

A Good Mate inspires Loyalty; Relationship Quality moderates an Ovulatory Phase shift  
in Romantic Relationship Feelings

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ABSTRACT

Theory and evidence are presented that support the hypothesis that being in a high quality romantic relationship protects women from ovulatory phase increases in negative relationship emotions that may shift their interest toward extra pair men. Relationship status, physical abuse, contribution of resources, satisfaction/commitment, and partner attractiveness were reported by a mixed race community sample of 353 women in a between-subjects design. Fertile women in low quality relationships (e.g., less committed, more abusive) showed more negative, conflicted, and ambivalent as well as less positive relationship feelings relative to both fertile women in high quality relationships and to non-fertile women. Supplementary analysis showed partner attractiveness (PA) was uncorrelated with relationship quality (RQ), and PA also moderated the ovulatory shift such that fertile women paired with attractive men felt better about their relationships than did all other women. Three way interactions (Fertility X RQ X PA) confirmed that RQ and PA are not only distinct components of mate quality but that they also moderate the influence of ovulatory shifts on relationship feelings. Implications for the theories of dual sexuality (Thornhill, 2006) and strategic pluralism (Gangestad & Simpson, 2000) are discussed.