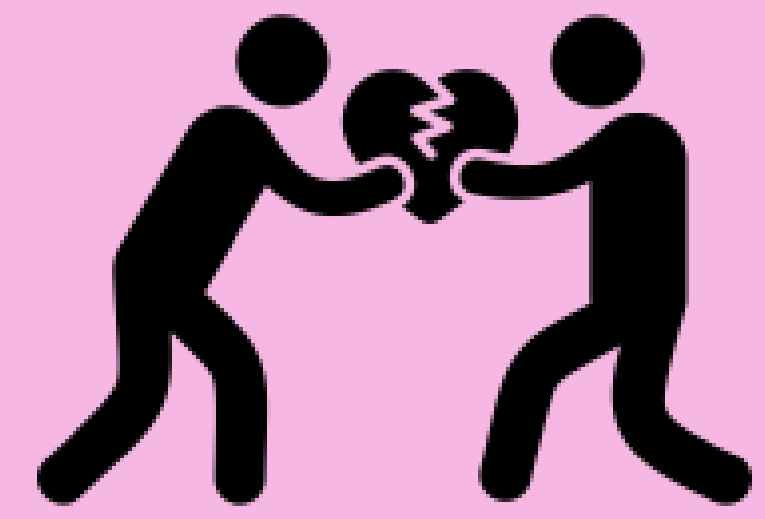


Associations Between Nostalgia and Attitudes Towards Intimate Partner Violence



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Introduction

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a widespread issue in the United States, as 1 in 4 women and nearly 1 in 10 men have experienced sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner (Truman & Morgan, 2014). One perspective that may be useful in understanding why people may choose to stay in an undesirable relationship is **nostalgia**, a sentimental longing for the past. Previous research has found that nostalgia for a relationship buffers the effect of conflict, with more nostalgic individuals expressing increased commitment to their romantic others (Swets & Cox, 2020). Building on this work, the current study explored whether relationship nostalgia is correlated with higher levels of tolerance for an abusive relationship. It was expected that higher nostalgia proneness was associated with greater acceptance of IPV among romantically involved individuals.

Method

Participants completed the following measures:

- **Trait Personal Nostalgia** (Routledge et al., 2008)
 - “How valuable is nostalgia for you?” (1 = *not at all*; 7 = *very much*)
- **Trait Relationship Nostalgia** (Mallory et al., 2018)
 - “How nostalgic does the intimacy you shared in your relationship make you feel?” (1 = *not nostalgic at all*; 5 = *very nostalgic*)
- **IPV Attitudes** (Fincham et al., 2008)
 - “It is okay for me to blame my partner when I do bad things.” (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*)
- **Relationship Well-being** (e.g., satisfaction, commitment, optimism)
 - **Optimism:** “In uncertain times, I usually expect the best for our relationship.” (1 = *strongly disagree*; 5 = *strongly agree*)
- **Self Well-being** (e.g., affect, life satisfaction, meaning in life)
 - **Meaning in Life:** “I understand my life’s meaning.” (1 = *absolutely untrue*; 7 = *absolutely true*)

Method cont.

- Participants were 142 adult participants (18 – 67 years old; $M = 31.39$, $SD = 8.30$) from Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (Mturk) compensated \$2.00 each
- 67 female (46.2%); 74 male (51.0%); 1 no response (0.7%)
- 100 White/non-Hispanic (69%); 17 Black/African American (11.7%); 9 Asian (6.2%); 8 Hispanic/Latino(a) (5.5%) 9 Other (7.6%)
- Participants *currently* involved in a romantic relationship were instructed to think of their current partner. Those *not* involved were instructed to think of their most recent partner
- 77 married (53.1%); 29 in a committed relationship (20.0%); 15 single (10.3%); 14 casually dating (9.7%); 7 single (6.9%)

Results

Table 1
Pearson Correlations Among Attitude Towards IPV and Nostalgia-Related Measures

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. IPV Attitude	...									
2. Trait Nostalgia	0.262**	...								
3. Relationship Nostalgia	0.173*	0.505**	...							
4. Positive Affect	0.205*	0.058	0.133	...						
5. Negative Affect	0.752**	0.207*	0.146	0.136	...					
6. Life Satisfaction	0.173*	0.128	0.026	0.271**	0.079	...				
7. Meaning in Life	-0.052	0.036	0.017	0.404**	-0.175*	0.592**	...			
8. Relationship Satisfaction	-0.177*	-0.034	0.021	0.186*	-0.192*	0.476**	0.451**	...		
9. Relationship Commitment	-0.161	-0.008	0.115	0.209*	-0.181*	0.292**	0.355**	0.645**	...	
10. Relationship Optimism	-0.473**	-0.198*	-0.181*	0.008	-0.466**	0.358**	0.322**	0.623**	0.536**	...

Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, two-tailed. $N = 142$.

Bivariate correlation analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between key variables (see Table 1).

- **Personal nostalgia** was positively correlated with IPV attitudes and negatively correlated with relationship optimism
- **Relationship nostalgia** was positively correlated with IPV attitudes and negatively correlated with relationship optimism
- **IPV attitudes** were also negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction and optimism

Discussion

- Key results of this study indicated that more positive IPV attitudes were positively associated with both trait personal nostalgia and relationship nostalgia
- This finding is supported by prior research on nostalgia, identifying social relationships as a key focus of nostalgic thought (e.g., Hepper et al., 2012)
- Nostalgia increases feelings of social connectedness and drives individuals to strengthen their existing relationships (Abeyta et al., 2015; Wildschut et al., 2010)
- Limitations of this study include its correlational nature, inclusion of non-romantically involved participants, and failure to find significant correlations between nostalgia proneness and IPV with relationship and self well-being outcomes
- Future work should:
 - 1) Examine potential mechanisms explaining the link between nostalgia proneness and IPV attitudes
 - 2) Utilize experimental methods to test whether manipulating a state of nostalgia influences attitudes toward IPV
 - 3) Further explore the specific causal factors contributing to a person’s choice to stay in an abusive relationship



Being more **nostalgic** for the past of a romantic relationship has been linked to being more committed to this relationship, even when the partnership is conflictual. This correlational research extended this by finding that more nostalgic people also endorsed more positive attitudes toward **intimate partner violence**.