

MEDIATORS AND MODERATORS OF THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN
SELF-SILENCING AND DEPRESSION

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MEDIATORS AND MODERATORS OF THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN
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ABSTRACT

MEDIATORS AND MODERATORS OF THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SELF-SILENCING AND DEPRESSION

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The concept of self-silencing was originally developed by Jack (1991) to explain cultural influences on how women should behave within their interpersonal relationships and why women are more likely to than men to experience clinically relevant levels of depression. Jack and Dill (1992) created the Silencing the Self Scale (STSS), which consists of four subscales, to test their hypotheses regarding gender differences in self-silencing and depression. Research has shown that there is a common link between self-silencing and depression among women (Gratch, Bassett, & Attra, 1995; Uebelacker, Courtnage, & Whissman, 2003; Whiffen, Foot, & Thompson, 2007). The relationship between self-silencing and depression has been more difficult to explain amongst men. Previous studies have found gender acted as a moderator between self-silencing, specifically on the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale (CSS) of the STSS, and depression. The current study attempted to replicate and explain the moderation effect found in Lutz-

Zois et al. (2013). Participants (N= 135) completed six measures including three measures to examine self-silencing behaviors, as well as a depression measure and relationship satisfaction measure. The results indicated no significant interaction between gender and scores on the CSS. A moderated-mediation model was constructed to understand potential relationships between the CSS, gender, relationship satisfaction, and depression. However, the interactions predicted within the model were not significant. Researchers have hypothesized that men self-silence for different reasons than women, such that self-silencing can help establish control and power within their relationship or to avoid experiencing unpleasant emotions (Smolak, 2010; Remen, Chambless & Rodebaugh, 2002). Therefore, this researcher constructed two additional measures using items on the STSS in attempt to identify under what specific conditions do men self-silence. I hypothesized that gender would act as a moderator between depression and self-silencing with regard to conflicts on topics that are seen as unimportant. However, this interaction was not found. Finally, it was hypothesized that there would be a main effect for both genders for depression and self-silencing with regard to conflicts on topics that are seen as important. This main effect was not significant. The results of this study suggest additional research should be completed to further our understanding about gender differences in relation to self-silencing and depression.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER II: METHOD.....	13
CHAPTER III: RESULTS	19
CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION.....	35
REFERENCES.....	44
APPENDICES	
A. Demographic Measure	48
B. The Silencing the Self Scale	50
C. Important Conflict Questionnaire	55
D. Unimportant Conflict Questionnaire	58
E. The Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale	61
F. Relationship Assessment Scale	63

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Hypothesis 1: Gender moderates the relationship between the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale and depression	9
2. Hypothesis 2: Moderated-Mediation: Gender moderates the path between Care as Self-Sacrifice and relationship satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction mediates the relationship between the Care as Self -Sacrifice subscale and depression	10
3. Hypothesis 3: Gender moderates the relationship between self-silencing for unimportant topics of conflict and depression	12
4. Hypothesis 4: Main effect between depression and self-silencing during important topics of conflict	12

LIST OF TABLES

1. Descriptive Statistics for Continuous Study Variables	20
2. Zero-Order Correlations Between the Continuous Demographic Variables (Relationship Duration and Time Since Past Romantic Relationship) and the Criterion Variables (Depression, Self-silencing, and Relationship Satisfaction)	22
3. Zero-Order Correlations Between the Study Variables (Self-Silencing, Depression, and Relationship Satisfaction) for All Participants	23
4. Zero-Order Correlations Between the Study Variables (Self-Silencing, Depression, and Relationship Satisfaction) for Male Participants	25
5. Zero-Order Correlations Between the Study Variables (Self-Silencing, Depression, and Relationship Satisfaction) for Female Participants	27
6. Regression Analyses Predicting Depression from Gender x Care as Self-Sacrifice Subscale Scores	29
7. Percentile-Bootstrap Confidence Intervals Predicting Relationship Satisfaction from Gender x Care as Self-Sacrifice	30
8. Percentile-Bootstrap Confidence Intervals Predicting Depression	31
9. Regression Analyses Predicting Depression from Gender x Unimportant Conflict Questionnaire Scores	32
10. Regression Analyses Predicting Depression from Gender x Important Conflict Questionnaire Scores	34

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Within many intimate relationships, there is a struggle between remaining true to oneself and conforming to the role expected by one's romantic partner. This struggle often leads people to silence their feelings, thoughts, and emotions in order to salvage the relationship and avoid further conflict. However, the act of self-silencing can create the opposite effect; instead, the person is left feeling unsatisfied within his/her relationship and depressed since he/she is unable to express his/her true emotions. In this paper, I explained the theory of self-silencing with regard to depression and relationship satisfaction. I provided an in-depth description of the dynamic relationships between these three factors. In the first section, I described the history behind the development of the self-silencing theory. In the second section, I explained research findings about self-silencing and how it relates to depression among men. In the third section, I explained past research findings on the observed gender differences and similarities in self-silencing. I discussed gender comparisons in the association between self-silencing and both depression and relationship satisfaction. Finally, I presented the current study designed to examine mediators and moderators of the relationship between self-silencing and depression.

Self-Silencing Theory

Jack (1991) originally developed the concept of silencing the self as a feminist explanation of how cultural expectations of women influence their interpersonal relationships. Prior to the development of this concept, Jack believed that traditional psychological theories and concepts, including psychoanalysis, cognitive theories, developmental psychology, and clinical psychology, were not accurately depicting depression among women. These theories and concepts were painting women's depression as the result of being overly dependent, passive, and lacking autonomy. The understanding of depressed women's emotions and behaviors were seen as deviant because they were being compared to their male counterparts. With the evolving developments in the field of psychology of women, Jack felt that women's depression needed to be reevaluated using previous theories of depression, such as attachment, loss, dependence, and self-esteem, through the lens of women. In doing so, Jack felt that this would help clinicians, researchers etc. to create a better theoretical framework to understand the development of depression among women and their symptoms, as well as, creating a better platform to hear and understand women's unique narratives and relational struggles. It is important to highlight, that although Jack saw some fault in the traditional psychological theories and concepts, she noted that they "all agree that women's orientation to relationships is the central component of female identity and emotional activity" (p. 3, 1991). Jack highlighted aspects of the traditional theories, such as drive theory, attachment theory, object-relations theory, and relational theory, along with newer proponents suggested in the psychology of women (i.e., "the origins and development of women's orientation to relationships" (p. 11), gender norms, and cultural

and societal influences) to understand how women create their sense of self, and how that related to the development of depression. Jack concluded that silencing of the self within relationships is a major cause of depression among women due to their difficulties of trying to “create intimacy within inequality” (p. 63, 1991).

Jack (1991) describes the act of self-silencing as one suppressing his or her voice, emotions, thoughts, actions, and desires for the sake of the relationship. Jack (1991) believes that women self-silence to conform to the norms and values that society expects of them in order to maintain relationships. According to Jack (1991), because women are supposed to be submissive, unselfish, and loving within relationships, they are likely to experience intense conflict when they experience anger toward others. Women may experience anger and confusion when there is inner turmoil between how they should act and how they feel. These inner arguments contribute to the split in how they portray themselves. Outwardly, women may portray compliance and wanting to please their partner, but inwardly they may be experiencing anger (Jack, 2001). As self-silencing continues, women may feel as though they have lost themselves and are no longer connected with their true identity (Harper, Dickson, & Welsh, 2006). The act of self-silencing is also thought to lead to self-alienation and feeling as if they are no longer in touch with their emotions (Whiffen, Foot, & Thompson, 2007). The disconnect between emotions and true identity is one explanation that has been posed for why research has found higher prevalence rates of depression in women in comparison to men (Gratch, Bassett, & Attra, 1995; Uebelacker, Courtnage, & Whissman, 2003; Whiffen et al., 2007).

In order to study the association between self-silencing behaviors and depression among women, Jack and Dill (1992) created the Silencing the Self Scale (STSS). The STSS is a 31-item questionnaire that is broken down into four subscales. Each of the subscales target specific acts and reasons behind the tendency to self-silence. The Externalized Self-Perception subscale assesses the tendency to judge one's own behavior based on external standards. The Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale taps into the belief that one should put the needs of others ahead of one's own to avoid being selfish. The Silencing the Self subscale measures the extent to which one inhibits the expression of emotions in order to keep the relationship. Finally, the Divided Self subscale determines the extent to which a person feels the division of the self, meaning that they are hiding important thoughts and their needs in the context of their relationship (Jack & Ali, 2010). Since Jack and Dill's original work on self-silencing in women, researchers' built on this theory by examining gender differences and similarities in the associations between self-silencing and both relationship satisfaction and depression.

Self-Silencing and Depression Among Men

Jack originally created the Silencing the Self Scale to assess the association between self-silencing and depression amongst women. However, the questions are gender neutral, which allowed researchers to use this questionnaire with men as well. Research has found a surprising finding with respect to the scores of men on the STSS. Specifically, some studies have found men to score higher on the STSS in comparison to women (Gratch et al., 1995; Harper et al., 2006; Jack & Ali, 2010). For example, in a study on the link between rejection sensitivity and depressive symptoms amongst high school couples, Harper and Welsh (2007) had 211 participants complete the STSS, the

Rejection Sensitivity Scale, the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depressive scale, and participants were videotaped them during a conflict interaction. The results of this study indicated that there was a significant gender difference of the level of self-silencing, with the adolescent boys reporting higher levels of self-silencing in comparison to adolescent girls. Similarly, Gratch et al. (1995) completed a study regarding the relationship between gender, ethnicity, self-silencing and depression among 604 college students. The researchers hypothesized that overall women would report higher levels of self-silencing; however that was not the case. The researchers found a significant difference between reports of self-silencing, with men scoring higher on self-silencing than women. These results are puzzling because Jack's original theory assumed that women engage in self-silencing more so than men, and this tendency partially explained why women are more prone to experience clinically relevant levels of depression. Jack assumed that men do not have the same social pressures to suppress their own desires; therefore, it is unclear as to why men would score higher on the STSS.

What is also perplexing is that even though men report high levels of self-silencing, they report lower levels of depression compared to women (Gratch et al., 1995; Whiffen et al., 2007). These findings are in opposition with Jack's original theory because, again, she believed that self-silencing was a risk factor for the experience of depressive symptomology. Although some researchers have found a correlation between depression and self-silencing in men, others have found the relationship between the two to be non-significant, which has created uncertainty about how self-silencing within the relationship truly affects men (Thompson, 1995). It remains unclear as to why men tend to report higher self-silencing behaviors within intimate relationships, but there are some

ideas that have been proposed. For example, Jack (1991) suggested that women, more so than men, base their feelings of well-being and competence on the quality of their relationships. Thus, when there is a discord in this domain of one's life, women may be more prone to experience depression in comparison to men. Uebelacker et al. (2003) also suggested that a woman's sense of self is tied to their relationships with people; whereas a man's sense of self exists independently of the relationship. Researchers have also proposed that men may self-silence to avoid experiencing unpleasant emotions, whereas women may self-silence to maintain the relationship (Smolak, 2010; Remen, Chambless & Rodebaugh, 2002). Remen et al. (2002) also suggested that men might withdraw as a way to establish control and power within the relationship by dictating the pattern of communication, which could possibly explain why men may not experience depression although they are displaying self-silencing behaviors.

Gender Differences in Self-Silencing and Associated Feelings

Due to conflicting evidence to support the self-silencing theory among men, researchers have examined gender differences in patterns of association between scores on the STSS and depression to understand how specifically men and women differ with regard to self-silencing. Research has found men tend to score higher on the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale in comparison to women (Whiffen et al., 2007; Lutz-Zois et al., 2013). Whiffen et al. (2007) used a sample of 115 couples to assess the possibility of self-silencing mediating the link between marital conflict and depression. The results showed that men scored higher on the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale, which did not significantly correlate with depression. The researchers concluded that although men more often view putting the needs of others above their own as an indication of care, this belief did not

correspond with depression. Lutz-Zois et al. (2013) found similar findings in their study among 247 college students. The results of their study were consistent with other research, finding that men did score higher on the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale in comparison to women. In contrast to the findings of Whiffen et al. (2007), Lutz-Zois et al. (2013) found that, for male participants, the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale was negatively correlated with depression. There was a trend toward a positive relationship between these two variables in women. Interestingly, Lutz-Zois et al. (2013) found that scores on the other three STSS subscales were positively correlated with depression in both genders. They concluded that Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale might serve as a protective factor against the development of depression for men. Thus, the research indicates that gender differences exist in self-silencing at the subscale level, both in standing on these subscales and in relationships between the subscales and depression. However, it is still unknown what might account for these differences.

Some researchers have explored possible gender differences in self-silencing as a mediator of the relationship between relationship satisfaction and depression. In a study by Uebelacker et al. (2003), 127 married individuals completed a packet of questionnaires including measures of marital dissatisfaction, depression, self-silencing and perceptions of communication patterns. The results indicated that self-silencing was positively correlated with depression and marital dissatisfaction in both men and women. However, self-silencing only acted as a mediator between depression and marital satisfaction for women. In contrast, research conducted by Whiffen and colleagues (2007) found that self-silencing mediated the relationship between relationship satisfaction and depression in both genders.

Finally, explanations have been generated to explain why men, despite the fact that they are more likely to report higher levels of self-silencing behaviors, are less likely to experience depression (Harper & Welsh, 2007). As stated previously, one explanation that researchers have proposed is that men might self-silence to avoid conflict or topics that they do not wish to discuss, whereas women self-silence to preserve intimacy within their relationship (Harper et al., 2006; Smolak, 2010; Remen et al., 2002). Therefore, self-silencing would result in a favorable outcome for men to be able to avoid having to discuss topics that they find trivial, which could potentially explain why men report higher levels of self-silencing. However, no formal research has been conducted to test these assumptions.

The Current Study

One goal of the current study was to conduct research that would help us better understand why gender served as a moderator of the relationship between the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale of the STSS and depression in Lutz-Zois et al. (2013). I also attempted to determine when self-silencing would predict depression amongst men and women by looking at self-silencing for topics they deemed important and unimportant by the participant.

In my first hypothesis, I looked at the relationship between the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale of the STSS and depression. Specifically, I attempted to replicate the moderation effect found in Lutz-Zois et al. (2013). I predicted that gender would act as a moderator for the relationship between the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale and depression (HY1) (See *Figure 1*). Specifically, I expected that among men there would be a negative correlation between the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale and depression. However, I

predicted that among women there would be a positive correlation between the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale and depression.

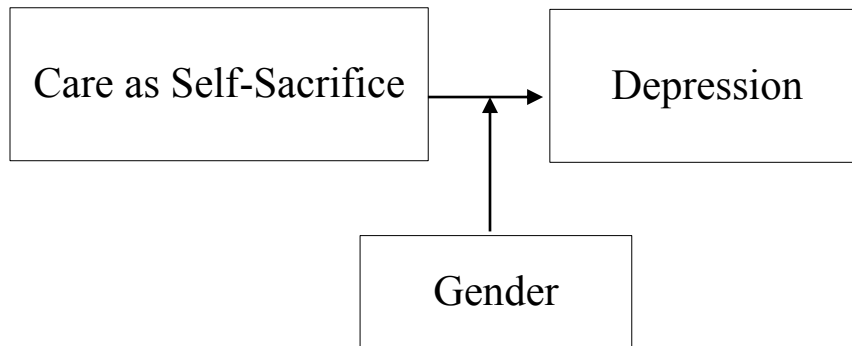


Figure 1. Hypothesis 1: Gender moderates the relationship between the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale and depression

The second hypothesis (HY 2) (See *Figure 2*) tested a mechanism for the moderator effect described in Hypothesis 1 and found in Lutz-Zois et al. (2013). Specifically, relationship satisfaction may explain why the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale was associated with lower levels of depression in men, but not in women. Because it is not a cultural mandate for men to be giving of themselves, men who do value self-sacrifice might have higher quality relationships. In contrast, women may feel chronic obligations to put the needs of others above their own, endorsing attitudes reflected on the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale may be associated with lower levels of relationship quality. Thus, I hypothesized that gender would moderate the relationship between the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale and relationship satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction would mediate the relationship between the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale and depression. Specifically, I predicted, among men there would be a positive

correlation between the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale and relationship satisfaction, and a negative correlation between relationship satisfaction and depression. However, among women, I hypothesized there would be a negative correlation between their scores on the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale and relationship satisfaction, and a negative correlation between relationship satisfaction and depression as well.

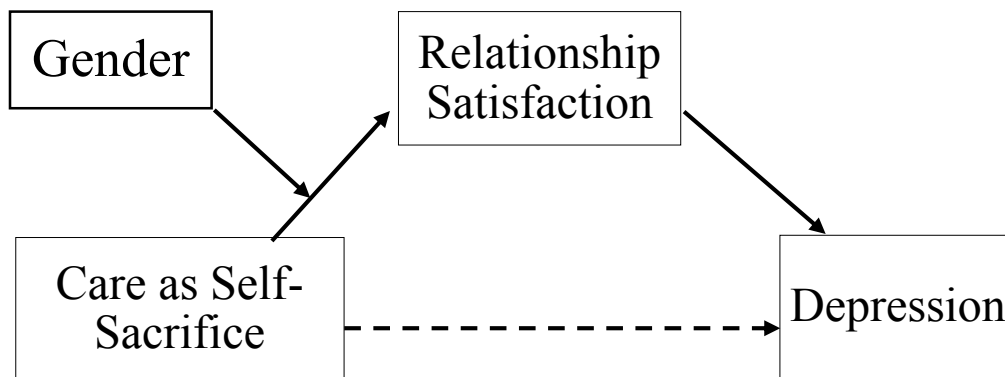


Figure 2. Hypothesis 2: Moderated-Mediation: Gender moderates the path between Care as Self-Sacrifice and relationship satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction mediates the relationship between the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale and depression

My next two hypotheses were created to test the assumption that women and men may self-silence for different reasons. I decided to have participants report on self-silencing behaviors during instances in which they engaged in unimportant and important topics of conflict in attempt to determine these potential gender differences. I chose to use unimportant topics of conflict based off of the idea that women self-silence in order to maintain the relationship, meaning women may feel the need to self-silence even during an instance of conflict over an unimportant topic for the sake of her relationship.

However, men may not feel the need to self-silence because during that particular type of conflict because they do not see it as detrimental to the relationship or sense of self. The use of important topics of conflict was based on the assumption that important topics of conflict may be more costly to the relationship, and that men self-silence to avoid conflict or topics that they do not wish to discuss, with women continuing to self-silence to maintain the relationship. Therefore, I hypothesized that gender would act as a moderator of the relationship between depression and self-silencing with regard to conflicts on topics that are seen as unimportant (HY 3) (*See Figure 3*). For women, I hypothesized that for topics that are unimportant there would be a positive correlation between depressive symptoms and self-silencing behaviors, such that the more self-silencing tendencies reported would predict higher levels of depression. For men, I predicted there would be no relationship between depression and self-silencing for topics that they do not find to be important. In contrast, I hypothesized that gender would not act as a moderator with regard to depression and self-silencing for topics that the person finds to be important, rather there will be a main effect between depression and self-silencing during important topics of conflict (HY 4) (*See Figure 4*). That is, for topics that the person finds important self-silencing would be positively correlated with depression in both men and women.

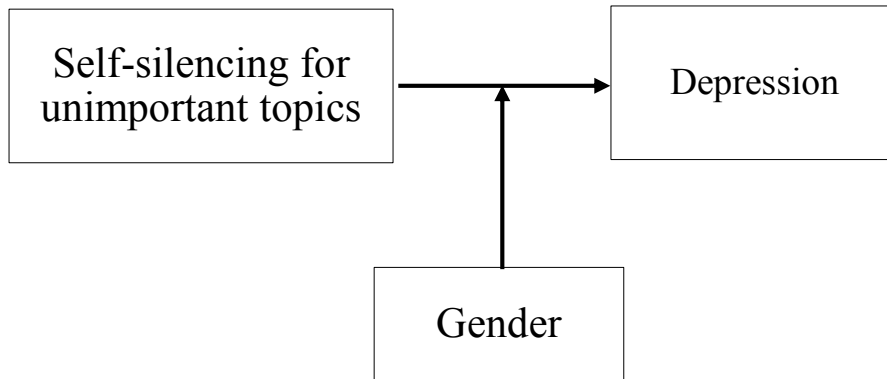


Figure 3. Hypothesis 3: Gender moderates the relationship between self-silencing for unimportant topics of conflict and depression

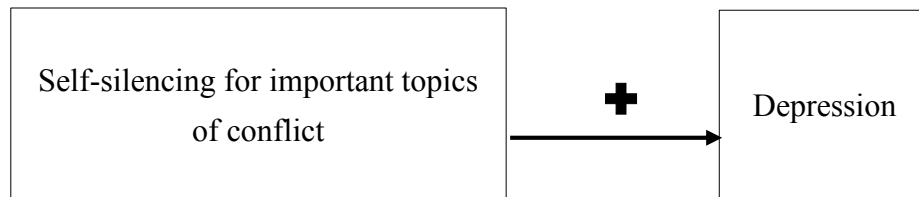


Figure 4. Hypothesis 4: Main effect between depression and self-silencing during important topics of conflict

CHAPTER II

METHOD

Participants

A total of 135 undergraduate students (males = 46, females = 89) participated in this study in exchange for either course credit in their Psychology 101 class ($N=85$) or extra credit in their upper level psychology class ($N=50$). Participants were recruited from a medium-sized university in the Midwest. The ages of participants ranged from 18 to 22 ($M = 19.46$, $SD = 1.25$). Years of education ranged from freshmen to seniors in college (Freshmen = 48%, Sophomore = 24%, Junior = 19%, Senior = 9%). The majority of the participants were Caucasian (91%); 3% were African American, and 6% reported “other” as their race. The majority of participants indicated that they were heterosexual (96%). The remaining participants indicated the following regarding their sexual orientation: 1% identified as gay, 2% identified as bisexual, and 1% identified as “other.” Participants indicated the following on their current relationship status: 49% participants were in a significant romantic relationship at the time of the study and 51%, while not in a current relationship, have been in significant romantic relationships in the past. The duration of relationships ranged from one 1 to 192 months ($M = 17.28$, $SD = 10.45$). Participants who were not currently in a romantic relationship were asked to indicate how long it had been since their most significant romantic relationship. The duration ranged from a half of a month to 48 months ($M = 11.49$, $SD = 10.45$). Finally, participants were

asked to indicate whether or not the relationship they based their responses on was long distance or not. Of the participants who answered this question, 39% reported that their relationship was long distance and 61% reported not being in a long distance relationship.

Measures

Demographics Questionnaire. This questionnaire included questions about age, racial or ethnic identity, sex, sexual orientation, current grade level, sign-up method, length of the romantic relationship, time since previous romantic relationship, and whether their relationship was long distance (*see Appendix A*).

The Silencing the Self Scale (STSS). The STSS (Jack & Dill, 1992) is a 31-item self-report measure. It assesses the degree to which the participants self-silence within their interpersonal relationships. This measure consists of four subscales, and based on the scores given by the participants a global score and four subscale scores are calculated. The first subscale on the STSS is the Externalized Self-Perception subscale, which measures the extent to which the participants judge themselves based on external standards. A sample question found on this subscale would be, “I tend to judge myself by how I think other people see me.” The next subscale is the Care as Self-Sacrifice (CSS) subscale, which measures the extent to which he/she attempts to secure the relationship by putting his/her partner’s needs above their own. An example of a question for this subscale would be, “Considering my needs to be as important as the people I love is selfish.” The third subscale is the Silencing the Self subscale (STS). This subscale assesses the participants’ tendency to inhibit self-expression and action in order to secure the relationship and avoid conflict, potential loss and retaliation. A sample question on this subscale would be, “I try to bury my feelings when I think they will cause trouble in

my close relationships.” The fourth and final subscale is termed the Divided Self (DS) subscale. The DS assess the extent to which the participant feels a division between the false identity that they present on the outside and their inner self, which results from hiding certain feelings and thoughts in an important relationship. A sample question found on this subscale would be, “Often I look happy enough on the outside, but inwardly I feel angry and rebellious.” Participants rate their answers on a five point Likert scale that ranges from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” (*see Appendix B*). For this study, the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale scores were used to test hypotheses 1 and 2.

Cramer and Thoms (2003) completed a factor analysis to explore whether the four subscales were present for both men and women. The results of their study showed that with the elimination of items one and eleven, the four-factor model was evident for women. With the elimination of items one, five, eight and eleven, a three-factor model combining the DS and ESP, was evident for men. They concluded that men and women self-silence in relationships. However, they suggest that subscale derivation should be gender-specific. In a sample containing both men and women, the internal consistency was reported as follows: .78, .85, .79, and .81 for silencing the self subscale, externalized self-perception subscale, Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale, and Divided Self subscale (Jack & Dill, 1992). This measure demonstrates good test-retest reliability and validity (Jack & Dill, 1992). The Cronbach’s alpha found in the current study for the STSS was .83. A Cronbach’s alpha of .57 was found on the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale.

In addition to the standard STSS, I also administered two modified versions of the STSS to test whether or not the importance of a topic during conflict affects self-silencing

behaviors and depression (*see Appendix C & D*). Each version contains eight items and one description section. The items for these questionnaires were selected from the set of 31-items on the standard STSS because they pertained specifically to conflicts with a partner and how feelings are expressed during these situations. The total scores of each questionnaire were used to test hypotheses 3 and 4. The Cronbach's alpha was .87 for the Important Conflict Questionnaire and .86 for the Unimportant Conflict Questionnaire.

The Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D). The CES-D (Radloff, 1977) is a standardized instrument that measures depressive symptomology. It consists of 20 questions in which the participants note the symptoms that they have experienced within the past week. Sample questions found on this questionnaire are, "I did not feel like eating, my appetite was poor," "I could not get going," and "I felt lonely." Participants' symptoms are rated on a four-point scale and the scores were summed. Scores can range from 0 to 60, with the higher scores indicating more severe depressive symptomology (*see Appendix E*). The internal reliability is acceptable for this scale (men: $\alpha = .88$; women: $\alpha = .88$) (Harper & Welsh, 2007). The CES-D correlates well with other self-report measures of depression such as the Symptom Checklist (SCL-90) (coefficient = .83) (Radloff, 1977). In the current study, a Cronbach's alpha of .75 was found for this measure.

Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS). The RAS (Hendrick, 1988) is a questionnaire used to assess general relationship satisfaction, regrets about the relationship, and love for one's partner. It contains seven items that are rated on a five point Likert scale ranging from A (unsatisfied) to E (extremely satisfied) or from A (never) to E (very often). Scores are summed and can range from 7 to 35. A sample

question on the RAS is, “How well does your partner meet your needs?” and “How satisfied are you with your relationship?” (*see Appendix F*). One study found a mean inter-tem correlation of .49 and an alpha of .86 (Hendrick, Dicke, & Hendrick, 1998). High correlations between the RAS and other measures of relationship satisfaction, such as the full Dyadic Adjustment Scale (.80) and the Kanas Marital Satisfaction Scale (.74), have been found in past research (Hendrick et al., 1998). A Cronbach’s alpha of .87 was found in the current study.

Procedure

I recruited participants through SONA Systems, an electronic participant recruitment program used at the university, and I solicited volunteers through upper level psychology classes. In terms of the latter, these participants received extra credit in the course through which they were recruited. This study was conducted in a classroom on campus in small groups of approximately fifteen students. For the purpose of the current study, it was important for participants either to be in a significant romantic relationship or to have been in one in the past; therefore, participants were excluded from participation if they had never been in a romantic relationship. All participants completed the informed consent form first. Once participants gave their informed consent, participants completed the six questionnaires including the demographic questionnaire, CES-D, RAS, and the STSS. Participants were also given a modified version of the STSS twice, to assess for the presence of self-silencing in regards to topics they deem important or topics that they find to be unimportant. The Demographic Data Sheet was always first, followed by the standard version of the STSS. The remaining questionnaires were counterbalanced using a random starting order with rotation. Participants had one hour to

complete all six of the questionnaires. When they completed all six of the questionnaires, they were debriefed and thanked for their participation.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

Preliminary Analysis

Table 1 summarizes the means, standard deviations, and ranges of the continuous variables for this study. In the current study, preliminary analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between demographic variables (i.e., age and race) and the criterion variable (i.e., depression). Zero-order correlations were computed between the continuous demographic variable of age and the criterion variable. There was no significant correlation between age and depression ($r = -.09, p > .05$); therefore, age was not controlled for in the primary analyses. For the categorical demographic variable of race, an ANOVA was computed to test for significant group differences in the criterion variable. The results indicated that there were significant racial differences in depression $F(2, 132) = 3.48, p < .05$. While neither the Tukey HSD and Scheffe post hoc tests pinpointed the specific nature of the group differences, an examination of the order of the means indicated that African Americans demonstrated the highest average scores on this depression measure ($M = 47.33, SD = 10.69$), followed by people who indicated “other” as their race ($M = 43.50, SD = 6.48$), and finally followed by Caucasians ($M = 39.36, SD = 6.71$). Because there was a significant group difference, race was controlled for in the primary analyses.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Continuous Study Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min-Max
STSS	83.90	13.31	53-131
CSS	30.89	4.23	19-39
CES-D	39.80	12.05	30-65
RAS	24.50	2.96	17-31
ICQ	11.58	4.96	6-26
UCQ	12.70	4.59	6-24

Note. STSS = The Silencing the Self Scale; CSS = Care as Self -Sacrifice subscale; CES-D = Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale; RAS = Relationship Assessment Scale; ICQ= Important Conflict Questionnaire; UCQ = Unimportant Conflict Questionnaire.

Additional analyses were computed to determine the relationship between age or descriptive relationship variables and both self-silencing and relationship satisfaction. Zero-order correlations indicated no significant relationship between age and self-silencing ($r = -.12, p > 0.05$), nor was there a significant difference between age and relationship satisfaction ($r = -.01, p > .05$). Table 2 summarizes the zero-order correlations that were computed between descriptive relationship variables (i.e., duration of the romantic and time since previous romantic relationship) and self-silencing, depression and relationship satisfaction. The results indicated no significant correlations between time since participants' previous relationships and depression, relationship satisfaction or self-silencing. The results indicated no significant correlation between the duration of the romantic relationship and depression. However, the results did indicate a significant negative correlation between the duration of the romantic relationship and self-silencing, such that participants in longer relationships were less likely to self-silence. The results also indicated a significant positive correlation between relationship duration and relationship satisfaction, such that participants who were in longer relationships reported higher levels of relationship satisfaction.

Table 3 summarizes the zero-order correlations that were computed between all study variables (i.e. self-silencing, relationship satisfaction, depression, and self-silencing for important and unimportant topics of conflict) for all participants. There was no significant relationship between the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale of the STSS and relationship satisfaction. In terms of associations between relationship satisfaction and other study variables, there were significant negative correlations between relationship satisfaction and self-

Table 2

Zero-Order Correlations Between the Continuous Demographic Variables (Relationship Duration and Time Since Past Romantic Relationship) and the Criterion Variables (Depression, Self-silencing, and Relationship Satisfaction)

Variable	RD	TSPRR	CES-D	STSS	RAS
RD	--				
TSPRR	-.10	--			
CES-D	-.05	-.12	--		
STSS	-.26*	-.20	.20*	--	
RAS	.23**	-.10	-.07	-.43**	--
* $p < .05$		** $p < .01$			

Note. RD = Relationship Duration; TSPRR = Time since past romantic relationship; CES-D = Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale; STSS = Silencing the Self Scale; RAS= Relationship Assessment Scale

Table 3

Zero-Order Correlations Between the Study Variables (Self-Silencing, Depression, and Relationship Satisfaction) for All Participants

Variable	STSS	CSS	ICQ	UCQ	CESD	RAS
STSS	--					
CSS	.57**	--				
ICQ	.52**	.27**	--			
UCQ	.58**	.16	.46**	--		
CES-D	.20*	.05	.03	.18*	--	
RAS	-.44**	-.05	-.24**	-.30**	-.07	--
* $p < .05$		** $p < .01$				

Note: STSS = The Silencing the Self Scale, CSS = Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale, ICQ = Important Conflict Questionnaire, UCQ = Unimportant Conflict Questionnaire, CESD = Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale, RAS = Relationship Assessment Scale

silencing in general, as well as self-silencing for both important and unimportant topics, such that the less a person self-silenced the more satisfied they tended to be in their relationship. There was also a significant positive correlation between depression and self-silencing, such that the more a person self-silenced the more likely they were to be depressed. The results indicated a significant positive correlation between depression and self-silencing during unimportant topics of conflict, such that the more a person self-silenced during unimportant topics of conflict the more likely they were to be depressed. There was not a significant relationship between depression and self-silencing for important topics.

Zero-order correlations were also computed between study variables for male participants (*See Table 4*). For men, there was a significant negative correlation between relationship satisfaction and self-silencing, such that male participants tended to be less likely to be satisfied in their relationship the more they self-silenced. There was also a significant negative correlation between relationship satisfaction and self-silencing for important topics of conflict, such that male participants were more likely to be satisfied in their relationship when they did not self-silence during important topics of conflict. The results indicated no significant relationship between depression and relationship satisfaction or self-silencing (neither in general nor as a function of conflict type).

Table 4

Zero-Order Correlations Between the Study Variables (Self-Silencing, Depression, and Relationship Satisfaction) for Male Participants

Variable	STSS	CSS	ICQ	UCQ	CESD	RAS
STSS	--					
CSS	.61**	--				
ICQ	.54**	.15	--			
UCQ	.54**	.16	.43**	--		
CES-D	.21	.23	-.02	.19	--	
RAS	-.46**	-.23	-.44**	-.18	-.10	--
* $p < .05$		** $p < .01$				

Note: STSS = The Silencing the Self Scale, CSS = Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale, ICQ = Important Conflict Questionnaire, UCQ = Unimportant Conflict Questionnaire, CESD = Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale, RAS = Relationship Assessment Scale

Table 5 summarizes zero-order correlations that were computed between study variables for female participants. For women, the results showed a significant negative correlation between self-silencing and relationship satisfaction for women, such that they were more likely to be satisfied in their relationship when they self-silenced less. There was also a significant negative correlation between relationship satisfaction and self-silencing for unimportant topics of conflict, such that women were more likely to be satisfied with their relationship when they self-silenced less during unimportant topics of conflict. There was a significant positive correlation between depression and self-silencing, such that the more women self-silenced the more likely they were to be depressed. There was a significant positive correlation between self-silencing for unimportant topics of conflict and depression, such that the more women self-silenced for unimportant topics of conflict the more they tended to be depressed.

T-tests were computed to assess for possible gender differences in self-silencing, depression, and relationship satisfaction. The results indicated no significant gender difference in depression, $t(133) = -1.49, p > .05$. The results also indicated no significant gender difference in relationship satisfaction, $t(133) = -1.42, p > .05$. A significant gender difference in self-silencing was found, $t(133) = 3.63, p < 0.001$, such that men ($M = 89.43, SD = 11.83$) reported higher levels of self-silencing in comparison to women ($M = 81.03, SD = 13.19$). T-tests were computed to assess for possible differences of sign-up method in self-silencing, depression and relationship satisfaction. No significant differences were evident between Psychology 101 students and upper level psychology students for depression, $t(133) = .28, p > 0.05$. The results also indicated no significant differences between Psychology 101 students and upper level psychology students for

Table 5

Zero-Order Correlations Between the Study Variables (Self-Silencing, Depression, and Relationship Satisfaction) for Female Participants

Variable	STSS	CSS	ICQ	UCQ	CESD	RAS
STSS	--					
CSS	.50**	--				
ICQ	.44**	.25*	--			
UCQ	.56**	.10	.43**	--		
CESD	.28**	.02	.12	.23*	--	
RAS	-.41**	.08	-.10	-.33**	-.08	--
* $p < .05$		** $p < .01$				

Note: STSS = The Silencing the Self Scale, CSS = Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale, ICQ = Important Conflict Questionnaire, UCQ = Unimportant Conflict Questionnaire, CESD = Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale, RAS = Relationship Assessment Scale

relationship satisfaction, $t(133) = .54, p > 0.05$. A significant difference was found between sign-up method and self-silencing, $t(133) = 3.03, p < 0.01$ such that Psychology 101 students ($M = 86.48, SD = 13.86$) indicated higher levels of self-silencing compared to upper level psychology students ($M = 79.51, SD = 11.14$).

Finally, t-tests were computed to determine potential group differences between the participant's current relationship status and self-silencing, depression, and relationship satisfaction. The results indicated no significant difference between participants who were currently in a relationship and participants reporting on a previous romantic relationship with respect to depression, $t(133) = .94, p > 0.05$. The results indicated a significant difference between relationship status and self-silencing, $t(133) = -3.63, p < 0.001$, such that participants not in a current romantic relationship ($M = 87.79, SD = 12.46$) reported higher levels of self-silencing in comparison to participants who are currently in a romantic relationship ($M = 79.83, SD = 13.04$). The results indicated a significant difference between relationship status and relationship satisfaction, $t(133) = 7.68, p < 0.001$, such that participants who were in a current romantic relationship at the time of the study ($M = 29.91, SD = 4.62$) reported higher levels of satisfaction compared to participants not in a current relationship ($M = 24.03, SD = 4.28$).

Primary Analyses

Hypothesis 1. The first hypothesis (i.e., gender will act as a moderator of the relationship between the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale and depression) was tested using multiple regression. Race was dummy coded and controlled for by entering this variable in the first step. Next, depression was regressed on scores on the CSS subscale, gender, and the product of the two variables. Scores on the CSS were mean centered in order to

reduce multi-collinearity (Cohen, Cohen, Aiken, & West, 2003). The results indicated no significant interaction between the product of gender and scores on the CSS in relation to depression (See *Table 6*). However, because the interaction was not significant, the effect was not decomposed, and my hypothesis was not supported.

Table 6

Regression Analyses Predicting Depression from Gender x Care as Self-Sacrifice Subscale Scores

Variable	β	t	p	R^2	p
Step 1				.05	.03
African American	.17	2.02	.05		
Other	.15	1.78	.08		
Step 2				.08	.06
Gender	.15	1.70	.09		
CentCare	.40	1.25	.21		
Gender x CentCare	-.32	-1.02	.31		

Note. CentCare= Mean-centered Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale scores, Gender x CentCare = Gender x Mean-centered Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale score Interaction.

Hypothesis 2. The second hypothesis (i.e., gender will moderate the relationship between scores on the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale and relationship satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction will mediate the relationship between the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale and depression) was tested using Model 7 in the SPSS version of the PROCESS macro developed by Hayes (2013). Scores on the CSS were mean centered in to reduce

multi-collinearity (Cohen, Cohen, Aiken, & West, 2003). First, race was entered as a covariate in order to control for the group differences found in the preliminary analyses. Next, mean centered scores on the CSS were entered as the independent variable, gender as the moderator, RAS scores as the mediator, and CES-D scores as the dependent variable. The results indicated no significant interaction between the product of gender and the CSS in relation to relationship satisfaction (*See Table 7*). The results also indicated that relationship satisfaction did not significantly mediate the relationship between the CSS and depression (*See Table 8*). Based on the results, neither interaction in my model was significant, and my hypothesis was not supported.

Table 7

Percentile-Bootstrap Confidence Intervals Predicting Relationship Satisfaction from Gender x Care as Self-Sacrifice

Variable	Coefficient	SE	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
CentCare	-.68	.41	.10	-1.49	.13
Gender	1.03	1.01	.31	-.98	3.03
Gender x CentCare	.39	.24	.10	-2.10	1.60

Note. CentCare = Mean-centered Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale scores; Gender x CentCare = Gender x Mean-centered Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale score Interaction. Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in the output are 95%

Table 8

Percentile-Bootstrap Confidence Intervals Predicting Depression

Variable	Coefficient	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
RASTS	-.08	.11	.47	-.30	.14
CentCare	.06	.14	.64	-.21	.34

Note. RASTS= Relationship Assessment Scale total score; CentCare = Mean-centered Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale scores; Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in the output are 95%.

Hypothesis 3. The third hypothesis (i.e., gender will act as a moderator of the relationship between depression and self-silencing with regard to conflicts on topics that are seen as unimportant) was tested using a multiple regression analysis. The same procedures outlined in Hypothesis 1 were used while testing this hypothesis; however, depression was regressed onto ratings of self-silencing for unimportant topics, gender, and the product of the two variables. However, the interaction between gender and self-silencing unimportant conflicts in the prediction of depression was not significant. Therefore, the interaction was not decomposed, and my hypothesis was not supported (See *Table 9*)

Table 9

Regression Analyses Predicting Depression from Gender x Unimportant Conflict Questionnaire Scores

Variable	β	t	p	R^2	p
Step 1				.05	.03
African American	.17	2.02	.05		
Other	.15	1.78	.08		
Step 2				.11	.01
Gender	.15	1.70	.08		
CentUnimp	.08	.24	.81		
GenderxCentUnimp	.14	.45	.65		

Note. CentUnimp= Mean-centered Unimportant Conflict Questionnaire scores, Gender x CentUnimp= Gender x Mean-centered Unimportant Conflict Questionnaire score Interaction.

Hypothesis 4. Hypothesis four (i.e., gender will not act as a moderator with regard to depression and self-silencing for topics that the person finds to be important, rather there will be a main effect between depression and self-silencing during important topics of conflict) was tested using a multiple regression analysis. Again, the same procedures outlined in Hypothesis 1 was used in testing this hypothesis, however, depression was regressed onto ratings of self-silencing for important topics, gender, and the product of the two variables. The interaction between gender and self-silencing important conflicts in the prediction of depression was not significant. Further, there was no main effect between depression and self-silencing during important topics of conflict, therefore, my hypothesis was not supported (See *Table 10*).

Table 10

Regression Analyses Predicting Depression from Gender x Important Conflict Questionnaire Scores

Variable	β	t	p	R^2	p
Step 1				.05	.03
African American	.17	2.02	.05		
Other	.15	1.78	.08		
Step 2				.07	.08
Gender	.12	1.32	.20		
CentImp	-.20	-.61	.54		
Gender x CentImp	.27	.90	.40		

Note. CentImp = Mean-centered Important Conflict Questionnaire scores, Gender x CentImp = Gender x Mean-centered Important Conflict Questionnaire score Interaction

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to further investigate gender differences with regard to self-silencing and its relationship to depression and relationship satisfaction. Specifically, this study sought to replicate and explain the findings of Lutz-Zois et al. (2013). I also explored gender as a moderator of the relationship between either self-silencing during important or unimportant topics of conflict and depression. The results of this study indicated that gender did not act as a moderator for the relationship between depression and the CSS. The moderated-mediation model created to explain potential relationships between the CSS, gender, relationship satisfaction, and depression, did not yield significant interactions. Also gender did not act as a moderator between self-silencing for unimportant topics of conflict and depression. There was also no main effect between self-silencing for important topics of conflict and depression. The remainder of this section will be broken up into an explanation of the results of my preliminary analyses and primary analyses. I will end with a discussion of study limitations and directions for future research.

Preliminary Analyses

Preliminary analyses were conducted primarily to examine simple relationships and gender differences among the study variables. Overall, the majority of the results were similar to findings of previous studies. As expected, there was a significant positive

correlation between self-silencing and depression (Gratch et al., 1995). Analyses were also computed on each gender separately. The results indicated that for men, there was a significant negative correlation between self-silencing and relationship satisfaction, such that they tended to be more satisfied in their relationship when they self-silenced less. These results are similar to Uebelacker et al. (2003) results, which found a significant negative correlation between self-silencing and marital satisfaction among both men and women. The results also indicated a significant negative correlation between relationship satisfaction and self-silencing during important topics of conflict. The investigation of level of importance of the topic was a novel aspect of this study. Therefore, there are not any findings in the past research that speak directly to this correlation. However, it stands to reason that if one suppresses their thought and feelings about relationship issues that are important to them, it could take a toll on the relationship. It was predicted that both men and women would report similar reactions when self-silencing about important issues. Thus, this correlation is consistent with such speculation.

Consistent with previous research, for women there was a significant positive correlation between self-silencing and depression (Gratch et al., 1995; Jack & Dill, 1992; Thompson, 1995; Uebelacker et al., 2003; Whiffen et al., 2007). As to be expected, results also indicated a significant negative correlation between relationship satisfaction and self-silencing. Finally, consistent with previous research (Harper & Welsh, 2007; Thompson, 1995), the results showed a significant negative correlation between self-silencing and relationship satisfaction for women, such that they tended to be more satisfied in their relationship when they self-silenced less.

Consistent with a finding of past research (Gratch et al., 1995; Harper et al., 2006; Harper & Welsh, 2007; Jack & Ali, 2010), but in contrast to Jack and Ali's (2010) original theorizing, t-tests indicated that men tended to report significantly higher levels of self-silencing compared to women. The t-tests also indicated a significant difference between relationship status and self-silencing, such that those who were not in a current romantic relationship reported higher levels of self-silencing compared to those who were currently in a romantic relationship. As to be expected, there was a significant difference between relationship status and relationship satisfaction, such that those who were in a current relationship at the time of the study indicated higher levels of satisfaction with their relationship compared to those who were not currently in a romantic relationship. These results may have occurred because those who are not currently in a romantic relationship may have had an insecure attachment with their partner, which led to implementing more self-silencing behaviors, and ultimately their relationship was unsatisfactory and dissolved the more they self-silenced (Jack, 1991).

Primary Analyses

Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2. Recall, that Lutz-Zois et al. (2013) found that gender moderated the relationship between the CSS of the STSS and depression.

Hypothesis 1 (i.e., gender will act as a moderator of the relationship between the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale and depression) and Hypothesis 2 (i.e., gender will moderate the relationship between scores on the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale and relationship satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction will mediate the relationship between the Care as Self-Sacrifice subscale and depression) were created in attempt to replicate and explain these findings. However, neither of these hypotheses were supported in the current study.

Although past research has used adolescents and undergraduate students to test similar hypotheses (Gratch et al., 1995; Harper et al., 2006; Lutz-Zois et al., 2013), it is possible that the limited number of participants limited the power of the interactions causing no significant effects. This researcher attempted to recruit participants who were in a current relationship of at least three months by creating a restriction in order to participate in the study. However, this restriction posed a problem with gaining an adequate number of participants; therefore, the restriction was lifted allowing for students who were not in a current relationship to participate. Specifically for Hypothesis 1, it is possible that the findings of Lutz-Zois et al. (2013) are simply not easily replicable and may be limited to their particular sample of participants. Interestingly, in the current study, the correlations between the CSS and depression for men were in the opposite direction of what was found in their sample. Thus, future research is needed to determine which set of findings is more robust. Regarding Hypothesis 2, other constructs not included in the current study, such as attachment style, could have potentially influenced the current constructs in unexpected ways, which could have caused the current moderated-mediation model to produce insignificant results. In future studies, it would be important to include attachment styles, as well as other constructs related to self-silencing and depression. In doing so, new models could be created to better understand how other variables influence the relationship between the self-silencing behaviors and depression.

Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4. Neither Hypothesis 3 (i.e., gender will act as a moderator of the relationship between depression and self-silencing with regard to conflicts on topics that are seen as unimportant) nor 4 (i.e., gender will not act as a moderator with regard to depression and self-silencing for topics that the person finds to

be important, rather there will be a main effect between depression and self-silencing during important topics of conflict) were supported in the current study. It is typically believed that higher scores for self-silencing is an indicator for clinical symptoms of depression (Jack, 1991; Jack & Dill, 1992). Although this may be true for women, it has not been the case for men, who although reported higher rates of self-silencing, typically had lower rates of depression (Gratch et al., 1995; Whiffen et al., 2007). Researchers have cited that men and women self-silence for different reasons (Harper & Welsh, 2007). For example, self-silencing has been cited as a way for men to avoid conflict or withdrawal, whereas women use self-silencing to preserve their relationship (Harper et al., 2006; Remen et al., 2002; Smolak, 2010). However, no formal research had been conducted to test these assumptions. Therefore, I created two hypotheses in attempt to determine when self-silencing behaviors occur. The first hypothesis predicted that gender would act as a moderator between depression and self-silencing during unimportant topics of conflict. However, the interaction was not significant and this hypothesis was not supported. Worth noting, zero-order correlations indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between self-silencing during unimportant topics of conflict and depression for women, whereas no significant relationship existed between these two constructs for men. However, there was a trend in the same direction for men, and the correlation between self-silencing for unimportant topics and depression was significant for the combined sample of men and women. Ironically, in contradiction to Hypothesis 4, there was not a significant relationship between depression and self-silencing for important topics.

It is possible that the measures created to test these hypotheses did not accurately tap into these constructs. For example, the measure of the construct we developed had the participants indicate specific conflicts in their relationship that they deemed to be important and unimportant and rate their self-silencing behaviors in the context of that conflict. Each participant's idea of severity may be different leading to ambiguity in interpreting his or her responses in relation to other participants. Further, no observations of the couple engaging in conflict or discussing instances of conflict with one another were used in this study, which may have been a better option in order to test these hypotheses. Alternatively, another possible explanation for the counterintuitive results might be that because the average age of our sample was young, many of these participants may not have had many experiences with important conflicts. As such, self-silencing with respect to unimportant conflicts might have been a greater contributing factor to symptoms of depression than it would be in longer-term relationships. Yet another possibility is that relationships were terminated during the early stages when participants experienced high levels of conflict with their partners during important topics.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The results of this study may have been hindered by potential limitations. One limitation of this study was using a convenience sample of undergraduate students as participants. For example, the types of relationships that undergraduate students engage in may not be as applicable to the hypotheses tested in this study. Participants may have been too young to experience conflict or stressors within their relationships that lead to the expression of depression or self-silencing. Further, this sample did not have specific

restrictions, which allowed for a variety of relationship types to be considered for data collection. For example, relationship duration and type was not controlled for, which could have hindered the potential for the expression of self-silencing or depression. Finally, participants who had been in significant romantic relationships in the past were allowed to participate in this study, which could have influenced my results. In future research, it may be helpful to use specific restrictions with regard to relationship duration, current relationship status and relationship type to ensure that the hypotheses can be accurately tested.

Another limitation was that there was limited diversity across participant's race and sexual orientation. Although this did not hinder my ability to test my hypotheses, it made the results difficult to generalize. In future research, it will be important to take measures to ensure more racial and sexual orientation diversity amongst the participants. Specifically, it will be imperative to gain more research on the homosexual population with regard to self-silencing due to the lack of information for this construct in current research. This researcher attempted to recruit homosexual participants by talking to the on-campus LGBT club and publishing information about the study on their social media outlets. However, these attempts were unsuccessful. In the future, it may be useful to recruit participants from other campuses that may have a larger homosexual population or use a community sample of homosexuals. I offered a donation of \$1 to a local LGBT group for each participant from the on-campus LGBT club; however, it may be useful to offer a larger amount of compensation for their participation.

Another limitation of this study was relying on self-report measures, which poses multiple problems. First, participants may have had social desirability bias, which could

have led them to down play depressive symptoms and self-silencing behaviors, as well as promote higher satisfaction in their relationships in order to be perceived in a positive light. In future studies, if feasible it would be more useful to use observational or partner-report measures in conjunction with self-report measures in order to have more objective data.

Research has indicated a potential shift in societal views of equality amongst men and women (Braun & Scott, 2009; Cotter, Hermesen, & Vanneman, 2011; Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000). This social change in gender role attitudes may impact beliefs among younger generations for how they should act within their romantic relationships, possibly resulting in self-silencing behaviors not playing out in the same way in relationships as it has in the past. Therefore, another future direction may be to attempt to study self-silencing across different generations to see if self-silencing behaviors have changed as societal pressures and expectations for each gender have changed. Further, the two additional measures that were created for the purpose of measuring self-silencing with regards to important and unimportant conflicts, used questions from the STSS is considered to be a limitation of this study. In the future studies, it would be useful to assess these hypotheses based on previous research using communication patterns (Harper & Welsh, 2007; Uebelacker et al., 2003) or to develop a better measure that assess for self-silencing during important and unimportant topics of conflict. For example, this researcher had participants indicate specific conflicts within their relationship that they deemed to be important and unimportant and then rate levels of self-silencing behaviors associated with those conflicts. In doing so, the generated scenarios were not standardized, thus possibly introducing individual variability for what constitutes as an

important or unimportant topic of conflict. In the future, it may be better to create standardized conflicts (i.e., written examples or video segments) and then have the participants indicate how they would react during that conflict using items from the STSS.

In conclusion, many of the results of this study were consistent with previous research, such as the positive relationship between self-silencing and depression, and men reported higher scores for self-silencing in comparison to women. However, when attempting to replicate and extend the findings found in the Lutz-Zois et al. (2013) study, these hypotheses were not supported. Moreover, this study attempted to evaluate potential gender differences with regards to the relationship between self-silencing during important and unimportant topics of conflict and depression, based on previous researcher's suggestions. Because my primary study hypotheses were not supported, it suggests that more research needs to be done to better understand the gender differences with regard to self-silencing and its relationship to depression and relationship satisfaction. It appears as though research provides a better understanding for these constructs amongst women. So, further research needs to be conducted to better understand these phenomena among men. A number of limitations could have impacted the results of this study. So, if it is possible to correct these limitations, it would be useful to retest these hypotheses. Finally, it is important that self-silencing research continues to expand and include different racial groups, sexual orientations, and age groups to better understand how it relates to depression and relationship satisfaction.

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APPENDIX A
DEMOGRAPHIC MEASURE

Please complete the following demographic information and then complete the following questionnaires in the order in which they are given.

1. Age: 18 19 20 21 22 and older
2. Gender: Male Female
3. Sexual Orientation: Heterosexual Gay Lesbian Bisexual Other
4. Ethnicity: Caucasian African American Other
5. Year in School: Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior
6. Are you a Psychology 101 student? Yes No
7. Are you currently in an exclusive romantic relationship?

Yes

No, but I have been in a romantic relationship in the past

No, I have never been in a romantic relationship

If Yes, answer the questions in terms of your current relationship. If no, answer in terms of your significant past relationship. If you have never been in a romantic relationship skip these two items.

8. Relationship Duration in months:

9. Is your relationship long distance? Yes No

10. If you are not currently in a romantic relationship but have been in one in the past,
how long ago was that relationship in months?

APPENDIX B

THE SILENCING THE SELF SCALE

Please circle the number that best describes how you feel about each of the statements listed below. If you are not currently in an intimate relationship, please indicate how you felt and acted in your most significant past romantic relationship. If you have never been in an intimate relationship please skip to this section. **CSS = Care as Self-Sacrifice item, STS = Silencing the Self item, ESP = Externalized Self-Perception item, and DS = Divided Self item.**

Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
----------------------	----------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------	-------------------

**1. (CSS) I think it is best to put myself first because no one else will look out for me.

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

2. (STS) I don't speak my feelings in an intimate relationship when I know they will cause disagreement.

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

3. (CSS) Caring means putting the other person's needs in front of my own.

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

4. (CSS) Considering my needs to be as important as those of the people I love is selfish.

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

5. (DS) I find it is harder to be myself when I am in a close relationship than when I am on my own.

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

Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
----------------------	----------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------	-------------------

6. (ESP) I tend to judge myself by how I think other people see me.

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

7. (ESP) I feel dissatisfied with myself because I should be able to do all the things people are supposed to be able to do these days.

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

**8. (STS) When my partner's needs and feelings conflict with my own, I always state mine clearly.

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

9. (CSS) In a close relationship, my responsibility is to make the other person happy.

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

10. (CSS) Caring means choosing to do what the other person wants, even when I want to do something different.

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

11. (CSS) In order to feel good about myself, I need to feel independent and self-sufficient.

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

12. (CSS) One of the worst things I can do is to be selfish.

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

13. (DS) I feel I have to act in a certain way to please my partner.

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

Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
----------------------	----------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------	-------------------

14. (STS) Instead of risking confrontations in close relationships, I would rather not rock the boat.

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

**15. (STS) I speak my feelings with my partner, even when it leads to problems or disagreements.

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

16. (DS) Often I look happy enough on the outside, but inwardly I feel angry and rebellious.

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

17. (DS) In order for my partner to love me, I cannot reveal certain things about myself to him/her.

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

18. (STS) When my partner's needs or opinions conflict with mine, rather than asserting my own point of view I usually end up agreeing with him/her.

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

19. (DS) When I am in a close relationship I lose my sense of who I am.

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

20. (STS) When it looks as though certain of my needs can't be met in a relationship, I usually realize that they weren't very important anyway.

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

** 21. (DS) My partner loves and appreciates me for who I am.

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

Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
22. (CSS) Doing things just for myself is selfish.				
1	2	3	4	5
23. (ESP) When I make decisions, other people's thoughts and opinions influence me more than my own thoughts and opinions.				
1	2	3	4	5
24. (STS) I rarely express my anger at those close to me.				
1	2	3	4	5
25. (DS) I feel that my partner does not know my real self.				
1	2	3	4	5
26. (STS) I think it's better to keep my feelings to myself when they do conflict with my partner's.				
1	2	3	4	5
27. (ESP) I often feel responsible for other people's feelings.				
1	2	3	4	5
28. (ESP) I find it hard to know what I think and feel because I spend a lot of time thinking about how other people are feeling.				
1	2	3	4	5
29. (CSS) In a close relationship I don't usually care what we do, as long as the other person is happy.				
1	2	3	4	5

Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
----------------------	----------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------	-------------------

30. (STS) I try to bury my feelings when I think they will cause trouble in my close relationship(s).

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

*31. (ESP) I never seem to measure up to the standards I set for myself.

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

* If you answered the last question with a 4 or 5, please list up to three standards you feel you don't measure up to.

1.

2.

3.

4.

Note: ** Items 1, 8, 15, and 21 are reversed scored before being added to the total score.*Written answers provided below item 31 can be used for descriptive purposes.

ESP = Externalized Self-Perception Subscale

CSS= Care as Self-Sacrifice Subscale

STS = Silencing the Self Subscale

DS= Divided Self Subscale

APPENDIX C

IMPORTANT CONFLICT QUESTIONNAIRE

The next set of questions pertains to your current or most significant past romantic relationship. If you have not been in a romantic relationship skip this questionnaire. Please imagine a specific conflict that you have had with your partner on a **topic that was deeply meaningful or important to you**. Describe the situation on the space provided. Be certain to write what the conflict was about and when and where it occurred. Be as specific as possible.

Please answer the following questions based on the conflict you described above:

1. How meaningful was this topic of conflict to you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not						Very
Meaningful						Meaningful

2. How severe would you rate this conflict/confrontation?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not						Very
Meaningful						Meaningful

3. During conflict with my partner, I didn't speak my feelings because I knew they would cause disagreement. (STS)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

**4. When my partner's needs and feelings conflicted with my own, I always stated mine clearly. (STS)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

**5. I spoke my feelings with my partner, even though it might have led to problems or more disagreements. (STS)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

6. When my partner's needs or opinions conflicted with mine, rather than asserting my own point of view I usually ended up agreeing with him/her. (STS)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

7. I thought it was better to keep my feelings to myself when they conflicted with my partner's. (STS)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

8. I tried to bury my feelings when I thought they would cause trouble in my relationship with my partner. (STS)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

****Items 4 and 5 are reversed scored before adding up the total score.**

STS = Silencing the Self Subscale

APPENDIX D

UNIMPORTANT CONFLICT QUESTIONNAIRE

The next set of questions pertains to your current or most significant past romantic relationship. If you have not been in a romantic relationship skip this questionnaire. Please imagine a specific conflict that you have had with your partner on **a topic that was NOT deeply meaningful or important to you**. Describe the situation on the space provided. Be certain to write what the conflict was about and when and where it occurred. Be as specific as possible.

Please answer the following questions based on the conflict you described above:

1. How meaningful was this topic of conflict to you?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not						Very
Meaningful						Meaningful

2. How severe would you rate this conflict/ confrontation?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not						Very
Meaningful						Meaningful

3. During conflict with my partner, I didn't speak my feelings because I knew they would cause disagreement. (STS)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

**4. When my partner's needs and feelings conflicted with my own, I always stated mine clearly. (STS)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

**5. I spoke my feelings with my partner, even though it might have led to problems or more disagreements. (STS)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

6. When my partner's needs or opinions conflicted with mine, rather than asserting my own point of view I usually ended up agreeing with him/her. (STS)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

7. I thought it was better to keep my feelings to myself when they conflicted with my partner's. (STS)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

8. I tried to bury my feelings when I thought they would cause trouble in my relationship with my partner. (STS)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree

****Items 4 and 5 are reversed scored before adding up the total score.**

STS = Silencing the Self Subscale

APPENDIX E

THE CENTER FOR EPIDEMIOLOGIC STUDIES DEPRESSION SCALE

Using the scale below, indicate the number which best describes how often you felt or behaved this way – **DURING THE PAST WEEK.**

1 = Rarely or none of the time (less than 1 day)

2 = Some or a little of the time (1-2 days)

3 = Occasionally or a moderate amount of time (3-4 days)

4 = Most or all of the time (5-7 days)

DURING THE PAST WEEK

- _____ 1. I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me.
- _____ 2. I did not feel like eating, my appetite was poor.
- _____ 3. I felt that I could not shake off the blues even with the help from my family or friends.
- _____ 4. I felt that I was just as good as other people.
- _____ 5. I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing.
- _____ 6. I felt depressed.
- _____ 7. I felt that everything I did was an effort.
- _____ 8. I felt hopeful about the future.
- _____ 9. I thought my life had been a failure.
- _____ 10. I felt fearful.
- _____ 11. My sleep was restless.
- _____ 12. I was happy.

- _____ 13. I talked less than usual
- _____ 14. I felt lonely.
- _____ 15. People were unfriendly.
- _____ 16. I enjoyed life.
- _____ 17. I had crying spells.
- _____ 18. I felt sad.
- _____ 19. I felt people disliked me.
- _____ 20. I could not get “going.”

APPENDIX F
RELATIONSHIP ASSESSMENT SCALE

Please circle the letter for each item that best answers that item ***based on your current or most significant past romantic relationship. If you have not been in a romantic relationship please skip this questionnaire.***

1. How well does your partner meet your needs?

A	B	C	D	E
Poorly		Average		Extremely Well

2. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?

A	B	C	D	E
Unsatisfied		Average		Extremely
Satisfied				

3. How good is your relationship compared to most?

A	B	C	D	E
Poor		Average		Excellent

**4. How often do you wish you hadn't gotten in this relationship?

A	B	C	D	E
Never		Average		Very Often

5. To what extent has your relationship met your needs?

A	B	C	D	E
Hardly at all		Average		Completely

6. How much do you love your partner?

A	B	C	D	E
Not Much		Average		Very Much

**7. How many problems are there in your relationship?

A	B	C	D	E
Very Few		Average		Very Many

****Items 4 and 7 are reversed scored before adding up the total score**