Domains of Clarity: Clarity of Competence and Clarity of Liking

THESIS

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By

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Abstract

The present research applies the distinction between self-liking and self-competence (Tafarodi & Swann, 2001) to self-concept clarity. Self-concept clarity refers to the degree to which an individual’s self-views are internally consistent, confidently held, and stable over time (Campbell et al., 1996). In Study 1, we examine this distinction within the context of change of state ratings of clarity and esteem over time. Results revealed that self-liking esteem and self-liking clarity strongly predict one another over time, and do so to a greater degree than do self-competence esteem and self-competence clarity. The reverse relationship was observed as well. Results also suggest that higher levels of self-liking clarity are associated with greater stability of self-liking esteem, but that this relationship does not hold for self-competence clarity and esteem. In Study 2, participants were presented with either threats to their self-liking, or threats to their self-competence. When presented with a competence threat, participants whose self-competence esteem or self-competence clarity were low expressed a greater desire to engage in liking-relevant behaviors, whereas those with high self-competence clarity and self-competence esteem reported a slightly higher desire to engage in liking related behaviors. Studies 3a and 3b considered self-liking and self-competence from a metacognitive perspective by using the ease of retrieval paradigm (Schwarz et al., 1991). It was predicted that individuals with high clarity would experience a drop in esteem when made to elaborate on relevant self-images, but the prediction was not supported.
Implications for the relationship of self-liking and self-competence to each other and to global self-esteem and self-concept clarity are discussed.
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Table of Contents

Abstract .............................................................................................................. ii
Acknowledgments ............................................................................................ iv
Vita ....................................................................................................................... v
List of Tables ........................................................................................................ viii
List of Figures ..................................................................................................... ix
Chapter 1: Introduction ...................................................................................... 1
Chapter 2: Study 1 ............................................................................................ 11
  Method ............................................................................................................. 13
  Results ............................................................................................................. 17
  Discussion ....................................................................................................... 22
Chapter 3: Study 2 ............................................................................................ 25
  Method ............................................................................................................. 27
  Results ............................................................................................................. 32
  Discussion ....................................................................................................... 35
  Method ............................................................................................................. 42
  Results ............................................................................................................. 46
List of Tables

Table 1. Table of correlations, Study 1................................................................. 91
Table 2. Confirmatory factor analysis of Clarity Items employed in Study 2............ 92
Table 3. Confirmatory factor analysis of Clarity Items employed in Study 3.......... 94
List of Figures

Figure 1. Liking behaviors following liking threat, Study 2................................. 96
Figure 2. Differences in desire to engage in liking-relevant and competence-relevant
behaviors, Study 2........................................................................................................ 97
Figure 3. Desire to engage in competence-related behaviors following competence threat,
Study 2 ................................................................................................................................ 98
Figure 4. Desire to engage in liking-related behaviors following competence threat, Study
2........................................................................................................................................ 99
Figure 5. Effect of ease of retrieval upon self-liking esteem in Study 3a..................... 100
Figure 6. Effect of ease of retrieval upon self-competence esteem in Study 3b.......... 101
Chapter 1: Introduction

Western culture places a considerable premium on accurate knowledge about oneself. We praise those who know themselves as wise; we consider those that lack such knowledge to be fools (Dunning, Johns, Ehrlinger, & Kruger, 2003). The merits of accurate self-knowledge are often debated (e.g., Taylor & Brown, 1988), but whatever the merits of knowing oneself it is clear that reaching such an objective is far from simple. Nevertheless, it is not uncommon for a person to feel that they know themselves.

Within social psychology, one approach to this question of perceptions of self-knowledge was explored by Jennifer Campbell, who developed the concept of self-concept clarity (Campbell, 1990; Campbell et al., 1996). Campbell et al. (1996) defined self-concept clarity as the extent to which a person’s self-concept is “…clear, confidently held, internally consistent, and temporally stable.” In simple language, it is the feeling that one does or does not know oneself.

Interest in self-concept clarity began as an outgrowth of the longstanding interest in the determinants and correlates of self-esteem (Campbell, 1990; Campbell et al., 1996). Self-concept clarity has come to be recognized as part of a self-system, wherein self-esteem and self-concept clarity interact and reciprocally influence each other (Kernis et al., 2000).
Confidence and certainty about the self is associated with greater positive affect towards the self (Baumgardner, 1990), and greater stability of self-esteem (Kernis et al., 1993), whereas positive affect tends to lead to greater confidence (Briñol, Petty, & Barden, 2007).

Self-esteem and self-concept clarity have historically been treated both in theory and research at the level of the global, overall self-evaluation (See Campbell et al., 1996; Tafarodi & Swann, 1995). However, how we evaluate ourselves suggests that there may be more to self-concept clarity than a global sense of knowing ourselves. A recurrent theme in evaluations of ourselves is the distinction between evaluations of social worth and evaluations of competence. Tafarodi and Swann (1995) argue that these two axes of self-worth constitute evaluations of acceptable-unacceptable (hereafter referred to as self-liking) and strong-weak (hereafter referred to as self-competence), and together capture the nature of humans as both social beings, and as agents affecting the world.

In the work presented here, we mimic the development of self-concept clarity as an outgrowth of self-esteem. As noted, the distinction between self-liking esteem and self-competence esteem was offered by Tafarodi and Swann (2001), and this distinction serves as the basis for this exploration of the nature of self-concept clarity. As this research draws heavily from the literature on self-esteem, our discussion begins there, before turning to its relationships with self-concept clarity.

Self-liking and Self-competence Esteem

Tafarodi and Swann (1995; 2001) have argued that evaluations of social worth and evaluations of competence reflect distinct types of self-esteem, rather than simply
sources that contribute to global self-esteem. They labeled these two types of self-esteem self-liking and self-competence. Self-liking is defined as “our affective judgment of ourselves, our approval or disapproval of ourselves, in line with internalized social values, and self-competence esteem is defined as “the overall sense of oneself as capable, effective, and in control.”

Self-liking esteem most closely approximates the classic conceptualization of global self-esteem as our subjective approval of ourselves, and the perception of whether or not we are good enough (Tafarodi & Swann, 2001). Our evaluations in this dimension are derived in part from the value others ascribe to us as children. Over time, these evaluations become internalized, and become somewhat detached from the evaluations of others (Tafarodi & Swann, 2001). Ultimately, we come to experience ourselves as social beings with or without the presence of others (Harre, 1991). Liking ourselves is marked by positive affect and acceptance of ourselves “warts and all” (e.g., Kernis, 2003), whereas disliking ourselves is marked by negative affect and social dysfunction (Blatt & Zuroff, 1992).

Self-competence esteem is based on the valuative perception of the self as a causal agent (Tafarodi & Swann, 2001). Perceptions of self-competence result from the successes and failures one has in affecting the environment. By affecting consequences in line with our intention, we come to perceive ourselves as a locus of power able to deal with a threatening environment (Tafarodi & Swann, 1995). Conversely, feeling that we are not competent and efficacious is often associated with stunted motivation, anxiety, depression, and self-doubt (Luyten et al., 2006), particularly if we do not believe we are
able to change ourselves (Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995) or our situation (e.g., Abrahamson, Seligman, & Teasdale, 1978).

Though these evaluations of the self are important, they are only part of the story. These two types of self-esteem draw on different types of information (social appraisals vs. task success; Tafarodi & Swann, 2001). There is further no a priori basis to assume that, for a given individual, these two types of information are equally certain. Further, these two types of information are treated differently (e.g., disconfirmatory evidence is diagnostic in the social realm, whereas confirmatory evidence is diagnostic for competence; Wojciszke, 2005). As such, it is plausible that these differences manifest as differences in clarity about the self.

Self-Esteem and Self-Concept Clarity

Self-concept clarity developed as an outgrowth of the self-esteem literature to help explain findings that were not easily understood by simple considerations of valence (Campbell et al., 1996). Rather, findings such as the malleability of self-views exhibited by low self-esteem individuals (Brockner, 1984) and the highly accessible self-views of those with high self-esteem (Campbell, 1990) are parsimoniously and clearly explained by confidence, clarity, and certainty (Campbell et al., 1996).

Those with high levels of self-concept clarity are better able to predict their success in future endeavors (Lewandowsk & Nardone, 2012), describe themselves more quickly and consistently than do those with lower levels of clarity (Campbell et al, 1996), and remain relatively stable in their evaluations of themselves (Kernis, 2005).
Conversely, those with low self-concept clarity far more readily accept external information about themselves (Chang, 1997).

Of central interest here is that global self-esteem and self-concept clarity are highly correlated ($r_s \sim .60-.70$; Campbell et al., 1996). Independent of any causal arguments, this suggests that evaluations of the self and the clarity and confidence of self-views go hand in hand. Further, a given evaluation of the self can be expected to be associated with differing degrees of certainty and confidence (DeMarree, Petty, & Briñol, 2007), and presumably these differences manifest as differences in clarity dimensions.

Little research exists to distinguish between different aspects of self-concept clarity, with one notable exception. Stinson and colleagues (Stinson, Wood, & Doxey, 2008) found that individuals’ level of clarity differs across domains. They distinguished between clarity about social commodities (e.g., attractiveness, social skills and status) and clarity about communal qualities (e.g., kindness, warmth, and honesty). Stinson and colleagues argued that communal qualities are easily faked, quite unobservable, and highly subjective. On the other hand, social commodities cannot be effectively faked, are highly observable, and relatively objective.

Communal qualities share a strong conceptual overlap with self-liking qualities. Both are marked by traits that make one liked, included, and perceived as moral, and that generally facilitate satisfying the need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Social commodities are not necessarily related to competence (attractiveness is not necessarily indicative of competence for example), but they overlap in that both social commodities and self-competence reflect traits that are likely to facilitate goal attainment. Further, both
dimensions are relatively objective, difficult to fake, and highly observable. Like attractiveness and high status, competence is not as easily faked as are friendliness and honesty (Wojciszke, 2005).

These differences suggest that self-liking clarity and self-competence clarity may be meaningfully distinguished. Further, due to the reciprocal influence of certainty and evaluations (e.g., Baumgardner, 1990; Briñol et al., 2007), it is likely that many properties and findings associated with global self-concept clarity apply to self-liking clarity and self-competence clarity as well.

*Stability of Self-esteem.* Self-esteem stability is “the magnitude of fluctuations in individuals’ momentary, contextually based self-esteem” (Kernis, 2005). Kernis and colleagues observed that among those with high self-esteem, those whose self-esteem is unstable are more likely to aggress after a threat (Kernis, Granneman, & Barclay, 1989), and to be more narcissistic (Zeigler-Hill, 2006). Further, much like individuals with low self-concept clarity, individuals with unstable self-esteem have been shown to more readily accept both positive and negative information about themselves (Kernis et al., 1993).

Higher levels of clarity are associated with greater stability of self-esteem (Kernis et al., 1993). Those with unstable self-esteem typically lack clarity and confidence in their self-views, and tend to be strongly affected by daily events. The relatively impoverished self-concepts of those with unstable self-esteem make it difficult for them to marshal evidence of their worth following failure (Kernis, 2003).
Presumably, this same relationship holds true for self-liking and self-competence. Higher levels of self-liking clarity can be expected to be associated with greater self-liking esteem stability, whereas higher levels of self-competence clarity should lead to greater self-competence esteem stability.

_Reactions to threats._ In general, uncertainty about the self is associated with greater reactivity to external influences (e.g., threats; McGregor, et al., 2001), and low self-concept clarity is no exception. Kernis (2005) argued that high self-concept clarity is associated with less reactivity to threats. Similarly, Campbell (1990) argued that low clarity, confidence, and certainty makes one more responsive to external information, and to be more sensitive to information about the self. Consistent with these arguments, individuals with lower levels of self-concept clarity respond with greater affective intensity to potentially unfair events (De Cremer & Sedikides, 2004), and to failure (Stucke & Sporer, 2002).

Uncertainty about the self need not be global in nature. Certainty about the self moderates reactions to threats, whether from competence sources (Braslow, Guerrettaz, Arkin, & Oleson, 2012) or from liking sources (Williams, 2007). Similar effects can be expected for self-liking clarity and self-competence clarity, with low clarity in a threatened domain leading to a greater likelihood of reacting to the threat.

_Metacognition._ Metacognition refers to beliefs about beliefs (Jost, Kruglanski, & Nelson, 1998). Though rarely explicitly acknowledged, the definition of self-concept clarity includes two metacognitive cues: confidence (Tormala, Petty, & Briñol, 2002) and consistency (i.e., fluency; Winkielman, Huber, Kavanagh, & Schwarz, 2012).
Confidence is the sense of conviction or validity associated with a belief (Petty, Briñol, & Tormala, 2002). The effects of confidence are apparent in past work on self-concept clarity. Confidence in a given belief is associated with greater resistance to change (e.g., Swann, Pelham, & Chidester, 1988), and a greater likelihood that the belief will guide behavior (e.g., Fazio & Zanna, 1978). Individuals with high self-concept clarity are more likely to behave in a way that reflects their self-beliefs (Guadagno & Burger, 2007). On the other hand, low self-concept clarity individuals assimilate information into their self-views (Chang, 1997), i.e. are less resistant to change than high clarity individuals.

Consistency refers to the degree to which information (i.e., beliefs) is regular, synchronized, and coherent (Winkielman et al., 2012). Beliefs and evaluations that are consistent are processed with greater speed and accuracy. This ease leads to a subjective experience of ease and fluency, which increases the positivity of evaluations and the perceptions of truth of beliefs (Winkielman et al., 2012). These properties are reflected in the speed with which individuals with high self-concept clarity access their self-concept (Campbell et al., 1996) and the accuracy with which they describe themselves (Lewandowski & Nardone, 2012).

Applied to self-liking and self-competence, greater clarity can be expected to be associated with higher levels of esteem. If fluency associated with processing the information underlying an evaluation of the self is disrupted, then that evaluation can be expected to decrease. Presumably, those with low clarity do not fluently process
evaluations of themselves and are not affected by events that might otherwise disrupt fluent processing.

Current studies

The purpose of Study 1 was to provide the first evidence that self-liking clarity and self-competence clarity can be meaningfully distinguished. This was accomplished using the methodology employed by Kernis et al. (1993) as a vehicle to explore relationships between self-liking and self-competence.

Specifically, this study was a test of the degree to which the relationships observed between global self-esteem and global self-concept clarity hold true for their constituent parts. Based on past work by Kernis and colleagues (Kernis et al., 1993), we predicted that higher levels of self-liking clarity would be associated with higher levels of self-liking esteem stability. Similarly, it was predicted that higher levels of self-competence clarity would be associated with higher levels of self-competence esteem stability.

Study 1 was also a test of the relationships between both dimensions of esteem and of clarity over time. Based on the relationship between self-certainty and self-esteem (e.g. Baumgardner, 1990), it was predicted that daily increases in self-liking esteem would predict increases in self-liking clarity the following day, and vice versa. It was further predicted that increases in self-competence esteem would predict increases in self-competence clarity the subsequent day, and vice versa.

Study 2 was conducted in order to demonstrate that clarity in a given domain matters when reacting to threats in that same domain. For example, when someone
encounters a threat that relates to feelings of social inclusion and acceptance (i.e., their self-liking) then it is their self-liking esteem and their self-liking clarity that should moderate how they will respond to that threat. Self-esteem and clarity focused on the competence arena should be less likely to moderate responses to threats of that social nature. In a similar way, when someone encounters a threat within the context of self-competence and efficacy, their self-competence esteem and their self-competence clarity should moderate their reactions. To that end, participants were presented with a threat to either their social inclusion, or to their competence. It was predicted that individuals with low clarity or low esteem in a given domain would be more reactive to threats in that domain.

Studies 3a and 3b were conducted to demonstrate the importance of clarity in dealing with difficulty in thinking about the self. To that end, these studies use the classic ease of retrieval effect (Schwarz et al., 1991). This effect interferes with fluent processing of information – in this experimental paradigm, using ease of retrieval, by having individuals recall numerous examples of a given trait about themselves, which then leads to a change (typically in a negative way) in how people rate themselves on that trait. Expectations of difficulty are an important part of this effect (Hansen & Wänke, 2008). As self-concept clarity can be conceptualized as the subjective experience of knowing oneself, individuals with highly clear self-concepts likely expect greater ease in describing themselves. Conversely, those with low self-concept clarity typically dispositionally doubt their identities and feel that they do not know themselves quite as well, and so should have no expectations of ease. The predictions advanced were as
follows: first, those with high self-liking clarity made to elaborate upon their self-liking self-images would report lower self-liking esteem. In addition, it was predicted that this effect would occur in the competence domain as well.
Chapter 2: Study 1

In study 1, we apply the logic employed in research on the relationship between global self-concept clarity and global self-esteem stability (e.g., Kernis et al., 1989) to the self-liking and competence dimensions. High levels of global self-concept clarity are associated with greater stability of global self-esteem (Kernis et al., 1993), but the degree to which these relationships hold true for self-liking and self-competence separately is unclear.

Kernis and colleagues (Kernis et al., 2000) argued that self-esteem stability, level, and self-concept clarity reciprocally influence each other, and that as one increases, so do the others. Similarly, certainty about the self leads to greater positive affect toward the self (Baumgardner, 1990), greater stability (Kernis et al., 1993), and positive affect leads to confidence (Briñol, Petty, & Barden, 2007).

Here, we extend these findings associated with global conceptualizations of self-esteem and self-concept clarity to the distinction between self-liking and self-competence. We predicted that higher levels of self-liking clarity would predict greater stability of self-liking esteem, and that higher levels of self-competence clarity would predict greater stability of self-competence esteem.
Past work has documented the stability of self-concept clarity (Campbell, 1990) but this property has not been tested in a manner akin to Kernis et al. (1993). Here, we test stability of self-ratings of self-concept clarity. We predicted that high levels of self-liking clarity would be associated with greater stability of self-liking clarity, and that the same relationship (i.e., higher self-competence clarity being associated with greater stability of self-competence esteem) would emerge for self-competence clarity.

We predicted that self-liking esteem and self-competence esteem would positively correlate, and that self-liking clarity and self-competence clarity would positively correlate. We expected that matched clarity and esteem (i.e., self-liking esteem and self-liking clarity, and self-competence esteem and self-competence clarity) would correlate to a greater degree than mismatched esteem and clarity (i.e., self-liking esteem and self-competence clarity, and self-competence esteem and self-liking clarity). Finally, we predicted that increases in self-liking esteem would predict increases in self-liking clarity and vice versa, and that increases in self-competence esteem would predict increases in self-competence clarity, and vice versa.
Method

Participants

Forty-eight undergraduate participants enrolled in an upper level Psychology course at The Ohio State University completed the study in exchange for extra credit. Five participants were excluded from the analyses because they did not complete three or more of the measures used to calculate self-esteem stability, leaving a final sample of 43 participants. Demographic information was not collected.

Procedure

To begin, participants were given a broad overview of the study. They were then given a packet containing all measures to be completed over the course of the study. Participants were then instructed to complete several questionnaires immediately in order to assess trait levels of the constructs of interest. These questionnaires included measures of global self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), global self-concept clarity (Campbell et al., 1996), self–liking and self-competence esteem (Tafarodi & Swann, 2001), and self-liking and self-competence clarity (detailed below).

Participants were instructed to complete the additional state measures of self-esteem and self-concept clarity over the course of the following week twice daily (at 10 AM and 10 PM) over the course of the following five days.

Measures

Global Self-Esteem Level. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE; Rosenberg, 1965) consists of 10 items, and is typically scored on a 6 point scale (1= Strongly
disagree; 6 = Strongly agree). Sample items include “On the whole, I am satisfied with myself” and “I certainly feel useless at times” (See Appendix A). Responses are summed across all items.

The Rosenberg Scale has been shown to be a valid measure of self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), and past research has shown acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .72$ to .88) and good test-retest coefficients ($\alpha = .82$ for one week; $\alpha = .5$ for one year) (Gray-Little, Williams, & Hancock, 1997)

*Global Self-Concept Clarity Level.* The Self-Concept Clarity scale (SCC; Campbell et al., 1996) is comprised of 12 items (See Appendix B). Representative items include “My beliefs about myself often conflict with one another” and “My beliefs about my worth often conflict with one another.” Participants responded to each item using a five-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree), and responses were summed across all items such that higher scores indicate higher clarity ($M = 37.74$, $SD = 11.53$, $\alpha = .92$).

The original scale validation efforts (Campbell et al., 1996) showed that the scale exhibits a high level of internal consistency ($\alpha = .86$, averaged across three studies), and possesses reasonable test-retest reliability ($r$’s $\geq .7$). The scale is highly correlated with self-esteem ($r \geq .6$), neuroticism ($r = -.64$), and moderately correlated with extraversion ($r = .4$), conscientiousness ($r = .53$), and agreeableness ($r = .26$).

*Dimensions of Self-Esteem Levels.* Participants completed the 16-item Self liking and Competence Scale-Revised (SLCS-R; Tafarodi & Swann, 2001). The SLCS-R is comprised of two subscales, one representing self-liking (8 items) and the other
measuring self-competence (8 items). Sample self-liking items include “I feel great about who I am” and “I never doubt my personal worth”; sample self-competence items include “I perform very well at many things” and “I sometimes deal poorly with challenges.”

Participants indicated their level of agreement with each item (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree). Responses are summed for each subscale, with higher numbers indicating higher self-esteem (Self-liking Esteem $M = 28.58, SD = 6.02, \alpha = .9$; Self-competence Esteem $M = 28.05, SD = 5.85$, $\alpha = .85$; $r(43) = .46$, $p < .01$).

**Clarity Dimension Levels.** In order to create separate self-concept clarity measures for the self-liking and self-competence dimensions, each of the original 12 self-concept clarity items were reworded to reflect specifically the self-liking and self-competence dimensions of clarity, yielding 24 items in all. To illustrate, the original Self-Concept Clarity item “My beliefs about myself often conflict with one another” was rewritten as “My beliefs about my worth often conflict with one another” and “My beliefs about my competence often conflict with one another” (reflecting the liking and competence domains, respectively). The full scale transformed as two subscales measuring liking self-concept clarity and competence self-concept clarity appear in Appendices C and D.

Participants responded to each item using a 5-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree). Higher scores reflected higher levels of clarity (Liking Clarity $M = 41.86, SD = 9.5, \alpha = .9$; Competence Clarity $M = 41.10, SD = 10.91, \alpha = .9$; $r(40) = .72$, $p < .01$)
Stability of Self-Esteem and Self-Concept Clarity. Assessments were obtained over the course of the week following the measurement of self-esteem levels. Participants were instructed to complete the measures at 10:00 A.M. and 10:00 P.M., beginning on the day immediately following the administration of the measures of trait levels of self-esteem and self-concept clarity. Participants were instructed to complete the scales in a manner that reflected their current levels of self-esteem or self-concept clarity at the moment they completed their ratings on the inventories.

Stability was calculated as the standard deviation of each participant’s ratings on each subscale across the five days of responding. Consequently, there were four measures of stability in all: Self-liking esteem stability ($M = 2.63$, $SD = 1.48$); Self-competence esteem stability ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 1.38$); Self-liking clarity stability ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.47$); and Self-competence clarity stability ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 2.28$). Because higher standard deviations indicate greater variability in self-reports of self-esteem, a negative correlation between level and stability indicates greater stability, i.e. less variability.
Results

Self-liking Dimension

As predicted, self-liking esteem and self-liking clarity were highly correlated ($r(41) = .72, p < .01$). This correlation is consistent with past work on the relationship between global self-esteem and self-concept clarity (e.g., Campbell et al., 1996).

Typically, people who feel they know themselves also tend to like themselves (e.g., Baumgardner, 1990; Kernis, 2005). Level and stability of self-liking esteem were uncorrelated $r(41) = -.11, p = .49$. This finding is consistent with past work on self-esteem level and stability, which has shown that level and stability of global self-esteem are weakly and negatively correlated (e.g. Kernis et al., 1989).

Trait level of liking clarity and stability of liking clarity were modestly correlated $r(41) = -.33, p < .05$. This result provides additional support for the conceptualization of high self-concept clarity as associated with increased stability of self-concepts. Campbell et al. (1996) demonstrated that high self-concept clarity is associated with greater stability of self-descriptions, and this finding suggests that high clarity (specifically, self-liking clarity) is also associated greater stability of confidence, certainty, and consistency of self-views.

Self-liking clarity level and self-liking esteem stability were not significantly correlated ($r(41) = -.22, p = .16$), but the direction is consistent with past work which has shown that those who perceive that they know themselves tend to remain relatively stable in their self-evaluations (Kernis et al., 1993).
In addition, baseline levels of self-liking esteem and self-liking clarity were considered as dependent variables in a regression. Self-liking esteem significantly predicted self-liking clarity, $b = .98$, $t(41) = 5.16$, $p < .01$, whereas self-competence esteem did not, $b = .31$, $t(41) = 1.6$, $p = .12$. Similarly, self-liking clarity level significantly predicted self-liking esteem, $b = .52$, $t(41) = 5.11$, $p < .01$, but self-competence clarity did not, $b = -.08$, $t(41) = -.87$, $p = .39$.

In sum, the relationships between self-liking clarity and self-liking esteem are similar to the relationships between global self-concept clarity and global self-esteem. The results also support the distinguishability of self-liking and self-competence, with self-liking esteem and self-liking clarity mutually predicting each other with self-competence esteem and self-competence clarity controlled for.

*Self-competence Dimension*

Self-competence esteem and self-competence clarity correlated relatively highly ($r(41) = .56$, $p < .01$), as predicted. This relationship is consistent with the relationship between global self-esteem and self-concept clarity. Consistent with predictions, self-competence esteem level and stability were not significantly correlated, $r(41) = -.12$, $p = .44$. Like evaluations within the self-liking dimension, evaluations of one's competence are unrelated to the consistency with which they are held.

Self-competence clarity level and self-competence clarity stability were not significantly correlated, though the trend was consistent with expectation, $r(41) = -.23$, $p = .14$. It appears that, as with self-liking esteem, those who feel they know what makes them competent tend to remain consistent in those perceptions.
Contrary to predictions, stability of evaluations of self-competence were unrelated to the level of self-competence clarity ($r(41) = -.05, p = .74$).

In addition, self-competence esteem and self-competence clarity were considered as dependent variables in a regression, predicted both by each other, and by the alternative esteem or clarity (e.g. self-competence esteem predicted by self-liking clarity and self-competence clarity). When predicting self-competence clarity, self-competence esteem level was a stronger predictor, $b = .86, t(41) = 3.09, p < .01$, than was self-liking esteem, $b = .47, t(41) = 1.71, p < .10$. Similarly, when predicting self-competence esteem, self-competence clarity was a significant predictor, $b = .27, t(41) = 2.6, p < .05$, but self-liking was not, $b = .04, t(41) = .34, p = .74$.

In sum, self-competence behaves somewhat similar to global self-esteem and global self-competence clarity, with the exception that higher levels of self-competence clarity do not appear to moderate self-competence esteem stability. In addition, self-competence esteem and self-competence clarity exhibited a stronger statistical relationship with each other, than with either self-liking clarity or self-liking esteem.

*Change Over Time*

Hierarchical linear modeling was used to examine the relationships between self-liking and self-competence over time. A residual change strategy was used to test change from time point to time point, with time point N + 1 predicted by time point N predictors. For simplicity, time point N will be referred to as Time 1, and time point N + 1 as Time 2. Self-liking esteem, self-liking clarity, self-competence esteem, and self-competence clarity at Time 1 were entered as fixed effects predictors of the dependent variable at
Time 2, with time as a random effect. Partial correlations were calculated for each variable (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1991).

Self-liking clarity at Time 1 significantly predicted self-liking esteem at Time 2, $pr = .15, t(481) = 3.30, p < .01$. Self-liking esteem at Time 1 also predicted self-liking esteem at Time 2, $pr = .61, t(481) = 16.72$. Neither self-competence esteem nor self-competence clarity predicted self-liking esteem ($p$’s > .18).

Time 1 self-liking esteem significantly predicted Time 2 self-liking clarity, $pr = .18, t(481) = 4.1, p < .01$. Further, Time 1 self-liking clarity also predicted Time 2 self-liking clarity, $pr = .50, t(481) = 12.62, p < .01$. Time 1 self-competence clarity also predicted Time 2 self-liking clarity, $pr = .18, t(481) = 4.01, p < .01$, but Time 1 self-competence esteem did not, $pr = .04, t(481) = -.8, p = .42$.

Self-competence clarity at Time 1 significantly predicted self-competence esteem at Time 2, $pr = .12, t(482) = 2.72, p < .01$, and this was true of self-competence esteem at Time 1 as well, $pr = .63, t(482) = 17.75, p < .01$. Time 1 self-liking esteem also significantly predicted self-competence esteem at Time 2, $pr = .15, t(482) = 3.32, p < .01$, but not self-liking clarity did not, $pr = .07, t(482) = 1.46, p = .14$.

Finally, Time 1 self-competence esteem significantly predicted self-competence clarity at Time 2, $pr = .11, t(481) = 2.46, p < .05$. Further, Time 1 self-competence clarity predicted Time 2 self-competence esteem, $pr = .53, t(481) = 13.84, p < .01$, and the same was true of Time 1 self-liking clarity, $pr = .19, t(481) = 4.22, p < .01$, but not Time 1 self-liking esteem, $pr = .04, t (481) = -.88, p = .38$
In short, self-liking esteem and self-liking clarity mutually predict each other over time, and self-competence esteem and self-competence clarity similarly predict each other over time. Consistent with past experimental work relating self-certainty and self-affect, increases in clarity predict increases in esteem, and vice versa, within each dimension.
Discussion

Study 1 provides some evidence that self-liking clarity and self-competence clarity are distinct dimensions, and vary relatively independently of one another. This was accomplished using multiple measurements over the course of a week to examine the stability of judgments of self-liking and self-competence dimensions of both self-esteem and self-concept clarity.

The mutually predictive relationship between esteem and clarity within a given dimension is consistent with the relationship between self-esteem stability and level, and self-concept clarity, that Kernis and colleagues (Kernis et al., 2000) observed for global conceptualizations of self-esteem and self-concept clarity. However, this work extends past work to show that the relationship applies to self-liking and self-competence (Tafarodi & Swann, 1995; 2001), and further provides evidence of the relationship between clarity and esteem over time. Increases in self-liking esteem led to increase in self-liking clarity and vice versa, and the same relationship was observed between self-competence esteem and self-competence clarity.

Also consistent with past work by Kernis and colleagues (e.g., Kernis et al., 1993), self-esteem level and self-esteem stability within a given dimension were found to be only weakly correlated. This is consistent with global self-esteem level and stability (Kernis, 2005). Such a statement must be qualified by the relatively high correlation ($r = .65$) between self-liking stability and self-competence stability, which may reflect what Kernis (2005) considered to be the highly ego-involved nature of those with unstable
self-esteem. By itself, this suggests that these two dimensions tend to hang together, and vary together, over time – to a great extent.

These findings must be taken with some caution, however. Some of the nonsignificant results reported here may be due to the small sample size, rather than to a true lack of a relationship (a Type II error). Further, precisely how much participants complied with the instructions to complete the measures on time, one at a time, is unknown. Participants were given a packet to take home, and so in theory were able to complete many of the measures simultaneously if they so desired. If such is the case, the strength of the relationships reported here may be exaggerated.

Given that self-liking and self-competence is a distinction not applied to self-concept clarity in the literature, the relatively high correlation between self-liking clarity and self-competence clarity \( (r = .72) \) merits further consideration. A similar correlation was encountered in early work on the self-liking and self-competence distinction using the Self-Liking and Self-Competence Scale (Tafarodi & Swann, 1995). Despite the high subscale correlation, the research on these two dimensions revealed independent associations with reactions to success and failure (Tafarodi & Vu, 1997), memory (Tafarodi, 1998), and cultural differences (Tafarodi & Walters, 1999).

Such work suggests that the high correlation is not sufficient evidence to dismiss the notion that, as with self-esteem, self-liking and self-competence dimensions exist within self-concept clarity. Further, the results obtained in this study provide support for the distinguishability of self-liking clarity and self-competence clarity. Self-liking clarity and self-liking esteem strongly predict each other concurrently and over time, and self-
competence clarity and self-competence esteem similarly reciprocally influence each over the course of time.
Chapter 3: Study 2

Study 1 provided evidence that self-liking and self-competence dimensions can be distinguished within self-esteem and self-concept clarity. The present study was intended to provide experimental evidence for the distinction by examining how one’s clarity in a given domain affects responses to threats in that domain. More specifically, how do people react in the face of threats when they are - or are not - clear about a given aspect of themselves?

When threatened, people are typically motivated to deal with the threat in some manner. Such motivational reactions manifest, broadly, as disengagement or reengagement. These reactions allow people to maintain positive perceptions of themselves (Sherman & Cohen, 2006). For example, when threatened within a given domain, people may affirm themselves in another domain (e.g., if competence is threatened, they may engage in affiliative behaviors; Sherman & Cohen, 2006). Alternatively, people may redouble their efforts in the threatened domain in a defensively zealous manner (e.g., McGregor & Jordan, 2007).

Levels of both self-esteem (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996) and self-concept clarity predict reactions to threats (Kernis, 2005). Typically, individuals with unstable and unclear high self-esteem are the most likely to react to threats (Kernis, 2003).
However, a great deal of research supports the notion that low self-esteem is associated with a vulnerability to certain threats (e.g., Murray, Holmes, & Collins, 2006). In addition to the effects of self-esteem, those with low self-concept clarity are highly responsive to external self-relevant information (Campbell, 1990). Conversely, those with high self-concept clarity tend to be less responsive to such information (Chang, 1997).

In the case of self-concept clarity, however, such receptivity and responsiveness may not necessarily lead to a vulnerability to threats. Despite this, one reason to assume that those with low self-concept clarity are vulnerable to threats is that self-concept clarity can be considered to be an indicator of what Sherman and Cohen (2006) termed self-integrity, or the strength of the self. Those low in both self-esteem and self-concept clarity may be considered to be particularly low in self-integrity due to the relatively weakly integrated nature of their self-concept, and so are less able to marshal psychological resources to dismiss a threat (Sherman & Cohen, 2006). Conversely, those with high self-esteem and high self-concept clarity can be considered to have extremely high self-integrity, and an ability to dismiss or defend against threats by bringing to mind positive characteristics of themselves.

What we predicted here, then, is that only people with high esteem and clarity in a given domain will be relatively unaffected by threats to that domain. Specifically, only those with high self-liking esteem and high self-liking clarity will be unaffected by a threat that bears upon their self-liking, and only those with high self-competence esteem and high self-competence clarity will be unaffected by a threat that bears upon their self-competence.
Method

Participants

Ninety-eight participants enrolled in an introductory psychology course completed the experiment in partial fulfillment of course requirements. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions, and completed the experiment in groups of between one and six individuals.

Procedure

The present study used a modified Life Alone manipulation (Twenge et al., 2007) to threaten these two domains in as parallel a way as possible. This manipulation is a powerful social exclusion threat ($d’s >= 1.0$; Twenge, Baumeister, Tice, Stucke, 2001).

Participants were told that they were participating in an experiment intended to improve the effectiveness of an already high-quality statistical process designed to analyze peoples’ personalities. Similar to the original instructions (Twenge et al., 2001), participants were told that the measurement was capable of generating an accurate prediction of their likely future.

Participants first completed the Self-liking Clarity and Self-competence Clarity items developed in Study 1, and then completed the Self-Liking and Self-Competence Scale-Revised (SLCS-R; Tafarodi & Swann, 2001). They then answered questions relevant to the extroversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness domains of personality (Goldberg et al., 2006).

The three personality domains were selected based on their face-valid association with self-liking and competence. Extraversion is a component of the traditional Life
Alone manipulation (Twenge et al., 2001). Agreeableness and conscientiousness were included based on what seems like an intuitively plausible relationship to social inclusion, and competence and responsibility, respectively.

After completing these items, participants were informed that the computer was analyzing their information and that there would be a short delay. Participants were first presented with information about their extraversion, followed by agreeableness, and finally by conscientiousness. Information was presented as a function of whether participants were low, moderate, or high in the domain, as defined by the lower third, middle third, and top third of the scale range for each of the three dimensions. All information presented was intended to be authentically consistent with their actual trait level of these personality domains (see Appendix I for details).

Participants were presented with the experimental manipulation immediately after they received the personality feedback. In the liking threat condition, participants were presented with the Life Alone manipulation (Twenge et al., 2007), with careful fidelity to the original use of this manipulation; one additional sentence was included to aid the cover story (“Based on your answers…”). Participants were told the following:

Based on your answers to all of the previous questions, you're the type who will end up alone later in life. You may have friends and relationships now, but by your mid-20s most of these will have drifted away. You may even marry or have several

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This approach was used as the items employed were specifically intended by their creators to be normed on the population they are used on, and no normative data were available.
marriages, but these are likely to be short-lived and not continue into your 30s.

Relationships don't last, and when you're past the age where people are constantly forming new relationships, the odds are you'll end up being alone more and more.

Participants were told the following in the competence threat condition:

Based on your answers to all of the previous questions, you're the type who will end up with a low-paying job later in life. You may have academic and vocational successes now, but by your mid-20s most of these will have drifted away. You may even have a few chances for success at work, but these are likely to be short-lived and not continue into your 30s. Jobs don't last, and when you're past the age where people are finding opportunities for career advancement, the odds are you'll end up failing in your career more and more.

Participants in the control condition were told that:

Based on your answers to all of the previous questions, you’re the type who will end up doing fine in life. You likely have friends and relationships now, and most of these will continue. You will likely marry or otherwise do well in love, and these relationships are likely to last a long time. Your relationships and career will last, and even when you’re past the age where most people are done forming new relationships, the odds are you’ll end up continuing to make friends and do well at your job.

Finally, participants were presented with the dependent measure questionnaire. They were asked to rate their desire to engage in a series of behaviors (11 belongingness-
relevant behaviors and 11 competence-relevant behaviors, detailed below; see Appendices G and H). These behaviors were presented in counterbalanced order.

Measures

Self-esteem Dimensions. Participants completed the Self liking and Competence Scale-Revised (SLCS-R; Tafarodi & Swann, 2001). The SLCS-R is comprised of 16 items, with two 8-item subscales representing self-liking and self-competence. Participants responded to the items using a 5-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree). Responses are summed for each subscale, with higher numbers indicating higher dimensional self-esteem (Liking Esteem $M = 28.89$, $SD = 5.83$, $\alpha = .88$; Competence Esteem $M = 27.02$, $SD = 4.83$, $\alpha = .83$; $r(96) = .63$, $p < .01$).

Clarity Dimensions. As in Study 1, participants were presented with the Self-liking Clarity and Self-competence Clarity items. Items were responded to on a 5-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree), with higher scores indicating higher levels of clarity (Liking Clarity $M = 42.00$, $SD = 8.43$, $\alpha = .89$; Competence Clarity $M = 37.94$, $SD = 7.71$, $\alpha = .84$; $r(96) = .67$, $p < .01$). These findings are similar to the results obtained in Study 1.

Behaviors. Participants were presented with 22 behaviors (11 each from both the self-liking and the competence domains; see Appendices G and H). The behaviors were intended to represent a broad array of possible expressions of motivation in the dimensions discussed here. Specifically, they were intended to capture belongingness motivation and competence motivation, respectively.
Participants rated their desire to engage in each of the behaviors on a 5-point scale (1 = Really do not want to, 5 = Really want to), with higher scores indicating a greater desire to engage in the behaviors (Liking behaviors, $M = 41.69$, $SD = 5.66$, $\alpha = .73$; Competence behaviors, $M = 40.51$, $SD = 4.60$, $\alpha = .47$).
Results

Factor Analysis of Clarity Items

Confirmatory factor analysis is employed here, rather than exploratory factor analysis, due to the theoretical purpose: to distinguish between the two clarity dimensions (e.g., Tafarodi & Swann, 1995). Six eigenvalues exceeded 1: 9.4, 2.2, 1.4, 1.2, 1.1, and 1.0. A two-factor solution yielded adequate model fit (RMSEA = .096, 90% CI [.083, .109]). RMSEA less than .1 is considered acceptable, albeit not ideal (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). A one-factor solution yielded poor model fit (RMSEA = .121, 90% CI [.108, .133]), and consequently the two-factor solution is preferred.

Self-liking Dimension

Analyses were conducted using dummy coded regression. All comparisons are relative to the control condition. Specifically, liking behaviors were predicted by self-liking esteem, self-liking clarity, and their interaction with condition. Self-competence clarity and self-competence esteem were entered as covariates.

The hypothesis for this domain was not supported, as no three-way interaction emerged, $b = .01, t(84) = -.63, p = .53$. Instead, self-liking clarity and the liking threat marginally interacted, $b = .54, t(84) = 1.91, p < .10$, such that there was a trend for those with low liking clarity to report reduced desire to engage in liking behavior ($M = 38.53$), relative to the control ($M = 43.39$). Conversely, those with high liking clarity reported a higher desire ($M = 44.31$), relative to the control ($M = 40.06$). See Figure 1 for details.

No simple effect of the liking threat on liking behaviors emerged, $b = -.30, t(84) = -.18, p = .75$. Self-liking esteem did not predict desire to engage in behaviors, $b = .19$,
$t(84) = .74, p = .46$. Liking clarity did not predict liking behaviors, $b = -.23, t(84) = -1.46, p = .15$, Self-liking esteem did not interact with the liking threat, $b = -.12, t(84) = -0.29, p = .77$.

**Self-competence Dimension**

Analyses were conducted using dummy coded regression. All comparisons are relative to the control condition. Competence behaviors were entered as the criterion variable, with self-competence esteem, self-competence clarity, and their interactions with condition entered as predictor variables. Self-liking esteem and self-liking clarity were entered as covariates. Predictor variables were centered (Aiken & West, 1991).

In partial support of the hypotheses advanced, a nonsignificant but suggestive three-way interaction emerged between self-competence esteem, competence clarity, and the competence threat, $b = -0.04, t(84) = -1.53, p = .13$. Desire to engage in competence-relevant behaviors was marginally predicted by a competence threat, $b = 2.31, t(84) = 1.78, p < .10$, with those threatened reporting an increased desire to engage in competence-related behaviors. Desire was not predicted by self-competence esteem, $b = .28, t(84) = .96, p = .30$, or by self-competence clarity, $b = -.11, t(84) = -.68, p = .50$. Self-competence esteem did not interact with condition, $b = -.33, t(84) = -1.02, p = .31$. Competence clarity also did not interact with condition, $b = .19, t(84) = .97, p = .33$.

**Differences between Behavioral Dimensions**

As with self-liking and self-competence specifically, the following regressions were dummy coded regressions with the control as the referent. Analyses reported control for self-esteem and self-concept clarity in the alternate dimension.
The difference between behavioral desires was calculated by subtracting the sum of the competence-relevant behaviors from the sum of the liking-relevant behaviors ($M = 1.18, SD = 6.5$). Positive values indicate a relatively greater desire to engage in liking behaviors; negative values indicate a preference for competence behaviors. The slightly positive overall mean on this measure shows that, across conditions, participants generally preferred the liking behaviors to the competence behaviors ($t(97) = 1.8, p = .07$).

A three-way interaction emerged between self-competence clarity, self-competence esteem, and the competence threat condition emerged, ($b = .07, t(84) = 2.06, p < .05$; See Figures 2, 3, and 4). Individuals high in both self-competence esteem and clarity expressed a slightly greater increase in desire to engage in liking behaviors. Conversely, those with high self-competence esteem and low clarity displayed a relatively greater focus on competence behaviors, and those low in both self-competence esteem and clarity expressed a slight preference for competence behaviors. Participants low in self-competence esteem and high in self-competence clarity reported a greater focus on competence-relevant behaviors as well.

In addition, the competence threat nonsignificantly predicted differences in desires, $b = -2.8, t(84) = -1.59, p = .12$, with participants in the competence threat condition tending to report a relatively greater focus on competence behaviors.

Self-liking clarity, self-liking esteem, and liking threats did not emerge as significant predictors of differences in desires, and no interactions were observed (all $p$’s > .2).
Discussion

It was predicted that one's level of clarity and esteem would be important factors in determining how an individual reacts to a threat. Specifically, it was predicted that individuals high in self-liking esteem and liking clarity would be relatively unaffected by a liking threat, and that individuals high in self-competence esteem and self-competence clarity would be relatively unaffected by a competence threat.

The results mostly supported the hypothesis advanced for self-competence. Consistent with our predictions, those low in either self-competence esteem or in self-competence clarity reported a relatively greater desire to engage in competence behaviors. In addition, those with high self-competence esteem and high competence clarity expressed an increased desire to engage in liking behaviors following a competence threat.

Within the liking domain, those with low self-liking clarity reported a decrease in desire to engage in liking behaviors when threatened, whereas those with high self-liking clarity reported an increase in desire. Speculatively, this may reflect social expectancies, or what these individuals expect in terms of future acceptance. Those with positive social expectancies approach others when threatened with rejection, whereas those with negative social expectancies distance themselves (Sommer & Rubin, 2005). Presumably, those with high self-liking clarity have such positive expectancies and approach others following a rejection threat, whereas those with low self-liking clarity either lack such expectations or assume negative outcomes and so avoid others following a rejection threat.
Such an interpretation is speculative as expectancies were not measured in this study, but not without merit for the following reasons. First, high levels of confidence and certainty typically lead to an increase in willingness to make predictions (i.e., expectancies). Second, though high self-liking clarity is not necessarily associated with positive self-evaluations, self-liking clarity and self-liking esteem were highly correlated ($r = .74$) in the present study, indicating that those whose self-liking clarity is high tend to also like themselves. Such individuals likely assume others do as well, given the socially mediated nature of self-liking esteem (Tafarodi & Swann, 1995; 2001). In sum, it is not unreasonable to assume that those with high self-liking clarity are typically confident in their likability, and generally expect positive social outcomes.

**Limitations**

There were a few significant limitations of Study 2 which merit consideration. The dependent variables used were created specifically for this experiment and were not drawn from past research. As such, they have relatively unknown validity. They were created to serve as a proxy for motivation following a threat, and to be as broad as the domains they were intended to capture.

The competence behaviors exhibited very low internal reliability ($\alpha = .47$) and low inter-item correlations (all $rs < .3$). Similarly, the liking behaviors exhibited only passable internal reliability ($\alpha = .77$). These low alphas suggest possible multidimensionality of the behaviors used here, at least in the case of competence behaviors. Though low internal reliability works against the likelihood of statistical
significance, it nevertheless poses a problem in that low reliability is sometimes said to indicate low validity (e.g., John & Soto, 2007). However, there are many forms of reliability and validity. Internal reliability is only one form of reliability, and is of limited value in evaluating at least some forms of validity (McCrae, Kurtz, Yamagata, & Terraciano, 2011). Ultimately, properly assessing the validity of these behaviors employed here requires additional research, but low internal reliability is not sufficient by itself to dismiss the findings reported here.

A key point to consider that is apparent with hindsight is the questionable nature of the control condition. The typical Life Alone control condition informs participants that they will be accident-prone later in life. Self-competence esteem is influenced by successful goal attainment, and accidents indicate some sort of goal inconsistent consequences (i.e., failure) that may be perceived as indicative of competence (Fiske et al., 2007). As such, the standard life alone control runs the risk of acting as a self-competence threat. The control condition employed in the present study was developed to avoid such issues.

However, the information presented in the control condition is relatively positive in nature, and may have been a manipulation in and of itself: specifically, participants may have felt affirmed (Sherman & Cohen, 2006) by the relatively positive nature of the information. Self-affirmation involves confirming or discussing in some capacity values important to an individual, and social inclusion and vocational success are presumably central values to college students. Speculatively, affirming that participants will succeed in life may influence their desire to engage in either liking or competence behaviors. In
order to help address these concerns, additional analyses were conducted that excluded the control condition. Briefly, the analyses conducted were generally not significant, due in part to the reduced sample size, but the general pattern remained the same (See Appendix M for details).
Chapter 4: Studies 3a and 3b

Study 2 provided experimental evidence supporting the distinction between clarity about one's self-liking and clarity about one's competence. Those individuals high in self-competence esteem and high in self-competence clarity reported a relatively greater desire to engage in liking behaviors after a competence threat, whereas those low in either self-competence esteem or self-competence clarity reported a desire to engage in relatively more competence behaviors than liking behaviors. In addition, those individuals high in self-liking clarity reported a relatively greater focus on liking behaviors if presented with a self-liking threat.

Studies 3a and 3b approaches the task of distinguishing self-liking clarity from self-competence clarity from a metacognitive perspective. Individuals with clear self-concepts, by definition, hold their beliefs about themselves with a high level of confidence, and have well-defined, consistent, and accessible self-views (Campbell et al., 1996). These properties are hallmarks of fluent processing, which is a metacognitive cue derived from the subjective experience of ease in thinking about a given topic (Alter & Oppenheimer, 2009). Fluency in processing information about a given target leads to more positive evaluations of that target (Reber, Schwarz, & Winkielman, 2004). Hence, one can expect a fluent experience when thinking about the self to lead to more positive evaluations of the self.
A common manipulation of metacognitive influences upon thoughts and belief is the ease of retrieval effect (Schwartz et al., 1991). The ease of retrieval effect induces disfluency by requiring individuals to extensively elaborate on a given area of knowledge (Winkielman et al., 2012), which then leads to less positive evaluations. There are now several illustrations of the impact of this manipulation on judgments about the self. It has been found that ease of retrieval manipulations influence self-ratings of assertiveness (Schwarz, 1998), and politeness (Rothman & Hardin, 1997). Further, individual differences in self-doubt have been shown to moderate the ease of retrieval’s effects on self-esteem (Hermann, Leonardelli, & Arkin, 2002).

Violations of expectations of ease are an important component of this effect (Hansen & Wanke, 2008). Intuitively, individuals with clear self-concepts should expect ease in describing themselves. Their self-concepts are clearly defined, consistent, and stable, and likely rarely doubted. For those with less clear self-concepts, however, the expectations should be much different. These individuals have no reason to expect ease in thinking about themselves, and if anything expect difficulty in doing so (Guerrettaz, 2011).

In the case of clarity about one’s liking and clarity about one’s competence, only those with high self-liking clarity should expect ease in describing what makes them likable, and only those high in self-competence clarity should expect ease in describing traits that reflect their competence. However, if such expectations are violated, then their self-evaluations in those dimensions would be expected to suffer commensurate with the metacognitive difficulty they experience.
The hypotheses advanced for the present studies were as follows. First, individuals with high self-liking clarity who were made to elaborate extensively on their self-liking self-images would report lower self-liking esteem. In addition, it was predicted that this effect would hold true in the competence domain as well. Those with high self-competence clarity should report lower self-competence esteem if asked to recall multiple competence-related self-images. Further, for Study 3b, it was predicted that those high in self-liking clarity would expect ease in describing their liking self-images, and those high in self-competence clarity would expect ease in describing their competence self-images.
Method

Study 3a

Participants

One hundred and ten individuals enrolled in an introductory psychology course participated in this study for partial course credit. Two participants were removed due to a software malfunction and 43 were deleted because they elaborated on a self-image from the opposing dimension, leaving a final sample of 65 participants.

Procedure

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the cells of a 2 (2 examples vs. 8 examples) x 2 (Self-liking dimension vs. Self-competence dimension) between-subjects design. Participants were informed that they were participating in an experiment about how people view themselves, and about peoples' identities. Participants first completed the Liking and Competence Clarity items. Following completion of the items, participants were presented with the ease of retrieval task.

Participants were assigned to one or the other dimension, liking or competence, and depending on that assignment, they were asked to list either five liking self-images, or five competence self-images. The meaning and definition of self-liking and competence were provided to participants (See Appendix K). All conditions were presented along with the definition of the other dimension, and participants were asked explicitly not to list self-images that would fall under that other dimension. Example self-liking traits provided by participants are “compassionate,” “friendly,” and “forgiving.” Example competence traits are “intelligent,” “determined,” and “hard working.” In order
to ensure that participants understood the task, a simple example was provided using
“able” in the competence conditions, and “charitable” in the self-liking conditions (See Appendix L).

After listing their five self-images, participants were asked to choose which of the five was most important to them. They were instructed to provide either 2 or 8 times that they behaved in a way that reflected that self-image. This process was repeated for the trait they considered second most important. Participants then completed the SLCS-R. Finally, participants were presented with two questions related to confidence, one for each dimension, and debriefed.

Measures

Clarity Dimensions. Participants were presented with a new set of Self-competence Clarity and Self-liking Clarity items. These items were intended to address face validity concerns of the questions used in the previous two studies. Further, while the model fit of the scales used in the previous studies is considered acceptable fit, it is not considered good fit (i.e., RMSEA of less than .07; Steiger, 2007). In order to address these concerns, ten items were adapted from the original Self-concept Clarity scale (Campbell et al., 1996), with the intent of creating a scale that could easily be used for either dimension by replacing a single word (See Appendices J and K). Participants responded to the items on a 5-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 5 = Strongly agree). Responses were summed, and ranged from 10 to 50. Descriptive statistics for self-liking clarity were $M = 34.03$, $SD = 8.50$, $\alpha = .92$, and for self-competence clarity they were $M$
=31.08, \( SD = 67.56, \alpha = .90 \). The two subscales were highly correlated, \( r(63) = .72, p < .01 \).

**Self-esteem.** As in Studies 1 and 2, participants completed the Self Liking and Competence Scale-Revised (SLCS-R; Tafarodi & Swann, 2001). Descriptive statistics for self-liking esteem were \( M = 27.69, SD = 6137, \alpha = .89 \), and for self-competence esteem they were \( M = 26.27, SD = 4.88, \alpha = .83 \). The two subscales were highly correlated, \( r(.63) = .60, p < .01 \).

**Study 3b**

**Participants**

One hundred and twenty-seven individuals enrolled in an introductory psychology course participated in this study for partial course credit. Thirty-two participants elaborated on self-images from a domain other than the one to which they were assigned, and were excluded from subsequent analyses, leaving a final sample of 95 participants.

**Procedure**

The procedure of Study 3b was similar to that of Study 3a, with one exception. Participants were presented with the ease of retrieval task instructions after completing the Clarity Dimensions items, but were not asked to actually complete the task. Participants were then asked to rate how difficult they expected the task to be (see below). Participants then completed the actual ease of retrieval task.

**Measures**

**Clarity Dimensions.** Participants were presented with the same clarity items used in Study 3a. Participants responded to the items on a 5-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree,
5 = Strongly agree). Responses were summed, and ranged from 10 to 50. Descriptive statistics for self-liking clarity were $M = 31.28$, $SD = 7.26$, $\alpha = .88$, and for self-competence clarity they were $M = 31.45$, $SD = 7.6$, $\alpha = .86$. The two subscales were modestly correlated, $r(93) = .40$, $p < .01$.

**Self-esteem.** As in the previous three studies, participants completed the Self Liking and Competence Scale-Revised (SLCS-R; Tafarodi & Swann, 2001). Descriptive statistics for self-liking esteem were $M = 27.99$, $SD = 5.92$, $\alpha = .90$, and for self-competence esteem they were $M = 26.60$, $SD = 3.78$, $\alpha = .68$. The two subscales were highly correlated, $r(93) = .54$, $p < .01$.

**Difficulty Questions.** Participants completed four questions (1 = Very Easy, 6 = Very Difficult) about the difficulty they anticipated in describing themselves. One question asked participants about the difficulty they expected in listing five self-images, another questioned the difficulty they expected in elaborating on two of these images, and a final question inquired about the overall difficulty of the task. Finally, participants answered a question about how difficult it is for them to describe themselves to others.
Results

Factor Analysis of Clarity Items

Participants completed the self-liking and self-competence clarity items at the start of Studies 3a and 3b prior to any manipulation, and so the data from both studies were combined in order to better test the factor structure of the clarity items used here.

Confirmatory factor analysis is employed here, rather than exploratory factor analysis, due to the theoretical reasons to distinguish between self-liking and self-competence (e.g., Tafarodi & Swann, 1995). Four eigenvalues exceeded 1: 9.85, 1.74, 1.23, and 1.13. A two-factor solution yielded adequate model fit (RMSEA = .094, 90% CI [.078, .111]). RMSEA less than .1 is considered acceptable, albeit not ideal (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). A one-factor solution yielded significantly worse model fit (RMSEA = .151, 90% CI [.136, .165]). Consequently, the two-factor solution is to be preferred. See Table 3 for details.

Study 3a

Self-liking Esteem

The specific analyses conducted were effects coded regression with self-liking clarity, number of items recalled, and dimension of self-images as predictors. Self-competence esteem and self-competence clarity were entered as covariates. All predictor variables were centered (Aiken & West, 1991).

The interaction between self-liking clarity, number of items recalled, and dimension of items recalled was not significant, $b = .11$, $t(53) = 1.51$, $p = .14$. However,
the direction of the effect is not consistent with the hypotheses (this effect is discussed here because a parallel effect appears in Study 3b). Within the competence self-images conditions, those whose self-liking clarity was high reported a drop in self-liking esteem after recalling 8 self-images. Conversely, those whose self-liking clarity was low reported higher self-liking esteem after recalling 8 self-images (See Figure 5 for details).

This was qualified by a marginal interaction between self-liking clarity and number of items recalled, \( b = -0.15, t(53) = -1.82, p < .1 \). Among those asked to recall 8 examples, participants whose self-liking clarity was high reported a decrease in self-liking esteem, whereas those whose self-liking clarity was low reported an increase in self-liking esteem. In addition, dimension of items recalled significantly predicted self-liking esteem, \( b = 1.20, t(53) = 2.15, p < .05 \), with participants in the liking recall conditions tending to report higher self-liking esteem.

Higher self-liking clarity was not significantly associated with higher levels of self-liking esteem, \( b = 0.10, t(53) = 1.04, p = .30 \). Number of examples recalled did not significantly influence self-liking esteem, \( b = -0.79, t(53) = -1.40, p = .17 \).

**Self-competence Esteem**

All analyses conducted were effects coded regression with self-competence clarity, number of items recalled, and the dimension of the self-images as predictors. Self-liking esteem and self-liking clarity were included as covariates. The 2-item recall condition was coded as the reference condition, and all variables were centered (Aiken & West, 1991).
There was no three-way interaction between self-competence clarity, dimension of items recalled, and number of items recalled, \( b = -.03, t(53) = -.39, p = .69 \).

Self-competence clarity significantly predicted self-competence esteem, \( b = .31, t(53) = 2.85, p < .01 \). Self-competence clarity and dimension of items recalled marginally interacted, \( b = .14, t(53) = 1.95, p < .10 \). Those with low self-competence clarity tended to report higher self-competence esteem, whereas those with high self-competence clarity tended to report lower self-competence esteem. Number of items recalled did not affect self-competence esteem, \( b = .26, t(53) = .51, p = .62 \). Self-competence clarity and number of items recalled did not interact, \( b = -.02, t(53) = -.24, p = .81 \).

**Study 3b**

**Self-liking Esteem**

The specific analyses conducted were effects coded regression with self-liking clarity, number of items recalled, and the dimension of the self-images as predictors. Self-competence esteem and self-competence clarity were entered as covariates. Two items and competence recall were the reference levels, and all variables were centered (Aiken & West, 1991).

Self-liking clarity predicted significantly higher self-liking esteem, \( b = .22, t(85) = 2.95, p < .01 \). Number of items recalled and the dimension of items recalled did not significantly predict self-liking esteem, and these variables did not interact with one another or with self-liking clarity (\( p \)'s > .34).

**Self-competence Esteem**
All analyses conducted were effects coded regression with self-competence clarity, number of items recalled, and the dimension of the self-images as predictors. Self-liking esteem and self-liking clarity were included as covariates. All predictor variables were centered (Aiken & West, 1991).

A nonsignificant three-way interaction effect emerged, $b = -.08$, $t(85) = -1.55$, $p = .13$. The pattern of this interaction merits interpretation, as it is parallel in nature to that reported in Study 3a. Within the liking self-images dimension, those with low clarity that recalled 8 images reported relatively higher self-competence esteem, whereas those with high clarity showed the reverse, and reported lower self-competence esteem (See Figure 6 for details).

A main effect of dimension emerged, such that participants in the liking conditions reported lower self-competence esteem, $b = .83$, $t(85) = -2.53$, $p < .05$. Self-competence clarity and number of items recalled did not interact, $b = -.02$, $t(53) = -.24$, $p = .81$. Self-competence clarity and dimension of items recalled did not interact, $b = -.03$, $t(85) = -.5$, $p = .62$. Finally, number of items recalled did not predict self-competence esteem, $b = .05$, $t(85) = .15$, $p = .89$, nor did self-competence clarity, $b = .09$, $t(85) = 1.57$, $p = .12$.

*Anticipated Difficulty*

The three ease of retrieval task questions were averaged into an aggregate measure of difficulty ($\alpha = .93$). Expected difficulty of completing the liking self-images task was negatively predicted by self-liking clarity, $b = -.05$, $t(47) = -2.84$, $p < .01$, and by self-competence clarity, $b = -.04$, $t(47) = -2.13$, $p < .05$. Further, self-liking clarity
negatively predicted participants’ expected difficulty in describing their likability to others, \( b = -.08, t(47) = 3.82, p < .01 \). Self-competence clarity did not significantly predict such ease, \( b = -.03, t(47) = -1.35, p = .18 \).

Neither self-liking clarity nor self-competence clarity predicted the difficulty participants expected in completing the ease of retrieval task, or in describing their competence to others (all \( ps > .16 \)).
Discussion

These studies provide some limited additional evidence that clarity from liking sources and clarity from competence sources are distinguishable. However, the results reported here were not consistent with the hypotheses. It was predicted that for those high in self-liking clarity, extensively elaborating on liking images would result in a drop in self-liking esteem. Similar to self-liking, the prediction that extensively elaborating on competence images would lead those with high self-competence clarity to report lower self-competence esteem was not supported. It was also predicted that higher levels of clarity would be associated with expectations of ease in describing oneself, and this prediction was supported, but with qualifications. Self-liking clarity predicted expectations of ease in describing liking traits, as predicted. In addition, self-competence clarity was also a significant predictor of expectations of ease in describing liking traits.

Roughly 40% of participants were excluded from the analyses because they elaborated on traits that reflected the alternate dimensions, suggesting that the instructions and definitions of liking and competence self-images provided were not fully successful in distinguishing these two domains in participants’ minds. Participants in the competence conditions tended to include a variety of liking traits (e.g., friendly, kind, honest) as being indicative of their competence, and participants in the liking conditions often mentioned traits such as intelligence and responsibility. This is not surprising for two reasons. As Tafarodi and Swann (2001) pointed out, virtues can be used to great effect, and competencies may be seen as moral. Further, competence and efficacy are also
applicable to social concerns, as successfully acquiring and maintaining relationships requires skill in interacting with others. Taken together, these facts may explain the difficulty in separating liking traits from competence traits, at least for the purposes of ease of retrieval effects.

This difficulty may be reflected in the pattern of results obtained across these two studies. In Study 3a, individuals high in self-liking clarity made to elaborate their competence self-images reported a drop in self-liking esteem, whereas in Study 3b, individuals high in self-competence clarity who elaborated on their liking self-images reported lower self-competence esteem. This pattern of results may be due to the aforementioned overlap in meaning of certain self-liking and self-competence traits. Such an interpretation is speculative, and we return to this issue in the general discussion.
Chapter 5: General Discussion

The present work draws inspiration from the classic distinction between self-evaluations based on liking and evaluations based on competence (e.g., Diggory, 1966; Tafarodi & Swann, 1995; Wojciszke, 2005) and applies it to understanding the nature of self-concept clarity (Campbell et al., 1996). In order to distinguish between these two domains of self-concept clarity, three studies are reported here, each taking a very different approach to the challenge of distinguishing competence-based self-concept clarity from liking-based self-concept clarity.

In Study 1, we explored the stability of self-esteem and self-concept clarity in both the liking and competence dimensions using a methodology modeled after the paradigm employed by Kernis and colleagues (Kernis et al., 1989). Kernis and colleagues (Kernis et al., 1989) found that stability of global self-esteem and level of global self-esteem are only weakly correlated, and here we find the same for self-liking and self-competence esteem. Similar to self-esteem, self-concept clarity stability was relatively independent of self-concept clarity level. Self-concept clarity is defined in part by stability of the self-concept (Campbell et al., 1996), and the present results support such a conceptualization.
We further found that self-liking esteem and self-liking clarity mutually predict each other over time. The same is true of self-competence esteem and self-competence clarity. Self-competence and self-liking predicted each other in some cases, but to a far lesser degree, lending further support for the viability of the distinction between self-liking clarity and self-competence clarity.

Study 2 employed an experimental approach to explore whether reactions to specific threats to the self in the liking or competence domains would depend upon one’s self-esteem and self-concept clarity in that domain. The hypotheses were supported within the competence domain, and partially within the liking domain. Participants with high levels of both self-competence esteem and self-competence clarity expressed a relatively greater desire to engage in liking behaviors following a threat to their competence. On the other hand, the story for participants lower in either esteem or clarity was quite different. Following a threat to their competence, they expressed a desire to engage in relatively more competence-related behaviors.

Among participants whose liking was threatened, self-liking clarity moderated responses. Those whose self-liking clarity was high reported an increased desire to engage in liking behaviors. On the other hand, those whose self-liking clarity was low reported a decreased desire to engage in liking behaviors.

Study 3 made use of the ease of retrieval paradigm (Schwarz et al., 1991) to test the hypothesis that extensive elaboration of self-images in a given domain would undermine evaluations of the self in that same domain. It was predicted that for those
high in self-liking clarity, extensively elaborating on liking images would result in a drop in self-liking esteem. Further, it was predicted that for those high in self-competence clarity, elaborating on competence self-images would lead to a drop in self-competence esteem. However, neither of these predictions was supported.

*Nature of Self-liking and Self-competence*

Tafarodi and Swann (1995; 2001) have argued that self-competence esteem and self-liking esteem are co-equal dimensions of self-esteem and that treating self-esteem as global in nature neglects our duality as both socio-moral beings and agents affecting the world. While it is certainly true that people evaluate themselves and others on distinct dimensions and are motivated by needs to be both socially included and approved of, as well as efficacious and able to influence our environment, the results here (specifically, Study 1) and the literature on person perception suggest that their treatment of these two dimensions as being “co-equal dimensions of self-esteem” (Tafarodi & Swann, 2001) must be considered with certain qualifications in mind.

Treating them as equal neglects the primacy of social concerns. As a strongly altricial species, we rely utterly on the support of our parents and communities for many years (to varying degrees for over a decade or two). This need for community leads to social inclusion being our most important goal to attain. Even as adults, we rely on our communities, and make exceedingly rapid judgments of others’ likeability – and so, their plausible intent (Willis & Todorov, 2006).

Closer consideration of the relationships observed in Study 1 support viewing self-liking as primary, reflecting its origins in social approval and connectedness
(Tafarodi & Swann, 1995). Higher levels of self-liking clarity were associated with greater stability of self-liking esteem and self-competence esteem, but no such relationship was observed for self-competence clarity level. Further, stability of self-liking clarity level was equally strongly associated with self-liking esteem stability and self-competence esteem stability. Conversely, self-competence stability was only weakly associated with both types of esteem stability.

The results of Study 1 also suggest that it is self-liking that is most responsible for the relationship between global self-esteem and global self-concept clarity (e.g., Kernis et al., 1993). Though the correlations are not significantly different due to the small sample size ($ps > .1$), global self-esteem exhibited a stronger relationship with self-liking esteem ($r(41) = .82$) than with self-competence esteem ($r(41) = .63$). Similarly, global self-concept clarity was more closely related with self-liking clarity ($r(41) = .74$) than with self-competence clarity ($r(41) = .63$).

Additionally, one way to interpret participant responses to the manipulation employed in Studies 3a and 3b is to argue that they reflect the primacy of self-liking. Specifically, there was a clear pattern to the way in which participants misunderstood the instructions. Many participants construed traits that are relatively more reflective of likability, belongingness, and acceptance (i.e., sources of self-liking esteem) to be competence self-images (e.g., honest, friendly). Participants asked to provide competence images provided more images from the other dimension ($M = 1.49, SD = 1.46$) than did those asked to provide liking images ($M = .65, SD = .88; t(96) = 3.41, p < .01$). Though
speculative, participants may have misunderstood the instructions and responded with what most readily came to mind: what makes them likable.

Further, participants may have construed traits to be indicative of the alternate dimension when elaborating upon them in a way not immediately visible and correctable. For example, participants in both liking and competence conditions mentioned intelligence as a relevant trait. Participants that did so in the liking conditions were excluded from analyses. However, participants in the competence conditions may have conceptualized intelligence as indicative of likability. This would lead to an effect upon self-liking esteem, rather than self-competence esteem. Such an argument is quite speculative, but if accurate would indicate that the findings reported here are at least somewhat consistent with the predictions advanced.

Though self-liking appears primary, both liking and competence threats affect people, and this is true even when controlling for clarity in the unthreatened domain. In Study 2, threats to liking were moderated by level of self-liking clarity such that, relative to the control condition, those low in self-liking clarity expressed a reduced desire to engage in liking behaviors, whereas those high in clarity expressed an increased desire. Further, the competence threat clearly affected those low in either self-competence esteem or self-competence clarity in such a way that they reported a relatively greater desire to engage in competence-related behaviors than in liking-related behaviors. Conversely, those high in both self-competence esteem and self-competence clarity reported a relatively greater focus on liking-related behaviors.

*Future Directions*
The present research has offered some support for the distinguishability of self-liking clarity and self-competence clarity, but many of the predictions advanced were not supported. Future work is clearly necessary to adequately address the distinction offered here, and to provide reasonable support for it.

A clear extension of this work is to combine the basic approaches employed by studies 1 and 2, specifically self-esteem stability (and self-concept clarity stability) and reactions to threats. Self-esteem stability has been shown to be an important factor in predicting threat responses (Kernis, 2005), and it is extremely likely that self-liking esteem stability would behave similarly given the high correlation between global and self-liking esteem levels ($r(41) = .82$). Whether or not a similar effect would occur for self-competence esteem stability is less clear. The relationship between global self-esteem and self-competence esteem levels is relatively more modest ($r = .63$), and further the competence dimension is typically less central and important than the liking dimension. It is entirely plausible that even if those with lower self-competence esteem stability reacted with greater vigor to threats, they would do so out of concern for the implications of incompetence upon social inclusion.

In addition, future research will address the issues the dependant measures used in Study 2. The dependent measures were intended to capture domain-specific motivation. Because both liking and competence represent large spheres of life, a wide variety of behaviors were used to accomplish this. The low reliability of the dependent measures used in Study 2 raises questions of validity (but does not necessarily imply them; McCrae
et al., 2007). Regardless, future research may profitably employ the use of well-validated measures of motivation in these domains in order to address this concern.

Two issues related to Study 3 merit addressing in future research. Specifically, future work should improve upon the manipulation, and test the assumption that those with high levels of clarity anticipate ease in describing themselves. A possible way to provide a more effective manipulation of liking and competence self-images is to simply give participants a list of traits that are clearly representative of a given dimension. Participants would then choose ten traits that describe them, pick the two most important to them, and then elaborate upon them. In order to test the assumption that participants anticipate ease in describing themselves, a simple method of doing so is to simply ask them by presenting them with the entirety of the task and having them state their expectations of ease in describing themselves. Participants would then be presented with the actual ease of retrieval task. This would allow for a test of the possibility that it is the violations of expectations of ease that would lead to a drop in self-esteem.

The present research also has clinical implications. Some researchers theorize that there are two distinct types of depression, and these two types are analogous self-liking and self-competence (Beck, 1982; Blatt, 1984). The form of depression that is analogous to self-liking is known as either sociotropic or dependent depression, whereas the form similar to self-competence is known as autonomic or self-critical depression. Sociotropic/dependent depression is characterized by feelings of helplessness, loneliness, and crying, whereas autonomic/self-critical depression is characterized by feelings of failure, guilt, anhedonia, and loss of interest in others (Luyten et al., 2006).
Based on past work by Kernis and colleagues (Kernis et al., 1991), those with unstable self-liking esteem can be expected to experience more severe sociotropic/dependent depression, whereas those with unstable self-competence esteem can be expected to experience more severe autonomic/self-critical depression. Similarly, it is likely that those with low self-liking clarity experience greater sociotropic/dependent depression, whereas those with low self-competence clarity are likely to experience greater autonomic/self-critical depression. Part of overcoming depression is the belief that one can, and those low in the relevant clarity presumably are uncertain of whether or not they can.

Conclusion

The present research was conducted to advance the distinction between clarity from liking sources and clarity from competence sources. As sociomoral beings and as agents affecting the world, we derive satisfaction from successfully navigating the social world, adhering to social norms, and from affecting the world at large. In order to succeed, however, we must believe that we can, and know what makes us able to do so. Though the studies reported here did not fully support the hypotheses advanced, the distinction between self-liking and self-competence is a classic one. The distinction has proven useful in numerous areas of self-perception, and it is one that still seems worth exploring in future research about the self-concept.
References


Appendix A: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others.

2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure. (R)

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

5. I feel that I do not have much to be proud of. (R)

6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

8. I wish I could have more respect for myself. (R)

9. I certainly feel useless at times. (R)

10. At times I think that I am no good at all. (R)

   Scale ranges from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree).

   (R) Indicates reverse-keyed item.
Appendix B: Self-Concept Clarity Scale

1. My beliefs about myself often conflict with one another. (R)

2. On one day I might have one opinion of myself and on another day I might have a different opinion. (R)

3. I spend a lot of time wondering about what kind of person I really am. (R)

4. Sometimes I feel that I am not the person that I appear to be. (R)

5. When I think about the kind of person I have been in the past, I’m not sure what I was really like. (R)

6. I seldom experience conflict between the different aspects of my personality.

7. Sometimes I think I know other people better than I know myself. (R)

8. My beliefs about myself seem to change very frequently. (R)

9. If I were asked to describe my personality, my description might end up being different from one day to another day. (R)

10. Even if I wanted to, I don’t think I could tell someone what I’m really like. (R)

11. In general, I have a clear sense of who I am and what I am.
12. It is often hard for me to make up my mind about things because I really don’t know what I want. (R)

Scale ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

(R) Indicates reverse-keyed item.
Appendix C: Self-liking Clarity, Version 1

1. My beliefs about my competence often conflict with one another. (R)
2. On one day I might have one opinion of my competence and on another day I might have another opinion. (R)
3. I spend a lot of time wondering about how skilled I really am. (R)
4. Sometimes I feel that I am not really as talented as I appear to be. (R)
5. When I think about my accomplishments in the past, I'm not sure that I ever knew my true skill level. (R)
6. I seldom experience conflict between the different aspects of my personality and how competent I am.
7. Sometimes I think I know other people’s talents better than I know my own. (R)
8. My beliefs about my talents seem to change very frequently. (R)
9. If I were asked to describe my self-competence, my description might end up being different from one day to another. (R)
10. Even if I wanted to, I don't think I could tell someone if I’m competent. (R)
11. In general, I have a clear sense of how talented I am.
12. It is often hard for me to make up my mind about trying new things because I don't really know if I'm capable. (R)

Scale ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

(R) Indicates reverse-keyed item.
Appendix D: Self-competence Clarity, Version 1

1. My beliefs about my worth often conflict with one another. (R)
2. On one day I might have one opinion of my self-worth and on another day I might have another opinion. (R)
3. I spend a lot of time wondering about my value as a person. (R)
4. Sometimes I feel that I am not really as likeable as I appear to be. (R)
5. When I think about my value as a person in the past, I'm not sure that I’m the same person now. (R)
6. I seldom experience conflict between the different aspects of my personality and how likeable I am. (R)
7. Sometimes I think I know other people’s worth better than I know my own. (R)
8. My beliefs about my value seem to change very frequently. (R)
9. If I were asked to describe my self-worth, my description might end up being different from one day to another. (R)
10. Even if I wanted to, I don't think I could tell someone if I'm likeable. (R)
11. In general, I have a clear sense of how likeable I am.
12. It is often hard for me to make up my mind about trying to make friends because I don't know if I'm really likeable. (R)

Scale ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

(R) Indicates reverse-keyed item.
Appendix E: Self-Liking and Competence Scale-Revised

These items concern your general thoughts and feelings about yourself. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each item using the scale below:

1---------------2--------------3---------------4--------------5

Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1. I tend to devalue myself. (L-)

2. I am highly effective at the things I do. (C+)

3. I am very comfortable with myself. (L+)

4. I am almost always able to accomplish what I try for. (C+)

5. I am secure in my sense of self-worth. (L+)

6. It is sometimes unpleasant for me to think about myself. (L-)

7. I have a negative attitude toward myself. (L-)

8. At times, I find it difficult to achieve the things that are important to me. (C-)

9. I feel great about who I am. (L+)

10. I sometimes deal poorly with challenges. (C-)

11. I never doubt my personal worth. (L+)

12. I perform very well at many things. (C+)

13. I sometimes fail to fulfill my goals. (C-)

74
14. I am very talented. (C+)

15. I do not have enough respect for myself. (L-)

16. I wish I were more skillful in my activities. (C-)

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Note. C = self-competence; L = self-liking; - = negative item; + = positive item.
Appendix F: Big Five Domain Items

Items are responded to using the following scale:

1: Very Inaccurate
2: Moderately Inaccurate
3: Neither Inaccurate nor Accurate
4: Moderately Accurate
5: Very Accurate

Am the life of the party.
Feel comfortable around people.
Start conversations.
Talk to a lot of different people at parties.
Don't mind being the center of the attention.
Don't talk a lot. (R)
Keep in the background. (R)
Have little to say. (R)
Don't like to draw attention to myself. (R)
Am quiet around strangers. (R)
Am interested in people.

Sympathize with others' feelings.

Have a soft heart.

Take time out for others.

Feel others' emotions.

Make people feel at ease.

Am not really interested in others. (R)

Insult people. (R)

Am not interested in other people's problems. (R)

Feel little concern for others. (R)

Am always prepared.

Pay attention to details.

Get chores done right away.

Like order.

Follow a schedule.

Am exacting in my work.

Leave my belongings around. (R)

Make a mess of things. (R)

Often forget to put things back in their proper place. (R)

Shirk my duties. (R)
Appendix G: Liking-relevant behaviors

For the following behaviors, please rate your desire to engage in them.

How much do you want to:

Hang out with close friends
Hang out with any friend
Hang out with people you barely know
See your family
Go to a small party
Go to a large party
Go to a bar
Help a friend
Help a stranger
Volunteer for a charity
Donate money to a charity

Items are responded to using the following scale:

1: Really do not want to
2: Do not want to
3: Neither want nor do not want to
4: Do want to
5: Really want to
Appendix H: Competence behaviors

For the following behaviors, please rate your desire to engage in them. How much do you want to:

- Play a game that you know you are good at
- Play a game that you aren't very good at.
- Play a game that you have never played before.
- Study for your next exam(s).
- Create something (for example, by knitting, carpentry, sewing, or cooking)
- Go for a drive
- Play with pets
- Clean
- Buy something you want
- Exercise
- Eat something that makes you feel better

Items are responded to using the following scale:

1: Really do not want to
2: Do not want to
3: Neither want nor do not want to
4: Do want to
5: Really want to
Appendix I: Personality Feedback

*Extraversion domain:*

Based on your answers to the previous questions, you are a very introverted person. You are likely to prefer to have a few close friends, rather than a lot of friends. You may enjoy social events, but likely find them to be draining and need time to recover.

Based on your answers to the previous questions, you aren't particularly introverted or extroverted. You are likely to do well enough in a social situation of any size, though you may prefer some sizes more than others.

Based on your answers to the previous questions, you are a very extroverted person. You are likely to prefer to have as many friends as possible, regardless of closeness. You enjoy social events, and likely find them to be exciting and energizing.

*Agreeableness domain:*

80
Based on your answers to the previous questions, you are in the low-range in terms of agreeableness. You are not likely to say things just to get along with others, and may even be quick to insult people. Generally, you don't have time for people's problems.

Based on your answers to the previous questions, you are about mid-range in terms of agreeableness. You get along with most people, but aren't necessarily eager to please people. You are, however, likely to still care about people in general, even if you don't know them incredibly well.

Based on your answers to the previous questions, you are in the high-range in terms of agreeableness. You are likely to get along extremely well with others, at times saying things just to be polite. Generally, you always have time for people's problems, and care deeply about others.

Conscientiousness domain:

Based on your answers to the previous questions, are you in low-range in terms of conscientiousness. You are likely to often to be unprepared and unorganized. You are also probably not very concerned with details, and at times may be considered irresponsible.
Based on your answers to the previous questions, are you mid-range in terms of conscientiousness. You are likely to be generally prepared and organized, though there are times when you forget things. You are usually responsible, and take care of things you need to.

Based on your answers to the previous questions, are you in the high-range in terms of conscientiousness. You are likely to always be prepared and organized, and you rarely forget to do things. You are also likely to be very detail oriented. You are considered very responsible, and always take care of things you need to.

Please wait a moment while all of your answers are processed.

Your answers to specific questions, how fast you responded to the questions, and the relationships between each of the personality characteristics will be used to determine your likely life path.
Appendix J: Self-competence Clarity, Version 2

The following items will ask you about your perceptions and beliefs about your own competence. By competence, we mean your skill level, your ability, your talents, and so on. Please answer the items based on the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neither agree nor disagree
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

1. My beliefs about my competence often conflict with one another.
2. On one day I might have one opinion of my competence and on another day I might have a different opinion.
3. I spend a lot of time wondering about how competent I really am.
4. Sometimes I feel that I am not as competent as I appear to be.
5. When I think about how competent I thought I was in the past, I'm not sure that I was right.
6. Sometimes I think I know how competent other people are better than I know how competent I am.
7. My beliefs about how competent I am seem to change very frequently.
8. If I were asked to describe how competent I am, my description might end up being different from one day to another day.
9. Even if I wanted to, I don't think I could tell someone if I'm really competent.
10. In general, I have a clear sense of how competent I am.
Appendix K: Self-liking Clarity, Version 2

The following items will ask you about your perceptions and beliefs about your own likeability. By likeability, we mean your friendliness, your social value, your goodness, and so on. Please answer the items based on the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neither agree nor disagree
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

1. My beliefs about my likeability often conflict with one another.
2. On one day I might have one opinion of my likeability and on another day I might have a different opinion.
3. I spend a lot of time wondering about how likeable I really am.
4. Sometimes I feel that I am not as likeable as I appear to be.
5. When I think about how likeable I thought I was in the past, I'm not sure that I was right.
6. Sometimes I think I know how likeable other people are better than I know how likeable I am.
7. My beliefs about how likeable I am seem to change very frequently.
8. If I were asked to describe how likeable I am, my description might end up being different from one day to another day.
9. Even if I wanted to, I don't think I could tell someone if I'm really likeable.
10. In general, I have a clear sense of how likeable I am.
Appendix L: Study 3 instructions

In the coming few screens, you will write FIVE things about yourself that relates to your sense of how competent and capable you are.

The only thing we ask is that what you list is distinct from what relates to your sense and clarity of how likeable and good you are (as in the tool examploe at the start of this study).

Answer as if you were giving the answers to yourself, not to somebody else. Write the answers in the order that they occur to you. Don't worry about logic or "importance". As an example, you might write "able."

ALL answers should be adjectives.

For example, your response page should look like this, but with ADJECTIVES instead of colors:

1. purple
2. blue
3. red
4. orange
5. yellow
Please list FIVE things about your identity that contribute to seeing yourself as a competent, talented, and capable person.

The only thing we ask is that what you list is distinct from what contributes to you seeing yourself as a friendly, likeable, good, or valuable person.

For example, you might write "I am able."

Please write each only one item per line. Pressing Enter after each word will start a new line.

I am...

Below please rate how difficult it felt to generate your responses by selecting the response that best matches how difficult this felt during the task: 
Now, please pick ONE of those answers that are MOST IMPORTANT to you.

You will then explain in depth how you have shown that those answers really do reflect who you are. You'll need to give [TWO/EIGHT] specific examples for those two answers.

[participant’s listed self-images]

For example, if you decide to elaborate on how you are able, you would have to give 2 examples of times you behaved in a way that reflected your able self-image.

Reflecting on the trait you chose, describe [TWO/EIGHT] instances when you behaved in a way that reflects being [participant’s most important trait]

Please review your responses to the ten self-images.
Choose the trait you consider second most important to your identity as a competent person. You will be asked to elaborate on this trait.

[participant’s listed self-images]

Reflecting on the trait you chose, describe [TWO/EIGHT] instances when you behaved in a way that reflects being [participant’s second most important trait]
All analyses were conducted as effect coded regression, with esteem and clarity in the alternative dimension controlled for.

**Self-liking**

Self-liking esteem, self-liking clarity, and condition did not significantly interact, $b = .02, t(56) = 1.28, p = .21$. Self-liking clarity significantly predicted increased desire to engage in liking behaviors, $b = .35, t(56) = 2.07, p < .05$. No effect of condition ($b = .00, t(56) = .00, p = .99$) or self-liking esteem ($b = .13, t(56) = .6, p = .55$) emerged. Condition did not significantly interact with self-liking esteem ($b = .26, t(56) = 1.24, p = .22$), or with self-liking clarity ($b = -.03, t(56) = -.22, p = .83$).

**Self-Competence**

No three-way interaction emerged between self-competence esteem, self-competence clarity, and the competence threat, $b = -.01, t(56) = -.42, p = .67$. The competence threat condition was associated with significantly greater desire to engage in competence behaviors, $b = 1.54, t(56) = 2.25, p < .05$. Self-competence esteem did not significantly predict desire to engage in competence behaviors, $b = .07, t(56) = .42, p = .68$, nor did self-competence clarity, $b = .04, t(56) = .33, p = .74$. Finally, condition did not significantly interact with self-liking clarity ($b = .02, t(56) = .2, p = .84$), or with self-liking esteem ($b = -.09, t(56) = -.57, p = .57$).

**Differences in Desire**
A difference measure was calculated based on the difference between liking desires and competence behaviors, such that positive scores indicate a relatively greater focus on liking behaviors.

The three-way interaction between self-competence esteem, self-competence clarity, and competence threat was no longer significant, $b = .03, t(56) = 1.37, p = .18$, but the pattern remained the same. A marginal effect of the competence threat emerged, such that those threatened expressed an increased desire to engage in competence behaviors relative to liking behaviors, $b = 1.63, t(56) = -1.93, p < .10$. Self-competence esteem did not predict differences in desire, $b = .02, t(56) = .11, p = .91$. Self-competence clarity also did not predict differences in desire, $b = -.20, t(56) = -1.19, p = .24$.

No three-way interaction emerged for self-liking esteem, self-liking clarity, and condition, $b = .02, t(56) = 1.22, p = .23$. Self-liking clarity marginally predicted an increased desire to engage in liking behaviors relative to competence behaviors, $b = .33, t(56) = 1.72, p < .10$. Self-liking esteem did not significantly predict differences in desire, $b = .27, t(56) = 1.12, p = .27$. Condition did not significantly predict differences, $b = 1.55, t(56) = -1.63, p = .11$. However, the direction remains consistent with Study 2 analyses. Finally, condition did not significantly interact with self-liking clarity ($b = .12, t(56) = .75, p = .46$), or with self-liking esteem ($b = .19, t(56) = .78, p = .44$).
Appendix N: Tables and Figures

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Table 1. Correlations between measures of self-esteem and self-concept clarity in Study 1. Level refers to measurement of trait, average level at time point 1. Stability refers to the magnitude of the standard deviation of the measurements taken over time; negative correlations indicate lower standard deviation, and so more stable state self-evaluations. LE = Liking Esteem, CE = Competence Esteem, LC = Liking Clarity, and CC = Competence Clarity. † p < .1. *p < .05. **p < .01.
RMSEA = .096  
Factor Correlation = .70

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<tr>
<th>Self-Liking Clarity Items</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. My beliefs about my worth often conflict with one another. (R)</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. On one day I might have one opinion of my self-worth and on another day I might have another opinion. (R)</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I spend a lot of time wondering about my value as a person. (R)</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sometimes I feel that I am not really as likeable as I appear to be. (R)</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. When I think about my value as a person in the past, I'm not sure that I’m the same person now. (R)</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. I seldom experience conflict between the different aspects of my personality and how likeable I am. (R)</td>
<td>-.06</td>
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<td>7. Sometimes I think I know other people’s worth better than I know my own. (R)</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. My beliefs about my value seem to change very frequently. (R)</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. If I were asked to describe my self-worth, my description might end up being different from one day to another. (R)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Even if I wanted to, I don't think I could tell someone if I’m likeable. (R)</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. In general, I have a clear sense of how likeable I am.</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. It is often hard for me to make up my mind about trying to make friends because I don't know if I'm really likeable. (R)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Competence Clarity items</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My beliefs about my competence often conflict with one another. (R)</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. On one day I might have one opinion of my competence and on another day I might have another opinion. (R)</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I spend a lot of time wondering about how skilled I really am. (R)</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sometimes I feel that I am not really as talented as I appear to be. (R)</td>
<td>.66</td>
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</table>

Table 2. Confirmatory factor analysis of Clarity Items employed in Study 2.
Table 2 continued

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>When I think about my accomplishments in the past, I'm not sure that I ever knew my true skill level. (R)</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>I seldom experience conflict between the different aspects of my personality and how competent I am.</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Sometimes I think I know other people’s talents better than I know my own. (R)</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>My beliefs about my talents seem to change very frequently. (R)</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>If I were asked to describe my self-competence, my description might end up being different from one day to another. (R)</td>
<td>.79</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Even if I wanted to, I don't think I could tell someone if I’m competent. (R)</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>In general, I have a clear sense of how talented I am.</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>It is often hard for me to make up my mind about trying to do new things because I don't know if I'm really competent. (R)</td>
<td>.61</td>
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</table>
Factor Correlation = .38
RMSEA = .094

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor Correlation</th>
<th>Factor #1</th>
<th>Factor #2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RMSEA</td>
<td>.094</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self-liking Clarity Items

1. My beliefs about my likeability often conflict with one another. .60
2. On one day I might have one opinion of my likeability and on another day I might have a different opinion. .71
3. I spend a lot of time wondering about how likeable I really am. .74
4. Sometimes I feel that I am not as likeable as I appear to be. .68
5. When I think about how likeable I thought I was in the past, I'm not sure that I was right. .38
6. Sometimes I think I know how likeable other people are better than I know how likeable I am. .53
7. My beliefs about how likeable I am seem to change very frequently. .88
8. If I were asked to describe how likeable I am, my description might end up being different from one day to another day. .83
9. Even if I wanted to, I don't think I could tell someone if I'm really likeable. .62
10. In general, I have a clear sense of how likeable I am. .62

Table 3. Confirmatory factor analysis of clarity items employed in Study 3.

Continued
Table 3 continued

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<thead>
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<th>Self-Competence Clarity Items</th>
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<td>1. My beliefs about my competence often conflict with one another.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. On one day I might have one opinion of my competence and on another day I might have a different opinion.</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I spend a lot of time wondering about how competent I really am.</td>
<td>.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Sometimes I feel that I am not as competent as I appear to be.</td>
<td>.47</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. When I think about how competent I thought I was in the past, I'm not sure that I was right.</td>
<td>.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Sometimes I think I know how competent other people are better than I know how competent I am.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My beliefs about how competent I am seem to change very frequently.</td>
<td>.80</td>
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<td>8. If I were asked to describe how competent I am, my description might end up being different from one day to another day.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Even if I wanted to, I don't think I could tell someone if I'm really competent.</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. In general, I have a clear sense of how competent I am.</td>
<td>.42</td>
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</table>
Figure 1. Interaction between Self-liking Clarity and Liking threat. Low self-liking clarity defined as -1 SD, and high self-liking clarity is defined as +1 SD. LC = Self-liking Clarity.
Figure 2. Predicted mean differences in desire to engage in liking-relevant and competence-relevant behaviors, by condition. Positive numbers indicate a greater desire to engage in liking-relevant behaviors, and negative desires indicate a greater to engage in competence-relevant behaviors. High and low are defined as one standard deviation above and below the mean, respectively. CE = Self-competence Esteem, CC = Self-competence Clarity.
Figure 3. Predicted mean desire to engage in competence-related behaviors. High defined as +1 SD, and low as -1 SD. CE = Self-competence Esteem. CC = Self-competence Clarity.
Figure 4. Predicted mean desire to engage in liking-related behaviors. High defined as +1 SD, and low as -1 SD. CE = Self-competence Esteem. CC = Self-competence Clarity.
Figure 5. Effect of ease of retrieval upon self-liking esteem in Study 3a. Interaction of self-liking clarity, number of items recalled, and self-images dimension. Self-liking esteem and self-liking clarity are centered. High defined as +1 SD, and low as -1 SD. LC = Self-liking Clarity.
Figure 6. Effect of ease of retrieval upon self-competence esteem in Study 3b. Interaction of self-competence clarity, number of items recalled, and self-images dimension. Self-liking esteem and self-liking clarity are centered. High defined as +1 SD, and low as -1 SD. CC = Self-competence Clarity.