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# Perceived Similarity and Relationship Success among Dating Couples: An Idiographic Approach

Catherine J. Lutz

*University of Dayton, czois1@udayton.edu*

Angela Christine Bradley

*University of South Florida*

Jennifer L. Mihalik

*Bellefaire Jewish Children's Bureau*

Erika R. Moorman

*University of Dayton*

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Running Head: IDIOGRAPHIC SIMILARITIES

Preferred Dimensions of Similarity and Relationship Satisfaction among Dating Couples<sup>1</sup>

Catherine J. Lutz, Angela C. Bradley, Jennifer L. Mihalik, and Erika R. Moorman

University of Dayton

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<sup>1</sup>All correspondence should be addressed to the following: Catherine J. Lutz; Department of Psychology; University of Dayton; Dayton, OH 45469-1430.

Abstract

This study investigated the relation between similarity on valued characteristics and relationship success. Two hundred forty-seven college students rated their current romantic partner on perceived similarity in personality, attitudes, interests, and religious affiliation. Participants also completed measures of importance of similarity in these dimensions and relationship satisfaction. The status of the relationship was assessed six weeks later. Results revealed significant Similarity x Importance interactions for religion and interests in predicting satisfaction. Participants with high perceived similarity in religion or interests reported greater satisfaction than low similarity counterparts, but only to the extent that they rated this type of similarity as being important to them. Similar results were found for attitudes in predicting Time 2 outcome. These findings support an idiographic approach to the study of similarity.

## Preferred Dimensions of Similarity and Relationship Satisfaction among Dating Couples

Intimate relationships are central to the lives of most people. When these relationships are satisfying, individuals experience elevated levels of general well-being and life satisfaction (Campbell, Sedikides, & Bosson, 1994; Myers & Diener, 1995). Conversely, the association between relationship distress and negative physical and mental health outcomes is well-established (Mayne, O'Leary, McCrady, Contrada, & Labouvie, 1997; Wickrama, Lorenz, Conger, & Elder, 1997). In terms of just what exactly distinguishes content couples from discontented couples, a litany of factors have been identified. These factors can be roughly subdivided into either individual difference variables (i.e., characteristics of the individual members of the dyad) or relationship variables (i.e., characteristics of the relationships themselves).

Individual difference variables that have been found to be positively related to satisfaction include the Big Five personality traits of conscientiousness, agreeableness, and extraversion (Watson, Hubbard, & Weise, 2000), secure attachment style (Hammond & Fletcher, 1991; Jones & Cunningham, 1996), androgynous gender roles (Jones & Cunningham, 1996; Rosenzweig & Dailey, 1989), self-esteem (Jones & Cunningham, 1996; Karney & Bradbury, 1995), and adaptive relationship beliefs (Epstein & Eidelson, 1981; Jones & Stanton, 1988). Alternatively, insecure attachment (Jones & Cunningham, 1996; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994) and the Big Five trait of neuroticism (Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Thomsen & Gilbert, 1998) have been found to be negatively related to satisfaction. Relationship variables that positively predict satisfaction include effective communication and problem-solving interactions (Long, 1990; Meeks, Hendrick & Hendrick, 1998), intimacy, autonomy, equality, institutional barriers to

dissolution (Kurdek, 2000), frequent use of relationship maintenance behaviors (Dainton, 2000; Dainton, Stafford, & Canary, 1994), and positive social exchange (Floyd & Wasner, 1994).

Interpersonal similarity and complementarity (the extent to which two people's differing needs or traits come together in an interlocking fashion) are two of the most widely researched variables in the area of relationship satisfaction and outcome (Burlison & Denton, 1992; Levinger, 1964; Meyer & Pepper, 1977; Neimer, 1984). Historically, the question of which of these variables is a stronger predictor of satisfaction has been the subject of much debate (Katz, Glucksberg, & Krauss, 1960; Levinger, 1964; Murstein & Beck, 1972; Winch, 1955). The majority of studies in this area suggest that similarity is the more essential component of satisfying relationships (Blazer, 1963; Meyer & Pepper, 1977; Murstein & Beck, 1972). For example, the results of a review conducted by White and Hatcher (1984) indicated that, with a few notable exceptions (Katz, Glucksberg, & Krauss, 1960), most studies have found stronger effect sizes for similarity than for complementarity (Blazer, 1963; Blum & Mehrabian, 1999; Burlison & Denton, 1992; Meyer & Pepper, 1977; Neimer, 1984). Results favoring similarity have been found even when methodologies designed to be sensitive to complementarity effects have been employed (Meyer & Pepper, 1977).

Although research on similarity effects has greatly elucidated our understanding of the development and maintenance of satisfying relationships, this literature is largely limited to nomothetic investigations. That is, much of this literature has been concerned with identifying the specific dimensions of similarity are predictive of satisfaction and outcome for *people in general*. Such investigations neglect the possibility that differences exist in the dimensions of similarity that *a specific person* values in her/his own romantic relationship. The current study, therefore, sought to advance our understanding of relationship satisfaction by examining

individual differences in the dimensions of similarity that people weight as important in their own romantic relationships. We will begin the remainder of the introduction by first summarizing research on specific dimensions of similarity identified as important to the development and maintenance of satisfying relationships. Thereafter, an idiographic approach to this topic will be discussed. Finally, the results of a study designed to evaluate the utility of such an idiographic approach will be presented.

### *Specific Dimensions of Similarity*

Belief and attitude similarity have been consistently linked to relationship satisfaction (Byrne & Blaylock, 1963; Chadwich, Albrecht, & Kunzu, 1976; Hendrick, 1981). According to Byrne (1971), people have a desire to hold “correct” attitudes and values. However, because attitudes and values cannot be objectively verified, people turn to others for such validation and as a result, they are attracted to others who share similar attitudes/values. Jones and Stanton (1988) examined how belief similarity was related to marital satisfaction and found that perceived similarity in couples’ belief systems was negatively associated with marital distress. In addition, the results of a study conducted by Craddock (1991) indicated a significant relation between similarity in couples’ attitudes regarding marital roles and global satisfaction. Other studies have also verified that similarity in attitudes is a moderately strong predictor of relationship satisfaction (Chadwich, Albrecht, & Kunzu, 1976; Hendrick, 1981).

In addition to similarity in beliefs and attitudes, similarity in activities and interests has also been associated with relationship satisfaction (Crohan, 1992; Swim & Surra, 1999). Researchers have shown that engaging in joint activities is associated with couples’ reports of experiencing fewer conflicts and being more satisfied (Bowen & Orthner, 1983; Crohan, 1992). Recently, investigators have begun to explore classes of interest that may be especially relevant

to couples' satisfaction. For example, Swim and Surra (1999) examined similarity in interest for gender stereotyped activities and found that when couple similarity was such that the participant and partner both liked stereotyped activities of the participant's gender, couples reported doing more activities together and being more satisfied. Further, a series of studies by Aron and colleagues (2001) suggest that similarity in interest for self-enhancing activities was a better predictor of relationship satisfaction than was engaging in shared mundane activities.

Personality traits are yet another dimension of similarity that has been linked to relationship satisfaction (Lewak, Wakefield, & Briggs, 1985). More specifically, Meyer and Pepper (1977) demonstrated that interpersonal warmth, which they defined as a trait on a continuum ranging from the need for affiliation and nurturance to the need for autonomy and aggression, was significantly associated with marital satisfaction. In addition, Lewak, Wakefield, and Briggs (1985) examined the relation between similarity on personality characteristics measured by the MMPI-II and relationship satisfaction. It was revealed that similarity on the Depression scale was related to both husbands' and wives' satisfaction, while similarity on the Hypochondriasis scale was associated with wives' satisfaction. Psychologists have also begun to investigate the relationship between the Big Five personality traits and mate preference as well as various indices of relationship success (Botwin, Buss, & Shackelford, 1997; Nemechek & Olson, 1999; Schmitt, 2002). For instance, a study by Nemechek and Olson (1999) revealed an association between spousal adjustment and similarity in conscientiousness, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Interestingly, while similarity in conscientiousness was related to adjustment for both husbands and wives, similarity in neuroticism was related to adjustment solely for wives, whereas similarity in agreeableness was related to adjustment solely for husbands.

Social scientists have also studied whether similarity in various aspects of religion and spirituality are associated with marital satisfaction and stability. Some studies suggest greater marital satisfaction (e.g., Wilson & Musick, 1996) and lower divorce rates (e.g., Lehrer & Chiswick, 1993) among intrafaith as compared to interfaith marriages. Additionally, one study (Mahoney et al., 1999) indicated that married couples who engaged in joint religious activities scored higher on a global measure of marital adjustment, reported fewer conflicts, and perceived more benefits from marriage than did couples who did not engage in such activities together.

Researchers have also investigated how dimensions of similarity that predict attraction and relationship satisfaction vary as a function of relationship length (e.g., Duck & Craig, 1978). For instance, a longitudinal study of friendship conducted by Lea and Duck (1982) demonstrated that similarity in general attitudes was a strong predictor of initial attraction. Over time, however, similarity in a more concentrated set of attitudes emerged as the stronger predictor of satisfaction. Specifically, similarity in personal constructs, which refer to the core elements of one's worldview that determine overall cognitive processing of external events, was more strongly related to satisfaction in the later stages of relationship development. Further, Neimer and Mitchell (1988) found that it was similarity in the *structure* (i.e., degree of complexity) of personal constructs rather than the *content* of such constructs that was more strongly associated with attraction during the later stages of the acquaintance process.

#### *Idiographic Approach*

Studies evaluating the association between similarity and indices of relationship success have largely been limited to nomothetic methodologies. One potential difficulty with this approach, however, is that looking at these group effects can mask important effects occurring within specific individuals. For instance, similarity in religious values may be significantly



correlated with satisfaction for highly religious persons, but not significantly correlated for persons who are only moderately religious. As a result, when these two types of people are combined, the relationship between similarity in religious values and satisfaction may be diminished. Thus, research in this area may benefit from exploring individual differences in the dimensions of similarity that are related to satisfaction and outcome. That is, just as some scholars have discovered that the relevant dimensions of similarity vary as a function of the stage of the relationship (e.g., Lea & Duck, 1982; Neimeyer & Mitchell, 1988), relevant dimensions may also vary from person to person. With a few notable exceptions (Jamieson, Lydon, & Zanna, 1987; Lewak, Wakefield, & Briggs, 1985), this speculation has yet to be examined empirically.

A small number of studies have investigated whether the dimensions of similarity that are pertinent to satisfaction vary as a function of personality style or mental health status of the participant. For instance, one study conducted by Jamieson et al. (1987) inspected the association between attraction and both attitude and activity preference for individuals who differ on the trait of self-monitoring. Their results revealed that, in general, similarity in both attitudes and activity preference were predictors of initial attraction between persons. However, it was shown that self-monitoring moderated the effect of these two types of similarity on attraction in that low self-monitors were more attracted to those similar to them in attitudes as opposed to activity preference, while high self-monitors had greater attraction for those similar in activity preference. The researchers proposed that the likely reason for this pattern was that low self-monitors prefer doing varied activities with a few carefully selected and well-liked partners (Snyder, Gangestad, & Simpson, 1983). This suggests that low self-monitors probably seek out

dispositionally congruent partners with whom they can “be themselves,” while high self-monitors look for partners with whom they can establish satisfying situation-specific exchanges.

Lewak et al. (1985) studied the relation between personality and intelligence similarity and both attraction and relationship satisfaction among clinical couples (i.e., couples undergoing marital therapy) and non-clinical couples. Their results revealed differences between the two groups in types of personality similarity that predicted satisfaction. In the non-clinical sample, similarity on the Depression scale of the MMPI-II was related to the satisfaction of both husbands and wives, while similarity on the Hypochondriasis scale was related to wives’ satisfaction only. In the clinical sample, similarity on the Fake Bad scale was associated with both partners’ satisfaction. In sum, the studies by Lewak et al (1985) and Jamieson et al. (1987) underscore the importance of investigating how the dimensions of similarity relevant to successful romantic relationships may vary as a function of certain individual difference variables.

#### *Current Study*

The current study also attempted to ascertain individual differences in the dimensions of similarity that are pertinent to relationship satisfaction. However, whereas the aforementioned studies have looked at broad personality traits (e.g., low and high self-monitors) with respect to different dimensions of similarity (e.g., activity preference and attitudes), the current study looked at individual preferences for similarity on a given dimension. The present study investigated whether satisfaction is significantly associated with participant-partner correspondence on the dimensions of similarity that participants deem as important. That is, different individuals might value different types of similarity – relative to others – in their partners. Relationship satisfaction for these persons would, therefore, vary as a function of

whether their partner is similar to the participant on those preferred dimensions. For example, this model would predict that someone who values similarity in family values is likely to be satisfied in a relationship in which his/her partner has corresponding family values. On the other hand, similarity in recreational interests may be completely unrelated to this person's satisfaction if she/he considers this type of similarity to be unimportant. Conversely, a person who deems similarity in recreational interests as being important would be satisfied if his/her partner shared such interests, while similarity in family values would be irrelevant to his/her level of satisfaction. This approach, therefore, advances the level of precision in our understanding of the relation between similarity and relationship satisfaction.

To our knowledge, no study to date has investigated idiosyncratic weightings of different types of similarity in making judgments of relationships satisfaction. However, in the second study of a four study project Hassebrauck and Aaron (2001) used similar logic with respect to prototype matching in close relationships. That is, they examined whether participant-partner match on prototypic relationship characteristics deemed as personally important to individual participants predicted positive relationship qualities above match on generally agreed upon prototypically positive characteristics. Unfortunately, in this study taking into account idiosyncratic prototypes for the ideal relationship added little predictive power above consensual prototypes. This study, nevertheless, does provide a conceptual and methodological model for exploring idiosyncratic effects with respect to similarity.

In the current study, participants rated how similar their partner was to themselves on the dimensions of personality, attitudes/values, interests, and religious orientation. Furthermore, participants completed measures of importance of matching on these four dimensions of similarity and relationship satisfaction. Finally, they were contacted by e-mail six weeks later to

determine the status of their relationship. Studies have found that perceived similarity accounts for a greater proportion of the variance in relationship satisfaction than does actual similarity (Arias & O'Leary, 1985; Jones & Stanton, 1988). Therefore, the present study examined the construct of similarity in terms of perceived similarity rather than actual similarity.

A series of four hierarchical regression analyses were performed, in which relationship satisfaction was entered as the criterion variable. Similarity for each of the dimensions (i.e., personality, attitudes, interests, and religious orientation) and rated importance of each dimension were entered first. The interaction of these variables was entered in the subsequent step. Using relationship status after 6-weeks as the criterion, four discriminant analyses were conducted of a similar form as the regression equations. It was anticipated that perceived partner similarity on the dimensions of similarity that individual participants valued would be associated with relationship satisfaction as indicated by significant Similarity x Importance interactions. Thus, we offered the following hypotheses:

H 1: The Similarity x Importance interactions would significantly predict relationship satisfaction and outcome beyond the main effects for similarity and importance of a given dimension.

H2: Follow-up analyses of simple main effects of similarity for *high* levels of importance (i.e., for individuals who *do* value a given dimension of similarity) would reveal significant differences in the following form: high perceived similarity on the dimension would be associated with higher levels of satisfaction than low perceived similarity. A similar pattern of results would be revealed for relationship status as the criterion.

H3: Follow-up analyses of simple main effects of similarity for *low* levels of importance (i.e., for individuals who *do not* value a given dimension of similarity) would not reveal

significant differences. That is, high perceived similarity on the dimension would not be associated with higher levels of satisfaction than low perceived similarity. A similar pattern of results would be revealed for relationship status as the criterion.

## Method

### *Participants*

A total of 247 participants (Females = 141; Males = 106) were recruited from the Introduction to Psychology courses at a private, Midwestern university. Participants volunteered in exchange for course credit. All participants had to be involved in one and only one romantic relationship at the start of the study. The majority (98%) of participants reported that their partner was of the opposite-sex of themselves. The average age of participants as well as partners was 19 years ( $SD = 1.69$  and  $2.19$ , respectively). The majority of participants were Caucasian (90%); 7% were Black; 2% were Hispanic; and 1% were from other ethnic groups. The average length of the participants' relationships was 17 months, and 57% of participants reported that the relationship was long distance in nature. Attrition for the 6-week follow-up was 17 participants (see Table 1 for a more complete description of the demographic background of study participants and their partners).

### *Measures*

#### *Perceived similarity*

A 39-item measure of perceived similarity with a five-point Likert scale format was created specifically for the purpose of this study. This measure assessed eight dimensions of perceived similarity: each of the Big Five personality traits, attitudes, interests, and religious affiliation. Similarity in the Big Five personality traits was assessed with six items for each trait, one item for each facet scales represented in the NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992). For

example, the Extraversion domain as assessed by the NEO-PI-R is comprised of the facets Warmth, Gregariousness, Assertiveness, Activity, Excitement-Seeking, and Positive Emotions. Thus, an item for each of these facets was created. This method was used in order to enhance the content validity of our assessment of each trait. Items were constructed by taking directly adjectives from the NEO-PI-R manual used to describe each of the facet scales. Possible scores for each of the five traits ranged from 6 to 30. The dimensions of attitudes and interests were assessed with four items each; thus, possible scores ranged from 4 to 20 on each of these scales. On the attitudes scale, separate items were created for financial/economic attitudes, child-rearing, music, and religion. The interests scale contained items for music preference, socializing in groups, interest in the arts, and interest in sports. Finally, a single item was created to assess perceived similarity in religious affiliation. A copy of this measure can be found in Appendix A. Coefficient alpha for these dimensions ranged from to .62 (attitudes) to .88 (agreeableness).

#### *Perceived Importance*

A measure of perceived importance was also created for the purpose of this study. This measure was designed to assess *perceived importance* of each of the eight dimensions of similarity within the context of the participant's current romantic relationship. The items on this measure were exactly parallel to those of the similarity measure with the exception that rather than participants rating the extent to which "your partner is similar to you," participants were asked to rate the extent to which "it is important for him/her to be similar to you." A similar method for assessing perceived importance was utilized by Hassebrauck and Aron (2001). A copy of this measure can be found in Appendix B. Coefficient alpha for these dimensions ranged from .64 (interests) to .86 (agreeableness).

#### *Relationship Satisfaction*

Participants' relationship satisfaction was measured using a modified version of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS; Spanier, 1976). A single version was completed in which participants rated their own satisfaction. The DAS is comprised of four subscales (Affectional Expression, Dyadic Cohesion, Dyadic Consensus, and Dyadic Satisfaction) and contains items in which respondents rate different aspects of their relationship on a five-point Likert scale. Different items on the DAS have different response labels, but all range from 1 to 5, such as 1 ("always disagree") to 5 ("always agree") and 1 ("all the time") to 5 ("never"). In the current study, the DAS full-scale was used in the primary analyses, whereas the subscales were used for follow-up analyses. Scores for the Dyadic Satisfaction (DS) factor range from 9 to 45; Dyadic Cohesion (Dcoh) scores range from 5 to 25; Dyadic Consensus (Dcon) scores range from 9 to 45; and scores for the Affectional Expression (AE) subscale range from 4 to 20. Modifications involved making the measure more relevant to dating couples as opposed to married couples and standardizing all responses on a five-point scale. A total of five items were deleted from the original measure, making the total number of items on the modified scale 27. Thus, values for the full scale ranged from 27 to 135. It is believed that the modifications were justified because the DAS has been used in a number of studies on dating couples (e.g., Shapiro & Kroeger, 1991; Zak, Collins, Harper, & Masher, 1998). Internal consistency of the DAS has been found to be good, with values ranging from .70 for the 4-item AE subscale to .95 for the complete instrument (Carey, Spector, Lantinga, & Krauss, 1993). Furthermore, the DAS demonstrates convergent validity with the Marital Adjustment Scale with a value of .87, and it showed divergent validity with the Marital Disaffection Scale with a value of -.79 (Lim & Ivey, 2000). Cronbach's alpha for the subscales in the current study ranged from .60 (Dcoh subscale) to .73 (Dcon subscale) and was .87 for the DAS full-scale.

*Relationship Outcome*

Relationship outcome was assessed at Time 2 using a 1-item measure that asked whether participants were still in their relationship (relationship status). Ratings for being in the relationship are 1 (“yes”) or 2 (“no”).

*Procedures*

Participants rated their current romantic partner on perceived similarity in the Big Five personality traits, attitudes, interests, and religious affiliation. Participants also completed measures of importance of similarity in these eight dimensions and relationship satisfaction. Demographic measures always came first in the questionnaire packet. The order of the questionnaires was randomized using a Latin square procedure starting with the following order: perceived similarity, relationship satisfaction, and perceived importance. Lastly, participants completed a one-item index of relationship outcome after a six-week follow-up. This follow-up was done via e-mail. The participants were then thanked and debriefed upon receipt of their responses to the follow-up questions.

Results

*Preliminary Analyses*

Table 1 summarizes the frequencies and percentages for the nominal and ordinal level variables. The means, standard deviations, and ranges of continuous variables analyzed in the current study are presented in Table 2.

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Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here  
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Preliminary analyses were carried out in order to examine the relations between demographic variables and the primary criterion variables (i.e., relationship satisfaction and relationship outcome). Both the DAS full scale as well as the four subscales were included in these analyses. Results of zero-order correlations between relationship satisfaction and continuous demographics indicated that relationship length ( $r = .13, p < .05$ ) was positively related to the Dyadic Cohesion subscale. Participant and partner age were not significantly related to the DAS full scale or any of the four subscales.

Analyses of variance between relationship satisfaction and nominal level demographic variables (i.e., participant and partner gender, participant and partner religion, participant and partner ethnicity, and distance of the relationship) were also conducted. The analyses revealed a significant difference for distance of the relationship (i.e., local versus long distance) on both the Dyadic Satisfaction ( $F(1, 229) = 4.14, p < .05$ ) and Affectional Expression subscales ( $F(1, 229) = 4.80, p < .05$ ) such that participants in long distance relationships reported less satisfaction than did participants not in these types of relationships ( $M = 37.46$  and  $M = 38.53$ , respectively), but more frequent expressions of affection ( $M = 17.23$  and  $M = 16.52$ , respectively). No significant differences were found for participant and partner gender, participant and partner religion, or participant and partner ethnicity. In order to avoid potential confounding effects of relationship length and distance of the relationship, these variables were included in the primary analyses involving relationship satisfaction as the criterion.

Analyses of variance between continuous demographic variables revealed significant effects for participant ( $F(1, 229) = 5.73, p < .05$ ) and partner age ( $F(1, 229) = 3.99, p < .05$ ) on relationship status at Time 2. Older participants and partners were more like to be together after 6 weeks ( $M = 19.23$  and  $M = 19.46$ , respectively) than younger participants and partners ( $M =$

18.53 and  $M = 18.71$ , respectively). No significant effects were found for relationship length. Similarly, chi-square analyses conducted between nominal-level demographics variables and outcome indicated that participant and partner gender, religion, and ethnicity were not significantly associated with outcome. In order to avoid potential confounding effects of participant and partner age, these variables were included in the primary analyses involving relationship status as the criterion.

#### *Similarity and Relationship Satisfaction*

The results of the zero-order correlations examining the relation between the different dimensions of similarity and relationship satisfaction are shown in Table 3. Again, correlations were calculated using both the DAS full scale as well as the four subscales.

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 Insert Table 3 about here  
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As depicted in Table 3, all of the dimensions of similarity were significantly associated with full-scale scores on relationship satisfaction. The majority of the relationships between the dimensions of similarity and the four subscales of satisfaction were significant. A comparison of  $r$  to  $z$  transformed values indicated that the Affectional Expression subscale demonstrated a significantly weaker relationship with similarity in attitudes, interests, and religion than did the other three satisfaction subscales.

ANOVAS between the similarity variables and relationship outcome revealed significant differences in similarity in religion ( $F(1, 229) = 4.11, p < .05$ ), openness ( $F(1, 229) = 4.16, p < .05$ ), agreeableness ( $F(1, 229) = 4.03, p < .05$ ), and attitudes ( $F(1, 229) = 11.20, p < .001$ ) on the relationship status index at Time 2. Specifically, participants who were still with their

partners after 6 weeks reported that they were more similar to their partners in these variables ( $M = 3.67$ ,  $M = 23.03$ ,  $M = 24.01$ , and  $M = 15.02$ , respectively) than participants who had terminated the relationship ( $M = 3.18$ ,  $M = 21.61$ ,  $M = 22.47$ , and  $M = 13.26$ , respectively).

*Similarity x Importance Interactions for Relationship Satisfaction*

Zero-order correlations between the Similarity x Importance interactions and relationship satisfaction can be found in Table 3. In order to test the hypothesis that matching on preferred dimensions of similarity would predict relationship satisfaction, a series of four hierarchical multiple regression equations were conducted with the DAS full scale as the criterion variable: one for the Big Five personality traits, attitudes, interests, and religious orientation. We chose to test our primary hypotheses using the full scale rather than the subscales to reduce difficulties with the probability of spurious results stemming from multiple statistical comparisons (Stevens, 1996). Relationship length and distance of the relationship were entered as control variables in the first step, the main effects for the variable and importance of the variable were entered in the second step, and the Similarity x Importance interaction was entered on the third step. Support for our hypotheses would be indicated by significant  $R^2\Delta$  values on the third step. The results of the significant regression analyses are summarized in Table 4.

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 Insert Table 4 about here  
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As can be seen in Table 4, significant Similarity x Importance interactions were found for both religion and interests. The results failed to reveal significant Similarity x Importance interactions for either attitudes or the Big Five personality traits. In order to determine whether the direction of the effects for religion and interests were consistent with the hypotheses outlined

in the introduction, the medians for interest and religious similarity and interests and religious importance of similarity were first calculated. The similarity and importance variables were then recoded into dichotomous variables (i.e., high and low). Follow-up analyses were conducted to test the simple main effects for similarity at high and low levels of importance. That is, separate one-way ANOVAs were calculated for high and low importance of similarity in religion or interests. Participants' scores on the DAS were used as the dependent variable and perceived similarity in either religion or interests was used as the independent variable. Consistent with hypotheses, results indicated that for those participants who valued similarity in religion (i.e., high importance), participants with high perceived similarity in religious affiliation reported greater levels of relationship satisfaction on the DAS than did those low in similarity ( $F(1, 160) = 17.83, p < .001; M = 112.40$  and  $M = 105.83$ , respectively). For participants who did not value similarity in religion (i.e., low importance), there was no significant difference on the DAS between participants high in perceived religious similarity and those low in perceived religious similarity ( $F(1, 85) = 1.10, p > .05$ ). The results for interests were also consistent with hypotheses. For those participants who valued similarity in interests, participants with high perceived similarity in interests reported greater levels of relationship satisfaction on the DAS than did those low in similarity ( $F(1, 139) = 41.26, p < .001; M = 113.48$  and  $M = 102.45$ , respectively). For participants who did not value similarity in interests, there was no significant difference on the DAS between participants high in perceived similarity in interests and those low in this variable ( $F(1, 107) = 3.65, p > .05$ ).

#### *Similarity x Importance Interactions for Relationship Outcome*

Discriminant function analyses were carried out in order to determine whether the Similarity x Importance interactions would uniquely predict relationship status at 6-week follow-

up. Four analyses were conducted with relationship status as the criterion variable (one for interests, attitudes, religion, and the Big Five personality traits). Each similarity variable, importance of similarity on that dimension, and the Similarity x Importance interactions were entered simultaneously for each of the four analyses. Participant and partner age were also entered as control variables. The results revealed a significant Similarity x Importance interaction for attitudes ( $F(1, 227) = 7.98, p < .01$ ), but not the other three dimensions.

Follow-up analyses were conducted to test the simple main effects for similarity at high and low levels of importance. Again, separate one-way ANOVAs were calculated for high and low importance of similarity in attitudes. Because outcome is a categorical measure, interpretation was simplified by using participants' scores on perceived similarity in attitudes as the dependent variable and outcome as the independent variable. Consistent with hypotheses, results indicated that for those participants who valued similarity in attitudes, participants who were still together at Time 2 were more likely to be high in perceived similarity in attitudes than participants who had terminated their relationships ( $F(1, 139) = 8.19, p < .01; M = 15.59$  and  $M = 13.77$ , respectively). For participants who did not value similarity in attitudes, there was no significant difference in perceived similarity in attitudes between participants who were still together and those who had terminated their relationships in perceived similarity ( $F(1, 91) = 3.44, p > .05$ ).

#### *Additional Analyses*

We speculated that the absence of significant Similarity x Importance interactions for the Big Five personality traits or for attitudes in predicting the DAS full-scale might have been because these effects vary as a function of the specific component of satisfaction in question. Therefore, follow-up analyses were computed treating each of the four satisfaction subscales as

separate criterion variables. For each of these subscales, two regression equations were calculated, one with the Big Five personality traits and one for attitudes. The equations were of the same form as the ones computed with the DAS full-scale. A summary of the significant results can be found in Tables 5 and 6. The results revealed significant Similarity x Importance interactions for extraversion on the dyadic consensus subscale and for conscientiousness on the dyadic satisfaction subscale, at the .05 level, but not at the level required by a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons (in this case,  $p < .01$ ). The analyses failed to detect any significant interaction effects for the regression equations involving attitudes.

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Insert Tables 5 and 6 about here  
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### Discussion

The current study sought to advance our understanding of the role of similarity by considering idiosyncratic weightings of similarity type as a predictor of relationship satisfaction and outcome. Although previous studies (Jamieson et al., 1987; Lewak, et al., 1985) have taken this type of individual difference approach by examining the effect of specific types of similarity for different groups of individuals (e.g., high versus low self-monitors), the current study looked at an even more broadly applicable theoretical framework for classifying individual differences in the association between similarity type and relationship success. Specifically, we looked at whether one's personal preference for a given dimension of similarity moderated the relationship between similarity and both satisfaction and outcome. Although the research looking at similarity in values has a long tradition in the relationships literature (Byrne, 1971; Byrne & Blaylock, 1963; Chadwich, et al., 1976; Hendrick, 1981), to our knowledge there has been little

attention given to the idea that people may even differ in their values of various types of similarity. As mentioned previously, a recent study by Hassebrauck and Aron (2001) evaluated the role of perceived importance of specific relationship characteristics, but their topic of interest was similarity between valued characteristics and characteristics of the actual relationship not similarity between the participant and partner per se. Thus, this study can be viewed as a very preliminary examination of this idiographic approach to the similarity-satisfaction relation. In the remainder of the discussion we will discuss the implications and limitations of the current findings and then conclude by offering suggestions for future research.

#### *Similarity x Importance Interactions*

Support for our findings were found in the significant Similarity x Importance interactions for the dimensions of interests and religious affiliation in predicting relationship satisfaction, and the dimension of attitudes in predicting relationship status at Time 2. However, aside from the individual subscales of relationship satisfaction little support was found for our hypotheses with respect to the Big Five personality traits. Thus, our hypotheses regarding importance as a moderator of the similarity-relationship success associations was supported for some dimensions but not others. These findings imply that the importance of similarity in interests, religious affiliation, and attitudes, may in part be in the eye of the beholder. That is, similarity in these factors may play a more vital role in relationship success with individuals who deem these factors as important. For people who do not view these dimensions as being as central to relationship health, these types of similarity might not exert as much influence. Although intriguing, these finding raise many questions.

One perplexing aspect of this study is our general failure to identify interactions for the Big Five personality traits. Several possibilities may account for this apparent lack of an effect.

An obvious interpretation is that no such interaction exists. Rather, perceived similarity in personality may be distinct from the other types of similarity examined in the current study in that the main effects for personality similarity over-ride the possibility of interactions with perceived importance. That is to say, that perhaps most people value similarity in personality such that an interactional model is less relevant. Another possibility is that the importance and perceived similarity measures created for the current study are less sensitive to detecting such interaction effects for personality. Due to the relatively abstract nature of personality, it may have been more difficult for participants to think about and report on the degree to which they value similarity in various facets of personality. Yet another possibility is that a valuing of similarity in personality surfaces later in the relationship. Finally, it may be the case that such effects vary as a function of particular facets of relationship satisfaction. The creators of the DAS and others assume that satisfaction is a multidimensional construct (Mahoney et al., 1999; Spanier, 1976). Separate analyses of the DAS subscales lent partial support to this hypothesis. However, the results of these analyses were not significant when a correction for multiple comparisons was applied. Clearly, replication of the findings for conscientiousness and extraversion at the subscale level would be critical before any firm conclusions could be drawn.

Another interesting aspect of the current results is that a Similarity x Importance interaction for attitudes was found in the analyses of outcome, but not relationship satisfaction. It might be the case that summing across four different types of attitudes obscure effects for specific classes of attitudes. Simply stated, some people may value similarity attitudes about some things (e.g. finances) but not others (e.g., childrearing practices). Another explanation is that, as with personality, importance of attitudinal similarity or even individual's knowledge of their partner's attitudes may surface later in relationships.



*Directions for Future Research*

There are numerous ways in which the finding from this project could be extended in future research. Due to the novelty of this research question, the assessment of perceived importance was designed to be relatively straightforward and face valid. However, it is clear that considerably more research is needed to establish the validity of this measure as well as to explore alternative methodologies for examining this question. One inherent limitation in the methodological approach taken in the current study is that it leaves a good deal of room for post hoc reasoning on the part of the participant. Presumably, most participants enter the study with a general impression of how rewarding their current relationship is to them. Therefore, when answering questions about how much they value similarity in a certain characteristic, they may have inferred that they value such similarity to the extent that they perceived it as being absent or present in their current relationship. Therefore, ideally the results of the study would be supplemented in future research with longitudinal and experimental studies. In terms of the former, studies are needed in which importance is assessed prior to entering a relationship and then similarity and satisfaction are assessed once the participant does, in fact, commence a relationship. Additionally, the time lag used in the current study was fairly brief. Optimally, future research would span several years rather than several weeks. In terms of experimental methods, modifications of Byrne's (1971) classic "attraction paradigm" could be utilized to enable causal claims. Again, in such a study a measure of importance would be administered first. Then hypothetical profiles could be assigned to participants that are either similar or dissimilar on these dimensions. These two types of studies, although potentially cumbersome to implement, are necessary additions to the current findings.

Our findings could also be expanded by including other well-researched dimensions of similarity such as similarity in abilities and skills. For instance, Neimer (1984) found that spouses having similar levels of cognitive skills reported greater marital satisfaction than did those with dissimilar levels of cognitive skills, regardless of whether the skill level itself was low or high. Likewise, Burlison and Denton (1992) found that similarity in social-cognitive and communication skills, as opposed to couples' absolute standing on these variables, was positively related to marital satisfaction, such that similarly low-skilled couples were no less happy with their marriages than similarly high-skilled couples. We limited the number of dimensions in the present study largely out of a concern that the inclusion of too many separate dimensions would result in analytic complications. Nonetheless, possible individual differences in preferences for other types of similarity would be a worthy topic of future investigation.

Once it has been established with alternative methodologies and more diverse populations that an idiographic approach is a useful addition to the similarity literature, the next step might be to identify classes of variables that predict a valuing of one dimension versus another. For instance, one might expect to find that marital status is associated with a weighting of certain dimensions of similarity above others. When couples get married and start cohabitating, they may come to value similarity in conscientiousness (i.e., degree of planfulness and organization) more than in earlier stages of the relationship because they would likely be working together to achieve common responsibilities and goals (e.g., household and financial management). Likewise, as stated earlier, couples in later stages of relationships may value similarity in attitudes more than those who are casually dating because there are more negative repercussions to a mismatch in values when a couple is attempting to work together as a unit to make major life decisions together. Gender or gender-role identity may also be a factor that is

related to dimensions of similarity that one deems as important in their intimate relationships. Consistent with this speculation is a study mentioned previously by Nemechek and Olson (1999) that found that similarity in the Big Five personality dimensions that predict marital adjustment differed for men and women.

Increasingly studies have begun looking at specific types or dimensions of similarity (e.g., Burleson & Denton, 1992) and at individual differences in the relation between types of similarity and both satisfaction and outcome (Jamieson et al., 1987; Lewak, et al., 1985). It is believed that our study builds on this trend by examining whether individual preferences for certain types of similarity interact with perceptions of similarity. Furthermore, our findings that Similarity x Importance interactions - albeit only for some dimensions but not others - add significantly to the prediction of relationship success can be considered an exciting and important advancement in the understanding of similarity's contribution to relationship maintenance and enhancement. It would, therefore, be enormously worthwhile to continue to advance this line of research in the future.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Nominal and Ordinal Level Study Measures

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Participant Gender		
Female	141	57
Male	106	43
Partner Gender		
Opposite	243	98
Same	4	2
Participant Religion		
Catholic	171	69
Protestant	21	9
Methodist	8	3
Baptist	13	5
Other	28	11
None	6	2
Partner Religion		
Catholic	156	63
Protestant	17	7
Methodist	14	6
Baptist	11	5
Other	23	8
None	26	11
Participant Ethnicity		
Black	16	7
Hispanic	6	2
Caucasian	222	90
Other	2	1
Partner Ethnicity		
Black	14	6
Hispanic	8	3
Caucasian	221	90
Other	3	1
Same Ethnicity		
Yes	226	91
No	20	8
Long Distance <sup>1</sup>		
Yes	140	57
No	91	37

Relationship Status – 6 weeks		
Together	193	76
Apart	38	15

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<sup>1</sup>Due to missing data, these percentages do not equal 100.

Table 2

## Descriptive Statistics for Continuous Study Measures

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.-Max
Relationship Satisfaction	108.88	10.53	74-142
Dyadic Satisfaction	37.77	4.00	25-45
Dyadic Cohesion	18.59	2.46	12-24
Dyadic Consensus	35.45	4.29	17-45
Affectional Expression	16.97	2.41	8-20
Similarity neuroticism	18.93	4.10	8-29
Similarity extraversion	22.84	4.05	10-30
Similarity openness	22.74	4.10	9-30
Similarity conscientiousness	21.86	4.36	10-30
Similarity agreeableness	23.57	4.51	10-30
Similarity attitudes	14.69	3.07	5-20
Similarity interests	14.52	3.14	4-20
Similarity religion	3.57	1.37	1-5
Importance neuroticism	19.07	4.52	6-30
Importance extraversion	22.91	3.59	10-30
Importance openness	21.92	4.10	6-30
Importance conscientiousness	22.36	3.76	10-30
Importance agreeableness	25.11	3.48	10-30
Importance attitudes	14.05	2.90	6-20
Importance interests	10.80	3.09	4-18
Importance religion	3.11	1.37	1-5

Table 3

Zero-order Correlations Between Continuous Independent Variables and Relationship Satisfaction

Variable	DAS	DS	DCoh.	DCon.	AE
Sim. neuroticism	.46**†	.44**†	.32**†	.42**†	.22**†
Sim. extraversion	.49**†	.43**†	.32**†	.46**†	.26**†
Sim. openness	.60**†	.48**†	.48**†	.54**†	.33**†
Sim. conscientiousness	.57**†	.52**†	.38**†	.59**†	.25**†
Sim. agreeableness	.62**†	.54**†	.41**†	.53**†	.42**†
Sim. attitudes	.50**†	.39**†	.41**†	.49**†	.20*
Sim. interests	.40**†	.30**†	.31**†	.46**†	.14*
Sim. religion	.30**†	.22**†	.25**†	.33**†	.05
S x I neuroticism	.35**†	.32**†	.28**†	.37**†	.12
S x I extraversion	.45**†	.37**†	.31**†	.44**†	.23**†
S x I openness	.48**†	.36**†	.43**†	.43**†	.21**†
S x I conscientiousness	.48**†	.41**†	.39**†	.51**†	.19*
S x I agreeableness	.60**†	.52**†	.44**†	.55**†	.36**†
S x I attitudes	.44**†	.39**†	.38**†	.42**†	.11
S x I interests	.06	.21*	.21*	.34**†	.08
S x I religion	.35**†	.32**†	.28**†	.37**†	.12

\* $p < .01$ .      \*\* $p < .001$ 

*Note.* The required level of significance for these analyses using a Bonferroni correction is .001 (.05/64).  
†Significant after application of Bonferroni correction.

Table 4

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Full Scale Relationship Satisfaction from Similarity x Importance Interactions

Variable	Beta	t	Sig.	R <sup>2</sup> Δ	Sig.
Religion					
Step 1					
Rel. length	-.05	-.71	.48	.00	.62
Rel. distance	-.04	-.63	.53		
Step 2					
Sim. religion	.28	4.22	.00	.11	.00
Imp. religion	.13	1.94	.05		
Step 3					
S x I religion	.29	4.76	.00	.08	.00
Interests					
Step 1					
Rel. length	-.05	-.71	.48	.00	.62
Rel. distance	-.04	-.63	.53		
Step 2					
Sim. interests	.42	6.64	.00	.17	.00
Imp. interests	-.05	-.85	.39		
Step 3					
S x I interests	1.10	2.75	.01	.03	.01

Note. For the equation involving religion, R<sup>2</sup> = .07 for step 1; R<sup>2</sup> = .34 for step 2; R<sup>2</sup> = .44 for step 3. For the equation involving interests, R<sup>2</sup> = .07 for step 1; R<sup>2</sup> = .41 for step 2; R<sup>2</sup> = .44 for step 3.

Table 5

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Dyadic Satisfaction from Similarity x Importance Interactions for the Big Five Personality Traits

Variable	Beta	t	Sig.	R <sup>2</sup> Δ	Sig.
Step 1					
Rel. length	-.05	-.68	.50	.02	.12
Rel. distance	-.12	-1.88	.06		
Step 2					
Sim. agreeableness	.17	2.36	.02	.40	.00
Sim. extraversion	.07	.98	.33		
Sim. neuroticism	.16	2.23	.03		
Sim. openness	.14	2.03	.04		
Sim. conscientiousness	.28	4.08	.00		
Imp. agreeableness	.15	2.01	.04		
Imp. extraversion	-.02	-.33	.74		
Imp. neuroticism	-.10	-1.54	.13		
Imp. openness	-.04	-.63	.53		
Imp. conscientiousness	-.06	-.95	.34		
Step 3					
S x I agreeableness	1.06	1.89	.06	.04	.02
S x I extraversion	.72	1.23	.22		
S x I neuroticism	.67	1.65	.10		
S x I openness	-.60	-1.08	.28		
S x I conscientiousness	-1.26	-2.34	.02		

Note. R<sup>2</sup> = .02 for step 1; R<sup>2</sup> = .42 for step 2; R<sup>2</sup> = .45 for step 3.



Table 6

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Dyadic Cohesion from Similarity x Importance Interactions for the Big Five Personality Traits

Variable	Beta	t	Sig.	R <sup>2</sup> Δ	Sig.
Step 1					
Rel. length	.13	1.96	.05	.03	.04
Rel. distance	-.12	-1.83	.07		
Step 2					
Sim. agreeableness	.08	.99	.33	.32	.00
Sim. extraversion	.04	.58	.56		
Sim. neuroticism	.01	.15	.38		
Sim. openness	.35	4.73	.00		
Sim. conscientiousness	.07	.94	.35		
Imp. agreeableness	.17	2.21	.03		
Imp. extraversion	-.12	-1.51	.13		
Imp. neuroticism	.06	.89	.38		
Imp. openness	.05	.76	.45		
Imp. conscientiousness	.10	1.45	.15		
Step 3					
S x I agreeableness	.36	.60	.55	.03	.05
S x I extraversion	1.30	2.11	.04		
S x I neuroticism	-.70	-1.61	.11		
S x I openness	-.14	-.24	.81		
S x I conscientiousness	.74	1.29	.20		

Note. R<sup>2</sup> = .03 for step 1; R<sup>2</sup> = .35 for step 2; R<sup>2</sup> = .38 for step 3.

## Appendix A

*Perceived Similarity*

To what extent do you believe that your partner is **similar to you** in the following areas? Choose one response for each item.

- |  | 1                  | 2                | 3       | 4                  | 5            |
|--|--------------------|------------------|---------|--------------------|--------------|
|  | Not at all similar | Slightly similar | Neutral | Moderately similar | Very similar |
1. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of nervousness or worry typically experienced.
  2. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of anger typically experienced.
  3. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of sadness typically experienced.
  4. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of self-consciousness.
  5. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of impulsiveness.
  6. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of confidence in their ability to cope with problems.
  7. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of affectionateness.
  8. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of sociability.
  9. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of assertiveness.
  10. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on activity level (i.e., high vs. low energy level).
  11. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of sensation-seeking behavior (e.g., bungee jumping).
  12. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of cheerfulness and optimism.
  13. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of openness to experiencing an inner fantasy life.
  14. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of openness to experiencing the fine and performing arts.
  15. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of openness to experiencing new activities.

16. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of openness to experiencing a wide range of different ideas.
17. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of openness to experiencing a wide range of different values.
18. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of openness to experiencing a wide range of different emotions.
19. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of trust in others.
20. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of sincerity.
21. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of generosity and consideration of others.
22. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of humility.
23. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of sympathy and concern for others.
24. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of cooperation.
25. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of competence in addressing life's obstacles.
26. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of ambition and dedication in pursuing academic and professional goals.
27. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of self-discipline and follow-through.
28. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of cautiousness and deliberation in making decisions.
29. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of neatness or orderliness.
30. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on level of adherence to ethical principles.
31. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on political attitudes.
32. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on financial and economic attitudes.
33. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on attitudes regarding children and family.
34. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on moral and religious attitudes.
35. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on interests in music preference.
36. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on preference for socializing in groups.

37. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on interests in the arts.
38. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** on preference for sports.
39. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel that **your partner is similar to you** in religious affiliation.

## Appendix B

*Perceived Importance*

People differ in terms of what dimension they view as important to have in common with their partner. To what extent do you believe it is **important** for your partner **to be similar to you** in the following areas? Choose one response for each item.

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all important	Slightly important	Neutral	Moderately important	Very important

1. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of nervousness or worry typically experienced.
2. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of anger typically experienced.
3. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of sadness typically experienced.
4. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of self-consciousness.
5. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of impulsiveness.
6. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of confidence in their ability to cope with problems.
7. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of affectionateness.
8. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of sociability.
9. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of assertiveness.
10. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on activity level (i.e., high vs. low energy level).
11. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of sensation-seeking behavior (e.g., bungee jumping).
12. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of cheerfulness and optimism.
13. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of openness to experiencing an inner fantasy life.
14. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of openness to experiencing the fine and performing arts.

15. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of openness to experiencing new activities.
16. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of openness to experiencing a wide range of different ideas.
17. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of openness to experiencing a wide range of different values.
18. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of openness to experiencing a wide range of different emotions.
19. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of trust in others.
20. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of sincerity.
21. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of generosity and consideration of others.
22. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of humility.
23. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of sympathy and concern for others.
24. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of cooperation.
25. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of competence in addressing life's obstacles.
26. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of ambition and dedication in pursuing academic and professional goals.
27. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of self-discipline and follow-through.
28. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of cautiousness and deliberation in making decisions.
29. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of neatness or orderliness.
30. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on level of adherence to ethical principles.
31. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on political attitudes.
32. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on financial and economic attitudes.
33. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on attitudes regarding children and family.

34. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on moral and religious attitudes.
35. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on interests in music preference.
36. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on preference for socializing in groups.
37. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on interests in the arts.
38. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** on preference for sports.
39. \_\_\_\_ The degree to which you feel **it is important for him/her to be similar to you** in religious affiliation.