Abstract:

Two studies are reported examining whether similarities in cognitive complexity foster different forms of interpersonal attraction. Study 1 provided an experimental test of the hypothesis that perceivers would be more attracted to targets with similar levels of complexity than to targets with dissimilar levels of complexity. Participants read interpersonal impressions reflecting low and high levels of cognitive complexity and completed 3 assessments of attraction (social, task, and intellectual) to the source of the impressions. As predicted, there were significant interactions between perceiver complexity and target complexity such that high-complexity perceivers were more attracted to high-complexity targets than were low-complexity perceivers, whereas low-complexity perceivers were more attracted to low-complexity targets than were high-complexity perceivers. Unexpectedly, however, low-complexity perceivers were more attracted to a high-complexity target than a low-complexity target. Study 2 examined the effects of similarities in cognitive complexity on attraction among 126 pairs of dating partners. Partners having similar levels of cognitive complexity expressed significantly greater intellectual attraction to one another than partners having dissimilar levels of cognitive complexity.