Supplemental Material

Romance, Risk, and Replication:

Can Consumer Choices and Risk-Taking be Primed by Mating Motives?

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In all experiments participants gave demographic and other information including their relationship status (e.g., single, in a relationship, married) and also reported their awareness of the purpose of the experiment via a series of funnel debriefing questions. These began very generally (e.g., “what do you think the survey you just completed was designed to investigate?”) with participants answering in their own words, but eventually became highly specific (e.g., “Do you think the text at the beginning of the survey had an effect on the maximum prices you said you would be willing to pay for the various goods and services?”) and answered via a yes/no response. Even by the most specific question only a minority of participants reported believing that the text affected their responses. Of these only some gave a justification indicative of awareness of the experimental hypothesis (e.g, “feelings of contentment and excitement may compel one to spend higher than normal on certain items”) and such reports were given by participants in both priming and control groups. Importantly, for all experiments the overall pattern of results is unaffected by removal of such participants from the analyses.

To confirm that the priming materials activate priming motives and intentions, we carried out a manipulation check on 106 additional male participants, tested online. After reading the romantic prime text, participants rated themselves on a scale from 0-100 as more a strongly desiring a romantic partner (M = 74.3, SD = 24.8) than ones who read the control text (M = 62.6, SD = 31.2), $t(104) = 2.13$, $p = .018$ (1-tailed). This is consistent with several of the published studies (Baker & Maner, 2008, 2009; Griskevicius et al., 2007; Hill & Durante, 2011) which have similarly demonstrated an effect of the prime materials (both text and pictures) on mating intentions.

Study 3 results

A 2 (Gender) x 2 (Priming Condition: Prime vs. Control) x 2 (Domain: Consumption vs. Benevolence) x 2 (Conspicuousness: Conspicuous vs Inconspicuous) mixed ANOVA was conducted. This yielded a main effect of domain, $F(1, 147) = 18.85$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .114$, indicating that participants rated themselves as more willing than the average person to pay for acts of benevolence ($M = 5.38$) but less willing than the average person to pay for consumption items ($M = 4.87$), which was moderated by a significant domain x gender interaction, $F(1, 147) = 10.79$, $p = .001$, $\eta^2_p = .068$, reflecting the fact that the effect of domain was gender-specific: while females were much more willing to pay for benevolence ($M = 5.57$) than for consumption ($M = 4.67$), males were indifferent between benevolence ($M = 5.19$) and consumption ($M = 5.06$). There was a main effect of conspicuousness, $F(1, 147) = 33.54$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .186$, indicating that individuals rated themselves as relatively more likely to engage in conspicuous ($M = 5.35$) compared to inconspicuous ($M = 4.89$) activities.

Lastly there was a highly significant domain x conspicuousness x gender interaction, $F(1, 147) = 13.12$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .082$. This reflects the fact that while men were more likely to engage in conspicuous ($M = 5.39$) compared to inconspicuous *consumption* ($M = 4.73$), females were indifferent (conspicuous $M = 4.71$; inconspicuous $M = 4.63$); in contrast females were more likely to engage in conspicuous ($M = 6.00$) compared to inconspicuous *benevolence* ($M = 5.14$), whereas males were indifferent (conspicuous $M = 5.31$; inconspicuous $M = 5.06$). However crucially the 4-way domain x conspicuousness x prime x gender interaction was nonsignificant, $F(1, 147) = 0.14$, $p = .71$, $\eta^2_p = .001$, as was the main effect of prime condition, $F(1, 147) = 0.69$, $p = .41$, $\eta^2_p = .005$, and all other interactions involving condition, $F < 1.04$ in each case.

Study 8 results

On the primary (i.e., Li et al.) loss aversion measure, the observed degree of loss aversion was slightly greater than in Li et al.'s (2012, Study 1) experiment, which was approximately $1.50 (estimated from their Figure 1). An analysis of variance with gender, testing format (laboratory or online), and priming condition (control, mating prime, self-protection prime) as between-subjects factors yielded a main effect of format, $F(1, 638) = 7.07$, $p = .008$, $\eta^2_p = .011$. Participants tested online, $M = -12.1$, 95% CI [-18.6, -5.7], were significantly loss averse whereas those tested in the laboratory, $M = 15.2$, 95% CI [-1.0, 31.4], were not. No other effects or interactions were significant, including the important gender x priming condition interaction, $F(2, 638) = 1.85$, $p = .16$, $\eta^2_p = .006$. Descriptive statistics are reported in Table S1.

For the second loss aversion test (based on Tom, Fox, Trepel, & Poldrack, 2007), we calculated the number of gambles accepted by each participant. Despite the fact that the wins were larger on average than the losses and that 10 of the gambles displayed greater gains than losses, participants opted to play significantly fewer than half the gambles, $M = 9.19$, 95% CI [8.90, 9.47], indicating loss aversion (participants were on average indifferent between accepting and rejecting a gamble when the gain/loss ratio was 1.34). An analysis of variance identical to the one above yielded no significant main effects or interactions, including no main effect of testing format, $F(1, 638) = 0.08$, $p = .78$, $\eta^2_p = .00$, and no gender x priming condition interaction, $F(2, 638) = 1.49$, $p = .23$, $\eta^2_p = .005$. Descriptive statistics are reported in Table S1.

For the gambling question, a large majority of participants chose the less risky option. A slightly (but not significantly) smaller proportion of males chose the risky option in the mating prime (5/109) versus the control condition (8/109).

References

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Table S1

Sample size (*N*) and descriptive statistics for the prime (mating and self-protection) and control groups in Study 8 for the two loss aversion measures.

	N	Mating *M* (*SD*)	*N*	Self-protection *M* (*SD*)	*N*	Control *M* (*SD*)
Li et al. loss aversion measure						
Male						
online	97	-2.41 (87.21)	96	-5.50 (85.87)	96	-13.44 (77.51)
laboratory	12	-16.11 (70.92)	11	-9.87 (38.47)	13	64.07 (69.76)
Female						
online	97	-22.16 (75.34)	97	-10.14 (66.91)	97	-19.12 (79.31)
laboratory	12	26.28 (68.71)	11	10.41 (49.75)	11	9.44 (78.82)
Tom et al. loss aversion measure						
Male						
online	97	9.43 (3.53)	96	9.73 (4.03)	96	9.08 (3.43)
laboratory	12	10.17 (5.67)	11	8.91 (2.77)	13	8.85 (1.72)
Female						
online	97	9.37 (3.64)	97	8.62 (3.73)	97	8.80 (3.48)
laboratory	12	8.83 (3.93)	11	8.18 (4.79)	11	10.91 (4.99)