (Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006; Bishop et al., 2004). Mindfulness is a cognitive and affective strategy that attempts to transcend the boundaries of the physical self by acknowledging the fleeting nature of thoughts and emotions and the interconnectedness of individuals with their environment. Mindfulness begins with an acceptance of one's emotions and needs. Thus, individuals high in mindfulness could potentially engage in self-silencing behaviors in a more effective manner. Recognizing and accepting one's emotion but choosing not to act on it has different psychological consequences than noticing an emotion, judging it as unacceptable, and then suppressing it. For instance, one individual who is angry at their spouse may suppress their emotion and their urge to yell, without being aware of the complexities of the emotional experience or even having insight about the choice to self-silence. Another individual who is angry at their spouse may be aware of their anger, validate it (through self-talk that communicates that the feeling makes sense), and then choose not to yell. The latter instance of self-silencing, performed mindfully, may be effective and healthy. In both cases, the emotion is not acted upon, yet the implications for how one feels about oneself afterward are different.

Mindfulness is associated with a variety of positive psychological outcomes, including general life satisfaction (Nyklicek & Kuijpers, 2008) and secure and positive views of the self (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Heppner & Kernis, 2007). Mindfulness appears to be adaptive in that it empowers individuals to relate to their emotions in a healthier way. Specifically, mindfulness is related to greater emotional intelligence, self-compassion (Baer et al., 2006), and emotion regulation (Corcoran, Farb, Anderson, & Segal, 2010; Dekeyser, Raes, Leijssen, Leysen, &

Dewulf, 2008). In addition to improving general well-being, mindfulness may facilitate healthier responses to stress. Trait mindfulness predicts a less intense stress response to relationship conflict, as well as less anxiety and anger-hostility following a conflict with a romantic partner (Barnes, Brown, Krusemark, Campbell, & Rogge, 2007). Participants engaging in mindfulness practice endorsed greater efficacy in responding to stress post-practice than prior to their mindfulness practice (Carson, Carson, Gil, & Baucom, 2004). Additionally, mindfulness is associated with more adaptive and strategic responses to conflict (Kozlowski, 2013).

The benefit of mindful responses to stress can also be seen in research examining mindfulness within relationships. Trait mindfulness is positively correlated with relationship satisfaction (Barnes et al., 2007; Wachs & Cordova, 2007), and it predicts more adaptive and relationship-enhancing responses to relationship stress (Barnes et al., 2007). Specifically, individuals higher in mindfulness are more likely than those lower in mindfulness to use self-control and accommodation in response to a relationship conflict. Interestingly, these strategies may look like self-silencing in that one's mood-dependent action is inhibited or an individual's needs may be sacrificed. Individuals who are high in mindfulness may be able to more strategically self-silence without experiencing the corresponding negative consequences to emotion and self-esteem.

All of these benefits of mindfulness may allow individuals who engage in self-silencing behaviors to be more validating and accepting of their emotions even if they do not act on them. Therefore, individuals high in both self-silencing and mindfulness may be more strategic in when they self-silence.

Gender Differences in Self-Silencing

Any investigation of self-silencing needs to take into account important gender differences in self-silencing behaviors and their correlates. While self-silencing as a construct was initially developed as an explanation for greater rates of depression in women (Jack, 2001; Jack & Dill, 1992), subsequent research has indicated that rates of self-silencing are actually higher amongst men (Duarte & Thompson, 1999; Gratch et al., 1995; Little et al., 2011; Remen et al., 2002; Whiffen et al., 2007). Other studies found non-significant differences in total STSS scores between men and women (Flett et al., 2007; Jack et al., 2010; Page et al., 1996; Spratt, Sherman, & Gilroy, 1998).

Cramer and Thoms (2003) argue that higher STSS scores in men call into question whether self-silencing truly does create a vulnerability to depression, since men, who have almost universally lower rates of depression, tend to score equal to or higher than women in self-silencing. Additionally, if self-silencing is theorized to develop as a consequence of the internalization of gender norms and as a result of societal disempowerment of women, then it is illogical that men would score higher on self-silencing.¹

However, evidence from several domains suggests that the construct of self-silencing may actually be different in women and men. First, Jack and Dill's (1992) rationally derived subscales appear to fit better for women than men. Remen et al. (2002) found that the subscale of Divided Self does not appear relevant for men. Instead, using an exploratory factor analysis, they offered a different subscale to replace the Divided Self that they described as "autonomy/

¹ Smolak (2010) argues that higher rates of self-silencing in men may be explained by the fact that most studies yielding these results used primarily Caucasian-American college students for their samples. Within this population, depression rates are relatively similar between men and women, thus explaining the higher rates of self-silencing in men than in the larger population.

independence.” Cramer and Thoms (2003) found that for men the most relevant model was three factors, which included combining items on the Divided Self and Externalized Self-Perception subscales.

The construct validity of self-silencing is also weaker in men than women. Duarte and Thompson (1999) found that men’s scores on the Divided Self subscale, unlike women’s scores, were not correlated with the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale, which brings into question whether those subscales may be a part of the same construct for men. Self-silencing appears to be different in men than women.

Consistent with that notion, the relationship between self-silencing and depression is generally stronger for women than men (Gratch et al., 1995; Thompson, 1995; Whiffen et al., 2007). Whiffen et al. (2007) concluded that this difference occurred because, while men overall score higher on STSS, the specific subscales that tend to be higher for men (Care as Self-Sacrifice and Silencing the Self) are only weakly, if at all, related to depression. The Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale has been associated with feelings of anger and resentment in women, but not men (Duarte & Thompson, 1999). Furthermore, the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale has been inversely correlated with depression for men (Lutz-Zois et al., 2013) in the same sample where it correlated with anxious attachment for women. One exception to this trend came from Harper and Welsh (2007), who actually saw similar relationships between depression and self-silencing in their sample. They explained this discrepancy with the theory that, since their population consisted of men and women in relationships, then perhaps for those men, self-silencing has a different meaning. Hautamaki (2010) also found a similar relationship between depression and self-silencing in men and women when examining a Finnish sample, likely because gender inequality in Finland is lower than in the United States.

Self-silencing also affects men and women differently within the context of relationships. While self-silencing is negatively related to relationship satisfaction in adolescent girls, it is not for adolescent boys (Harper & Welsh, 2007). The same trend holds for the most part for married men and women. Thompson (1995) noticed that while wives' self-silencing negatively correlated with both their own and their husbands' relationship satisfaction, that was not true for husbands' self-silencing. Additionally, wives' self-silencing actually correlated with their husbands' depression, and again, this relationship did not exist for men's self-silencing. It should be noted though, that this trend has exceptions. Ubelacker, Courtnage, and Whisman (2003) found that self-silencing correlated with marital dissatisfaction for both husbands and wives. For the most part, for women, but not men, self-silencing appears closely tied to their intimate relationships.

Whiffen et al. (2007) found that women's self-silencing is correlated with general relationship satisfaction and occurs independent of the women identifying an explicit conflict. For men, however, self-silencing isn't related to relationship satisfaction but instead is related to the presence of specific conflicts. Therefore, for women, self-silencing may be a more stable attitude, but for men, it's a more specific coping strategy employed in response to conflict. Harper and Welsh (2007) argue that men use self-silencing more strategically, to preserve relationships, rather than to enhance the quality of them. They additionally argue that men may use self-silencing to maintain power within a relationship, an argument also offered by Remen et al. (2002). Self-silencing may also be different for men in that it may represent more of a hesitancy to disclose emotionally in general, or a pride in being emotionally controlled, rather than a fear that one's disclosure may be rejected (Harper & Welsh, 2007; Smolak, 2010). Self-silencing may also be a strategy to simply disengage from an argument that may be

uncomfortable. Some men may adopt a strategy of “She’s always right” in an argument, in order to prevent conflicts from escalating. While this strategy may result in the inhibition of one’s needs or emotions, it may also be associated with a sense of mastery.

In conclusion, the gender differences in self-silencing suggest that self-silencing is not always problematic. Self-silencing behaviors can have different meanings, functions, and consequences within relationships. For men, self-silencing isn’t related to relationship satisfaction but instead is related to the presence of specific conflicts, while for women, self-silencing may be a more stable attitude.

Present Study

While self-silencing appears in general to be related to depression and other negative consequences, this relationship is not universal. The central focus of the present study was to examine the moderating variables that affect the relationship between self-silencing and depression, relationship satisfaction, coping strategies in response to stress, and affect following stress. To our knowledge, there has not been a study that has previously examined how self-reported trait self-silencing predicted actual self-silencing behaviors in everyday life during an extended period of time (beyond simply a one-day assessment). Little et al. (2012) examined how trait self-silencing predicted outcomes one year later, but they did not use daily diary methodology. We decided to examine the consequences of self-silencing across a span of two weeks, to increase the possibility of participants’ having “stress episodes” (Affleck et al., 1999, p. 747) which would be necessary to trigger coping behaviors.

In the present study, we assessed initial self-silencing, relationship satisfaction, depression, and mindfulness, before using a two-week daily diary design to assess daily self-silencing, instances of romantic stressors, daily negative affect, and daily relationship

satisfaction. This is an interval-contingent method of data gathering, as participants were asked to identify specific behaviors once a day (Affleck et al., 1999). Additionally, we obtained data on relationship satisfaction and perceptions of participants' self-silencing from their romantic partners.

Hypotheses

Our hypotheses fell into four main areas. First, we examined the main effect of trait self-silencing on variables assessed during the daily diary methodology. Second we studied the main effects of daily self-silencing on other daily variables, and the moderating role that trait self-silencing played on those relationships. Third, we explored the moderating role of mindfulness on trait self-silencing. Fourth, we examined the moderating role of mindfulness on daily self-silencing. We had a fifth area of exploratory analyses regarding the role of partner's perceptions of participant self-silencing. However, no a priori hypotheses were made in that area.

In investigating the main effects of trait self-silencing, we had seven main hypotheses. First, we predicted that self-silencing would be related to negative relationship satisfaction in significant others, consistent with the previous findings that self-silencing could create discomfort and frustration in the silencer's partner (Harper & Welsh, 2007) and that wives' self-silencing predicted husband's marital dissatisfaction (Thompson, 1995). However, we also predicted that, even when controlling for participant's own relationship satisfaction, their self-silencing would still predict their partner's negative relationship satisfaction.

Second, we predicted that trait self-silencing would predict more instances of romantic relationship stressors. This is consistent with the assertion that self-silencing does not allow individuals to effectively address stressful situations, so those situations tend to re-emerge. However, there is no empirical evidence yet to document this.

Third, we predicted that trait self-silencing would predict the prevalence of romantic relationship stressors being deemed the most bothersome stressor of the day. We reasoned that since romantic relationship stressors continue to re-emerge for those high in trait self-silencing, they are also likely more distressing.

Fourth, we predicted that trait self-silencing would inversely predict daily relationship satisfaction. This emerged from findings that trait self-silencing was correlated with lower relationship satisfaction (Ubelacker et al., 2003).

Fifth, we predicted that trait self-silencing would predict the prevalence of self-silencing behaviors as measured by daily assessments for fourteen days. This hypothesis was consistent with Harper and Welsh (2007), who found that scores on the STSS positively predicted giving in to one's partner more frequently during one specific conflict.

Sixth, and consistent with the theoretical understanding that self-silencing is related to depression (Jack, 2001), we predicted that trait self-silencing would be associated with negative affect on the same day.

We were also curious about whether partners' view of participants' trait self-silencing may be a better predictor than partner's own self-report of trait self-silencing. While we made no a priori hypotheses in this area, we still entered the partners' ratings of self-silencing into each equation to explore this question.

In examining the main effects of daily self-silencing, our first hypothesis was that daily self-silencing would predict negative affect. We based this on the findings that trait self-silencing has been consistently associated with depression. However, this connection has not yet been demonstrated for daily self-silencing. Furthermore, this relationship would be even stronger for individuals who rated themselves as high on the STSS, because in those cases, self-

silencing behaviors would confirm a pre-existing notion of their inability to express their voice. This is consistent with the understanding that self-silencing is especially harmful when it confirmed a previously held understanding of one's subservient role.

Our second hypothesis was that daily self-silencing would inversely predict daily relationship satisfaction, and this relationship would also be moderated by trait self-silencing. Similar to the above hypothesis, trait self-silencing has been linked with negative relationship satisfaction (Ubelacker et al., 2003), but this has not yet been documented through daily assessment methodology.

Next, we focused on the moderating variable of mindfulness on the effects of trait self-silencing, and made six hypotheses in this area. Each followed the same assumption: that for those high in mindfulness, there would not be as strong of a relationship between trait self-silencing and its negative consequences. First, we predicted that mindfulness would moderate the relationship between trait self-silencing and depression, such that the positive relationship between self-silencing and depression would be weaker for those high in mindfulness. Second, mindfulness would moderate the relationship between trait self-silencing and relationship satisfaction. Third, mindfulness would moderate the relationship between trait self-silencing and partner relationship satisfaction. Fourth, we predicted that mindfulness would moderate the relationship between trait self-silencing and daily negative affect. Fifth, we predicted that mindfulness would moderate the relationship between trait self-silencing and daily negative relationship satisfaction. Sixth, we predicted that mindfulness would moderate the relationship between trait self-silencing and the prevalence of romantic relationship stressors.

We also hypothesized that mindfulness would moderate the relationship between daily self-silencing and its negative consequences. Again, our hypotheses followed the pattern that

mindfulness would allow individuals to engage in daily self-silencing without experiencing the negative consequences that would otherwise be associated with daily self-silencing. First, we predicted that mindfulness would moderate the relationship between daily self-silencing and negative affect. Second, we predicted that mindfulness would moderate the relationship between daily self-silencing and daily relationship satisfaction.

For each hypothesis involving mindfulness, we used the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ). We believed that in addition to the full scale, the two subscales that would consistently be moderators would be the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales. These are the aspects of mindfulness that allow an individual to be aware of their emotion or need (Nonjudging) and consciously and strategically (Act with Awareness) act on them. If one is high in Nonjudging and Act with Awareness, they are able to silence their voices in a mindful and effective way.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Participants

Undergraduate students (13 men, 54 women, $M_{\text{age}} = 20.13$, age range: 18 - 25 years) in an exclusive romantic relationship for at least one month ($M_{\text{length}} = 16.83$ months, relationship length range: 1.5 – 48 months) served as participants in this study. They were recruited through flyers posted on American University's campus, announcements on the *Today@AU* daily email sent to the student body, and presentations given in undergraduate psychology courses.

Participants primarily identified as Caucasian/White (73%), with the remaining identifying as Black/African-American (12%), Asian descent (6%), multi-racial (4%), Latino (3%), and American Indian/Alaska Native (1.5%). Additionally, 21% consider themselves to be Hispanic or Latino. Data was obtained from 60 ($M_{\text{age}} = 21.27$, age range: 18-42) of the participants' romantic relationship partners. The relationships were primarily heterosexual (88%).

Participants were given course credit or \$10 for completing the baseline evaluation. For completing daily measures, participants were either given \$1 for each measurement or course credit. To provide more incentive for completion of daily diaries, participants were entered in a \$50 lottery if they completed 13 out of the 14 daily measures. The odds of winning were 1 in 25. Participants' partners were recruited through emails sent after obtaining the participants' informed consent. Partners were compensated with a \$5 gift card and entrance into a lottery for \$50, where the odds of winning were 1 in 25.

Measures

Trait Self-Silencing. Self-silencing was measured with the Silencing the Self Scale (STSS; Jack, 1991), a 31-question self-report inventory. The scale uses a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly Agree*). Examples of items on the scale are "I don't

“speak my feelings in an intimate relationship when I know they will cause disagreement” and “Caring means choosing to do what the other person wants, even when I want to do something different.” The scale has been validated among adolescents (Harper & Welsh, 2007), male and female undergraduate students (Page et al., 1996), women in battered women’s shelters, and pregnant women who have abused drugs (Jack & Dill, 1992).

The STSS has strong internal consistency (Cronbach’s α ranging from .86 to .94; Jack & Dill, 1992) and excellent 2-week test-retest reliability (Pearson r ’s range from .88 to .93). It also has strong construct validity. Items on the scale were generated directly from qualitative research on women’s experiences in relationships. Additionally, the STSS varied in a predicted fashion according to the social context in which it is completed (e.g. women in samples in battered women’s shelters score significantly higher than female undergraduate students; Jack & Dill, 1992). Scores on the STSS correlated moderately with the Saying What I Think Around Others scale (SWIT; Harter, Waters, Whitesell, & Kastelic, 1998; Smolak & Munstertieger, 2002), another measure of voice. Scores on the measure correlated positively with scores of depression (Jack & Dill, 1992; Page et al., 1996), marital dissatisfaction (Uebelacker et al., 2003), and overall communication and post-conflict distress (Harper & Welsh, 2007).

However, it is noteworthy that the factor structure of the STSS is not consistently supported (Remen et al., 2002). For both women and men, support for the four factor model of self-silencing was lacking. For men, in fact, an additional factor (autonomy/independence) was found to be a better fit than Jack’s (1991) subscale of The Divided Self.

Mindfulness. Mindfulness was measured with the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ; Baer et al., 2006). The scale was constructed through factor analysis of the items from five previously constructed mindfulness measures: Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (Brown

& Ryan, 2003); Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (Buchheld, Grossman, & Walach, 2001); Kentucky Inventory of Mindfulness Scale (Baer, Smith, & Allen, 2004); Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale (Hayes & Feldman, 2004); and the Mindfulness Questionnaire (Chadwick, Hember, Mead, Lilley, & Dagnan, 2005). Factor analysis demonstrated that the items loaded onto five different factors of mindfulness: Nonjudging, Observe, Describe, Non-React, and Acting with Awareness. The FFMQ combines and represents these five factors. The scale consists of 39 statements to which participants respond on a five-point scale, from 1 (*never or very rarely true*) to 5 (*very often or always true*). Examples of statements include: “When I’m walking, I deliberately notice the sensations of my body moving” (Observing); “I’m good at finding words to describe my feelings” (Describing); “When I do things, my mind wanders off and I’m easily distracted” (Acting with Awareness; reverse-scored); “I criticize myself for having irrational or inappropriate emotions” (Non-judging; reverse-scored); and, “I perceive my feelings and emotions without having to react to them” (Non-reacting). The FFMQ has been validated among undergraduate and community samples in the United States and Great Britain (Baer et al., 2008).

Baer and colleagues (2006) found good internal consistency for each of the subscales (the Observing subscale, $\alpha = .83$; Describing subscale, $\alpha = .91$; Acting with Awareness subscale, $\alpha = .87$; Non-reacting subscale, $\alpha = .74$; and Non-judging subscale, $\alpha = .87$).

Evidence for its construct validity came from its correlation with a similar construct, self-compassion, as evidenced by the Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003): Observing subscale, $r = .14, p < .001$, Describing subscale, $r = .30, p < .001$, Acting with Awareness subscale, $r = .40, p < .001$; Non-reactivity subscale, $r = .53, p < .001$; and Non-judging subscale, $r = .48, p < .001$. Additionally, scores on four of the five subscales correlated positively with frequency of

meditation experience (Baer et al., 2008). Some criticism of the FFMQ, however, comes from the fact that one study (Christopher, Christopher, & Charoensuk, 2009) found that a sample of American undergraduate students actually had higher scores on the Observing, Describing, and Nonjudging subscales of the FFMQ than a group of practicing Buddhist monks in Thailand. This study noted the need for a more nuanced and culturally sensitive understanding for how mindfulness may be defined in western culture.

Depression. Depression was measured using the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D), a 20-item self-report measure of depressive symptoms for adults in the general population (Radloff, 1977). Like the FFMQ, the CES-D was developed through examining items from previously existing measures of the construct (Radloff, 1977). CES-D respondents were asked to identify the proportion of time that they have felt or behaved a certain way during the past week using a four-point scale, from 1 (*rarely or none of the time*) to 4 (*most or all of the time*). Examples of items are “I felt that I was just as good as other people,” and “I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing.” The scale represents four components of depression: “depressive affect, positive affect, somatic and retarded activity, and interpersonal” (Radloff, 1977), and emphasizes more affective elements of depression than the commonly used Beck Depression Inventory BDI (Beck, Shaw, Rush, & Emery, 1979), which captures more cognitive components of depression (Santor, Zuroff, Ramsay, Cervantes, & Palacios, 1995).

The CES-D has been validated across age ranges and cross-culturally in several translations (e.g. Dutch and Greek). The CES-D has demonstrated strong internal consistency (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .90$; Skorikov & Vandervoort, 2003) in clinical and nonclinical samples (Orme, Reis, & Herz, 1986; Radloff, 1977) and good test-retest reliability ($r = .51$ at 2 weeks, and $r = .32$ at 1 year; Radloff, 1977).

There is comprehensive evidence for the scale's construct validity. Scores on the CES-D correlated strongly ($r = .56$) with nurse ratings of psychiatric inpatients (Craig & van Natta, 1976) and clinical interviews with both inpatients and nonclinical samples (Radloff, 1977). Evidence for convergent validity came from moderate correlations with individuals seeking outpatient treatment who were diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder using the Hamilton Clinician Rating Scale ($r = .44$), as well as strong correlations at termination of treatment ($r = .69$; Radloff, 1977). Evidence for the scale's discriminant validity came from its discrimination between nonclinical community members and psychiatric inpatients, as well as its weaker correlation with measures of aggression and social desirability than with other measures of depression. Additionally, the CES-D demonstrated a moderate correlation with interview assessments of depression (Radloff, 1977). One downside of the scale may be its inability to adequately discriminate depression from trait anxiety (Orme et al., 1986).

Relationship satisfaction. Relationship satisfaction was measured with a version of the Quality of Marriage Index (QMI; Norton, 1983) adapted by Tolpin and Cohen (1993) for dating couples. Wherever the original version used the word “marriage,” the adapted version used “relationship.” The QMI is a six-item questionnaire, with the first five questions asking participants to rate their agreement with statements regarding their relationship on a 7-point Likert Scale from 1 (*very strong disagreement*) to 7 (*very strong agreement*). An example statement is, “My relationship with my partner is very stable” and “I really feel like *part of a team* with my partner.” The sixth item uses a 10-point rating scale from 1 (*extremely unhappy*) to 10 (*extremely happy*) and asks participants to rate “The degree of happiness, everything considered, in your relationship.”

The scale has strong internal consistency (coefficient $\alpha = .97$; Heyman, Sayers, & Bellack, 1994), and it has been validated on men and women (Heyman et al., 1994). Heyman, Sayers, and Bellack (1994) demonstrated strong construct validity for the QMI. High QMI scores were associated with reduced frequency of discussing break-up (Norton, 1983). Its convergent validity was evidenced in its strong and positive correlation with the Relationship Satisfaction Scale and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, as well as its moderate negative correlation with a measure of one's desired change in his/her relationship. The QMI's discriminant validity was seen in its non-existent to low correlations with non-interpersonally-related subscales of the Symptom Checklist (90 item-revised) for men and its low to moderate correlations with the same subscales for women (Norton, 1983).

Negative affect. Negative affect was measured with select items from the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule-Expanded Form (PANAS-X). This is a 60-item scale measuring mood on both a general positive and negative affect dimension, as well as on 11 more specific subscales. In order to keep the measure brief and encourage compliance, this study tested only eleven of the items from the PANAS-X. Specifically, this study administered the five-item Sadness subscale, four of the six items from the Guilt subscale, one of the six items from the Hostility subscale, and one item from the Fear subscale (Watson & Clark, 1994). For each item, participants were asked on a 5-point scale from 1 (*very slightly or not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*) to rate the degree to which they felt a particular emotion at that current moment. Examples of specific items include “Blue” (Sadness), “Ashamed” (Guilty), and “Hostile” (Hostility). We computed the measurement of negative affect by taking the mean response to each item.

The full-version PANAS-X demonstrated strong reliability and validity. Here, we will only discuss reliability and validity of subscales and dimensions used in the current study. For

instance, the Positive Affect dimension demonstrated very good internal consistency, with coefficient alphas ranging from .83 to .88. For the Sadness subscale, $\alpha = .86$; for the Guilt subscale, $\alpha = .86$; and for the Hostility subscale, $\alpha = .82$.

The PANAS-X also demonstrated strong construct validity. Its convergent validity was seen through the correlation between its subscales and similar subscales of the Profiles of Mood States (POMS: McNair, Lorr & Droppleman, 1971). Specifically, the correlation between the Sadness subscale of the PANAS-X and the Depression-Dejection subscale of the POMS was $r = .85$; the correlation between the Positive Affect subscale of the PANAS-X and the Vigor subscale of the POMS was $r = .86$, and the correlation between the Hostility subscale of the PANAS-X and the Anger-Hostility subscale of the POMS was $r = .91$. Evidence for its discriminant validity came from weaker correlations between the subscales of the PANAS-X and non-corresponding subscales. For instance, the Sadness subscale of the PANAS-X correlated with the Tension-Anxiety subscale of the POMS at $r = .57$ and the Anger-Hostility subscale of the POMS at $r = .51$. The Positive Affect subscale of the PANAS-X was uncorrelated with the Tension-Anxiety, Anger-Hostility, and Fatigue subscales of the POMS, and only moderately and inversely correlated with the Depression-Dejection subscale of the POMS ($r = -.24$).

Additional evidence for the measure's convergent and discriminant validity came from comparisons between self-reports of the PANAS-X and peer and dating partners' reports of the same variables. Scores of the PANAS-X corresponded significantly to peer reports of the same variables: Sadness, $r = .52, p < .05$; Guilt, $r = .34, p < .05$; Hostility, $r = .31, p < .05$; and Positive Affect, $r = .48, p < .05$ (Watson & Clark, 1994).

Daily relationship satisfaction. Daily relationship satisfaction was measured with a one-item question, "How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your relationship today?"

Participants responded to the question on a 9-point scale from 1 (*Very Dissatisfied*) to 9 (*Very Satisfied*).

Prevalence of romantic relationship stressors. Participants were given a list of 10 different stressful events common to romantic relationships (e.g. “Had an argument with my dating partner that was left unresolved”) and asked to state whether the situation occurred that day. This questionnaire was adapted from work by Tolpin, Cohen, Gunthert, and Farrehi (2006). Participants were then asked to indicate which of the stressors they experienced was the “worst or most bothersome problem of the day.”

Daily self-silencing. Participants’ daily self-silencing was measured by asking participants to rate the frequency of their usage of two specific self-silencing behaviors (“put others’ needs first” and “kept my feelings to myself in order to avoid disagreement”). This measure was modeled from Stone and Neale’s (1984) measure of daily coping, which did not include the above behaviors. Additionally, in Stone and Neale’s original measure, participants were asked to indicate with a “yes” or “no” whether specific coping strategies were used during the day. In our study, participants were asked to rate their usage of each strategy using a Likert scale from 1 (*Not at all*) to 4 (*A lot*). Their responses to each item were summed to form the daily self-silencing score.

Procedure

Participants completed their initial assessment in person in the Stress and Emotion laboratory at American University. As part of the informed consent, participants were instructed explicitly to refrain from speaking with their significant others about the study. This request was motivated by the desire to avoid any distress that participation in the study could have on the couples, as each member was asked to answer questions about their relationship.

Upon completing the informed consent, participants provided contact information for their romantic partner as well as consent for researchers to contact him/her to facilitate their partner's completion of the study. Participants completed their initial assessment via surveymonkey.com on a laboratory computer. First, they completed a demographics questionnaire, then a measure of depression, a measure of mindfulness, a measure of relationship quality, and a measure of self-silencing. Participants were then given either money or course credit for the first phase of their participation.

Participants were notified that they would be contacted via email during the next evening at 7:45pm, as well as each of the following 13 evenings at the same time, with a link to complete their daily assessments. They were instructed to complete the daily assessment based only on events that had occurred since they last completed an assessment. They were instructed to complete the assessment that night before they went to sleep. The daily assessment consisted of the measures of negative affect, current relationship satisfaction, conflicts experienced during the previous day, and daily self-silencing.

Participants' partners were emailed the same day that participants completed their in-person assessment. Partners were given a link on Survey Monkey to complete their participation. Partners completed a measure on their own demographics, their perception of their partners' (the participant's) self-silencing, and their own level of relationship satisfaction. Partners' perception of trait self-silencing was measured using the STSS, and changing the pronoun "I" to "my partner" and including explicit instructions to complete the measure based on their partner's attitudes and behaviors.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

We conducted all analyses using Microsoft Office Excel 2007, SPSS 22.0, and HLM 7.0. We received data from 60 out of 67 romantic partners, a compliance rate of 90%. The average relationship length was 16.83 months (range = 1.25 – 48). Relationship length was uncorrelated with any of the trait variables, except for the Externalized Self-Perception subscale of the STSS, $r = -.246, p = .045$. The longer the relationship, the lower the individual's sense of externalized self-perception. Of the couples from whom we received data from both partners, 53 were heterosexual and seven were homosexual. Of the homosexual couples, two were composed of men, and five were composed of women. See Table 1 for descriptive statistics of all initial and daily measurements.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for In-Person and Daily Variables

	<i>N</i>	<i>α</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<u>In-Person Variables</u>				
STSS	67	.87	72.45	15.62
STSS-ESP	67	.78	16.15	5.33
STSS-CSS	67	.66	26.48	5.19
STSS-SS	67	.83	18.63	6.37
STSS-DS	67	.81	11.19	4.56
CES-D	67	.89	30.73	8.11
FFMQ	67	.87	133.36	16.49
FFMQ-NJ	67	.93	28.06	7.78
FFMQ-O	67	.78	26.42	5.37
FFMQ-D	67	.92	29.76	6.26
FFMQ-NR	67	.78	22.16	4.73
FFMQ-AA	67	.86	26.96	5.21
QMI	67	.93	31.94	4.66
P-STSS	60	.82	76.93	13.32
P-STSS-ESP	60	.74	14.82	4.75
P-STSS-CSS	60	.75	27.53	5.74
P-STSS-SS	60	.76	21.78	5.66

P-STSS-DS	60	.66	12.80	3.91
P-QMI	60	.95	31.70	5.48
<u>Daily Variables</u>				
Daily Self-silencing	781		1.09	1.58
Daily Relationship Satisfaction	781		5.96	1.21
Average Daily Stressors	781		2.47	1.97
Average Romantic Relationship Stressors	781		0.94	1.47
Daily Negative Affect	781		1.40	0.53

Note. STSS= Silencing the Self Scale; STSS-ESP=Externalized Self-Perception subscale; STSS-CSS=Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale; STSS-SS=Self-Silencing subscale; STSS-DS=Divided Self subscale; QMI=Relationship Satisfaction; CES-D=Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression scale; FFMQ=Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire; FFMQ-NJ=Nonjudging subscale; FFMQ-O=Observe subscale; FFMQ-D=Describe subscale; FFMQ-NR=Nonreact subscale; FFMQ-AA=Acting with Awareness subscale; P-QMI=Partner Relationship Satisfaction; P-STSS=Partner perception STSS; P-STSS-ESP=Partner perception of Externalized Self-Perception subscale; P-STSS-CSS=Partner perception of Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale; P-STSS-SS=Partner Perception of Self-Silencing subscale; P-STSS-DS=Partner Perception of Divided Self subscale.

Participants completed 781 daily assessments total, for an average of 11.66 assessments each (range = 1 – 15). Two participants accidentally completed an extra assessment. Sixty-five out of 67 (97%) completed at least five diary entries, and 39 out of 67 (58%) completed at least thirteen of the fourteen diary entries. In order to examine descriptive statistics of daily responses, we aggregated daily stressors, daily romantic relationship stressors, daily self-silencing, mood, and daily relationship satisfaction to create a daily average score (See Table 1). While pair-wise correlations could be slightly inflated due to the nested structure of level one data, nevertheless, we examined the correlations for descriptive purposes. Of note, while daily self-silencing was correlated significantly with prevalence of romantic relationship stressors ($r = .172, p < .001$) and daily negative affect ($r = .281, p < .001$), it was uncorrelated with daily relationship satisfaction ($r = -.039, p = .276$). We also examined the frequency of the various types of romantic relationship stressors. We found that the most common was “Had an argument with my romantic partner that was resolved” (110 occurrences overall, 15% of romantic stressors), followed by “Got along poorly with my romantic partner (not an argument)” (109 occurrences overall, 15% of romantic stressors).

Preliminary Analyses

Depression, relationship satisfaction, trait self-silencing, and mindfulness all correlated in the expected directions (See Table 2 for full correlation matrix). Participants' self-report of trait self-silencing was moderately and positively correlated with their partners' perceptions of participant self-silencing, $r = .385, p = .002$. Participant and partner ratings of relationship satisfaction were not correlated however, $r = .036, p = .786$.

Length of relationship was not correlated with relationship satisfaction, partner's relationship satisfaction, trait self-silencing or partner's perception of self-silencing. The only variable correlated with length of relationship was externalized self-perception, or STSS-ESP ($r = -.246, p = .045$). Individuals in longer relationships reported lower levels of externalized self-perception.

Relationship satisfaction. When examining participant and partner relationship satisfaction, we noticed an experimenter error in which the scale was switched for items 1 – 5. The original scale (Norton, 1983) ranged from 1 (*very strong disagreement*) to 7 (*very strong agreement*), with higher scores representing higher relationship satisfaction. However, in our study, the scales ranged from 1 (*very strong agreement*) to 7 (*very strong disagreement*). Item 6 used the same scale as the original, thus resulting in the anchors of the scale being switched from items 1-5 to item 6. Upon initially examining the data, we noticed that several participants appeared to rate their relationship as very positive for items 1 – 5, but very negative for item 6. This suggested that some participants did not notice the change in direction of the anchors on item 6.

We then examined the internal reliability of the relationship satisfaction measure both with and without item 6. With item 6, Cronbach's α for participant relationship satisfaction was

.665, and without it was .932. For partner relationship satisfaction, with item 6, $\alpha = .742$, and without it, $\alpha = .952$. Therefore, the measure was much more internally reliable without item 6. We also looked at corrected item-total correlations. For participant relationship satisfaction, the corrected item-total correlations ranged from .604 – .750 for items 1 – 5, and .029 for item 6. For partner relationship satisfaction, the correlations ranged from .712 – .813 for items 1 – 5, and -.030 for item 6.

Mindfulness and Self-Silencing. Because of our hypothesis that individuals high in mindfulness as well as self-silencing would be buffered from the negative effects of self-silencing, we first examined whether these individuals existed in our study. Since mindfulness was negatively correlated with self-silencing, it was worth exploring to see if there were many individuals who were both high in self-silencing and mindfulness. We explored this by running split median analyses. We found that of our 67 participants, ten were low in both self-silencing and mindfulness, 24 were low in self-silencing and high in mindfulness, 22 were high in self-silencing and low in mindfulness, and 11 fell into the high self-silencing and high mindfulness category.

Next, to ensure that participants answered items 1 – 5 in the way we intended, we correlated scores for those items with responses to other qualitative data we received on relationship satisfaction, such as asking participants and their partners “My partner and I agree on *major* things in our relationship about (circle the closest percentage of time with which you agree).” This item was included in Norton’s (1983) original measure as additional qualitative data, but not as part of the six main questions. We correlated responses to this question with items 1 – 6. Items 1 – 5 each correlated significantly with the percentage indicated for the agreement question, with r s ranging from .535 to .697 (all p s < .001).

Table 2

Correlations among the Outcome Variables.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. STSS																		
2. STSS-ESP	<u>.81</u>																	
3. STSS-CSS	<u>.56</u>	<u>.34</u>																
4. STSS-SS	<u>.83</u>	<u>.52</u>	.26															
5. STSS-DS	<u>.68</u>	<u>.48</u>	.02	<u>.55</u>														
6. QMI	<u>-.33</u>	-.24	.21	<u>-.42</u>	<u>-.48</u>													
7. CES-D	<u>.40</u>	<u>.37</u>	.10	.23	<u>.51</u>	-.23												
8. FFMQ	<u>-.52</u>	<u>-.45</u>	-.25	<u>-.37</u>	<u>-.46</u>	.07	<u>-.64</u>											
9. FFMQ-NJ	<u>-.42</u>	<u>-.55</u>	-.14	-.13	<u>-.47</u>	.08	<u>-.62</u>	<u>.63</u>										
10. FFMQ-O	.05	.19	-.13	-.04	.13	-.08	.04	<u>.36</u>	-.20									
11. FFMQ-D	<u>-.47</u>	-.31	-.23	<u>-.51</u>	-.29	.08	-.21	<u>.58</u>	.09	.19								
12. FFMQ-NR	-.09	-.16	-.03	.02	-.11	-.08	<u>-.38</u>	<u>.54</u>	<u>.36</u>	.04	.01							
13. FFMQ-AA	<u>-.42</u>	-.29	-.13	<u>-.35</u>	<u>-.47</u>	.15	<u>-.56</u>	<u>.67</u>	.28	.16	.29	.21						
14. P-QMI	-.02	-.04	.17	-.10	-.08	.04	.02	-.08	.05	-.25	-.03	.01	-.02					
15. P-STSS	<u>.39</u>	.26	.18	<u>.36</u>	<u>.34</u>	-.16	.27	-.14	-.03	.06	<u>-.39</u>	.03	-.04	-.09				
16. P-STSS-ESP	<u>.34</u>	<u>.34</u>	.14	.23	.31	-.00	<u>.35</u>	-.26	-.22	.06	-.18	-.23	-.14	-.04	<u>.72</u>			
17. P-STSS-CSS	.24	.08	<u>.34</u>	.17	.12	-.13	.09	-.01	.09	-.03	-.29	.20	.02	.15	<u>.54</u>	.17		
18. P-STSS-SS	.26	.19	-.00	.32	.24	-.14	.03	-.02	.10	.01	-.30	.07	.05	-.09	<u>.78</u>	<u>.38</u>	.15	
19. P-STSS-DS	.18	.07	-.07	.24	.27	-.14	.31	-.13	-.11	.14	-.26	-.02	-.07	<u>-.35</u>	<u>.63</u>	<u>.42</u>	-.08	<u>.51</u>

Note. STSS= Silencing the Self Scale; STSS-ESP=Externalized Self-Perception subscale; STSS-CSS=Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale; STSS-SS=Self-Silencing subscale; STSS-DS=Divided Self subscale; QMI=Relationship Satisfaction; CES-D=Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression scale; FFMQ=Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire; FFMQ-NJ=Nonjudging subscale; FFMQ-O=Observe subscale; FFMQ-D=Describe subscale; FFMQ-NR=Nonreact subscale; FFMQ-AA=Acting with Awareness subscale; P-QMI=Partner Relationship Satisfaction; P-STSS=Partner perception STSS; P-STSS-ESP=Partner perception of Externalized Self-Perception subscale; P-STSS-CSS=Partner perception of Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale; P-STSS-SS=Partner perception of Self-Silencing subscale; P-STSS-DS=Partner Perception of Divided Self subscale

Correlations that are underlined indicate significance at the $p \leq 0.01$ level.

Correlations in bold indicate significance at the $p \leq 0.001$ level.

However, item 6 was not significantly correlated with the agreement question ($r = .143, p = .250$). When looking at partner relationship satisfaction, a similar pattern emerged. Items 1 – 5 correlated significantly with the agreement question, with r s ranging from .305 to .444 (all p s < .02). However, item 6 was not significantly correlated with the agreement question ($r = .154, p = .239$). Therefore, it appeared as though individuals responded to items 1 – 5 accurately, but often inaccurately to item 6. Thus, in the final measure of relationship satisfaction, we used only items 1 – 5.

Comparison with typical scores. Next we compared participants' scores to typical scores for similar samples. Participants' scores were similar to typical college scores with regards to relationship satisfaction (See Norton, 1983). However, a one-sample T-test indicated that our sample scored significantly higher in mindfulness than the college sample cited in Baer et al. (2008), $t(66) = 4.475, p < .001$. Our sample's score more closely resembled that of a highly educated sample (Baer et al., 2008). In terms of depression, a one-sample T-test indicated that our sample scored significantly lower than a sample cited by Herman et al. (2011), $t(66) = -3.884, p < .001$. Additionally, a one-sample T-test revealed that our sample scored significantly lower on the Silencing the Self Scale (STSS) than the sample cited in Jack and Dill (1992), $t(66) = -3.118, p = .003$.

Gender discrepancies in STSS. Due to previous findings of gender discrepancies in the construct validity of the STSS, we examined the construct validity and internal reliability of the measure and each of its subscales with both men and women. Table 3 shows these results. On average, men scored higher on the full STSS, but this difference was not significant, $t(65) = 1.459, p = .149$. When examining the subscales, the biggest difference between men and women was on the STSS-SS subscale. This difference was significant, $t(65) = 2.513, p = .014$, such that

men reported higher self-silencing. In terms of internal reliability, the results from men had acceptable internal reliability on the STSS-ESP and STSS-CSS, but lower than ideal internal reliability for the STSS-SS and STSS-DS. Women had acceptable internal reliability for the STSS-ESP, STSS-SS, and STSS-DS, and lower than ideal internal reliability for the STSS-CSS.

Table 3

Gender Discrepancies in Descriptive Statistics, Internal Reliability, and Predictive Validity for the Silencing the Self Scale and its Subscales.

	N	<i>A</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Dep	RelSat
<u>Men</u>						
STSS	13	.88	78.08	16.10	.285	.322
STSS-ESP	13	.77	16.08	5.41	.180	.211
STSS-CSS	13	.76	27.54	5.84	.154	.541
STSS-SS	13	.69	22.46	5.65	.324	.165
STSS-DS	13	.69	12.00	3.83	.230	.044
<u>Women</u>						
STSS	54	.87	71.09	15.35	.483	-.595
STSS-ESP	54	.79	16.17	5.37	.406	-.457
STSS-CSS	54	.64	26.22	5.05	.122	.089
STSS-SS	54	.84	17.70	6.23	.309	-.586
STSS-DS	54	.82	11.00	4.73	.570	-.735

Note. STSS=Silencing the Self Scale; STSS-ESP=Externalized Self-Perception subscale; STSS-CSS=Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale; STSS-SS=Self-Silencing subscale; STSS-DS=Divided Self subscale. Dep=correlation with depression scale. RelSat=correlation with relationship satisfaction scale.

Correlations that are underlined are significant at $p \leq .01$

Correlations that are bolded are significant at $p \leq .001$.

Scores on the STSS and subscales were all moderately or strongly correlated with depression for women, except for STSS-CSS, which was uncorrelated. For men, as the sample size was much smaller, no significant correlations emerged; however, all Pearson correlation statistics were in the positive and weakly correlated range, except for STSS-SS, which was in the positive and moderately correlated range. A calculation for the test of the difference between two independent correlation coefficients indicated that the correlations between STSS and depression were not significantly different between men and women (Preacher, 2002).

However, when it came to the relationship between STSS and subscale scores with relationship satisfaction, there were more striking differences. For women, STSS and all subscales except STSS-CSS were strongly and negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction. For men, however, while no correlation reached significance (perhaps related to the low n), all correlations were in the positive direction, and the correlation between STSS-CSS and relationship satisfaction approached significance: $r = .541, p = .056$.

Therefore, trait self-silencing had different internal reliability and predictive validity for men and women. In order to address this gender discrepancy we included an additional moderation analysis that looked at the moderating role of gender for each of our main hypotheses. We ran simple linear regression analyses to determine if gender moderated the relationship between STSS and depression. First we centered both gender and STSS. The equation was modeled as:

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (STSS_i) + \beta_2 (G_i) + \beta_3 (STSS_i \times G_i) + r_i$$

where y_i is depression for person i ; β_0 is the average depression score; β_1 is how much depression changed for every point increase of STSS; $STSS_i$ is STSS for person i ; β_2 is how much depression changed for every point increase of gender; G_i is gender of person i ; β_3 is how much depression changed for every point increase in the interaction term; $STSS_i \times G_i$ is the interaction term; and r_i is the error term. We found that $\beta_3 = 0.185, p = .204$. Gender did not moderate the relationship between STSS and depression.

Next, we examined whether gender moderated the relationship between STSS and relationship satisfaction. We conducted the same analysis as above, only we entered relationship satisfaction as the outcome. We found that $\beta_3 = -0.291, p = .001$. Gender did moderate the

relationship between STSS and relationship satisfaction. Figure 1 shows that STSS was a negative predictor of relationship satisfaction for women only.

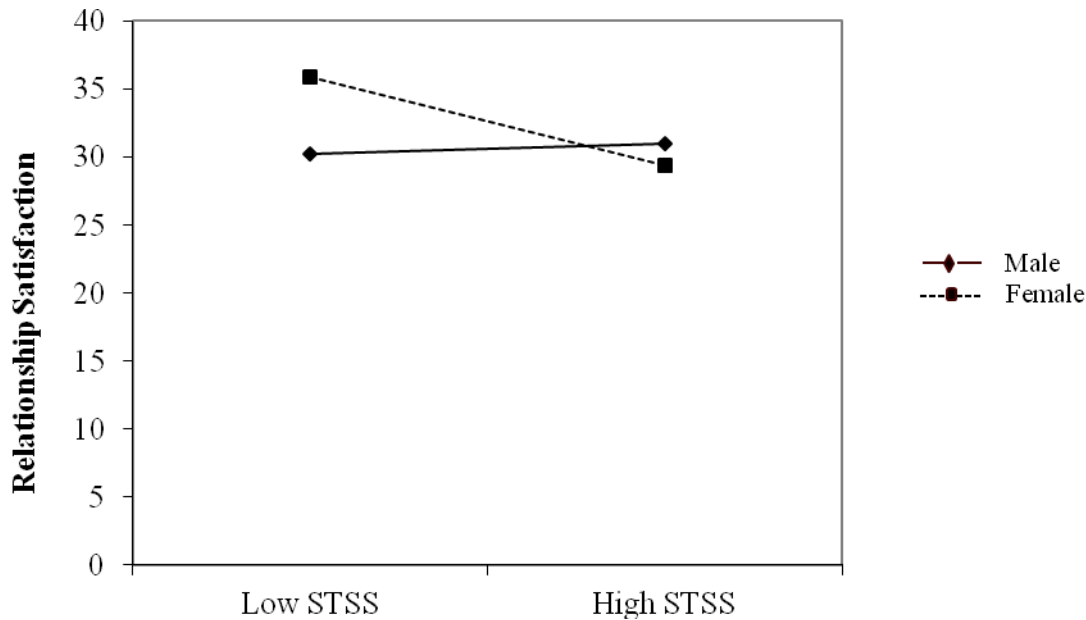


Figure 1. Results of Two-Way Moderation Analysis Showing the Interaction between Gender and STSS on Relationship Satisfaction.

Partner perception of trait self-silencing. To our knowledge, this study was the first study to examine partners' perceptions of participants' trait self-silencing, so we also examined the internal reliability and the construct validity of this questionnaire. As mentioned above, partner's perception of trait self-silencing (P-STSS) was moderately correlated with the STSS. When looking at each of the subscales, the highest correlation between partner perception and participant self-report was for Externalized Self-Perception, $r = .338$, $p = .008$; followed by Care as Self-Sacrifice, $r = .337$, $p = .008$; then Self-Silencing, $r = .319$, $p = .013$; and then Divided Self, $r = .268$, $p = .038$. Conceptually this makes sense, since the DS represents a more internal process than the other subscales. Interestingly though, there was a striking gender difference in

the correlation between STSS-DS and P-STSS-DS for men and women. For women, the correlation between self-report and partner perception of the Divided Self was positive, $r = .353$, $p = .014$. However, for men, the relationship verged on significance, but in the opposite direction, $r = -.508$, $p = .091$. For no other subscale were men's scores correlated in one direction and women's in a different.

Internal reliability was also good for the full P-STSS ($\alpha = .818$), acceptable for the P-STSS-ESP ($\alpha = .735$), P-STSS-CSS ($\alpha = .748$), and the P-STSS-SS ($\alpha = .755$), but a bit lower than ideal for the P-STSS-DS ($\alpha = .664$). Upon closer examination, the internal reliability of the P-STSS-DS was acceptable for women ($\alpha = .727$) but was actually negatively internally correlated for men. Therefore the partner perception of the Divided Self subscale was not internally reliable for the male participants.

Main Analyses

Consequences of trait self-silencing. The first set of main analyses examined the consequences of trait self-silencing (STSS) and each of its subscales on global and daily level outcomes. Any significant findings were then re-run to see if the relationships held even after controlling for depression. We also included gender as a moderator for each of these based on our findings of gender differences in STSS. If gender significantly interacted with STSS, then the analyses were re-run with separately with only men and then only women.

Hypothesis 1: Trait self-silencing will predict negative partner relationship satisfaction.

This hypothesis was tested with a simple linear regression analysis with the equation modeled as:

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (\text{STSS}_i) + \beta_2 (R_i) + r_i$$

where y_i is the relationship satisfaction for person i 's partner; β_0 is the average partner relationship satisfaction; β_1 is how much partner relationship satisfaction changed for every point

increase of STSS; $STSS_i$ is the STSS score for person i ; β_2 is how much partner relationship satisfaction changed for every point increase of participant relationship satisfaction; R_i is relationship satisfaction for person i ; and r_i is the error term. We included participant's own relationship satisfaction in the model in order to control for it. The results indicated that STSS did not significantly predict partner relationship satisfaction, $\beta_1 = -0.003$, $p = .955$. Therefore, trait self-silencing did not predict partner relationship satisfaction, when controlling for participant relationship satisfaction. This hypothesis was not supported.

Next, we explored if any of the STSS subscales predicted partner relationship satisfaction. To do so, we re-ran the same analyses as above, but substituted in each of the subscales rather than the full STSS. We found that none of the four subscales predicted partner relationship satisfaction: STSS-ESP, $\beta_1 = -0.028$, $p = .841$; STSS-CSS, $\beta_1 = 0.176$, $p = .205$; STSS-SS, $\beta_1 = -0.089$, $p = .475$; and STSS-DS, $\beta_1 = -0.100$, $p = .583$.

Lastly, we added gender as a moderator. First, we centered the independent variable and moderator. Gender and the interaction were added to the level 2 equation with the full STSS. The interaction between gender, STSS and partner relationship satisfaction was not significant, $\beta_3 = -0.006$, $p = .965$.

Hypothesis 2: STSS will positively predict the prevalence of romantic stressors. This hypothesis involved data from multiple levels, with the daily observations nested within individuals, we used Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM; Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992) Software, Version 7.0 to analyze the data. The HLM procedure uses maximum likelihood estimation to model the data at both level 1 and level 2 (Gunthert, Cohen, & Armeli, 1999, p. 1091). Level 1 was modeled as:

$$y_i = \beta_0 + r_i$$

where y_i is the predicted prevalence of romantic relationship stressors for person i ; β_0 is the average prevalence of romantic relationship stressors for person i ; and r_i is the error term. The Level 2 equation was modeled as:

$$\beta_0 = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} (\text{STSS}_i) + \mu_{0j}$$

where γ_{00} is the overall mean of romantic relationship stressors across the sample as a whole; γ_{01} is the slope representing the change in prevalence of romantic relationship stressors for every point increase in STSS; STSS_i is STSS for person i , and, μ_{0j} is the error term. We wanted to see if γ_{01} was significantly different from zero. In general, the average prevalence of relationship stressors per day was 0.94, $SD = 1.47$. We found that $\gamma_{00} = 0.953$, $p < .001$, and $\gamma_{01} = 0.016$, $p = .002$. Trait self-silencing did predict instances of romantic relationship stressors, such that as STSS increased, relationship strain also increased. Therefore the hypothesis was supported. Additionally, this relationship held even when we controlled for depression at level 1, ($\gamma_{01} = 0.043$, $p = .016$).

Next, we explored if the STSS subscales differentially predicted instances of romantic stressors. To do so, we re-ran the same analyses as above, but substituted in each of the subscales rather than the full STSS. We found that the STSS-DS was the strongest predictor ($\gamma_{01} = 0.070$, $p < .001$), followed by STSS-SS ($\gamma_{01} = 0.043$, $p < .001$), and STSS-ESP ($\gamma_{01} = 0.031$, $p = .043$). STSS-CSS ($\gamma_{01} = -0.007$, $p = .660$) did not predict instances of romantic stressors. When depression was controlled for, STSS-SS ($\gamma_{01} = 0.038$, $p = .002$) and STSS-DS ($\gamma_{01} = 0.065$, $p = .001$), still predicted instances of romantic stressors, but STSS-ESP did not, $\gamma_{01} = 0.020$, $p = .200$.

Lastly, we added gender as a moderator. Gender did interact with trait self-silencing, $\gamma_{03} = 0.027$, $p < .001$. We therefore re-ran the above analysis with only men and then only women.

We found that for men: $\gamma_{01} = -0.005$, $p = .640$; and for women: $\gamma_{01} = 0.022$, $p < .001$. STSS only predicted instances of romantic stressors for women, and again this relationship held even after controlling for depression, $\gamma_{01} = 0.021$, $p = .001$.

Hypothesis 3: STSS will positively predict instances of a romantic stressor that is judged the most bothersome stressor of the day. As this outcome was a binary variable, we used Bernoulli distribution for the outcome. If participants decided that the most bothersome stressor of the day was a romantic stressor, then that day was scored a “1.” If not, it was scored a “0.” At level 1, frequency of most bothersome romantic stressors was predicted by an intercept and error term. At level 2, we predicted frequency of most bothersome romantic stressors as a function of STSS. There was a trend toward significance suggesting that as STSS increased, frequency of most bothersome romantic stressors increased, $\gamma_{00} = -1.304$, $p < .001$, and $\gamma_{01} = 0.010$, $p = 0.086$. When we controlled for depression, we found that this relationship was no longer trending toward significance, $\gamma_{01} = 0.009$, $p = .130$.

When we substituted each STSS subscale as the predicting variable, we found that that STSS-DS was the only subscale to predict this outcome ($\gamma_{01} = 0.053$, $p < .001$). STSS-SS ($\gamma_{01} = 0.019$, $p = .212$), STSS-ESP ($\gamma_{01} = 0.020$, $p = .251$), and STSS-CSS ($\gamma_{01} = -0.006$, $p = .756$) all did not predict instances of most bothersome romantic stressors. When depression was controlled for at level 1, STSS-DS still predicted frequency of most bothersome romantic stressors, $\gamma_{01} = 0.063$, $p = .009$.

Next, we examined whether gender moderated the relationship between the full STSS and instances of most bothersome romantic stressors. We found that gender did interact with trait self-silencing to predict instances of most bothersome romantic stressors, $\gamma_{03} = 0.037$, $p < .001$. We therefore re-ran the above analysis separately with men and women. We found that

for men, $\gamma_{01} = -0.020$, $p = .234$. STSS actually negatively (but non-significantly) predicted instances of most bothersome romantic stressors. For women, $\gamma_{01} = 0.018$, $p = .002$, STSS positively predicted instances of most bothersome romantic stressors, and this relationship held even after controlling for depression, $\gamma_{01} = 0.017$, $p = .008$.

Hypothesis 4: STSS will predict lower daily relationship satisfaction. The level 1 outcome was daily relationship satisfaction, and the level 2 predictor was STSS. Trait self-silencing did negatively predict daily relationship satisfaction, $\gamma_{00} = 5.916$, $p < .001$, and $\gamma_{01} = -0.019$, $p = .004$. Therefore, our hypothesis was supported. As STSS increased, relationship satisfaction in everyday life decreased. When we controlled for depression at level 1, we found that this relationship was still significant, $\gamma_{01} = -0.016$, $p = .018$.

Next, we explored if the STSS subscales differentially predicted daily relationship satisfaction. To do so, we re-ran the same analyses as above, but substituted in each of the subscales rather than the full STSS. We found that STSS-DS was the strongest predictor ($\gamma_{01} = -0.068$, $p = .002$), followed by STSS-SS ($\gamma_{01} = -0.051$, $p < .001$), and STSS-ESP ($\gamma_{01} = -0.040$, $p = .038$). STSS-CSS ($\gamma_{01} = 0.004$, $p = .797$) did not predict daily relationship satisfaction. When we controlled for depression, we found that STSS-DS ($\gamma_{01} = -0.061$, $p = .036$) and STSS-SS ($\gamma_{01} = -0.046$, $p = .002$) still predicted daily relationship satisfaction, but STSS-ESP ($\gamma_{01} = -0.029$, $p = .109$) did not. When we included gender as a moderating variable, we found $\gamma_{03} = -0.007$, $p = .634$. Gender did not interact with trait self-silencing to predict daily relationship satisfaction.

Hypothesis 5: STSS will predict daily self-silencing. At level 1, daily self-silencing was the outcome. At level 2, we predicted daily self-silencing as a function of trait STSS. Trait self-silencing did predict daily self-silencing, $\gamma_{00} = 1.091$, $p < .001$, and $\gamma_{01} = 0.019$, $p = .006$. Therefore, our hypothesis was supported. Higher reports of trait self-silencing were associated

with higher daily reports of self-silencing. When we controlled for depression at level 1, this relationship was trending toward significance, $\gamma_{01} = 0.016$, $p = .061$.

Next, we explored if the STSS subscales differentially predicted daily self-silencing. To do so, we re-ran the same analyses as above, but substituted in each of the subscales rather than the full STSS. We found that the STSS-CSS was the strongest predictor ($\gamma_{01} = 0.060$, $p = .009$), followed by STSS-ESP ($\gamma_{01} = 0.050$, $p = .040$). Neither STSS-DS ($\gamma_{01} = 0.027$, $p = .200$), nor STSS-SS ($\gamma_{01} = 0.026$, $p = .175$) significantly predicted daily self-silencing. When depression was controlled for, STSS-CSS ($\gamma_{01} = 0.056$, $p = .017$) still predicted daily self-silencing but STSS-ESP ($\gamma_{01} = 0.039$, $p = .136$) did not. When we included gender as a moderating variable, we found $\gamma_{03} = 0.016$, $p = .241$. Gender did not interact with trait self-silencing to predict daily self-silencing.

Hypothesis 6: STSS will predict daily negative affect. Daily negative affect was the outcome at level 1, and we modeled daily negative affect as a function of STSS at level 2. Trait self-silencing did predict daily negative affect, $\gamma_{00} = 1.404$, $p < .001$, and $\gamma_{01} = 0.007$, $p = .006$. Therefore, our hypothesis was supported. Those with higher STSS reported more negative affect in daily life. However, when depression was controlled for at level 1, STSS no longer predicted daily negative affect, $\gamma_{01} = 0.002$, $p = .383$. This is logical, however, as depression and negative affect are very similar.

Next, we explored if the STSS subscales differentially predicted daily negative affect. To do so, we re-ran the same analyses as above, but substituted in each of the subscales rather than the full STSS. We found that that STSS-ESP was the strongest predictor ($\gamma_{01} = 0.019$, $p = .003$), followed by STSS-DS ($\gamma_{01} = 0.022$, $p = .023$), then STSS-SS ($\gamma_{01} = 0.015$, $p = .045$). STSS-CSS ($\gamma_{01} = 0.005$, $p = .511$) did not predict negative affect. When we controlled for depression,

neither STSS-ESP ($\gamma_{01} = 0.005, p = .331$), STSS-DS ($\gamma_{01} = -0.003, p = .801$), nor STSS-SS ($\gamma_{01} = 0.008, p = .250$) remained significant predictors of daily negative affect.

Next, we examined whether gender interacted with the full STSS to predict negative affect. It did, $\gamma_{03} = 0.010, p = .019$. We therefore re-ran the above analysis with only men and then only women. We found that for men, $\gamma_{01} = 0.000, p = .968$, STSS did not predict daily negative affect. For women we found $\gamma_{01} = 0.011, p < .001$; STSS did predict daily negative affect, however this relationship did not hold after controlling for depression, $\gamma_{01} = 0.005, p = .101$.

Consequences of daily self-silencing. Our second set of analyses focused on the level 1 outcomes of the level 1 variable daily self-silencing. We believed that daily self-silencing would be associated with negative daily outcomes, and those outcomes would be even worse for individuals high in trait self-silencing. For each analysis, we also included STSS and each subscale as a moderating variable. We had no a priori hypotheses regarding the subscales, therefore these analyses were exploratory. We also looked at whether gender was a significant moderator of daily self-silencing on the level 1 outcome, and we predicted that gender would interact with daily self-silencing.

Hypothesis 1: Daily self-silencing will predict negative affect and this will be moderated by STSS. The Level 1 equation was modeled as:

$$y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} (DSS_{ij}) + r_{ij}$$

where y_i is negative affect being predicted for daily assessment i for person j ; β_0 is the level of negative affect being predicted at average daily self-silencing; β_1 is how much the negative affect changed for every point increase of daily self-silencing; DSS_{ij} is daily self-silencing for assessment i and person j ; and r_i is the error term. The second level equation was modeled as:

$$\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} (\text{STSS}_i) + \mu_{0j}$$

where γ_{00} is the overall average negative affect being predicted; γ_{01} is the average change in negative affect for each point increase in STSS; and μ_{0j} is the error term. The other second level equation was:

$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11} (\text{STSS}_i) + \mu_{1j}$$

where γ_{10} is the average slope for the relationship between DSS and negative affect for the sample as a whole; γ_{11} is how much the slope coefficient increased for every point increase in STSS; and, μ_{1j} is the error. On average, daily self silencing was positively associated with negative affect, $\gamma_{00} = 1.404, p < .001$, and $\gamma_{10} = 0.025, p = .060$.

Additionally, the relationship between daily self-silencing and negative affect was moderated by trait level STSS, and $\gamma_{11} = 0.003, p = .033$. For those with higher trait self-silencing, there was a positive relationship between daily self-silencing and negative affect, but for those lower in self-silencing, there was a negative relationship (See Figure 2).

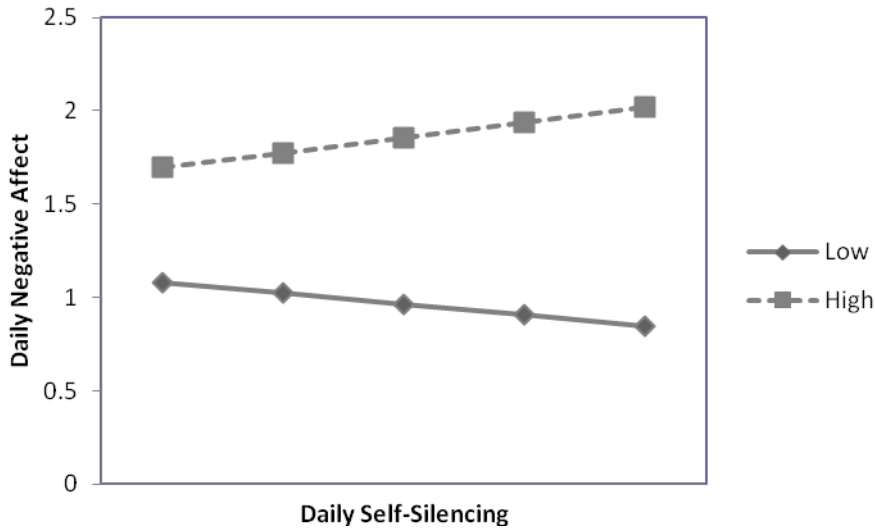


Figure 2. Results of Two-Way Moderation Analysis Showing the Interaction between STSS and Daily Self-Silencing on Daily Negative Affect.

Low = low trait self-silencing, High = high trait self-silencing

Next, we explored if the STSS subscales moderated the relationship between daily self-silencing and daily negative affect. We had no a priori hypotheses here. To explore this question, we re-ran the same analyses as above, but substituted in each of the subscales rather than the full STSS. We found that that STSS-ESP was the only significant moderator ($\gamma_{11} = 0.007, p = .050$), while STSS-SS was trending ($\gamma_{11} = 0.004, p = .063$). Neither STSS-DS ($\gamma_{11} = 0.006, p = .140$) nor STSS-CSS ($\gamma_{11} = 0.005, p = .127$) moderated the relationship between daily self-silencing and negative affect.

Additionally, we examined whether gender moderated the relationship between daily self-silencing and negative affect. We predicted that it would. Our analyses indicated that this interaction neared significance, $\gamma_{11} = .046, p = .054$. Only for women did STSS positively predict negative affect, $\gamma_{10} = .046, p = .030$. For men, $\gamma_{10} = .001, p = .964$, there was no relationship.

Hypothesis 2: Daily self-silencing will predict daily relationship satisfaction and that will be moderated by STSS. The equations were the same as above, but daily relationship satisfaction was the outcome. There was a trend indicating that increases in daily self-silencing were associated with decreases in everyday relationship satisfaction, $\gamma_{00} = 5.916, p < .001$, and $\gamma_{10} = -0.058, p = .093$. However, the relationship between daily self-silencing and relationship satisfaction was not moderated by STSS, $\gamma_{11} = -0.003, p = .229$. Therefore, our hypothesis that STSS would moderate the relationship between daily self-silencing and daily relationship satisfaction was not supported.

Next, we explored if any of the STSS subscales moderated the relationship between daily self-silencing and daily relationship satisfaction. To do so, we re-ran the same analyses as above, but substituted in each of the subscales rather than the full STSS. We found that STSS-

SS was the only significant moderator ($\gamma_{11} = -0.008, p = .046$). Figure 3 shows that for those high in STSS-SS there was a negative relationship between daily self-silencing and daily relationship satisfaction, however that relationship did not exist for those low in STSS-SS. Neither STSS-ESP ($\gamma_{11} = -0.009, p = .124$), STSS-DS ($\gamma_{11} = -0.006, p = .239$), nor STSS-CSS ($\gamma_{11} = 0.003, p = .742$) significantly moderated the relationship between daily self-silencing and daily relationship satisfaction.

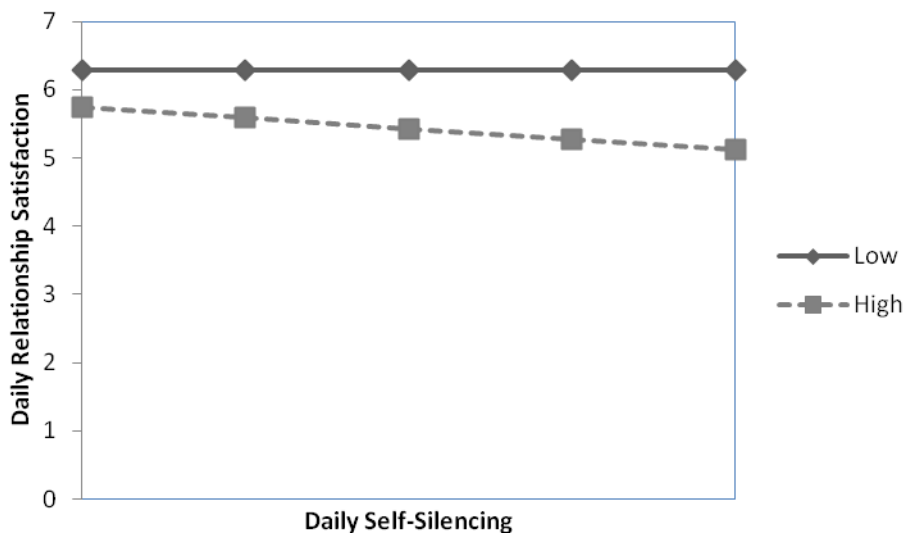


Figure 3. Results of Two-Way Cross Level Moderation Analysis Showing the Interaction between STSS-SS and Daily Self-Silencing on Daily Relationship Satisfaction. Low = low STSS scores, High = high STSS scores

Next, we examined whether the relationship between daily self-silencing and daily relationship satisfaction was moderated by gender. We predicted that gender would interact with daily self-silencing, but it did not, $\gamma_{11} = -0.054, p = .517$.

Consequences of partner perception of trait self-silencing. Next we pursued exploratory analyses to determine if partner's perceptions of participants' self-silencing (P-STSS) predicted relevant outcomes differently than participants' self-report of trait self-silencing. We re-ran each of the previous analyses with P-STSS entered rather than STSS. In

terms of daily outcomes as a function of P-STSS, we found that P-STSS positively predicted instances of relationship stressors ($\gamma_{01} = 0.015, p = .007$), and it was trending in its prediction of daily self-silencing ($\gamma_{01} = 0.013, p = .087$). Higher P-STSS scores were marginally associated with daily reports of self-silencing. However, P-STSS did not predict instances of days where romantic stressors were the most bothersome ($\gamma_{01} = 0.012, p = .146$), daily negative affect ($\gamma_{01} = 0.004, p = .196$), or daily relationship satisfaction ($\gamma_{01} = -0.009, p = .220$).

When looking at the role of P-STSS in moderating the relationship between daily self-silencing and other daily outcomes, we found that it did moderate the relationship between daily self-silencing and daily negative affect ($\gamma_{11} = 0.003, p = .030$). Higher scores on the P-STSS were associated with a stronger positive relationship between daily self-silencing and negative affect. However, we found that P-STSS did not moderate the relationship between daily self-silencing and daily negative relationship satisfaction ($\gamma_{11} = -0.002, p = .462$).

Moderating role of mindfulness on trait self-silencing. Our next area of analysis was in examining the role that mindfulness played in interacting with trait self-silencing to predict outcomes at global and daily levels. Consistent with previous research, we found that STSS positively predicted initial depression and negatively predicted initial relationship satisfaction in our sample, so we investigated whether mindfulness moderated this consistently documented relationship, as well as other negative outcomes of trait self-silencing. For each analysis, we looked at the full mindfulness scale (FFMQ) as well as each subscale. We hypothesized that the full FFMQ and the subscales of Nonjudging and Act with Awareness would buffer individuals with high STSS from the negative consequences typically associated with having high STSS. We believe that individuals high in Nonjudging are able to self-silence, but in a validating and

nonjudgmental way. Individuals who score high on the Act with Awareness subscale are able to self-silence, but in a strategic manner.

Hypothesis 1: Mindfulness, specifically the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales, will moderate the relationship between STSS and depression. This was explored using a simple linear regression with the interaction between STSS and mindfulness predicting depression. There was a significant interaction, $\beta_3 = -0.009$, $p = .001$. The graph of the results (Figure 4) demonstrates that for individuals low in mindfulness, trait self-silencing was positively related to depression, but for individuals high in mindfulness, trait self-silencing was actually inversely related to depression. Therefore, this hypothesis was supported.

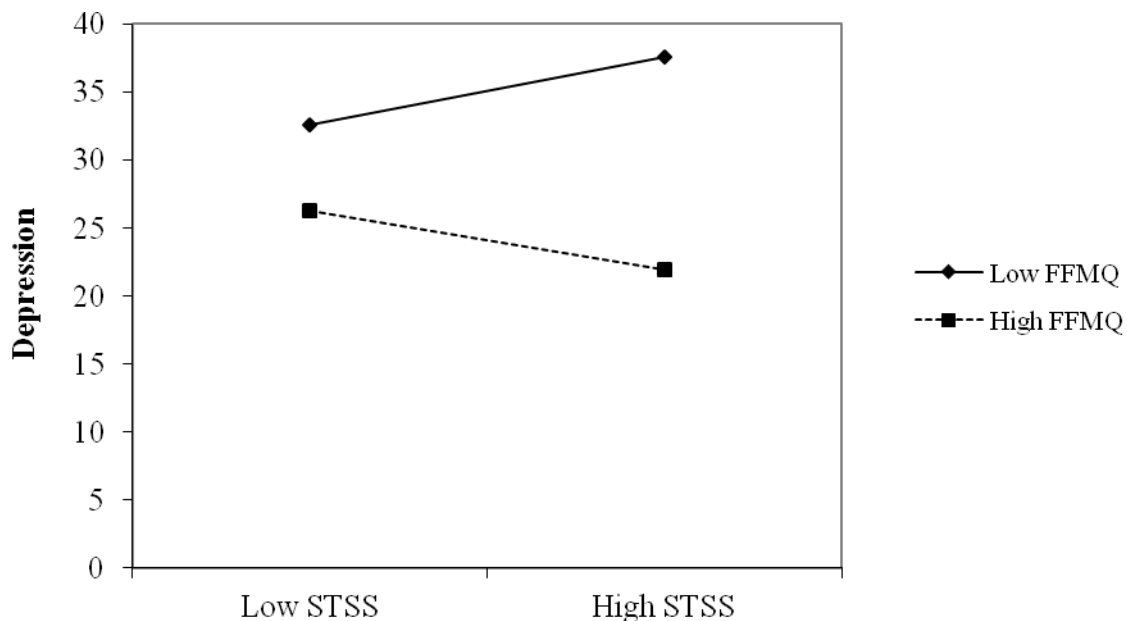


Figure 4. Results of Two-Way Moderation Analysis Showing the Interaction between FFMQ and STSS on Depression.

To further investigate which aspect of mindfulness moderated the relationship between STSS and depression, we re-ran the moderation analyses with the different subscales of the

FFMQ. We hypothesized that the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales would be significant moderators. Our hypothesis was partially supported. Consistent with our hypothesis, the only subscale that yielded a significant interaction was the Nonjudging subscale, $\beta_3 = -0.012$, $p = .050$. Therefore, we found that higher scores on the Nonjudging subscale of the FFMQ allowed participants to avoid the effect on depression generally associated with trait self-silencing. However, the Act with Awareness subscale, $\beta_3 = -0.008$, $p = .379$ was not a significant moderator.

Hypothesis 2: Mindfulness, specifically the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales, will moderate the relationship between STSS and relationship satisfaction. We used the interaction between STSS and mindfulness to predict relationship satisfaction. Similar to depression, our analysis here also yielded a significant interaction term, $\beta_3 = 0.008$, $p < .001$. Figure 5 shows that for individuals low in mindfulness, trait self-silencing predicted worse relationship satisfaction, but that connection did not exist for those higher in mindfulness.

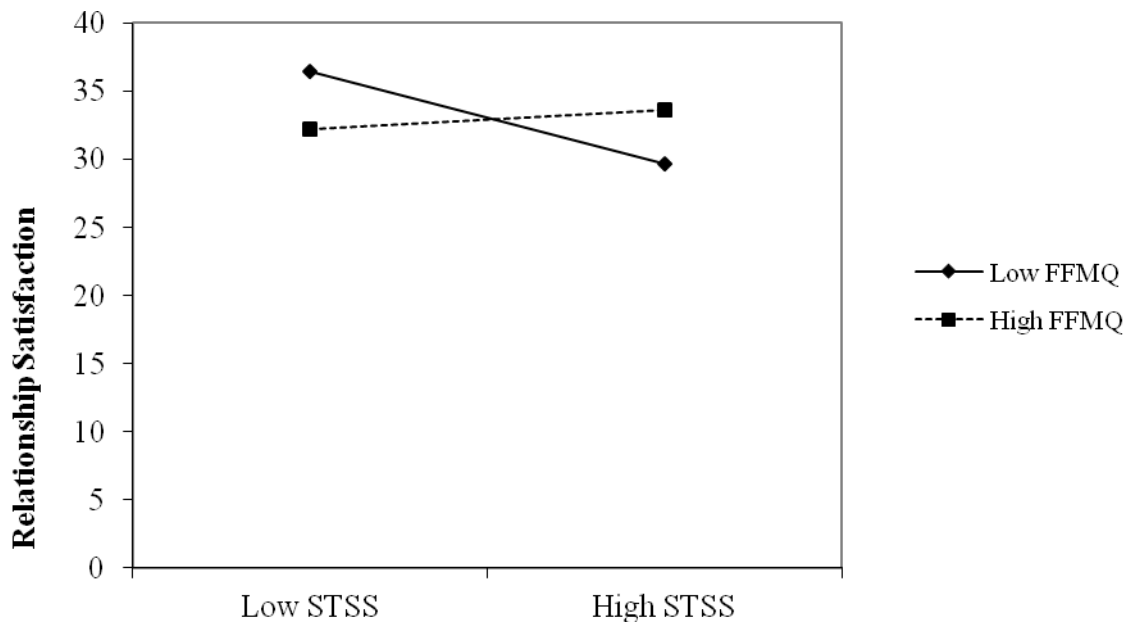


Figure 5. Results of Two-Way Moderation Analysis Showing the Interaction between FFMQ and STSS on Relationship Satisfaction.

To further investigate which aspect of mindfulness moderated the relationship between STSS and relationship satisfaction, we re-ran the moderation analyses with the different subscales of the FFMQ. We hypothesized that the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales would be significant moderators. Our hypothesis was supported. We found that the Nonjudging subscale ($\beta_3 = 0.016, p < .001$) significantly moderated the relationship between STSS and relationship satisfaction. We found that the Act with Awareness subscale ($\beta_3 = 0.026, p < .001$) also moderated the relationship. For both subscales, individuals who were low in mindfulness experienced decreases in relationship satisfaction at higher levels of STSS, but this relationship did not emerge for individuals high in mindfulness. Therefore our hypothesis that mindfulness allowed individuals to self-silence in a more accepting and strategic way was supported.

Hypothesis 3: Mindfulness, specifically the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales, will moderate the relationship between STSS and partner relationship satisfaction.

In order to explore this, we ran a simple linear regression that controlled for participants' own relationship satisfaction. We found that the interaction coefficient was marginally significant $\beta_3 = -0.006, p = .055$ (See Figure 6). There was no difference in partner relationship satisfaction as a function of mindfulness for individuals low in trait self-silencing. However, for those high in trait self-silencing, their partners relationship satisfaction was worse if participants were *high* in mindfulness.

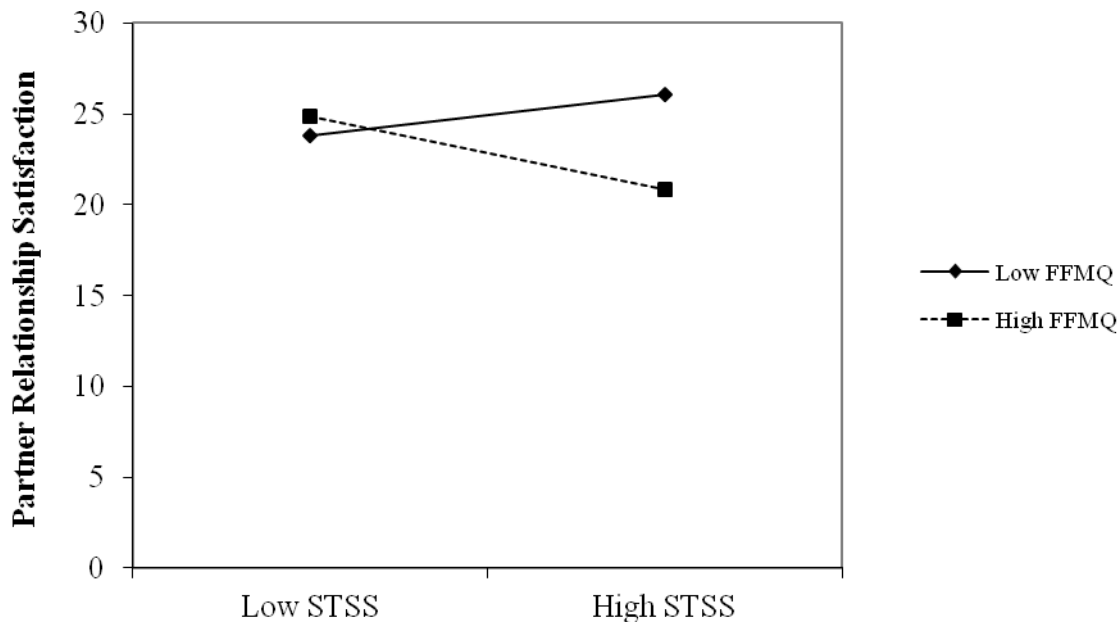


Figure 6. Results of Two-Way Moderation Analysis Showing the Interaction between FFMQ and STSS on Partner Relationship Satisfaction.

To further investigate which aspect of mindfulness moderated the relationship between STSS and partner relationship satisfaction, we re-ran the moderation analyses with the different subscales of the FFMQ. We hypothesized that the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales would be significant moderators. Our hypothesis was partially supported; the only subscale to trend toward significance was the Nonjudging subscale, $\beta_3 = -0.010$, $p = .088$. For those high in Nonjudging, there is a negative relationship between STSS and partner relationship satisfaction, for those low in Nonjudging, there is a positive relationship (See Figure 7). However, the Act with Awareness subscale ($\beta_3 = -0.014$, $p = .140$) did not significantly moderate the relationship between self-silencing and partner relationship satisfaction.

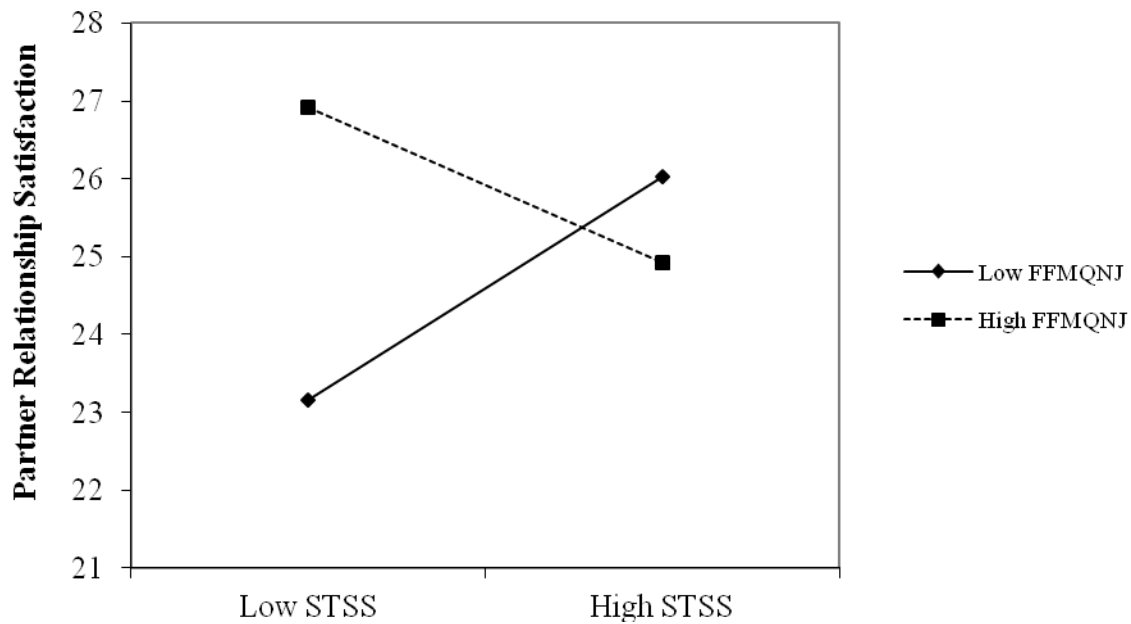


Figure 7. Results of Two-Way Moderation Analysis Showing the Interaction between FFMQ-NJ and STSS on Partner Relationship Satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4: Mindfulness, specifically the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales will moderate the relationship between STSS and daily negative affect. In order to test this hypothesis, we used HLM to predict daily negative affect at the first level. At level 2, STSS, mindfulness, and their interaction were entered into the equation. The interaction term was not significant, $\gamma_{00} = 1.404, p < .001$, and $\gamma_{03} = -0.000, p = .122$, and therefore the hypothesis was not supported.

We then re-ran the moderation analyses with the different subscales of the FFMQ. We hypothesized that the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales would be significant moderators. Our hypothesis was not supported; Nonjudging did not moderate the relationship, $\gamma_{03} = -0.000, p = .942$, nor did Act with Awareness, $\gamma_{03} = -0.000, p = .996$. None of the other mindfulness subscales were significant moderators either.

Hypothesis 5: Mindfulness, specifically the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales, will moderate the relationship between STSS and daily relationship satisfaction.

We ran the same model with daily relationship satisfaction as the outcome. Mindfulness did moderate the relationship between STSS and daily relationship satisfaction, $\gamma_{00} = 5.912, p < .001$, and $\gamma_{03} = 0.001, p < .001$. Therefore, the hypothesis was supported. The negative relationship between STSS and daily relationship satisfaction exists only for those low in mindfulness (See Figure 8).

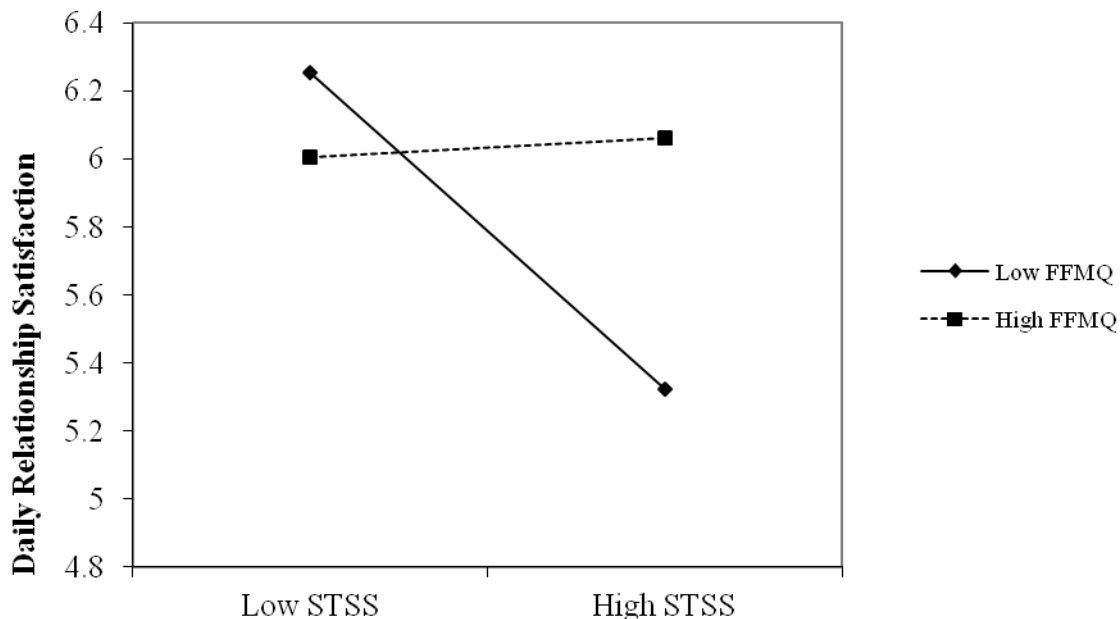


Figure 8. Results of Two-Way Moderation Analysis Showing the Interaction between FFMQ and STSS on Daily Relationship Satisfaction.

To further investigate which aspect of mindfulness moderated the relationship between STSS and daily relationship satisfaction, we re-ran the moderation analyses with the different subscales of the FFMQ. We hypothesized that the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales would be significant moderators. Our hypothesis was partially supported; the Act with

Awareness ($\gamma_{03} = 0.003, p = .002$) subscale significantly moderated the relationship between trait self-silencing and daily relationship satisfaction, however the Nonjudging subscale ($\gamma_{03} = 0.001, p = .307$) was not a significant moderator. Interestingly, although neither the Observe nor the Nonreact subscales were significant moderators, the Describe subscale ($\gamma_{03} = 0.003, p = .002$) was a significant moderator. Both the Describe and Act with Awareness subscales moderated the relationship between STSS and daily relationship satisfaction in a similar manner as the full FFMQ.

Hypothesis 6: Mindfulness, specifically the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales, will moderate the relationship between STSS and the prevalence of romantic stressors. We ran the same model with daily romantic stressors as the outcome. The hypothesis was supported; mindfulness did moderate the relationship between trait self-silencing and the prevalence of romantic relationship stressors, $\gamma_{00} = 0.953, p < .001$, and $\gamma_{03} = -0.001, p = .005$. For individuals low in mindfulness, as STSS scores increase, so does the prevalence of romantic stressors reported during the daily diaries. However, for those high in mindfulness, there is no relationship between STSS scores and the prevalence of romantic stressors (See Figure 9).

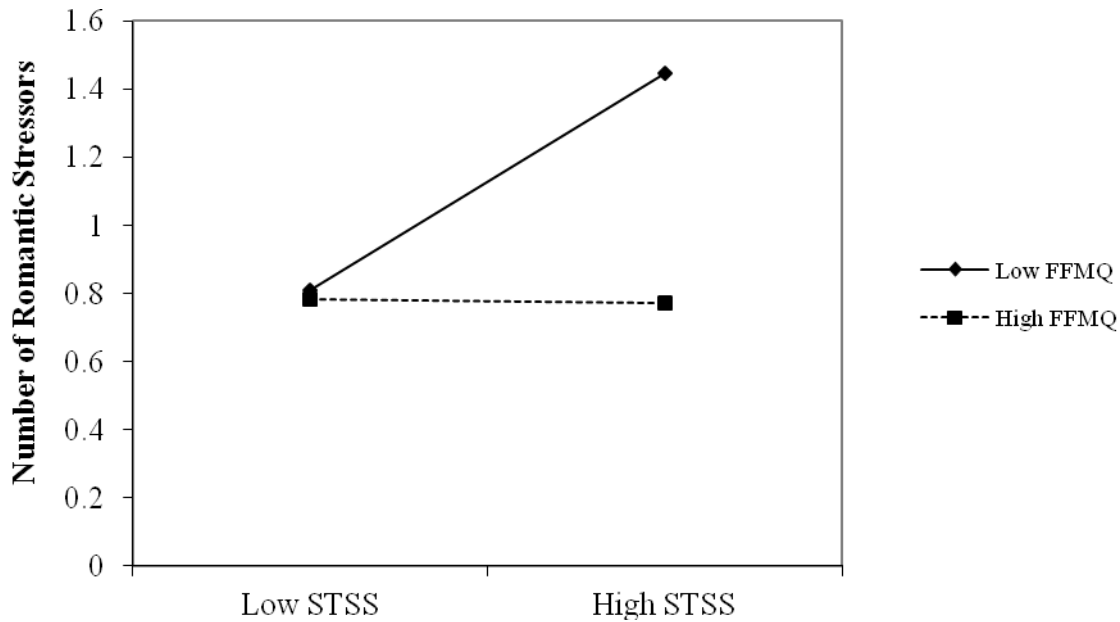


Figure 9. Results of Two-Way Moderation Analysis Showing the Interaction between FFMQ and STSS on Prevalence of Romantic Stressors.

To further investigate what aspect of mindfulness moderated the relationship between STSS and romantic stressors, we re-ran the moderation analyses with the different subscales of the FFMQ. We hypothesized that the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales would be significant moderators. Our hypothesis was supported; we saw that the Non-Judging ($\gamma_{03} = -0.001, p = .005$) and the Act with Awareness ($\gamma_{03} = -0.002, p = .027$) subscales were significant moderators. Additionally, the Non-React subscale ($\gamma_{03} = -0.002, p = .025$) also significantly moderated the relationship between trait self-silencing and prevalence of daily romantic relationship stressors; conversely, the Observe and Describe subscales were not significant moderators.

The Non-React and Act with Awareness subscales moderated the relationship between STSS and romantic stressors in a similar manner as the full FFMQ. For the Nonjudging subscale

(See Figure 10), there was still a stronger relationship between STSS and the prevalence of romantic stressors for individuals low in Nonjudging than for those high in Nonjudging. Those individuals lowest in both STSS and Nonjudging also reported the fewest romantic stressors. This finding was inconsistent with our hypothesis that Nonjudging would actually protect an individual from experiencing romantic stressors.

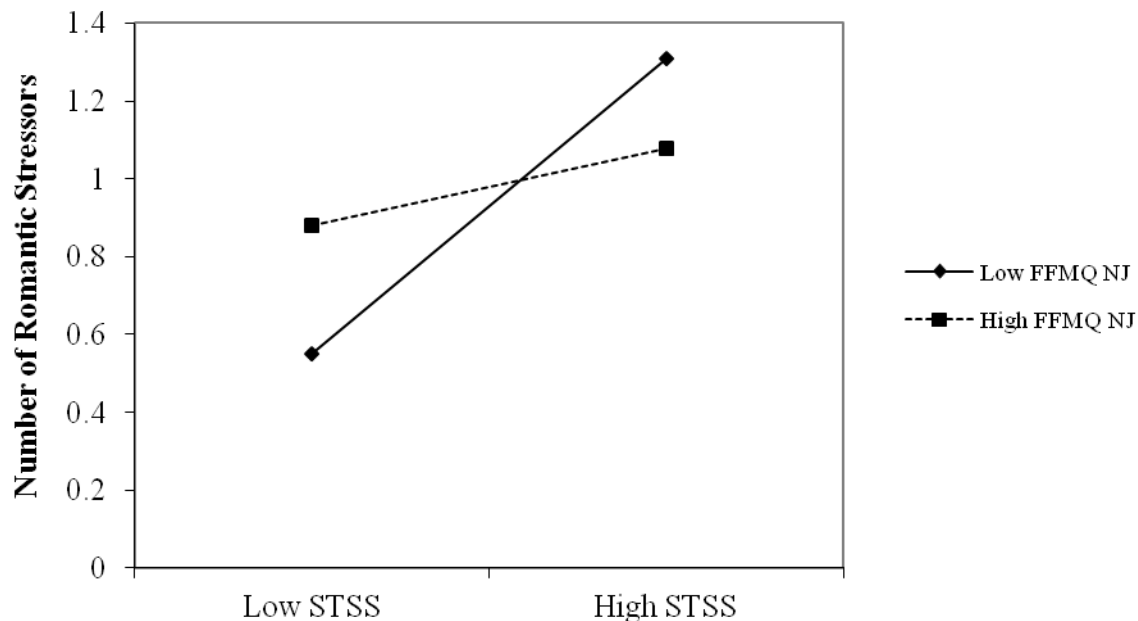


Figure 10. Results of Two-Way Moderation Analysis Showing the Interaction between FFMQ-NJ and STSS on Prevalence of Romantic Stressors.

Hypothesis 7: Mindfulness, specifically the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales, will moderate the relationship between STSS and the prevalence of days where romantic stressors were the most bothersome stressor of the day. We ran the same model with instances of most bothersome stressors as the outcome. The hypothesis was not supported; mindfulness did not moderate the relationship between trait self-silencing and the prevalence of most bothersome romantic stressors, $\gamma_{00} = -1.311$, $p < .001$, and $\gamma_{03} = -0.000$, $p = .842$.

We then re-ran the moderation analyses with the different subscales of the FFMQ. We hypothesized that the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales would be significant moderators. Our hypothesis was partially supported; we saw that the Non-Judging ($\gamma_{03} = -0.001$, $p = .048$) did moderate the relationship (See Figure 11) such that for those high in Nonjudging there was no relationship between STSS and most bothersome romantic stressors, while for those low in Nonjudging, STSS positively predicted prevalence of most bothersome romantic stressors. The Act with Awareness subscale however did not interact with STSS to predict prevalence of most bothersome romantic stressors, $\gamma_{03} = -0.000$, $p = .604$. Interestingly though, both the Observe ($\gamma_{03} = 0.002$, $p = .087$) and Describe ($\gamma_{03} = 0.002$, $p = .060$) subscales were trending but in the opposite direction. For both the Observe and Describe subscales, individuals low in those scales did not display a relationship between STSS and prevalence of most bothersome stressors; however for individuals who were high in those subscales, there was a positive relationship between STSS and instances of most bothersome stressors. This was inconsistent with our hypothesis.

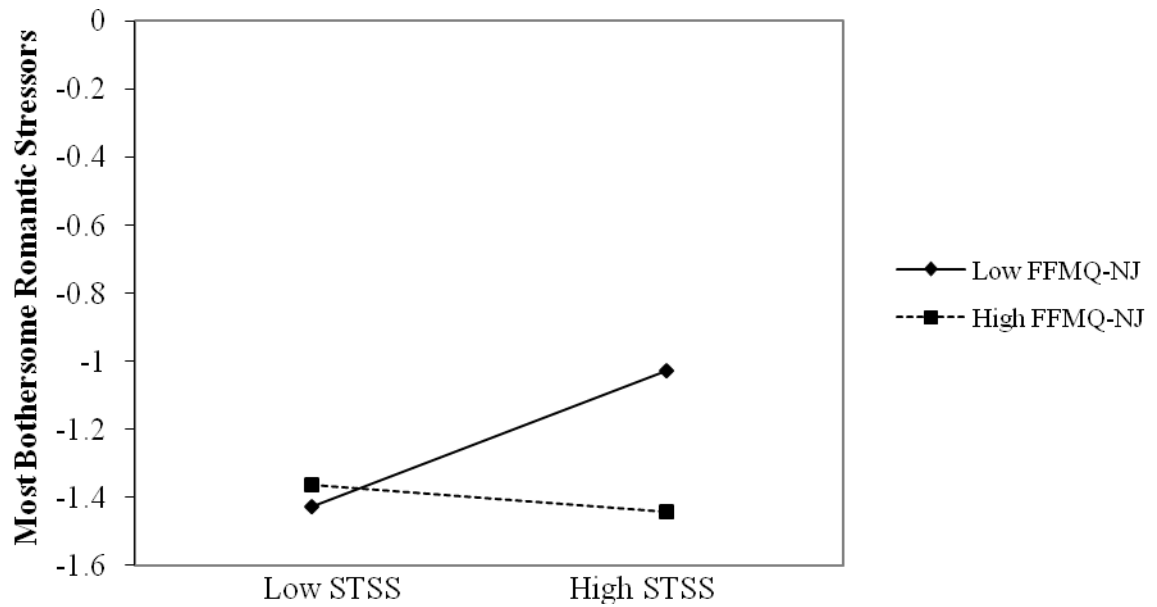


Figure 11. Results of Two-Way Moderation Analysis Showing the Interaction between FFMQ-NJ and STSS on Most Bothersome Romantic Stressors

Moderating role of mindfulness on daily self-silencing. Our final set of analyses was focused on examining the role of mindfulness at level 2 in moderating the relationship between the level 1 variable of daily self-silencing and other level 1 outcomes. For each analysis we looked at both the full scale FFMQ as well as each individual subscale. We hypothesized that the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales would be unique among the FFMQ subscales in their interaction with daily self-silencing to buffer individuals from the negative effects of daily self-silencing. We believe that individuals high in Nonjudging are able to self-silence but in a validating and nonjudgmental way. Individuals who are high on the Act with Awareness subscale are able to self-silence but in a strategic manner.

Hypothesis 1: Mindfulness, specifically the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales, will moderate the relationship between daily self-silencing and daily negative affect.

In order to test this hypothesis, we predicted daily negative affect as a function of daily self-silencing at level 1, and at level 2 we modeled the slope (relationship between negative affect and self-silencing) as a function of mindfulness. Mindfulness did not significantly predict the relationship between daily self-silencing and daily negative affect, $\gamma_{00} = 1.402$, $p < .001$, and $\gamma_{11} = -0.001$, $p = .127$. Therefore, the hypothesis was not supported.

We then re-ran the moderation analyses with the different subscales of the FFMQ. We hypothesized that the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales would be significant moderators. We found that the Nonjudging subscale was trending in its relationship ($\gamma_{11} = -0.003$, $p = .087$). Individuals higher in the Nonjudging subscale had a weaker relationship between daily self-silencing and daily negative affect. However, the Act with Awareness subscale ($\gamma_{11} = -0.006$, $p = .107$) did not moderate the relationship between daily self-silencing and daily negative affect, nor did any of the other subscales.

Hypothesis 2: Mindfulness, specifically the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales, will moderate the relationship between daily self-silencing and daily relationship satisfaction. In order to examine this, we ran the same analyses as above but used daily relationship satisfaction as the outcome variable. We found that $\gamma_{00} = 5.923$, $p < .001$, and $\gamma_{11} = 0.001$, $p = .594$, therefore mindfulness did not moderate that relationship, and our hypothesis was not supported.

We then re-ran the moderation analyses with the different subscales of the FFMQ. We hypothesized that the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales would be significant moderators. However, neither Nonjudging ($\gamma_{11} = 0.004$, $p = .247$) nor Act with Awareness ($\gamma_{11} =$

0.001, $p = .938$), significantly interacted with daily self-silencing to predict daily relationship satisfaction. Finally, the other three subscales also did not moderate the relationship.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

Overview

We had three goals in this study. First, we wanted to examine the daily outcomes of trait self-silencing. We believed that trait self-silencing would predict negative affect, relationship dissatisfaction, the prevalence of romantic conflicts, romantic conflicts that are perceived as the most bothersome conflict of the day, and daily self-silencing behaviors. Second, we wanted to look at the outcomes of daily self-silencing and whether they were moderated by trait self-silencing. We believed that daily self-silencing would lead to negative affect and relationship dissatisfaction, and that these outcomes would be worse for individuals high in trait self-silencing. Third, we wanted to see whether mindfulness moderated the outcomes of both trait and daily self-silencing. We believed that individuals high in mindfulness, particularly the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales, would not experience the negative outcomes typically associated with high trait self-silencing. Throughout all of these analyses, we also addressed the significant gender discrepancies related to self-silencing, as evidenced in both the pre-existing literature and in our sample.

In order to pursue our goals, we adopted two methodologies new to the literature on self-silencing. We used a daily diary methodology and we obtained data from participants' partners, including the partners' perceptions of self-silencing.

Main Findings

Our findings yielded several themes. Our preliminary analyses revealed that our sample was slightly less depressed, less self-silencing, and more mindful than typical college samples. We also saw that partner perception of trait self-silencing was relatively consistent with

participant self-reports, but was not a better predictor of daily diary outcomes than participant self-report. Our analyses showed that trait self-silencing was a multidimensional construct; specifically, it is noteworthy that the subscales varied substantially in the daily diary outcomes they predicted. Lastly, we found that trait and daily self-silencing appears to be more harmful for women than men.

In terms of our main analyses, we found that trait self-silencing demonstrated several main effects on daily diary outcomes. Daily self-silencing was also more harmful for those high in trait self-silencing. Lastly, mindfulness buffered individuals from the negative effects of trait self-silencing.

Characteristics of our sample. Our sample had several differences with typical college samples. First, our sample scored significantly higher (about $\frac{1}{2}$ of a standard deviation) in mindfulness on average than most college samples. It more closely resembled a highly educated sample (Baer et al., 2008). It is possible that this difference is due to the relatively higher academic rigor at American University as compared with other universities from which previous undergraduate populations have been sampled in mindfulness research. However, we did not collect information on grade point average or standardized test scores in order to see if there was a relationship between those variables and FFMQ scores.

Second, our sample scored significantly lower (about $\frac{1}{3}$ of a standard deviation) in trait self-silencing than most undergraduate samples (Jack & Dill, 1992; Lutz-Zois et al., 2013; Schrick et al., 2012). The lower level of trait self-silencing may represent the relatively egalitarian nature of the Washington DC area, where women are commonly in positions of power and may either experience or tolerate less gender inequality than in other regions of the country. For example, the gender pay disparity is lower in Washington DC than in any of the

fifty states (Hill, 2014). Previous research found that STSS was lower in populations with less gender inequality (Hautamaki, 2010). Additionally, the American University campus has a lively and activist political culture, whereby students are encouraged to speak-up on issues that are important to them. Therefore, it is possible that the university draws a population of individuals who are particularly low in trait self-silencing.

Third, our sample was significantly lower in terms of depression (about ½ of a standard deviation) than most undergraduate samples (Herman et al., 2011). This is consistent with the above two differences, in that depression and self-silencing are correlated positively with each other and negatively with mindfulness.

Partner perception of self-silencing. Our descriptive statistics also demonstrated that partners' perceptions of trait self-silencing were moderately correlated with participants' own self-reports. The Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale demonstrated the strongest correlation between participants self-report and partner perceptions. The Divided Self subscale had the lowest correlation. Additionally, for partners of men, the Divided Self subscale of the measure of partner perception of trait self-silencing had poor internal reliability. This makes sense conceptually as the Divided Self subscale may be the most difficult to perceive from another person as it literally measures a discrepancy between observable and internal information, and for men this discrepancy may be particularly difficult to perceive.

Unexpectedly, though, partners' perception of self-silencing was not related to participants' relationship satisfaction. This was in contrast to the negative correlation found between participants' self-report of trait self-silencing and their own relationship satisfaction.

While no a priori hypotheses were made, we also looked at whether partner perception of trait self-silencing was a stronger predictor of negative outcomes than participant self-report. We

reasoned that there could be different implications for self-report of self-silencing than for partner perception of self-silencing. We found that partner perception of trait self-silencing predicted relationship stressors and was trending in its prediction of daily self-silencing. However, partner perception did not predict negative affect, most bothersome stressors, or daily relationship satisfaction. Therefore partner self-silencing was not as strong of a predictor of daily diary outcomes as was individuals' own self-report. This may be because the strongest predictors of negative affect, most bothersome stressors, and daily relationship satisfaction were the Divided Self and Self-Silencing subscales and those could potentially be the hardest to perceive accurately by another person. Both subscales represent purely internalized phenomena whereas the Externalized Self-Perception and Care as Self-Sacrifice subscales involve more externalized and observable behaviors.

Multidimensionality of trait self-silencing. The subscales vary in their prediction of measures of mood and relationship satisfaction. In particular, the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale tended to predict very different outcomes than the other subscales. For men, among all the trait self-silencing subscales, it had the weakest correlation with depression and it was actually trending toward significance in the positive direction in its correlation with relationship satisfaction. For women, it was unrelated to either depression or relationship satisfaction. Additionally, we found that the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale did not predict romantic stressors, most bothersome relationship stressors, or daily relationship satisfaction

Our work is not the first to indicate that the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale may have different implications than other subscales. Whiffen et al. (2007) concluded that the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale was inconsistently related to depression. Lutz-Zois et al. (2013) found that the subscale was inversely related to depression for men, and Duarte and Thompson (1999)

found that unlike for women, for men the Care as Self-Sacrifice was not related to anger or resentment. It is possible that Care as Self-Sacrifice is not associated with as many negative outcomes in our study because of the relatively young age of our sample population. Self-sacrificing behaviors may not be as problematic in young relationships where individuals may still be in the “honeymoon” phase. Furthermore, college aged couples often do not live together or have kids, and so their relationships are less enmeshed. Perhaps self-sacrificing behaviors only begin to build resentment and lead to a loss of identity if they occur over a long period of time, or when relationships become more complicated and interconnected. Our study may not have been able to detect that trend. Additionally, it is possible that the relationship between care as self-sacrifice and relationship satisfaction is curvilinear, with a medium amount being good for relationships and a low or high amount being negative.

On the other hand, we found that the Externalized Self-Perception and the Divided Self subscales were strongly related to depression and negative affect, which was consistent with Whiffen et al. (2007). Along with the Self-Silencing subscale, the Divided Self subscale was also inversely related to relationship satisfaction. In terms of how the different subscales moderated the relationship between daily self-silencing and daily outcomes, Externalized Self-Perception was the only subscale to moderate the relationship between daily self-silencing and negative affect, and the Self-Silencing subscale was the only subscale to moderate the relationship between daily self-silencing and daily relationship satisfaction. Overall, the STSS appeared very multi-dimensional, with scores on the Divided Self associated with the most harmful outcomes and scores on the Care as Self-Sacrifice associated with the least harmful outcomes.

Gender discrepancies. Consistent with previous findings (e.g. Gratch et al., 1995), we found that men had higher levels of trait self-silencing, although the difference was not statistically significant. We also found differences in the construct and predictive validity of trait self-silencing in men and women. For instance, the full STSS as well as the subscales were more internally reliable in women than in men. Additionally, trait self-silencing had different implications for men compared with women. While we were limited in our conclusions by the small sample size of men in our study ($n = 13$), consistent patterns emerged. When examining pair-wise correlations for women, trait self-silencing and each subscale (except Care as Self-Sacrifice) were positively correlated with depression. For men, the correlations were much weaker, but they were in the same positive direction. When examining negative affect, we found that gender did moderate the relationship between trait self-silencing and daily negative affect. In women only, trait self-silencing predicted daily negative affect. These findings were consistent with previous research that demonstrated a weaker link between trait self-silencing and depression for men than for women (e.g. Gratch et al., 1995; Thompson, 1995).

We also found that, consistent with past research (Harper & Welsh, 2007; Thompson, 1995), gender moderated the relationship between self-silencing and relationship satisfaction. When examining pair-wise correlations, we saw that while trait self-silencing and each subscale (except Care as Self-Sacrifice) was significantly and negatively correlated with initial relationship satisfaction for women, the full STSS and each subscale was actually positively correlated with relationship satisfaction for men. While the small sample size of men prevented any of the correlations from reaching significance, the correlation between relationship satisfaction and Care as Self-Sacrifice approached significance.

Lastly, we found that gender interacted with self-silencing to predict prevalence of romantic stressors and most bothersome romantic stressors. Only for women, did self-silencing predict these outcomes. This is consistent with the argument that women tend to view their romantic relationship stressors as more significant for their mental health than do men (Jack et al., 2010; Jordon, 2010) and that for clinically depressed women, trait self-silencing was positively related to identifying romantic relationships as being the greatest source of stress in one's life (Ali et al., 2002). Our findings support the argument by Smolak (2010) that the "lived experience" of self-silencing for women is very different and more harmful than for men because it reinforces societal stereotypes that women should remain silent and subjugate their needs in romantic relationships.

Trait self-silencing predicts daily outcomes. When we predicted daily outcomes of trait self-silencing, we found that even after controlling for depression, trait self-silencing predicted the prevalence of daily relationship stressors, most bothersome relationship stressors, and negative daily relationship satisfaction. This is consistent with previous findings demonstrating that trait self-silencing predicted negative relationship satisfaction (Harper and Welsh, 2007; Ubelacker et al., 2003). Additionally, our findings support the argument offered by Jack (1991) and others that self-silencing, contrary to its intent to preserve relationships, may actually perpetuate conflicts and hurt relationship satisfaction on a daily basis. To our knowledge this is the first study in which the negative consequences of trait self-silencing have been demonstrated in everyday life among people in romantic relationships.

We also found that trait self-silencing predicted the use of daily self-silencing behaviors. This lends evidence to the argument that trait self-silencing does not just measure one's beliefs about his/her voice or their self-efficacy in relationships, but does predict self-silencing

behaviors in the context of everyday life. The only other study finding that trait self-silencing predicted specific self-silencing behaviors is from Harper and Welsh (2007), who found that trait self-silencing was related to giving into one's partner more often. However, that was a one-time behavior, whereas we found that the relationship between trait self-silencing and self-silencing behaviors occurred over a two-week period.

Interestingly, the only subscale of trait self-silencing to predict daily self-silencing was Care as Self-Sacrifice. However, this may have occurred due to the methodology by which we calculated daily self-silencing. Specifically, daily self-silencing was computed by totaling participants' responses to two questions, "Put others needs first," and "Kept my feelings to myself to avoid disagreement." This is significant because these two behaviors most closely represent items on the Care as Self-Sacrifice and Self-Silencing subscales, respectively.

However, we found that trait self-silencing did not predict negative affect when we controlled for depression. Of course, given that depression overlaps substantially with negative affect, this is not surprising. For example, we found that depression significantly predicted daily negative affect, when examined using HLM analyses, $\beta_{01} = 0.025, p < .001$.

Lastly, we did not find that trait self-silencing predicted relationship satisfaction for participants' partners. This was inconsistent with previous findings that found that for women, trait self-silencing was related to negative relationship satisfaction for individuals' husbands (Thompson, 1995). It is possible that since our participants were younger college students who were mostly living separately and unmarried, there was less of an effect of trait self-silencing on partner relationship satisfaction. Perhaps that connection takes a longer time to develop or requires more regular and intimate interaction, and newer relationships may not see the same impact of trait self-silencing on a partner's relationship satisfaction.

Outcomes of daily self-silencing are moderated by trait self-silencing. Our study found that daily self-silencing predicted negative affect. To our knowledge, this is the first evidence that links a depressive affect with specific instances of self-silencing. Past research had linked self-silencing behaviors with increased hostility following a conflict (Romero-Canyas et al., 2013), but previous conclusions that self-silencing and depression were related relied upon trait ratings of self-silencing and depression (e.g. Gratch et al., 1995). It is important to recognize though that our findings that daily self-silencing predicted negative affect only approached significance. Furthermore, they were no longer trending toward significance when we controlled for depression. It is possible though, that if we used a better measure of daily self-silencing (e.g. one that captured all aspects of self-silencing, not just care as self-sacrifice and self-silencing) we would be able to see an effect on negative affect.

We also found that daily self-silencing was more predictive of negative affect among individuals scoring higher in the Externalized Self-Perception subscale. This is logical, as these individuals may be more dependent upon external validation and they deny themselves that opportunity by self-silencing during a conflict.

Lastly, we saw that daily self-silencing was more predictive of daily relationship satisfaction among those who were high in the Self-Silencing subscale. Taken together, the above findings suggest that self-silencing is particularly harmful when it is part of a long term pattern of silencing one's needs.

Mindfulness buffers the negative effects of self-silencing. A central focus of our study was examining whether individuals who were mindful did not experience the same negative consequences of self-silencing. We found a pattern of results in our study that supports that idea. Mindful nonjudging moderated the relationship between trait self-silencing and depression.

While trait self-silencing positively predicted depression for individuals low in mindfulness, for individuals high in mindfulness, there was a negative relationship between trait self-silencing and depression.

Mindful nonjudging and mindful awareness moderated the relationship between trait self-silencing and initial relationship satisfaction and prevalence of romantic stressors. For those high in mindfulness, self-silencing did not predict the negative outcomes. We also found that mindful awareness moderated the relationship between trait self-silencing and daily relationship satisfaction. Trait self-silencing predicted daily relationship dissatisfaction only for those low in mindfulness. Mindful nonjudging also moderated the relationship between trait self-silencing and the prevalence of romantic stressors being judged the most bothersome stressor of the day. While trait self-silencing positively predicted depression for individuals low in mindfulness, for individuals high in mindfulness, there was a negative relationship between trait self-silencing and depression

In summary, individuals high in mindfulness are able to silence themselves without experiencing the same costs to their mental health or relationship health. Self-silencing is only harmful when in a non-mindful context. A possible explanation for our findings is that individuals high in mindfulness are better able to validate and accept their emotions and needs, even if they do not express them. Additionally, individuals high in mindfulness may be more explicitly aware of their needs and thus are more strategic and less impulsive in expressing them. Their validation is not dependent upon external expression.

Our results are consistent with findings that those who are high in mindfulness have stronger communication patterns in relationships as well as fewer conflicts (Barnes et al., 2007; Carson et al., 2004; Dekeyser et al., 2008; Kozlowski, 2013). Additionally, our findings are

consistent with the previous findings that mindfulness moderated the relationship between attachment anxiety and relationship dissolution. Considering the link between trait self-silencing and attachment anxiety, it makes sense that mindfulness would interact with self-silencing in a similar fashion as attachment anxiety in predicting relationship outcomes.

Interestingly though, mindfulness did not moderate the relationship between trait self-silencing and negative affect. This is inconsistent with findings from Gunthert et al. (1999) that acceptance was the only coping strategy to reduce negative affect. This suggests that the benefits of mindfulness occur over time as mindful individuals may still experience typical negative affect, but are able to deal with it more effectively, thus minimizing the risk of future depression. Perhaps those who are high in mindfulness are able to recover from negative affect more quickly without experiencing a prolonged depressed mood. A large body of literature has pointed to the significance of mindfulness in promoting emotion regulation (Goodall et al., 2012), and research has linked mindfulness with higher levels of self-compassion (Neff, 2003) and a decreased need to react to negative emotion (Feltman, Robinson, & Ode, 2009). Perhaps the benefit afforded by mindfulness may come in how one responds to their negative affect not in reducing negative affect itself. This is consistent with the literature supporting mindfulness based therapies (e.g. Acceptance and Commitment Therapy or Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy) as treatments for depression. Increasing one's mindfulness may allow an individual to make more adaptive responses to one's emotions, rather than changing one's emotions directly (Hayes, 2004; Teasdale et al., 2000).

We did not find that mindfulness consistently interacted with daily self-silencing to influence outcomes that were measured at a daily level. We only found that mindful nonjudging was trending toward significance in interacting with daily self-silencing to buffer individuals

from experiencing negative affect. It is possible that we were limited in our measurement because our measure of daily self-silencing only measured behaviors that matched two of the four subscales of the STSS.

We also did not find that mindfulness buffered the negative effects of trait self-silencing on partner relationship satisfaction. While the interaction between trait self-silencing and mindfulness was approaching significance in its prediction of partner relationship satisfaction, the relationship was in an unexpected direction. Those who were high in trait self-silencing had worse partner relationship satisfaction when they were high in mindfulness. There was no connection between trait self-silencing and partner relationship satisfaction for those low in self-silencing. This is inconsistent with findings that mindfulness may promote effective communication patterns in relationships as well as overall relationship satisfaction (Barnes et al., 2007; Gambrel & Keeling, 2010)

Real World Implications

Our findings demonstrate that trait self-silencing predicts the prevalence of romantic relationship stressors and negative relationship satisfaction over a two week period, even when controlling for depression. Our findings underline the importance of expressing one's needs in a relationship in order to be able to minimize the stress and conflicts that emerge in a relationship.

Our findings also support the argument that self-silencing might not always be maladaptive. Trait self-silencing appears to be most harmful for women. Only for women was self-silencing related to relationship dissatisfaction, relationship stressors, and negative affect. Additionally, self-silencing was not harmful when individuals were also high in mindfulness. When conducted within a nonjudgmental and mindfully aware context, self-silencing was

actually associated with less depression than those who were lower in self-silencing but also lower in mindfulness.

We also found that the relationship between daily self-silencing and both negative affect and daily relationship satisfaction was worse among those with high scores on the Externalized Self-Perception and Self-Silencing subscales respectively. This underscores that specific behaviors of self-silencing may be particularly harmful in the context of overall negative beliefs about one's voice and efficacy in relationships. Self-silencing behaviors are most harmful when they confirm an existing belief.

Lastly, our findings lend support to the importance of mindfulness as a strategy of regulating one's emotions. While our study demonstrated that trait mindfulness moderated the relationship between self-silencing and various negative outcomes, we did not examine whether training in mindfulness could alleviate the negative consequences of self-silencing. This could be the case, as there is research on the benefits of mindfulness training (See Carson et al., 2004; Teasdale et al., 2000) both for treating individuals' psychiatric symptoms as well as for improving relationships.

Advantages of Current Research

This project had several advantages in its design. First, by using a daily diary methodology, we were able to examine self-silencing in a more ecologically valid way. Previous research suggests that when individuals are asked to rate their aggregate trait levels of coping skills, they tend to inaccurately recall (Stone et al., 1998) and predict (Schwartz et al., 1999) their behaviors; individuals also tend to rate their behaviors along gender norms (Porter et al., 2000). Significantly, these gender differences disappear when coping is assessed at a more ecological level. This brings into question the merit of relying solely on aggregate self-reports of coping

behaviors, including self-silencing. In this study, we examined both aggregate and daily assessments of self-silencing behaviors and mood.

Second, by using a sample of individuals who were all in romantic relationships of at least one month, we were able to examine self-silencing behaviors within the context of relationships. Previous research that has examined self-silencing behaviors (as opposed to trait self-silencing) has looked at the behaviors in workplace settings (Cortina & Magley, 2003) or during an experimental inducement of rejection (Romero-Canyas et al., 2013). Only one other study (Harper & Welsh, 2007) examined some types of self-silencing behaviors in a relationship, but that was only through a one-time assessment.

Third, this study was also unique in its inclusion of the partners' perspectives of the participants' self-silencing behavior. This allowed two different measurements of participants' trait level self-silencing. It is possible that trait self-silencing is more harmful for relationships when partners also perceive it, as the partners become frustrated as well. However, the opposite argument could also be made, because if partners do not perceive an individual's self-silencing, then that individual could feel even more alone in the relationship.

Fourth, this study was unique in bridging the research from self-silencing with mindfulness. We found that self-silencing within the context of high mindfulness was not associated with the negative outcomes of depression and relationship dissatisfaction that are typically correlated with high self-silencing. Being mindfully nonjudgmental and aware may allow individuals to recognize and accept their emotions and needs while being strategic with what and how they express those emotions. Therefore the harmful aspect of self-silencing may not be the fact that one does not express themselves, it may be how one relates to him or herself internally.

Limitations of Current Research

While this study was designed in part to address limitations in the previous body of research on self-silencing, limitations of the present design exist as well. Participants were all undergraduate students at a private university on the East Coast. This sample is obviously not representative of the population as a whole. Furthermore, most participants (81%) were women. Therefore our analyses for the effects of self-silencing in men were underpowered, limiting our ability to detect the differences in self-silencing between men and women. We were also unable to look specifically at the effects of self-silencing in men. This was unfortunate as previous literature has demonstrated that self-silencing is very different in men than women (Gratch et al., 1995; Lutz-Zois et al., 2013; Remen et al., 2002). While we were able to see clear patterns of differences in the construct of self-silencing between men and women, our analyses were limited by the small sample size of men.

Additionally, the women in this sample may not experience the same level of systematic disempowerment that women in other populations are vulnerable to. Therefore, it is possible that the self-silencing construct is less applicable in this population. Jack and Dill (1992) demonstrated that self-silencing was higher for women in more vulnerable positions. However, Jack and Dill (1992) still found similar correlations between trait self-silencing and depression in all three samples. Therefore, while STSS may have varied throughout the three samples, the construct validity may be similar. Furthermore, self-silencing has still been correlated with depression in cultures where gender-based disempowerment is thought to be minimal (See Hautamaki, 2010).

An additional limitation of the study is that the methodology used, daily diary assessments, may not be as ecologically valid as previous research that has collected research more frequently during the day. It is possible that since we only assessed participants once a day, that their memory of their daily behaviors was not as accurate as it would have been if we had we done assessments more frequently. However, by only assessing once a day, we were able to measure self-silencing, coping, and mood over a longer period of time, thus potentially capturing the effects of a greater prevalence of stressors.

As discussed above, our daily self-silencing methodology only captured two of the four facets of self-silencing: care as self-sacrifice and self-silencing. We did not represent either externalized self-perception or the divided self in our measure of daily self-silencing. Therefore, analyses of daily self-silencing may be inadequate.

Our analyses may also have been vulnerable to an inflated Type 1 error rate. We experienced an alpha inflation due to the large number of analyses we ran. However, we chose not to correct for this because of our small sample size. Any correction for alpha inflation would have been overly restrictive of our ability to find significant conclusions. Additionally, the consistent patterns in our findings tempered our concern about an inflated Type 1 error rate.

It is also possible that the measures given to participants' partners may have been particularly vulnerable to demand characteristics. The partners were completing measures about their romantic partners (the participants), and thus the partners may have felt a pressure to be overly complimentary of the participants. It is also possible that partners may have feared that the participants would have access to their responses as well. While we stated clearly in the informed consent that neither participants nor partners would have access to each other's responses, it is still possible that the concern affected partner responses.

A final limitation of our study is that we did not examine the influence of whether couples were co-habiting or even in the same city. As our sample was all undergraduate students, it is possible that many were long distance and many did not live together. This is significant as more frequent contact may affect one's ability to accurately perceive his/her partner's self-silencing. Furthermore, self-silencing could potentially be more damaging when in the context of a cohabitating relationship where opportunities to express one's needs and emotions are more common.

Future Directions of Research

An important direction for future research would be to explore whether the motivation for self-silencing is different in individuals high in mindfulness, or if instead individuals high in mindfulness are just more able to cope with the negative repercussions of self-silencing. One strategy to assess these motivations would be consistent with Jack's (1991) initial studies of self-silencing: through qualitative research. Further understanding the stated motivations of individuals high in mindfulness when they self-silence, would help us better understand if they experience self-silencing differently than those low in mindfulness, or if they are just better able to cope with the consequences of self-silencing. Our findings suggest that trait self-silencing may be less harmful overall for men, and less harmful for individuals high in mindfulness. Additionally, our research indicates that daily self-silencing may be more harmful for individuals high in trait self-silencing. It is possible that there are different motivations for self-silencing, and these motivations are what could be leading to the different outcomes.

Another direction for future research may be to examine how to better measure the construct of daily self-silencing. This could include a measure that captures aspects of self-silencing that our measure did not, such as divided self or externalized self-perception.

Additionally, this could include a measure of the prevalence of self-silencing behaviors during the day. In contrast, we asked about the extent to which self-silencing was used in response to one specific situation per day. By creating a more valid assessment of daily self-silencing, we could examine more closely the similarities and differences between trait and daily self-silencing.

In the future, we could also improve our ability to examine partner perception of self-silencing. In the current study we examined partner perception of trait self-silencing, rather than the perception of daily self-silencing. This perception could be important in predicting the outcome of conflicts, as the partners of individuals who are high in self-silencing are more likely to feel frustrated following a conflict (Harper and Welsh, 2007).

A different direction for future research could be to examine the variables that mediate the relationship between trait self-silencing and depression more closely. This could be accomplished particularly effectively through a daily diary methodology. Specifically, it would be beneficial to understand which coping strategies mediate the relationship between trait self-silencing and depression.

Most of the research on self-silencing in relationships thus far have focused on concurrent correlations between self-silencing and relationship variables. Therefore no causality can be inferred. It is therefore not yet understood whether self-silencing leads to negative relationship satisfaction or instead whether negative relationship satisfaction leads to self-silencing. Likely, a more transactional relationship where one variable leads to another which then influences the first, is the most accurate. In order to investigate the direction of causality, it may be informative to examine trait self-silencing at the very early stages of a relationship and then examine relationship satisfaction at a time point one year later. Additionally, we may

examine individuals' self-silencing specific to several different relationships to see whether there is a consistency in self-silencing across those relationships, or to see if one only self-silences in certain relationships. This information may help us understand further if trait self-silencing is global for individuals or rather if it is a more relationship-specific phenomena. If it is the latter, it may be understood more as a consequence of a less than positive relationship. A final way to examine this question may be using the daily diary methodology. We could track whether self-silencing behaviors lead to later negative relationship satisfaction, or whether negative relationship satisfaction on one day leads to an increase in self-silencing behaviors the following day.

An additional direction for future research would be to continue to examine whether trait and daily self-silencing looks different among same sex couples than opposite sex couples. Due to the socialized gender role component of self-silencing in women, it might be expected that both women in a same sex relationship could engage in self-silencing. It's also possible though, that women in a same sex relationship may not exhibit some of the gendered behavior to which women are socialized to conform in the presence of men. Therefore, women in same sex relationship may be buffered from the pressure to self-silence. This is an empirical question that could be explored further in the future.

Finally, as research has examined that self-silencing varies cross culturally (Hautamaki, 2010) and across racial ethnicities (Gratch et al., 1995), future research could explore whether the moderating role of mindfulness is consistent across cultures and ethnicities. It is possible that mindfulness may not moderate the relationship between self-silencing and depression or relationship satisfaction in samples that are ethnically and culturally distinct from ours.

Conclusion

In conclusion, our study found that trait self-silencing significantly predicted the daily relationship satisfaction and the prevalence of romantic stressors that an individual experiences each day, and was trending in its prediction of daily self-silencing. We also found that daily self-silencing was more likely to lead to negative affect and poorer daily relationship satisfaction, when individuals scored higher on the Externalized Self-perception and Self-silencing subscales respectively. Lastly, individuals who were high in mindfulness, particularly the Nonjudging and Act with Awareness subscales, were buffered from the negative effects of self-silencing as measured through both initial outcomes and daily diary outcomes. Our results show that trait self-silencing is actually not harmful when individuals also score high on a measure of mindfulness. We believe that self-silencing, when conducted with an attitude of acceptance and awareness, can serve adaptive functions. Throughout our analyses we saw that self-silencing was often only harmful for women, and not men. Silencing one's self, at times and for some people, may be healthy.

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