



Articles

Playing Moderately Hard to Get

An Application of Brehm's Emotion Intensity Theory

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Abstract

In two studies, we examined the effect of different degrees of attraction reciprocation on ratings of attraction toward a potential romantic partner. Undergraduate college student participants imagined a potential romantic partner who reciprocated a low (reciprocating attraction one day a week), moderate (reciprocating attraction three days a week), high (reciprocating attraction five days a week), or unspecified degree of attraction (no mention of reciprocation). Participants then rated their degree of attraction toward the potential partner. The results of Study 1 provided only partial support for Brehm's emotion intensity theory. However, after revising the high reciprocation condition vignette in Study 2, supporting Brehm's emotion intensity theory, results show that a potential partners' display of reciprocation of attraction acted as a deterrent to participants' intensity of experienced attraction to the potential partner. The results support the notion that playing moderately hard to get elicits more intense feelings of attraction from potential suitors than playing too easy or too hard to get. Discussion of previous research examining playing hard to get is also re-examined through an emotion intensity theory theoretical lens.

Keywords: emotion intensity theory, reciprocation of attraction, romantic attraction

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Social psychologists have long recognized the importance of reciprocation of attraction for the development of interpersonal relationships (Finkel & Baumeister, 2010). In general, people like others who like them back (Kenny, 1994). When informed that another person likes or dislikes him or her, individuals reciprocate with equal like or dislike (Lehr & Geher, 2006; Whitchurch, Wilson, & Gilbert, 2011) manifested through differential displays of behavior in interpersonal interactions (Curtis & Miller, 1986), such as acting more friendly and warm (Stinson, Cameron, Wood, Gaucher, & Holmes, 2009). Similarly, people indicate that reciprocation of attraction is a key determinant of romantic attraction for another person (Peretti & Abplanalp, 2004; Sprecher, 1998). Learning that a potential romantic partner reciprocates one's attraction leads to increased attraction for the potential partner (Greitemeyer, 2010). People expect their attraction to be reciprocated (Back et al., 2011), and experience negative emotions (i.e., distress) and uncertainty when reciprocation is withheld (Baumeister, Wotman, & Stillwell, 1993). The expectation of reciprocation, and the negative reactions experienced when one's displays of attraction are not reciprocated, question the popular notion that withholding reciprocation (i.e., "playing hard to get") is an advantageous dating strategy.

Initial investigations of the hard to get phenomenon suggest that people are attracted to potential partners who are selective in their dating choices (Matthews, Rosenfield, & Stephan, 1979; Walster, Walster, Piliavin, & Schmidt, 1973). First, one explanation for the hard to get phenomenon resides in the distinction between dyadic reciprocity (liking reciprocated between two individuals) versus generalized reciprocity (a non-specific liking for others in general) (Kenny, 1994). When examining speed-daters, individuals who express romantic desires toward a specific person receive more reciprocation than if they display romantic attraction to multiple potential partners (Eastwick, Finkel, Mochon, & Ariely, 2007). In other words, people are attracted to potential partners who are selective in their reciprocation of attraction. A second explanation suggests that uncertainty about the other's attraction leads to increased thoughts about the other person, and subsequently greater attraction (Whitchurch et al., 2011). A third explanation of why people like potential partners who play hard to get follows from Brehm's (1999) emotion intensity theory.

Jack Brehm is famously remembered for his theoretical contributions to cognitive dissonance and his theory of psychological reactance. However, he also proposed a lesser known, but similarly impressive, theory of emotional and motivational intensity (Wright, 2011). Brehm's (1999) emotion intensity theory posits that emotions, affect, and mood are motivational states that urge behavior or adaptation toward a goal, and one's degree of emotional intensity is affected by the difficulty in obtaining one's goal. When one's goals are inhibited (termed deterrents), one's degree of emotional intensity (and related motivation) interacts with the magnitude of the deterrent to the goal in a cubic function. When no deterrents are present (i.e., difficulty of obtaining the goal is unknown or unspecified), the intensity of an emotion experienced equals the potential intensity of that emotion and represents the importance of obtaining one's goal (see Figure 1).

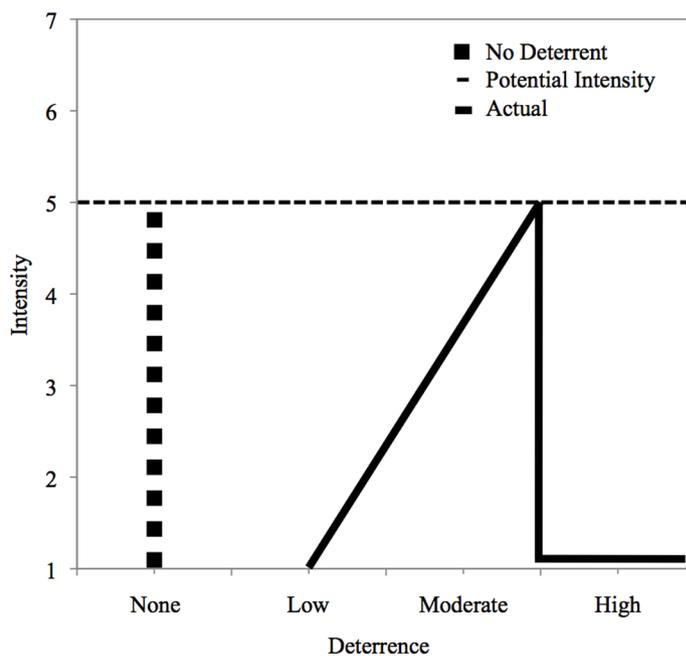


Figure 1. The effect of deterrence on the intensity of emotion.

When there is a low amount of deterrence, one's emotional intensity is low because of the small amount of effort needed to obtain the goal. When there is a moderate level of deterrence, the intensity of emotion rises to a point

where the effort needed to obtain the goal equals the degree of importance of the goal. If the degree of deterrence continues to increase, then one's emotional intensity and related motivation will drop because the goal appears unattainable. While no research has directly tested Brehm's emotion intensity theory with respect to romantic attraction and attraction reciprocation, a number of studies provide evidence suggesting that attraction to a potential partner varies in a cubic function depending on the degree of deterrence to feeling romantic attraction.

Wright, Toi, and Brehm (1984) asked male participants to rate the attractiveness of a potential lab partner after they were informed that to work with the person they would need to pass a memory test that varied in difficulty (easy, moderately difficult, hard). Participants rated the female assistant as more attractive when the test was moderately difficult compared to easy and hard. Miron, Kneffel, and Parkinson (2009) manipulated the importance of romantic partner flaws to find participants' degree of romantic attraction varied in line with the cubic function. Roberson and Wright (1994) manipulated men's perception of difficulty (unspecified, easy, moderate, impossible) of persuading a woman to choose him as a coworker. Participants' rating of interpersonal appeal (e.g., potential coworker is nice, desire to work with person) followed the cubic function. Wright and Contrada (1986) varied the selectiveness of a potential partner (non-selective, moderately selective, extremely selective in dating partners). Participants desired dating the potential partner who was moderately selective in their dating choices compared to non-selective or overly selective. While each of the above studies employed a different type of deterrent to feeling positively toward another person (e.g., memory test, partner flaws, selectiveness of potential partner), the results consistently show that attraction (and interpersonal appeal) is highest when the deterrent to obtain the goal is moderate, compared to low and high.

Although numerous researchers have sought to explain why playing hard to get is an advantageous dating strategy (Eastwick et al., 2007; Kenny, 1994; Matthews et al., 1979; Walster et al., 1973; Whitchurch et al., 2011; Wright & Contrada, 1986), no studies directly test whether a potential partner's degree of reciprocation of attraction influences the intensity of attraction. Researchers suggest that there exist different types (e.g., love, romantic obsession; see Graham, 2011) and dimensions (e.g., physical, social; see McCroskey, McCroskey, & Richmond, 2006) of attraction. However, regardless of whether attraction is an emotional state or an affective component of an attitude concerning another person, Brehm (1999) posits that the arousal of attraction (i.e., urge to get better acquainted with the object of attraction) should vary in intensity in a cubic function with the degree of deterrence toward the emotion, affect, or the mood's motivational goal. In other words, reciprocity of attraction may act as a signal to a potential mate the degree of difficulty in obtaining the goal of the emotional/affective arousal. In effect, Brehm's emotion intensity theory may explain the underlying mechanism of the playing hard to get phenomenon.

Current Research

The purpose of the current research is to examine the effect of reciprocity of attraction as a deterrent to attraction for a potential partner. Past research shows that reciprocation of attraction is related to greater attraction toward a potential romantic partner (Eastwick et al., 2007; Greitemeyer, 2010; Kenny, 1994; Lehr & Geher, 2006; Peretti & Abplanalp, 2004; Sprecher, 1998). However, people are also found to be attracted to individuals who withhold reciprocity of attraction by playing hard to get (Matthews et al., 1979; Walster et al., 1973; Whitchurch et al., 2011; Wright & Contrada, 1986). Thus, the problem under investigation is why withholding reciprocation of attraction is an advantageous dating strategy. Consistent with Brehm's (1999) emotion intensity theory, research shows that the intensity of attraction toward others varies as a function of the degree of difficulty to obtain one's goals (Miron et al., 2009; Roberson & Wright, 1994; Wright & Contrada, 1986; Wright et al., 1984). We suggest that a potential partner's degree of reciprocation of attraction can serve as a deterrent to attraction. Thus, potential partners who

signal they are easy to get by reciprocating attraction to multiple people (e.g., Eastwick et al., 2007) or are non-selective (e.g., Wright & Contrada, 1986) will elicit less attraction (vs. hard to get or highly selective potential partners) because the perceived difficulty of obtaining the goal of forming a relationship is low.

In two studies, we asked participants to imagine that they are attracted to a coworker who reciprocated the attraction one (high deterrence), three (moderate deterrence), or five (low deterrence) days a week, or no information about reciprocation was given (unspecified deterrence) prior to rating their attraction toward the potential partner. We operationalize reciprocity of attraction as the amount of positive attention shown toward the participant. Following Brehm's emotion intensity theory, the potential partner's degree of reciprocity of attraction will influence participants' intensity of attraction (liking and desire to be close to the other person) and related urge to obtain the goal (relationship formation) in a cubic function. Specifically, when no information is presented regarding reciprocity of attraction (control condition), participants' reported attraction should be high and represent the potential intensity of affect and importance of the goal. Attraction should decrease when the potential partner displays a high degree of reciprocation (low deterrence to form a relationship), increase when the potential partner displays a moderate degree of reciprocated attraction (deterrence equals the importance of forming a relationship), and decrease when the potential partner displays a low degree of reciprocation (high deterrence to forming a relationship). In other words, a potential romantic partner that signals he or she is too easy (high reciprocation) or too hard (low reciprocation) to form a relationship with will elicit less attraction than a person who is playing "moderately" hard to get.

Study 1

Participants and Design

Participants ($N = 197$, 53.8% women; $M_{\text{age}} = 23.77$, $SD = 7.53$) received partial course credit toward their psychology course requirement at Texas A&M University-Commerce. Participants indicated their racial/ethnic category as European American (65.5%), African American (16.2%), Hispanic (8.6%), Multiracial (5.1%), Asian/South Pacific Islander (2.5%), Indigenous Peoples (2%), and 60.4% were in a romantic relationship at the time of the study. Only participants who indicated a heterosexual orientation on a prescreen measure were eligible to participate. Participants were randomly assigned to read one of four vignettes: (1) no mention of reciprocation of attraction, (2) high reciprocation, (3) moderate reciprocation, and (4) low reciprocation. Participants then rated their degree of attraction and reported demographic information. The vignettes and measures were adapted such that male participants completed the study concerning a female target, and female participants completed the study concerning a male target.

Materials

Participants were asked to imagine that they are single and attracted to a single, opposite sex, coworker who they greet at work each morning (e.g., "Every day that you arrive you go to the break room for a cup of coffee. An attractive coworker arrives at the same time and sees you there every morning. Every morning you try to start a conversation with her/him"). Thus, in all conditions participants were asked to imagine that they were physically attracted to an opposite sex coworker and were motivated to converse with her or him. No other information was given in the control condition (i.e., the degree of reciprocation of attraction is unspecified). In the low reciprocity condition the coworker engages in conversation one day a week (e.g., "About one day a week s/he engages in a great conversation with you. During the conversation s/he smiles and laughs at your jokes. The other four days of the week s/he does not talk to you, but rather goes straight to work"). In the moderate reciprocity condition the coworker engages in conversation three days a week. In the high reciprocity condition participants are informed

that the coworker engages in conversation five days a week, and are further told that s/he “hangs around” the participant’s cubicle and walks with the participant to her or his car.

Following the vignette, participants completed a 12-item (e.g., “I am attracted to this person,” “S/he would be pleasant to be with,” “This person is likable”) measure of attraction to the coworker ($\alpha = .94$). The measure used a 7-point Likert-type response scale, from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*. Lastly, participants indicated their age, gender, ethnicity, and relationship status.

Results

To examine the effect of the manipulation of reciprocation of attraction on participants’ attraction to the coworker, we conducted a one-way ANOVA and a priori polynomial contrasts.¹ Contrary to our prediction, we did not find a significant cubic effect on attraction toward the coworker, $F(1, 193) = 0.56, p = .456, MSE = 1.12$ (see Figure 2).

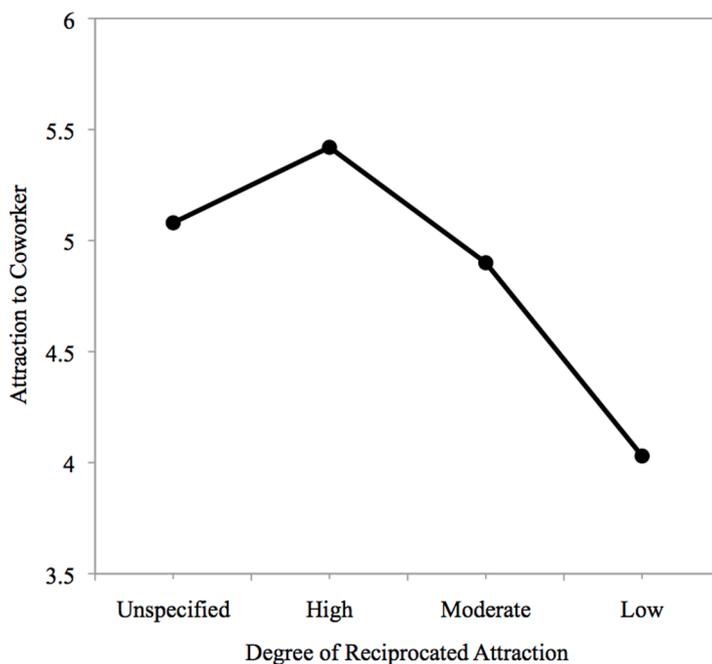


Figure 2. Study 1, participants’ reported attraction to the coworker as a function of the degree of reciprocated attraction.

A targeted polynomial contrast (1 -1 1 -1), showed only a marginal significant effect of manipulation on attraction, $t(193) = 1.75, p = .081$. A priori contrasts show that attraction did not differ between the unspecified ($M = 5.08, SD = 1.09$) and high ($M = 5.42, SD = 1.13$) reciprocation of attraction conditions, $t(193) = -1.62, p = .11$, and decreased from high to moderate ($M = 4.90, SD = 0.88$) reciprocation of attraction condition, $t(193) = 2.40, p = .017$. However, attraction did significantly decrease from the moderate to low ($M = 4.03, SD = 1.11$) reciprocation of attraction condition, $t(193) = 3.95, p < .001$.

Discussion

The purpose of Study 1 was to examine the effect of a potential partner’s degree of reciprocation of attraction on attraction for a potential partner. Supporting our predictions, participants indicated a high intensity of attraction

when the deterrent was unspecified (control) and in the moderate deterrent condition, and reported less attraction in the moderate compared to low reciprocity condition. The high intensity of attraction expressed by participants in the control condition shows the vignette was successful in eliciting attraction, and the less intense rating of attraction in the low reciprocation condition shows that a small degree of reciprocation is successful in deterring felt attraction. However, the predicted cubic effect was not significant as participants in the high reciprocity of attraction condition rated their attraction higher than expected. We suspect the vignette in the high reciprocity condition was insufficient in conveying the notion that the coworker was displaying a high degree of reciprocation of romantic attraction (i.e., easy to get). The high reciprocity vignette described behaviors enacted solely in the workplace and may have been interpreted as cues to form a work related friendship rather than a romantic partnership. To test our notion, we increased the displays of attraction reciprocated by the potential partner in the high reciprocation of attraction condition in Study 2.

Study 2

The purpose of Study 2 is to examine the effect of varying levels of reciprocated attraction with a revised vignette in the high reciprocity condition. Identical to Study 1, we predict a cubic effect of reciprocation of attraction on participants' ratings of attraction to the potential partner.

Participants and Design

Participants ($N = 186$, 53.8% women; $M_{\text{age}} = 22.26$, $SD = 6.87$) received partial course credit toward their psychology course requirement at Texas A&M University-Commerce. Participants indicated their racial/ethnic category as European American (55.4%), African American (25.3%), Hispanic (11.3%), Multiracial (3.8%), Asian/South Pacific Islander (2.7%), Indigenous Peoples (1.6%), and 50% were in a romantic relationship. Participants followed the same procedure as Study 1. The high reciprocity condition vignette was edited to include further displays of attraction by the coworker, including: joins in conversations with other coworkers in which the participant is engaged, includes her/himself on work projects, and calls the participant at night at his or her home to talk. The additional displays of attraction by the coworker were added to convey the notion that the coworker is inserting her/himself in additional aspects of the participant's work *and* home life. The additional statements were meant to more clearly convey the notion that the potential partner is interested in a romantic relationship. Participants then rated their attraction ($\alpha = .95$) and completed demographic items.

Results

As predicted, we found a significant cubic effect on attraction toward the coworker, $F(1, 182) = 45.58$, $p < .001$, $MSE = 1.38$ (see Figure 3).¹

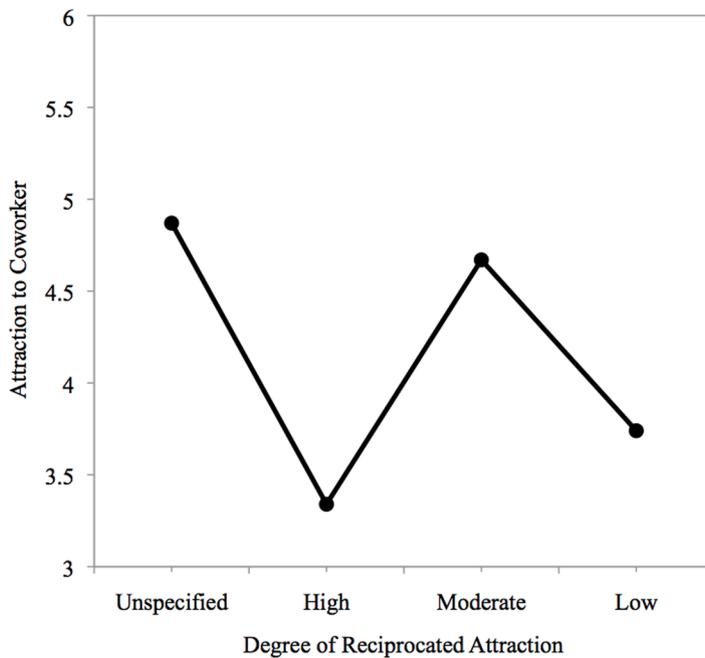


Figure 3. Study 2, participants' reported attraction to the coworker as a function of the degree of reciprocated attraction.

A targeted polynomial contrast (1 -1 1 -1), showed a significant cubic effect of manipulation on attraction, $t(182) = 7.12, p < .001$. A priori contrasts show that attraction decreased significantly from the unspecified ($M = 4.87, SD = 0.82$) to high ($M = 3.34, SD = 1.50$) reciprocation of attraction condition, $t(182) = 6.41, p < .001$, increased from high to moderate ($M = 4.67, SD = 0.91$) reciprocation of attraction condition, $t(182) = -5.57, p < .001$, and decreased from moderate to low ($M = 3.74, SD = 1.32$) reciprocation of attraction condition, $t(182) = 3.73, p < .001$. Additionally, the unspecified and moderate, $t(182) = 0.82, p = .41$, and the high and low reciprocation of attraction conditions did not differ, $t(182) = -1.63, p = .11$.

Discussion

The purpose of Study 2 was to examine the effect of varying levels of reciprocated attraction with a revised high reciprocation condition vignette. After amplifying displays of reciprocated attraction, participants showed lower ratings of attraction toward the potential partner compared to participants exposed to the unspecified and moderate deterrence vignettes. As predicted, participants' attraction for the potential partner followed a cubic function depending on the partners' degree of reciprocation of attraction.

General Discussion

The purpose of the present set of studies was to examine the effect of reciprocity of attraction as a deterrent to romantic attraction. Consistent with Brehm's emotion intensity theory, we predicted that the intensity of participants' attraction would change depending on the degree of reciprocity displayed by a potential partner. The predicted effect was not supported in Study 1. However, after revising the manipulation of high reciprocity in Study 2, we found the hypothesized cubic function between degree of reciprocity and participants' attraction for a potential romantic partner.

Brehm (1999) suggests that the intensity of emotion, affect, or mood experienced by individuals will vary as a cubic function with the amount of deterrence to feeling the emotion, affect, or mood. Beyond Miron et al. (2009), who show that the importance of a partner's flaws can serve as a deterrent to romantic attraction, prior studies show indirect support for the notion that attraction for a potential partner varies depending on the degree of deterrence to felt attraction. The present paper is the first empirical test of degree of attraction reciprocation as a deterrent to romantic attraction. For example, varying the magnitude of deterrents such as a memory test (Wright et al., 1984), persuading another person to choose oneself as a lab mate (Roberson & Wright, 1994), and the selectiveness of a potential partner (Wright & Contrada, 1986) have been found to influence the intensity of attraction toward another person.

When no information regarding a partner's reciprocation of attraction was presented, participants expressed a high intensity of attraction. In Study 2, participants exposed to the coworker displaying a high degree of reciprocation expressed a low intensity of attraction, participants exposed to the potential partner displaying a moderate degree of reciprocation expressed a high level of attraction, and participants exposed to the potential partner showing little reciprocation expressed a low intensity of attraction. Thus, although it may seem obvious that when the target of one's romantic attempts reciprocates that interest one would feel attracted to the other person, if the potential partner shows too much interest the degree of attraction declines. While participants expressed a high intensity of attraction in the high reciprocity condition in Study 1, the hypothesized decrease of attraction from the control to high reciprocation of attraction condition was demonstrated in Study 2. The difference in ratings of attraction in the high reciprocation condition between Study 1 and 2 suggest that a potential partner's reciprocation of attraction should clearly signal a desire on the part of the potential partner to form a romantic (rather than workplace friendship) relationship. However, further research is needed to ensure that participants perceived the coworker as expressing a clear romantic interest in the high reciprocation conditions in Study 1 and 2. The present results support Brehm's emotion intensity theory, and build upon past research by showing reciprocation of attraction from a potential partner can also serve as a deterrent to feeling romantically attracted to another person. The present results also hold implications for understanding why withholding reciprocity of attraction can benefit relationship formation.

A wealth of empirical findings shows that reciprocating romantic attraction influences interpersonal relationships (Back et al., 2011; Greitemeyer, 2010; Peretti & Abplanalp, 2004; Sprecher, 1998; Whitchurch et al., 2011). Because the reciprocation of romantic attraction is desired and expected from potential partners (Back et al., 2011), researchers have sought to explain why playing hard to get (i.e., withholding attraction) is a beneficial dating strategy (Walster et al., 1973). Brehm's emotion intensity theory, supported by Study 2 results, explain the underlying mechanism regarding reciprocity and attraction. Eastwick and colleagues (2007) showed that playing easy to get (expressing attraction to multiple people) is negatively related to reciprocation of attraction, while playing moderately hard to get (expressing attraction to specific people) is positively related to reciprocation of attraction. Back and colleagues (2011) found similar results; women's attraction to multiple men at a speed dating session (i.e., playing easy to get) was unrelated to how many men chose her, while men who chose many other potential partners were less likely to be chosen by other women. In other words, playing easy to get was unrelated for women, and negatively related for men, to reciprocation of attraction. However, both women and men who expressed desire for specific potential partners (i.e., playing moderately hard to get) were reciprocated in their attraction. Informed by Brehm's emotion intensity theory and the results of the present studies, people who view a potential partner as easy to get elicit less attraction, while potential partners who are viewed as moderately selective in their choice of dates elicit more attraction from potential partners. Furthermore, as shown by Wright and Contrada (1986),

being overly selective in choice of dating partners elicits less attraction. To the extent that selectivity is a sign of a potential partner's likelihood of reciprocating one's expressions of attraction, then the intensity of attraction to the potential partner will vary in a cubic function with the degree of attraction that is reciprocated. However, as we did not manipulate the selectivity of the partner's choice, future research is needed to examine if selectivity is signal or cue of reciprocation of attraction. Other research examining reciprocity of attraction and playing hard to get may also be explained by emotion intensity theory.

Whitchurch and colleagues (2011) informed female participants that four men had examined their Facebook profile and rated their attraction to the participant. The four men were reported to either (1) like the participant, (2) may have liked or rated the participant as average, or (3) rated the participant as average. Results showed greater attraction when the men's feedback was uncertain (may have liked or rated the participant as average) compared to when the feedback was positive (all like the participant) or negative (all rated the participant as average). The authors suggested that the results were due to increased thoughts about the men because of the uncertainty of their attraction to her. However, the results can also be explained by Brehm's emotion intensity theory. When participants believed the feedback was uniformly positive (low deterrence), uncertain (moderate deterrence), or negative (high deterrence), the degree of attraction followed an identical pattern as those found in the present research. In other words, similar to the findings in the present studies, the feedback regarding the potential partners' attraction to the participant served as a deterrent to attraction, and the ratings of attraction followed the hypothesized cubic pattern. Together, the results of the present and prior research on playing hard to get, and research examining real life speed dating situations, support the notion that playing moderately hard to get is an advantageous dating strategy because the moderate degree of deterrence elicits a higher intensity of attraction (compared to too easy or too hard to get).

Limitations and Future Directions

While the present studies support past research and theory there are some noted limitations. First, participants consisted of undergraduate college students. Older adults have less motivation to make new friends evidenced by less frequent interactions with friends (Carstensen, 1992), and less intense positive emotional experiences when interacting with new friends compared to younger adults (Charles & Piazza, 2007). The results of the present studies may not be generalizable to older adults or individuals in long lasting committed relationships because of a lack of importance, motivation, or potential gain to enter new romantic relationships. Thus, caution is warranted when generalizing to older adults. Second, participants may have responded to the vignettes based on lay theories regarding dating styles and norms. Prior research argues against this interpretation (Reysen, Landau, & Branscombe, 2012; Robinson & Clore, 2001). Vignettes can often elicit similar reactions to those exhibited in real life and realistic laboratory studies. While the vignettes used in the present studies showed results that are consistent with past realistic laboratory studies, and consistent with real world dating situations, future research will benefit from examination of reciprocity of attraction in real world settings. Third, future research should examine alternative explanations of the obtained results. For example, participants may be reacting to the loss of freedom to form a relationship (Brehm, 1966), making unfavorable character inferences about the potential partner in the high and low reciprocation conditions (Wright & Contrada, 1986), or inferred that they were not attracted to the potential partner because they were not currently in a relationship in the high reciprocity condition (Bem, 1972). Additionally, in Study 2, participants may have viewed the high reciprocation displayed by the coworker as unrealistic, clingy, overzealous, or annoying. However, participants' reactions to the displays of high reciprocation may represent lay explanations for expressing a low degree of attraction to the coworker. Further future research is

needed to examine the reasons participants attribute to their low degree of attraction for a potential partner that displays a high (vs. low) degree of reciprocation of attraction.

As noted in the introduction, Brehm's emotion intensity theory is the least recognized among his contributions to psychology (Wright, 2011). However, his theory may explain a variety of phenomenon related to the degree of interpersonal and romantic attraction felt toward others. Although in the present paper we show that reciprocation of attraction is a deterrent to attraction, other possible deterrents can also influence the degree of attraction to another person. For example, Miron et al. (2009) shows that varying the importance of partners' flaws can influence the intensity of romantic attraction toward a mate. Future research may also explore whether other dimensions and types of attraction (McCroskey et al., 2006) also vary in accordance with the degree of deterrence.

Conclusion

The present research showed a potential partners' degree of reciprocation of attraction affects attraction for a potential partner in a cubic function. The results support Brehm's (1999) emotion intensity theory, and explain why playing (moderately) hard to get is an advantageous dating strategy. In line with prior research, participants were shown to be more attracted to a potential partner when attraction was moderately reciprocated compared to when the potential partner displayed too little, or too much, attraction. The results suggest that individuals "turn off" or conserve emotional resources when either too little (i.e., saving resources for another potential partner) or too much (i.e., forming a relationship with the potential partner is easy or requires little effort) attraction reciprocation is displayed by a potential partner. Overall, a greater intensity of attraction is elicited when a potential partner reciprocates an optimal degree of attraction, or plays moderately hard to get.

Notes

i) We also conducted analyses including participants' gender and relationship status. The variables did not show significant main effects or interact with the manipulation (Studies 1 & 2). Thus, we present the results collapsed across participants' gender and current romantic relationship status.

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