

# Passion for activities and relationship quality: A dyadic approach

Journal of Social and  
Personal Relationships  
30(6) 734–749

© The Author(s) 2012

Reprints and permissions:

sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav

DOI: 10.1177/0265407512467748

spr.sagepub.com



Sophia Jowett<sup>1</sup>, Marc-André K. Lafrenière<sup>2</sup>, and  
Robert J. Vallerand<sup>2</sup>

## Abstract

The dualistic model of passion (Vallerand (2010) On passion for life activities: The dualistic model of passion. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 42, pp. 97–193). New York, NY: Academic Press) regards passion as a strong inclination toward a self-defining activity that one loves, values, and in which one invests a substantial amount of time and energy. The model proposes two distinct types of passion, harmonious and obsessive, which predict adaptive and less adaptive outcomes, respectively. The present study examined the role of passion for an activity in relationship satisfaction and interpersonal conflict within the purview of the activity using a dyadic approach. We hypothesized that harmonious and obsessive passion would predict adaptive and less adaptive interpersonal outcomes, respectively. Coach–athlete dyads ( $N = 103$ ) completed a questionnaire assessing harmonious and obsessive passions, relationship satisfaction, and interpersonal conflict. Results revealed both actor and partner effects of harmonious and obsessive passions and generally supported our hypotheses. Future research directions are discussed in light of the dualistic model of passion and interpersonal relationships.

## Keywords

Conflict, dyads, passion, relationship quality, satisfaction

<sup>1</sup> Loughborough University, UK

<sup>2</sup> Université du Québec à Montréal, UK

## Corresponding author:

Sophia Jowett, School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Loughborough University, Leicestershire LE11 3QL, UK.

Email: S.Jowett@lboro.ac.uk

The study of self and relationships represents an exciting field within relationship science that is still in its infancy. Vohs and Finkel (2006) characterized this field of research as being “in the early stages of a steep upswing” (p. 2). The present article aims to contribute to this field of relationship science by focusing on the association between the intrapersonal-motivational construct of passion *for an activity* (Vallerand, 2010; Vallerand et al., 2003) and interpersonal-relationship quality constructs, namely, relationship satisfaction and interpersonal conflict, *within the purview of the passionate activity*. Indeed, if two individuals are passionate toward the same activity, this could lead them to develop a profound relationship because they share a love for the activity and may both fully dedicate themselves to achieve common goals. We thus posited that one’s passion *for an activity* would have important effect on *relationship quality* with a close other within the activity. However, relationship quality may be related not just to passion but more precisely to the type of passion that is prevalent in an individual.

## The dualistic model of passion

### *The concept of passion*

Vallerand (2010) and Vallerand et al. (2003) have proposed a theoretical framework of passion focusing on the motivational processes that underlie heavy and sustained activity involvement. The dualistic model of passion (DMP) defines passion as a strong inclination toward a self-defining activity that one loves, finds important, and invests a significant amount of time and energy. These passionate activities come to be so self-defining that they represent central features of one’s identity. Passion can be oriented toward an activity (e.g., playing the piano), a person (e.g., one’s romantic partner), or an object (e.g., one’s cards collection). This model further suggests that individuals can pursue (equally important) passionate activities differently and with varied consequences. In particular, the model distinguishes between harmonious and obsessive activities. Individuals pursue these activities differently, meaning they regulate and integrate them distinctly with other life domains. While passion is viewed as an individual difference characteristic, in that some people may experience more harmonious passion and some others may experience more obsessive passion for an activity, passion is not a personality trait. In fact, an individual’s personality can function as an important step to develop either a harmonious or obsessive passion (Vallerand & Miquelon, 2007).

Harmonious passion refers to a strong desire to engage freely in the activity, where the person willingly endorses it as a significant, but not overwhelming, part of their identity. With harmonious passion, the person is in control of the activity and decides whether or not to engage in it. Because of such control over the activity, harmonious passion will lead one to experience their activity as coherent and well-integrated with other life domains. Consequently, people with harmonious passion will experience positive outcomes not only during activity engagement (e.g., positive affect, concentration, and flow) but also after activity engagement (e.g., general positive affect and psychological adjustment).

The second type of passion, obsessive passion, also refers to a strong desire to engage in the activity. However, in contrast to harmonious passion, obsessive passion overwhelms one’s identity. The activity is out of one’s control and is felt as pressuring

one to pursue it unremittingly. This type of engagement will lead to a rigid participation in the activity. As a consequence, with obsessive passion, the activity will be difficult to regulate and integrate with other life domains. This difficulty can eventually generate conflict within other aspects of the person's life and engender negative consequences (e.g., negative affect and rumination) during and after activity engagement.

Empirical findings have been consistent with the DMP. Both harmonious passion and obsessive passion are positively related to activity valuation, to perceptions of the activity as a passion, and to inclusion of the activity in one's identity (Vallerand et al., 2003, Study 1). Both types of passion, then, reflect adequately the definition of the passion construct. However, the two types of passion are differentially associated with outcomes. Harmonious passion is positively related, whereas obsessive passion is either unrelated or negatively related, to psychological well-being indices (Philippe, Vallerand, & Lavigne, 2009; Rousseau & Vallerand, 2008; Vallerand et al., 2003, Study 2; Vallerand et al., 2007), and to positive emotions during activity engagement (Lafrenière, Jowett, Vallerand, Donahue, and Lorimer, 2008, Study 2; Vallerand et al., 2003, Study 1; Vallerand, Rousseau, Grouzet, Dumais, & Grenier, 2006, Study 2). Moreover, harmonious passion is negatively related, whereas obsessive passion is positively related, to the experiences of conflict between one's passion and other life domains (Vallerand, Paquet, Philippe, & Charest, 2010; Vallerand et al., 2003, Study 1).

### *Passion and interpersonal relationships*

Research has recently assessed the link between passion and relationship quality. Results revealed that obsessive passion toward a specific activity leads to conflict in other life domains including interpersonal relationships, while harmonious passion does not. Several studies provided support for this hypothesis. In one of the first studies of the kind, Vallerand et al. (2003, Study 1) showed that only obsessive passion is positively associated with conflict between the passionate activity and other activities including relationships with other people. Moreover, Séguin-Lévesque, Laliberté, Pelletier, Vallerand, and Blanchard (2003) found that when the amount of time individuals engage in the Internet was controlled, harmonious and obsessive passion for the Internet negatively and positively predicted conflict with one's romantic partner. More recently, Vallerand, Ntoumanis, et al. (2008, Study 3) investigated English soccer fans and revealed that obsessive passion for being a soccer fan predicted conflict between one's passion for soccer and one's romantic relationship that, in turn, led to lower quality of romantic relationships. In contrast, harmonious passion was not linked to conflict with one's romantic partner.

The research above revolves around passion and interpersonal relationships experienced outside the passionate activity. Lafrenière et al. (2008) were the first to examine whether one's passion can influence interpersonal relationships within the purview of the passionate activity. In Study 1, it was found that athletes' harmonious passion about their sporting activity is positively associated with high-quality coach-athlete relationships, whereas associations for obsessive passion and relationship quality were nonexistent with the majority of the relational properties that were assessed. Moreover, in Study 2, coaches' harmonious passion about their coaching positively predicted

their perceptions of high-quality coach–athlete relationships, while coaches' obsessive passion was unrelated to the quality of relationship. Moreover, Philippe, Vallerand, Houliort, Lavigne, and Donahue (2010) have replicated these findings in a variety of settings (i.e., education and work) using prospective designs and objective ratings of interpersonal relationship quality. In sum, past research demonstrated that passion matters with respect to the quality of relationships within the purview of the passionate activity with harmonious passion predicting better quality relationships than obsessive passion.

### *The present research*

Although research on passion and relationships has led to important findings, no research, to our knowledge, has simultaneously evaluated both dyadic members. Thus, the purpose of the present research was to examine the effect of harmonious and obsessive passions on relationship satisfaction and interpersonal conflict using a dyadic methodological approach. We proposed that passion represents such an integral part of individuals' identity that it is likely to shape not only their own feelings, thoughts, and behaviors but also their perceptions of their close relationships and others' perceptions within the passionate activity. Thus, the focus of this study was to assess whether one's passion for an activity influences both dyadic members' perceptions of relationship quality (defined here as individuals' relationship satisfaction and perceptions of interpersonal conflict).

The coach–athlete relationship was central to this study. This is a type of close relationship that while it unfolds in sport, its content and functions would appear to be more or less similar with other types of close relationships that unfold at work, school, and home. For example, close relationships regardless of their type are expected to be characterized by trust, respect, appreciation, liking, commitment, support, cooperation, responsiveness, and friendliness (Hendrick, 1988; Jowett, 2009; Pierce, Sarason, Sarason, Solky-Butzel, & Nagle, 1997). Moreover, close relationships are expected to fulfill important human needs such as the need for belongingness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). When such close relationships are functional, their potential effects on members' growth and development are likely to spillover beyond the context in which they were originally unfolded (Rogers, 1961).

This study aimed to expand previous research in two ways. First, it examined the extent to which one's perceptions about the quality of the relationship depend upon their levels of harmonious and obsessive passions (i.e., actor effect). Second, it investigated whether one's harmonious and obsessive passions influence their partners' perceptions of the quality of the relationship (i.e., partner effect). Specifically, we posited that both types of passion should have diametrically opposed outcomes on interpersonal relationships within the purview of the activity. In line with past research on passion and relationships (e.g., Lafrenière et al., 2008; Philippe et al., 2010; Séguin-Lévesque et al., 2003; Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand, Ntoumanis, et al., 2008), we hypothesized that harmonious passion would be beneficial to the relationship. Harmoniously passionate individuals do not experience an uncontrollable urge to engage in the passionate activity, but rather flexibly choose to do so. Engaging in the passionate activity is personally endorsed and remains under the individuals' control. Consequently, harmonious passion

for an activity should allow individuals to engage in the passionate activity with an openness that is favorable to interpersonal relationships (Hodgins & Knee, 2002; Waugh & Frederickson, 2006). We thus hypothesized that harmonious passion would be positively associated with relationship satisfaction and negatively related to interpersonal conflict in their close relationships within the passionate activity.

In contrast, we hypothesized that obsessive passion would be detrimental to the relationship quality. With obsessive passion, the activity is out of one's control and is felt as pressuring one to pursue it unremittingly. Consequently, individuals with an obsessive passion engage in the activity in a rigid and narrow-minded manner (Hodgins & Knee, 2002) that is detrimental to interpersonal relationships developed in the purview of the activity (Waugh & Frederickson, 2006). We thus hypothesized that obsessive passion would be negatively associated with relationship satisfaction and positively associated with interpersonal conflict in their close relationships within the passionate activity.

Evidence not only in romantic and marital but also in coach–athlete relationship research (e.g., Acitelli, Kenny, & Weiner, 2001; Fletcher & Thomas, 2000; Jackson & Beauchamp, 2009; Jowett & Clark-Carter, 2006; Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996) has generally indicated that dyadic members' feelings, thoughts, and behaviors are interdependent. Accordingly, we explored whether one's harmonious and obsessive passions would be associated with their partner's perceptions of relationship quality. In line with the DMP (Vallerand, 2010; Vallerand et al., 2003), we hypothesized that one's harmonious passion would be positively associated with their partner's relationship satisfaction and negatively related with their partner's perceptions of interpersonal conflict within the passionate activity. Furthermore, we hypothesized that one's obsessive passion would be negatively associated with their partner's relationship satisfaction and positively associated with their partner's perceptions of interpersonal conflict within the passionate activity. Finally, in line with past research (e.g., Biesanz, West, & Millevoi, 2007; Kenny, Albright, Malloy, & Kashy, 1994), we expected that certain partner effects of harmonious and obsessive passion might emerge only in more long-term relationships as dyadic familiarity increases.

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

Participants were 103 Greek coach–athlete dyads (93 male coaches, 10 female coaches, 63 male athletes, and 40 female athletes) engaged in one of the several sports (e.g., gymnastics, volleyball, and football). The mean age of the coaches was 44.23 years ( $SD = 7.94$  years), while the mean age of the athletes was 22.04 years ( $SD = 5.29$  years). On average, coaches had been coaching for 15.75 years ( $SD = 12.53$  years), while athletes had been participating in their sport for 8.54 years ( $SD = 3.64$  years). Relationship length ranged from 5 months to 13 years, with an average relationship length of 2.88 years ( $SD = 2.03$  years). The coaches classified their performance level as follows: club level ( $N = 39$ ; 37.9%), county level ( $N = 5$ ; 4.9%), university level ( $N = 5$ ; 4.9%), national level ( $N = 41$ ; 39.8%), and international level ( $N = 13$ ; 12.6%).

## Measures

**Passion.** Athletes' and coaches' passion were assessed using the Passion Scale (Vallerand et al., 2003), an instrument composed of two six-item subscales assessing harmonious and obsessive passions. The items were adapted to refer to the specific sport engaged in by athletes or to the coaching domain for coaches (sample item for harmonious passion toward sport: "My sport [e.g., volleyball] is in harmony with other activities in my life"; sample item for harmonious passion toward coaching: "Coaching is in harmony with other activities in my life."; sample item for obsessive passion toward sport: "I have difficulties controlling my urge to do my sport [e.g., volleyball]"; sample item for obsessive passion toward coaching: "Coaching is the only thing that really turns me on."). This scale was completed on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not agree at all*) to 7 (*very strongly agree*). The Passion Scale has been used in several studies and has shown high levels of validity and reliability (see Ratelle, Vallerand, Mageau, Rousseau, & Provencher, 2004; Vallerand et al., 2003, Study 1), including with athletes (Vallerand et al., 2003, Studies 2 and 3; Vallerand et al., 2006) and coaches (Lafrenière et al., 2008, Study 2).

**Relationship satisfaction.** The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS; Hendrick, 1988; Hendrick, Dicke, & Hendrick, 1998) was used to assess athletes' and coaches' satisfaction with the coach–athlete relationship. The degree to which one is satisfied with the relationship reflects a positive relationship quality. The instrument consists of seven items (e.g., "How satisfied are you with your relationship?") and was assessed on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*very unsatisfied*) to 5 (*very satisfied*).

**Interpersonal conflict.** The conflict subscale of the Quality of Relationships Inventory (QRI; Pierce et al., 1997) was used to assess the athletes' and coaches' perceived coach–athlete relationship conflict. The degree to which one experiences interpersonal conflict reflects a negative relationship quality. The instrument consists of 12 items (e.g., "How much do you argue with your coach/athlete?") and was assessed on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*). In the present study, the internal reliability coefficients were acceptable for all scales used (see Table 1).

## Procedure

Coaches were contacted through a variety of means (e.g., e-mail and letter) and invited to participate in the study. Once the coaches consented to participate, athletes' permission was then sought. Coaches were allowed to choose any one athlete from his/her team as long as they had been training with this particular athlete for at least 3 months. Prospective participants were informed about the general aims of the study and the requirements for participation. Each member of the dyad (i.e., athletes and coaches) who consented to participate were supplied a multisection questionnaire that contained the demographic questions (e.g., age and gender), the Passion Scale (Vallerand et al., 2003), the RAS (Hendrick, 1988), and the conflict subscale of the QRI (Pierce et al., 1997). Instructions for completing the questionnaire were supplied by the test administrator; participants completed the questionnaire independently.

**Table 1.** Means, standard deviations, and correlations involving all study variables ( $N = 103$ ).

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	$\alpha$	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Athletes' harmonious passion	5.68	.85	.84	1.00	.59*	.11	.30*	.55*	-.43*	.17 <sup>†</sup>	-.09
2. Athletes' obsessive passion	4.70	1.00	.76			.05	.32*	.26*	-.08	.16	-.01
3. Coaches' harmonious passion	6.09	.68	.78				.47*	.09	.01	.36*	-.17 <sup>†</sup>
4. Coaches' obsessive passion	4.78	1.32	.87					-.02	.09	-.01	.24*
5. Athletes' relationship quality	4.21	.72	.86						-.55*	.46*	-.27*
6. Athletes' interpersonal conflict	2.83	1.02	.91							-.35*	.45*
7. Coaches' relationship quality	4.32	.52	.79								-.62*
8. Coaches' interpersonal conflict	2.60	.83	.87								

<sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ .

### Data analysis

In line with Kenny, Kashy, and Cook (2006), path analyses were conducted to examine actor and partner effects of harmonious and obsessive passions on relationship quality and interpersonal conflict. Actor effect measures the extent to which one's own variables predict his/her own outcomes. On the other hand, partner effect measures the extent to which the other person's variables predict one's own outcomes. In line with past research (e.g., Biesanz et al., 2007; Kenny et al., 1994), we expected that certain partner effects of harmonious and obsessive passions might emerge only in more long-term relationships as dyadic familiarity increases. Hence, length of relationship  $\times$  partner harmonious and obsessive passion interactions were included in the hypothesized model (see Moosbrugger, Schermelleh-Engel, Kelava, & Klein, 2009; Schumacker & Marcoulides, 1998, for interactions effects in structural equation modeling). According to Aiken and West's (1991) procedures, independent variables (i.e., length of relationship and actor and partner harmonious and obsessive passion) were centered before calculating the interaction products. Furthermore, significant interactions terms were graphed with high and low scores at one standard deviation (*SD*) above and below the mean (Aiken & West, 1991). Visual inspection of slopes helped to interpret the significant interaction terms.

We tested the model with path analyses (EQS 6.1; Bentler, 1993) using maximum-likelihood estimation procedure and reporting robust statistics. Usually, fitting of the model to the data is examined using the chi-square test. A nonsignificant chi-square indicates that the model was able to replicate suitably the sample covariance matrix. However, there are problems with relying solely on chi-square test because this statistic is sensitive to the size of the correlations, the model complexity, and the sample size (see Kline, 2005). Moreover, some researchers (e.g., Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) have suggested using additional fit indices to further assess model fit: the comparative fit index (CFI), the Bentler–Bonett normed fit index (NFI), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). According to Kline (2005) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2007), the CFI and NNFI should be

.90 or higher for acceptable model fit. Moreover, the RMSEA should be .06 or lower (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

## Results

### *Preliminary analyses*

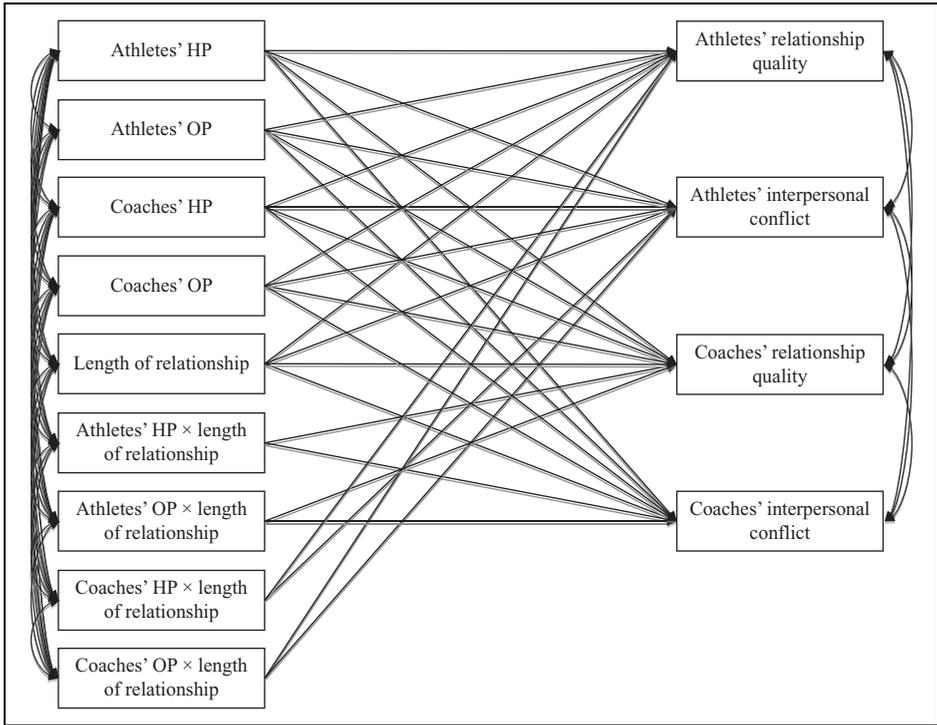
Missing values (representing .4% of the total data file) were replaced using an expectation-maximization procedure. Means, *SDs*, and Pearson's correlations are presented in Table 1. Inspection of the skewness and kurtosis indices for all variables in the model proved to be normal (values ranged from  $-.996$  to  $.937$  for skewness and from  $-.579$  to  $1.349$  for kurtosis). Data screening revealed no value higher than three *SDs* from the mean. Additionally, in order to screen for multivariate outliers, we computed Mahalanobis distance values for all participants. No participant exceeded the critical chi-square value at the  $p = .001$  level. In addition, all bivariate scatter plots were linear and homoscedastic. We also examined gender and age differences. Results demonstrated no significant main effect for coaches' and athletes' gender and age or interaction effects on all variables of the present study. Thus, we did not include gender or age in the following analyses. Finally, an omnibus test of distinguishability (see Gonzalez & Griffin, 1999) revealed that dyad members were empirically distinguishable.

### *Main analyses*

The model tested in the present study was composed of nine exogenous (i.e., length of relationship, athletes' and coaches' harmonious and obsessive passion, and length of relationship  $\times$  athletes' and coaches' harmonious and obsessive passion interactions) and four endogenous variables (i.e., athletes' and coaches' relationship quality as defined by the construct of relationship satisfaction and interpersonal conflict). In the hypothesized model, each endogenous variable was predicted by the length of relationship, actor's harmonious and obsessive passion, partner's harmonious and obsessive passion, and the interaction terms between the length of the relationship and partner's harmonious and obsessive passion. Furthermore, covariance paths among all exogenous variables and among all endogenous variables were estimated. See Figure 1 for a visual presentation of the hypothesized model. The model had an acceptable fit to the data,  $\chi^2(8) = 7.15.16$ ,  $p = .52$ , CFI = .99, NFI = .98, and RMSEA = .00. Results from Wald and Lagrange multiplier tests suggested that no addition or deletion of any theoretically sound parameters could significantly improve model fit.

### *Athletes' relationship quality*

We display all statistics in Table 2. Results showed that athletes' harmonious passion positively predicted ( $\beta = .50$ ,  $p < .05$ ) athletes' relationship satisfaction, while athletes' obsessive passion was unrelated to it. In addition, results revealed that coaches' obsessive passion negatively predicted ( $\beta = -.18$ ,  $p < .05$ ) athletes' relationship satisfaction. Finally, results showed that the length of relationship  $\times$  coaches' harmonious passion interaction was significant ( $\beta = .16$ ,  $p < .05$ ). A plot of this interaction revealed that the more long-term was the relationship, the more coaches' harmonious passion positively predicted athletes' relationship satisfaction.



**Figure 1.** The hypothesized model. HP: harmonious passion; OP: obsessive passion.

**Table 2.** Results of path analyses ( $N = 103$ ).

	<i>L</i>	AHP	AOP	PHP	POP	<i>L</i> × PHP	<i>L</i> × POP
<b>Athletes' outcomes</b>							
Relationship quality	.13	.50*	-.03	.10	-.18*	.16*	-.10
Interpersonal conflict	.01	-.68*	.26*	-.09	.23*	.02	-.00
<b>Coaches' outcomes</b>							
Relationship quality	.21*	.39*	-.27*	.03	.22*	.09	-.09
Interpersonal conflict	-.01	-.43*	.46*	-.18 <sup>†</sup>	.00	.11	.06

*L*: length of relationship; AHP: actor's harmonious passion; AOP: actor's obsessive passion; PHP: partner's harmonious passion; POP: partner's obsessive passion.

<sup>†</sup> $p < .10$ .  
\* $p < .05$ .

### Athletes' interpersonal conflict

Results showed that athletes' harmonious passion negatively predicted ( $\beta = -.68, p < .05$ ) athletes' interpersonal conflict, while athletes' obsessive passion was positively related ( $\beta = .26, p < .05$ ) to it. In addition, results revealed that coaches' obsessive passion positively predicted ( $\beta = .23, p < .05$ ) athletes' interpersonal conflict.

### *Coaches' relationship quality*

Results showed that coaches' harmonious passion positively predicted ( $\beta = .39, p < .05$ ) coaches' relationship satisfaction, while coaches' obsessive passion was negatively related ( $\beta = -.27, p < .05$ ) to it. In addition, results revealed that athletes' obsessive passion positively predicted ( $\beta = .22, p < .05$ ) coaches' relationship satisfaction.

### *Coaches' interpersonal conflict*

Results showed that coaches' harmonious passion negatively predicted ( $\beta = -.43, p < .05$ ) coaches' interpersonal conflict, while coaches' obsessive passion was positively related ( $\beta = .46, p < .05$ ) to it. In addition, results revealed that athletes' harmonious passion marginally and negatively predicted ( $\beta = -.18, p < .10$ ) coaches' interpersonal conflict.

## **Discussion**

The aim of the present research was to examine the potential associations between passion and relationship quality using a dyadic research design. Specifically, path analyses were conducted to examine actor and partner effects of harmonious and obsessive passion on relationship satisfaction on one hand and interpersonal conflict on the other. We posited that both types of passion should have diametrically opposed outcomes on interpersonal relationships within the purview of the activity. We hypothesized that harmonious and obsessive passion would predict adaptive and less adaptive interpersonal outcomes, respectively. Overall, the results from the present study provided support for the hypotheses we set out to examine.

First, we hypothesized that harmonious passion would be positively associated with relationship satisfaction and negatively related to interpersonal conflict in their close relationships within the passionate activity. Results revealed that harmonious passion was associated with more satisfying relationships within the purview of the activity. Moreover, harmonious passion was negatively related to interpersonal conflict. These findings suggest that having a harmonious passion toward a selected activity may promote the quality of the relationship and even protect against experiencing arguments, disagreements, and misunderstandings with dyadic partners. One possible explanation for this is that individuals with harmonious passion for an activity may have the capacity to engage with one another in the context of the relationship more effectively because they engage in the passionate activity more openly and flexibly. This type of passion thus allows individuals to fully consider their relationships with other people and thus commit and invest the necessary time and energy in sustaining and enhancing the quality of their relationships. These findings are consistent with previous research (Lafrenière et al., 2008; Philippe et al., 2010; Séguin-Lévesque et al., 2003; Vallerand, Ntoumanis, et al., 2008). Overall, these findings support the conceptual basis of harmonious passion as a type of passion in which individuals are more likely to assume control over their chosen activity (Vallerand, 2010; Vallerand et al., 2003) and thus less likely to lose sight of other important activities.

Second, we hypothesized that obsessive passion would be positively associated with interpersonal conflict and negatively associated with relationship satisfaction in their close relationships within the passionate activity. Results revealed that individuals' with an obsessive passion were more likely to perceive their relationships as conflictual. Stated differently, individuals whose passion for the activity was obsessive experienced more disagreements, arguments, and misunderstandings within their relationship. Moreover, while both coaches' and athletes' obsessive passion was related to interpersonal conflict, coaches' obsessive passion was negatively related to their satisfaction with the coach-athlete relationship and athletes' obsessive passion was unrelated to their satisfaction with the relationship. These findings largely support our hypothesis and are consistent with the DMP (Vallerand, 2010; Vallerand et al., 2003). It would appear that individuals with obsessive passion for an activity are less likely to expend energy and make time for their relationships, to invest in and commit to their relationship. Investing in or committing to one's relationship has been thought as important factors of good quality relationships (see, e.g., Rusbult, Coolsen, Kirchner, & Clarke, 2006). Thus, obsessive passion may be damaging on individuals' relationship quality as well as personal health and success.

Many relationship and social scientists (e.g., Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Berscheid & Peplau, 1983; Fincham & Beach, 2010; Jowett, 2005; Kelley et al., 2003) have explained the importance of the quality of interpersonal relationships for optimal human functioning and psychological well-being. Moreover, there is ample empirical evidence to highlight important links between the quality of interpersonal relationships and such variables as self-concept (Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992; Jowett, 2008; Dekovic & Meeus, 1997; Slotter, Gardner, & Finkel, 2010), motivation to persist in an activity for example sport (Adie & Jowett, 2010) and school (Wentzel, Barry, & Caldwell, 2004), positive emotions such as satisfaction (Gottman, 1994; Jowett & Nezelek, 2012; Murray et al., 1996; Waugh & Frederickson, 2006; Wong & Goodwin, 2009), as well as negative emotions such as jealousy (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993), anger, guilt (Sprecher, 1986), and depression (Jowett & Cramer, 2009; Knobloch & Knobloch-Fedders, 2010), just to name a few.

However, if one's obsessive passion does not allow the development of a good quality relationship, then not only is this inclination likely to undermine activity outcomes but also one's overall psychological well-being (Lafrenière et al., 2008). It should be noted that although the focus was on relationships between coaches and athletes, other two-person relationships, such as teachers and students, managers and employees, as well as parents and children, may follow a similar pattern of results as the ones recorded in this study. Future research should aim to investigate whether the present findings can be replicated in different types of relationships (e.g., romantic and marital, work, school, friendship, and peer) unfolding in different social contexts. Collectively, the findings with respect to harmonious and obsessive passions lend additional support to the DMP (Vallerand, 2010; Vallerand et al., 2003) within the context of interpersonal relationships.

Finally, we sought to investigate whether one's harmonious and obsessive passions would be related to their partner's relationship satisfaction and perceptions of interpersonal conflict within the passionate activity. Results revealed five partner effects. First, athletes' harmonious passion negatively (but marginally) predicted coaches' perceptions of

interpersonal conflict. Second, coaches' obsessive passion negatively predicted athletes' relationship satisfaction. Third, coaches' obsessive passion positively predicted athletes' perceptions of interpersonal conflict. These findings are consistent with past research (e.g., Lafrenière et al., 2008; Phillipe et al., 2010; Séguin-Lévesque et al., 2003; Vallerand et al., 2003). Fourth, coaches' harmonious passion was found to be positively related to athletes' relationship satisfaction but only in more long-term relationships. This finding suggests that coaches' harmonious passion associates more positively with athletes' perceptions of relationship satisfaction as the partnership develops over time. Future research is required in order to replicate and extend these findings and identify possible psychological mediators of such associations (e.g., familiarity, cohesion, empathy, and communication).

Fifth and contrary to hypotheses, it would appear that athletes' obsessive passion positively predicted coaches' relationship quality. This finding deserves special attention. For coaches, athletes' obsessive passion may be reflective of their commitment and devotion to the sport. Indeed, commitment and performance accomplishments are associated constructs (see Holt & Dunn, 2004). Consequently, coaches whose main role is to improve skill and performance (Lyle, 2002), may feel that coach-athlete relationships are more satisfying when their athletes demonstrate to them their utmost, and even extreme, commitment and devotion to the sport (compare Weiss & Weiss, 2007) reflected, in this study, in the degree to which athletes' are obsessively passionate. The potential links among passion, commitment (both real and perceived), and performance warrant close investigation. Moreover, future research is required in order to replicate this finding in other achievement-related contexts (e.g., school/university, dance, music, art, and work). Overall, the partner effects found in the present research add further credibility to the role of passion for an activity of interpersonal outcomes and highlight the advantages of obtaining data from both dyadic members (Kenny et al., 2006).

This investigation opens new avenues for research that aims to investigate whether passion has the capacity to associate, and even influence, the quality of dyadic relationships within the purview of the passionate activity be it in sport, education, or work. First, in line with interpersonal theorists on interdependence (e.g., Kiesler, 1996), it would be interesting to investigate the role of one's passion in the development of their partner's passion. Second, a link between passion and performance has recently been found (Vallerand et al., 2007; Vallerand, Mageau, et al., 2008). Hence, an interesting future research direction for achievement-related contexts would be to investigate the degree to which the quality of the relationship (e.g., coach-athlete, instructor-learner, and employer-employee) mediates the link between passion and performance accomplishments. The findings of such research would have both conceptual and practical significance. Finally, future research should continue investigating the intersection between individuals' passion for an activity and other interpersonal processes (e.g., coping with conflict, self-disclosure, and empathy), in other types of relationships (e.g., romantic, instructional, and work relationships), as well as group processes (e.g., team cohesion, role clarity or ambiguity, and collective efficacy).

## Limitations and conclusion

Some limitations should be kept in mind when interpreting the current findings. First, this study used a correlational design and thus is unable to establish causal relationships.

Future research should examine such causal relationships using experimental designs. Second, the present study measured all its variables concurrently. It would be important to conduct longitudinal or prospective research in order to determine the role of one's passion in predicting the *changes* in both own and partners' perceptions of relationship quality. Third, replication of the present study with diverse samples and contexts is necessary to add robustness to the present findings and add confidence to their generalizability.

Despite these limitations, the present findings support the importance of the intrapersonal–motivational construct of passion for understanding interpersonal outcomes. This research studied the psychological construct of passion for an activity as an individual difference characteristic to predict relationship quality defined positively by relationship satisfaction and negatively by interpersonal conflict. The findings of this study documented both actor and partner effects of harmonious and obsessive passion on relationship satisfaction and interpersonal conflict. The generated findings contribute not only to DMP (Vallerand, 2010; Vallerand et al., 2003) but also to the field of relationship science that aims to specifically unravel the interconnections between intrapersonal and interpersonal processes.

## Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

## References

- Acitelli, L. K., Kenny, D. A., & Weiner, D. (2001). The importance of similarity and understanding of partners' marital ideals to relationship satisfaction. *Personality Relationships, 8*, 167–185.
- Adie, J., & Jowett, S. (2010). Athletes' meta-perceptions of the coach–athlete relationship, multiple achievement goals and intrinsic motivation among track and field athletes. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 40*, 2750–2773.
- Aiken, L. S., & West, S. G. (1991). *Multiple regression: Testing and interpreting interactions*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Aron, A., Aron, E. N., & Smollan, D. (1992). Inclusion of other in the self scale and the structure of interpersonal closeness. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 63*, 596–612.
- Baumeister, R., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin, 117*, 497–529.
- Bentler, P. M. (1993). *EQS: Structural equation program manual*. Los Angeles, CA: BMDP Statistical Software.
- Berscheid, E., & Peplau, L. A. (1983). The emerging science of relationships. In H. H. Kelley, et al. (Eds.), *Close relationships* (pp. 1–19). New York, NY: W.H. Freeman and Company.
- Biesanz, J. C., West, S. G., & Millevoi, A. (2007). What do you learn about someone over time? The relationship between length of acquaintance and consensus and self-other agreement in judgments of personality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 92*, 119–135.
- Dekovic, M., & Meeus, W. (1997). Peer relations in adolescence: Effects of parenting and adolescents' self-concept. *Journal of Adolescence, 20*, 163–176.

- Fincham, F. D., & Beach, S. R. H. (2010). Of memes and marriage: Toward a positive relationship science. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 2, 4–24.
- Fletcher, G. J. O., & Thomas, G. (2000). Behavior and on-line cognition in marital interaction. *Personal Relationships*, 7, 111–130.
- Gonzalez, R., & Griffin, D. (1999). The correlation analysis of dyad-level data in the distinguishable case. *Personal Relationships*, 6, 449–469.
- Gottman, J. M. (1994) *What predicts divorce? The relationship between marital processes and marital outcomes*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Hendrick, S. S. (1988). A generic measure of relationship satisfaction. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 50, 93–98.
- Hendrick, S. S., Dicke, A., & Hendrick, C. (1998). The relationship assessment scale. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 15, 137–142.
- Hodgins, H. S., & Knee, C. R. (2002). The integrating self and conscious experience. In E. L. Deci & R. M. Ryan (Eds.), *Handbook of self-determination research* (pp. 87–100). Rochester, NY: University Of Rochester Press.
- Holt, N. L., & Dunn, J. G. H. (2004). Toward a grounded theory of the psychosocial competencies and environmental conditions associated with soccer success. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 16, 199–219.
- Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling*, 6, 1–55.
- Jackson, B., & Beauchamp, M. R. (2009) Efficacy beliefs in coach–athlete dyads: Prospective relationships using actor–partner interdependence models. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 59, 220–242.
- Jowett, S. (2005). On repairing and enhancing the coach–athlete relationship. In S. Jowett & M. Jones (Eds.), *The psychology of coaching. Sport and Exercise Psychology Division* (pp. 14–26) Leicester, UK: The British Psychological Society.
- Jowett, S. (2008). Moderators and mediators of the association between the coach–athlete relationship and physical self-concept. *International Journal of Coaching Science*, 2, 43–62.
- Jowett, S. (2009). Factor structure and criterion validity of the meta-perspective version of the coach–athlete relationship questionnaire (CART-Q). *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research and Practice*, 13, 163–177.
- Jowett, S., & Clark-Carter, D. (2006). Perceptions of empathic accuracy and assumed similarity in the coach–athlete relationship. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 45, 617–637.
- Jowett, S., & Cramer, D. (2009). The role of romantic relationships in athletes’ performance and well-being. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology*, 3, 58–72.
- Jowett, S., & Nezelek, J. (2012). Relationship interdependence and satisfaction with important outcomes in coach–athlete dyads. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 29, 287–301.
- Kelley, H. H., Holmes, J. G., Kerr, N. L., Reis, H. T., Rusbult, C. E., & Van Lange, P. A. M. (2003). *An atlas of interpersonal situations*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Kenny, D. A., Albright, L., Malloy, T. E., & Kashy, D. A. (1994). Consensus in interpersonal perception: Acquaintance and the big five. *Psychological Bulletin*, 116, 245–258.
- Kenny, D. A., Kashy, D. A., & Cook, W. L. (2006). *Dyadic data analysis*. New York, NY: Guilford.
- Kiesler, D. J. (1996). *Contemporary interpersonal theory and research: Personality, psychopathology, and psychotherapy*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.

- Kline, R. B. (2005). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford.
- Knobloch, L. K., & Knobloch-Fedders, L. M. (2010). The role of relational uncertainty in depressive symptoms and relationship quality: An actor-partner interdependence model. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 27*, 137–159.
- Lafrenière, M. A. K., Jowett, S., Vallerand, R. J., Donahue, E. G., & Lorimer, R. (2008). Passion in sport: On the quality of the coach-athlete relationship. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 30*, 1–22.
- Lyle, J. (2002). *Sports coaching concepts: A framework for coaches' behavior*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Moosbrugger, H., Schermelleh-Engel, K., Kelava, A., & Klein, A. G. (2009). Testing multiple nonlinear effects in structural equation modeling: A comparison of alternative estimation approaches. In T. Teo & M. S. Khine (Eds.), *Structural equation modelling in educational research: Concepts and applications* (pp. 103–135). Rotterdam, NL: Sense Publishers.
- Murray, S. L., Holmes, J. G., & Griffin, D. W. (1996). The benefits of positive illusions: Idealization and the construction of satisfaction in close relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 70*, 79–98.
- Phillipe, F. L., Vallerand, R. J., Houlfort, N., Lavigne, G. L., & Donahue, E. G. (2010). Passion for an activity and quality of interpersonal relationships: The mediating role of emotions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 98*, 917–932.
- Philippe, F. L., Vallerand, R. J., & Lavigne, G. L. (2009). Passion does make a difference in people's lives: A look at well-being in passionate and non-passionate individuals. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being, 1*, 3–22.
- Pierce, R. P., Sarason, I. G., Sarason, B. R., Solky-Butzel, J. A., & Nagle, L. C. (1997). Assessing the quality of personal relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 14*, 339–356.
- Ratelle, C. F., Vallerand, R. J., Mageau, G. A., Rousseau, F. L., & Provencher, P. (2004). When passion leads to problematic outcomes: A look at gambling. *Journal of Gambling Studies, 20*, 105–119.
- Rogers, C. (1961). *On becoming a person: A therapist's view of psychotherapy*. London, UK: Constable.
- Rousseau, F. L., & Vallerand, R. J. (2008). An examination of the relationship between passion and subjective well-being in older adults. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development, 66*, 195–211.
- Rusbult, C. E., & Buunk, B. P. (1993). Commitment processes in close relationships: An interdependence analysis. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 10*, 175–204.
- Rusbult, C. E., Coolsen, M. K., Kirchner, J. L., & Clarke, J. (2006). Commitment. In A. Vangelisti & D. Perlman (Eds.), *Handbook of personal relationships* (pp. 615–635). New York, NY: Cambridge.
- Schumacker, R. E., & Marcoulides, G. A. (1998). *Interaction and nonlinear effects in structural equation modeling*. Mahway, NJ: Erlbaum Associates.
- Séguin-Lévesque, C., Laliberté, M. L., Pelletier, L. G., Vallerand, R. J., & Blanchard, C. (2003). Harmonious and obsessive passions for the internet: Their associations with couples' relationships. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 33*, 197–221.
- Slotter, E. B., Gardner, W. L., & Finkel, E. J. (2010). Who am I without you? The influence of romantic breakup on the self-concept. *Personality and Social Psychological Bulletin, 36*, 147–160.

- Sprecher, S. (1986). The relation between inequity emotions in close relationships. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *49*, 301–321.
- Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2007). *Using multivariate statistics* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Vallerand, R. J. (2010). On passion for life activities: The dualistic model of passion. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (Vol. 42, pp. 97–193). New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Vallerand, R. J., Blanchard, C. M., Mageau, G. A., Koestner, R., Ratelle, C., Léonard, M., et al. (2003). Les passions de l'âme: On obsessive and harmonious passion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *85*, 756–767.
- Vallerand, R. J., Mageau, G. A., Elliot, A. J., Dumais, A., Demers, M. A., & Rousseau, F. (2008). Passion and performance attainment in sport. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, *9*, 373–392.
- Vallerand, R. J., & Miquelon, P. (2007). Passion for sport in athletes. In S. Jowett & D. Lavalée (Eds.), *Social psychology in sport* (pp. 250–277). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Vallerand, R. J., Ntoumanis, N., Philippe, F., Lavigne, G. L., Carbonneau, C., Bonneville, A., et al. (2008). On passion and sports fans: A look at football. *Journal of Sport Sciences*, *26*, 1279–1293.
- Vallerand, R. J., Paquet, Y., Philippe, F. L., & Charest, J. (2010). On the role of passion in burnout: A process model. *Journal of Personality*, *78*, 289–312.
- Vallerand, R. J., Rousseau, F. L., Grouzet, F. M. E., Dumais, A., & Grenier, S. (2006). Passion in sport: A look at determinants and outcomes. *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, *28*, 454–478.
- Vallerand, R. J., Salvy, S. J., Mageau, G. A., Denis, P., Grouzet, F. M. E., & Blanchard, C. B. (2007). On the role of passion in performance. *Journal of Personality*, *75*, 505–533.
- Vohs, K. D., & Finkel, E. J. (Eds.). (2006). *Self and relationships: Connecting intrapersonal and interpersonal processes*. London, UK: Guilford.
- Waugh, C. E., & Frederickson, B. L. (2006). Nice to know you: Positive emotions, self-other overlap, and complex understanding in the formation of new relationships. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, *1*, 93–106.
- Weiss, W. M., & Weiss, M. R. (2007). Sport commitment among competitive gymnasts: A developmental perspective. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, *78*, 90–102.
- Wentzel, K. R., Barry, C. M., & Caldwell, K. A. (2004). Friendships in middle school: Influences on motivation and school adjustment. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *96*, 195–203.
- Wong, S., & Goodwin, R. (2009). Exploring marital satisfaction across three cultures: A qualitative study. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *26*, 1011–1028.