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The University of Southern Mississippi

IMPRESSION RATING VIA SPEED-DATING:
HOW A SINGLE COMMUNICATION EVENT CAN ALTER
PERCEPTIONS OF ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL

by

Andrew Clayton Dix

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of the University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2012

ABSTRACT

IMPRESSION RATING VIA SPEED-DATING:
HOW A SINGLE COMMUNICATION EVENT CAN ALTER
PERCEPTIONS OF ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL

by Andrew Clayton Dix

May 2012

The central purpose of this experiment is to scientifically test whether interpersonal communication influences individual perceptions in a dating environment. This study uses interaction appearance theory (IAT) as an empirical foundation for understanding the relationship between communicative outcomes and personal opinions. According to IAT, cognitive impressions of aesthetic appearance are highly fluid and vulnerable to the results of multiple social interactions (Albada, Knapp, & Theune, 2002). While most empirical investigations have provided additional support for this theory, no studies have tested whether IAT applies to various other social constructs. As such, this investigation was designed to address this gap in the literature as it explores the variables of physical attractiveness, intelligence, attitudinal similarity, and background similarity within an attraction-relevant atmosphere.

A total of 104 undergraduate students at a large southeastern university engaged in speed-dating in order to ascertain if individual perceptions changed from pre-test to post-test. Study participants were recruited via numerous channels that included but were not limited to campus advertisements, class visits, and the student newspaper. Upon arrival, participants completed a 19-item blended scale that was created by the principal

investigator. Next, study participants socially interacted with multiple opposite-sex speed-daters for a time period of three minutes per person. Before departure, the same 19-item blended scale was re-administered to all study participants. The collected data was then subjected to a series of statistical tests that included reliability analyses and 2 x 2 x 2 mixed factorial ANOVAs.

Four central conclusions were drawn based on the evidence that emerged from the proposed hypotheses and research questions. First, interpersonal communication can be strategically used by females to increase their level of physical attractiveness. Second, a positive social interaction can make another person appear more intelligent. Third, perceptions of attitudinal similarity are influenced by a mere 180 seconds of communicative behavior. Fourth, the interaction appearance theory of communication can be applied to a single social interaction as well as to multiple other dependent and independent variables. When taken together, these results advance our practical understanding of both interpersonal attraction as well as cognitive processes.

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A Dissertation
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When asked to reflect on the courtship of a former girlfriend, acclaimed New York Times bestselling author Neil Strauss (2005) stated the following:

When talking to a woman, I could recognize the specific point when she became attracted to me, even if she was acting distant or felt uncomfortable. I knew when to talk and when to shut up; when to push and when to pull; when to tease and when to be sincere. (p. 212)

Although the preceding account depicts the experiences of just one individual, it does present a unique illustration of the process of attraction. On a similar note, it is especially important to be able to decode indications of interest because they can enhance or deter romantic relationship development. Along this line, the introduction of this paper defines interpersonal attraction and discusses the empirical foundations that underlie this multifaceted yet charming phenomenon.

The Many Hats of Interpersonal Attraction

Interpersonal attraction refers to “the affectional component of social relationships” (Huston, 1974, p. xv). Stated differently, this topic area addresses a multitude of positive emotional responses that occur between strangers, friends, and romantic partners (Berscheid & Walster, 1969; Duck, 1977; Huston, 1974). For example, individuals can be interpersonally attracted to physical attributes such as the facial appearance or body physique of a dyadic partner (Huston, 1974). On the other hand, psychological features including demeanor and “attitudes toward a limited number of

topics” (Huston, p. 10) can also produce feelings of desirability. In short, interpersonal attraction encompasses a host of diverse physical and mental characteristics.

Initial empirical research on interpersonal attraction yielded three conceptual definitions. First, Berscheid and Walster (1969) suggested interpersonal attraction was a multidimensional construct that was predicated on attitudes towards another individual. A short time later McCroskey, Larsen, and Knapp (1971) claimed interpersonal attraction was concentrated on “judgments about whether we ‘like’ another person, whether we desire to associate with or spend time with him, whether we ‘feel good’ in his presence” (p. 38). Finally, Huston (1974) extended the multidimensionality argument and posited that attraction was comprised of evaluative, cognitive, and behavioral components. When taken together, these conceptualizations indicated that interpersonal attraction is a complex social construct that involves liking for another individual.

Early communication scholarship devoted to interpersonal attraction examined how individuals convey romantic interest. For instance, Kirkendall (1961) reported that men tactically discuss their social prowess before attempting to steer the conversation towards intimate discussion. In terms of nonverbal channels, premier communication studies reported that interpersonal attraction was expressed through smiling (Argyle, Alkema, & Gilmour, 1972), gazing (Cook & Smith, 1975), and displaying an open posture (Mehrabian, 1969). The seminal work of these scholars was beneficial because it identified expressive functions, yet other social scientific research has been advantageous because it has produced unique insight on the theoretical underpinnings of interpersonal attraction.

Empirical Foundations of Liking

There are two philosophical approaches that are vital to the present research. First and foremost, interaction appearance theory (IAT) suggests that social interactions can positively or negatively influence judgments about the physical appearance of a dyadic partner (Albada, Knapp, & Theune, 2002). In terms of the relationship between communication and interpersonal attraction, IAT declares:

In order to effect a positive change in one's perceptions of a partner's physical attractiveness, continued social interaction is essential.

Social interaction may continue for any number of reasons, and it may occur over a relatively short or long period of time. Ultimately, if the satisfaction with the interaction is assessed significantly higher than the initial perception of physical attractiveness, one's desire for romantic involvement should be activated. (p. 12)

Thus, one of the central tenets of IAT is that source attractiveness is not always a static variable. Instead, theory advocates assert that perceptions of physical appearance are vulnerable to multiple social interactions. While IAT represents a contemporary means for understanding desirability, a classic attraction principle continues to yield novel data on interpersonal liking.

The second philosophical approach inherent to this study is the similarity-attraction hypothesis. The basic premise behind this well-established theoretical foundation is the claim that individuals are naturally attracted to similar others (Byrne, 1961). Historically speaking, the empirical roots of this axiom can be traced back to the

Athenian empire some 350 years before Christ. In fact, it was the renowned Greek philosopher Aristotle (translated in 1932) who famously proclaimed:

And they are friends who have come to regard the same things as good and the same things as evil, they who are friends of the same people, and they who are enemies of the same people we like those with whom we wish to be friends, if they show the same inclinationwe like those who resemble us, and are engaged in the same pursuits. We like those who desire the same things as we. (pp. 103-105)

In other words, interpersonal liking correlates with perceived similarity. While the opening pages of Chapter II further highlight the fruitful nature of the similarity-attraction hypothesis, it should be noted that one independent variable has failed to support the robust foundation of this particular paradigm. Specifically, Bell and Wilford (2008) reported that attraction did not develop between individuals who shared similar levels of intelligence. In that particular study, researchers concluded “those who were more similar to the intelligent individuals described were not significantly found to be more attracted to them” (Bell & Wilford, 2008). As such, additional investigation into how perceived intelligence functions in an attraction-relevant context is certainly warranted.

The Central Purpose of this Dissertation

The present study is being guided by the aforementioned chief maxim of IAT. In essence, the role of IAT in the present investigation is two-fold. First, IAT provides an empirical foundation on which this doctoral dissertation is being grounded. Second, this

study attempts to extend the underlying attraction mechanism that represents the heart of IAT. In order to accomplish this objective, this study is scientifically testing if a brief date can impact judgments of physical attractiveness, similarity, and intelligence. As alluded to previously, IAT nicely illustrates how perceptions of dyadic partners change over long periods of time. However, IAT and other extant literature do not address whether a single social interaction has the power to affect feelings of desirability. Thus, this study has been designed to address this gap in the literature as the central question being examined is: can a single communication event influence perceptions of physical attractiveness?

This dissertation is comprised of five separate chapters. The opening chapter begins by defining the central topic and discussing independent variables. The second chapter reviews the existing literature devoted to interpersonal attraction in potentially romantic relationships. More specifically, this section of the paper illustrates the pervasiveness of similarity research, examines how intelligence influences desirability, describes how propinquity mediates liking, and evaluates the impact of first impressions. The second chapter concludes by identifying several examples of positive communication, highlighting the effects of negative social interactions, and proposing several hypotheses as well as a research question. It is in the third chapter of this text that the author outlines methodological considerations. Once completed, the fourth chapter presents the results of this experiment. Lastly, the fifth and final chapter concludes by discussing study findings, identifying limitations, and suggesting directions for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Early Theory and Methodology

Two schools of thought dominate the theoretical landscape of interpersonal attraction. First, the attraction paradigm suggests individuals experience high amounts of attraction for similar others (Byrne, 1971). That is, people prefer interpersonal partners who possess comparable attitudes (Byrne, 1961). As archetype founder Don Byrne (1971) summarizes:

Several different kinds of evidence indicate that interpersonal attraction is related to similarity and dissimilarity of attitudes. If, however, we wish to initiate a research paradigm, it is necessary to consider that apparent relationship as simply the starting point for a program of basic research. (p. 47)

Indeed, the similarity-attraction foundation has been fruitful as subsequent research indicated that a strong relationship existed between interpersonal attraction and similarity (Berscheid & Walster, 1978; Bochner, 1984; Duck, 1976). Stated differently, early empirical observations on interpersonal attraction dispelled the famous adage that opposites attract.

The second empirical foundation of interpersonal attraction research is commonly referred to as the goal-oriented perspective. Scholars who embrace this philosophical approach argue that interpersonal attraction is influenced by individuals who desire healthy, positive, and stable communication atmospheres (Sannafrank, 1983; Sannafrank & Miller, 1981). As communication researcher Michael Sannafrank (1984) stated:

“Participating in normal, nonthreatening, get-acquainted conversations provides the individuals with a mutually experienced stable, predictable, and controllable environment” (p. 374). He also added the following:

This experience should lead individuals to perceive that future contact is likely to proceed in a manner that will satisfy these goals. This goal satisfaction, both as experienced in the communicative past and perceived in the future, should lead to high levels of attraction, regardless of the similarity state. (p. 374)

In other words, interpersonal attraction develops as a result of comfortable interactions in the past and because of the potential for pleasant interactions in the future. Thus, the goal-oriented perspective supports uncertainty reduction axioms (Berger & Calabrese, 1975) and also explains the relationship between communication and attraction in upcoming interactions.

The longstanding dispute between the goal-oriented and similarity-attraction camps resulted in some academics adopting a middle-of-the-road perspective. For example, Duck and Barnes (1992) asserted that similarity has some, but not exclusive control over interpersonal attraction. While they argued, “the concept of similarity is actually fundamental to the study of communication” (p. 199), they nevertheless maintained that goals are related to both attraction and communication. In a similar vein, Bochner (1991) stated that individuals communicate to attain goals, determine attitude similarity, and assess potential for interpersonal bonding. Even though advocates of a blended approach haggle about the fundamental underpinnings of each philosophical

camp, these same scholars frequently embrace diverse methodologies for studying interpersonal attraction.

Initial quantitative research on interpersonal attraction produced two prominent measures. First, Byrne (1971) constructed the interpersonal judgment scale, which suggested attraction was based on intelligence, knowledge of current events, morality, adjustments, personal feelings, and working together. A year later McCroskey and McCain (1972) simplified desirability research when they introduced the interpersonal attraction scale, which measured social, physical, and task attraction. Taken together, these scales offered researchers an efficient means for systematically studying example,

Additional studies used factor analysis to quantitatively examine interpersonal attraction. For instance, Triandis (1964) found that five independent factors represented about 60% of the variance in his study of interpersonal attraction. Moreover, the Triandis investigation identified a socio-emotional and task category of interpersonal attraction. In a related study, Kiesler and Goldberg (1968) found additional empirical support for the notion that interpersonal attraction was comprised of at least a task and liking dimension. As a direct result, one of their final conclusions was that “factor analysis might be a very useful tool in the study of interpersonal attraction” (p. 703). In summary, both of these studies provided support for the claim that interpersonal attraction was multidimensional in nature.

Early qualitative research on interpersonal attraction normally involved participant interviews. For example, Kirkendall (1961) conducted interviews with 200 college-aged men in order to assess their motivation, communication, protective measures, attitudes, and self-evaluations of romantic partners. When interview participant

number 52 (referred to as M) was asked about interpersonal attraction, Kirkendall summarized his sentiments by stating, “There are certain things which he finds are good indications as to whether or not the girl will become a willing partner” (p. 109).

Kirkendall goes on to summarize:

He also thinks it is indicative if a girl begins to flatter a boy. If she tells him he is a big wheel, or smooth guy, it means that she is impressed, and will accept advances from him when she might not from other fellows. (p. 110)

One of the main findings from the Kirkendall interviews was that men frequently developed communication strategies for building attraction. While this finding was empirically intriguing, the majority of subsequent attraction research focused less on strategy and more on similarity.

The Role of Similarity in Interpersonal Dyads

The relationship between interpersonal attraction and similarity can be evaluated in a myriad of different contexts. Most notably, Byrne (1961) reported that individuals had significantly more positive feelings for similar strangers than dissimilar strangers. Results also indicated that individuals viewed similar strangers as more intelligent, better adjusted, and more ethical than their dissimilar counterparts. When examined collectively, these conclusions were instrumental because they provided a solid foundation for later similarity-attraction research.

One of the more intriguing studies devoted to the similarity-attraction hypothesis was conducted by Byrne and Nelson (1965). The central hypothesis of this study was that feelings of attraction would increase as proportions of similar attitudes increased. As

hypothesized, ratings of attraction between individuals did improve when similar attitudes increased. Put differently, this finding indicated that a strong linear relationship existed between attraction and proportions of similar attitudes. Notably, this Byrne and Nelson study was one of the first investigations to offer empirical evidence of a positive correlation between similarity and attraction.

Numerous other social scientists have further developed the relationship between interpersonal attraction and similarity. For example, Byrne, Clore Jr., and Worchel (1966) found that individuals reported more attraction for strangers who shared similar economic statuses in comparison to people who were financial opposites. Likewise, Zander and Havelin (1960) claimed that individuals felt increased attraction for persons who shared similar amounts of confidence. Back in the laboratory, Zimbardo and Formica (1963) demonstrated that participants preferred to affiliate with individuals who maintained similar emotional states. Although these studies revealed that attitudinal similarity was positively associated with interpersonal attraction, subsequent research focused on the conceptualization of similarity.

Interpersonal attraction scholars have squabbled over the relative importance of perceived and actual similarity. Most studies have indicated that perceived attitude similarity is more indicative of liking for another than actual similarity (Byrne, 1969; Lindzey & Byrne, 1968). In terms of perceived similarity, Klohnen and Luo (2003) reported that similarity to an ideal self was a strong predictor of interpersonal attraction. With regard to actual similarities, Werner and Parmelee (1979) suggested that individuals preferred acquaintances that enjoyed similar activities to acquaintances that shared similar attitudes. While these results empirically demonstrated that strangers are drawn to

commonplace similarities, other investigations reported that individuals are attracted to less traditional characteristics.

Additional social scientific literature devoted to interpersonal attraction and similarity has found that individuals are enticed by unconventional similarities. For instance, Jones, Pelham, Cavallo, and Mirenberg (2004) claimed that individuals experienced elevated levels of attraction for others simply because they shared similar surnames. Moreover, Jones and colleagues also found that participants experienced more attraction for people who were given arbitrary numbers that closely matched their individual birthday. Similarly, scholars argued that individuals are more likely to report feelings of closeness for individuals who actually do share a birthday, regardless of whether conversational similarities existed (Miller, Downs, & Prentice, 1998). When taken together, these findings indicated that individuals fail to make a distinction between chance similarity and genuine similarity that often emerges in conversation.

Communication scholarship is heavily focused on the correlation between similarity and interpersonal attraction. A study by Buller, LePoire, Aune, and Eloy (1992) indicated that similarity between the speech rates of speakers and listeners resulted in increased levels of attractiveness. On the other hand, research has demonstrated that speech rate dissimilarity caused diminished perceptions of social attractiveness (Street & Brady, 1982). In addition, Wheelless and Reichel (1990) reported that similarity in communication style was a strong indicator of attraction for another interlocutor. As these communication studies focused on speech rate and style, separate investigations examined theoretical considerations related to attraction and similarity.

Communication accommodation theorists evaluated interpersonal attraction, similarity and a possible link to convergence. Empirical work by Giles, Mulac, Bradac, and Johnson (1987) suggested convergence occurred when “individuals adapt to each other’s speech by means of a wide range of linguistic features, including speech rates, pauses and utterance length, pronunciations and so on” (p. 14). In the same report, they argued that individuals who converged their speech were more likely to be seen as likable. In a similar vein, Fortman (2003) argued that “the more similar the attitudes, the greater the attraction and the more likely accommodation will occur” (pp. 107-108). Therefore, the findings from these studies empirically demonstrated that a strong correlation existed between communication accommodation and feelings of interpersonal attraction.

Attributional communication scholars evaluated whether a correlation existed between attraction, similarity, and attributions. For instance, Berger (1973) developed two hypotheses to test whether a relationship existed between attributions and interpersonal attraction. First, he hypothesized that individuals who successfully completed a word anagram would attribute their success to internal factors. Second, he theorized that individuals would experience increased attraction for those individuals who made the same attribution regarding task completion. Indeed, results suggested that individuals who made similar attributions were more likely to experience interpersonal attraction in comparison to sources that made dissimilar attributions.

Studies dedicated to similarities in persuasive communication and interpersonal attraction have yielded inconsistent results. In one investigation of young adults, Burleson and Samter (1996) reported that similarity in communication skills consistently

predicted attraction except in a persuasive skills condition. In contrast, Waldron and Applegate (1998) found that similarity in persuasive tactics was positively correlated with increased social attraction during argumentative conversations. While Waldron and Applegate attribute the contradictory findings as a function of different methodologies, other scholars such as Spitzberg, Canary, and Cupach (1994) maintain that feelings of ambivalence during conflict can result in both feelings of attraction and dislike. Either way, the relationship between attraction and similarities in persuasive communication remains decidedly unclear.

Humorous communication scholarship evaluated whether humor impacts attraction and similarity. Cann, Calhoun, and Banks (1997) tested the relationship between humorous communication and interpersonal attraction by having an attitudinally similar or attitudinally dissimilar stranger relay a humorous message over an intercom. They found that participants reported more attraction to dissimilar strangers who appreciated the joke in comparison to attitudinally similar strangers who felt neutral about the humorous message. Comparable research by Murstein and Brust (1985) examined students who rated humorous stimuli in a similar manner. Results indicated that humor rating similarity was positively correlated with liking, loving, and a predisposition to marry. All joking aside, these studies collectively suggested that attraction increased between individuals who embraced similar humor tendencies.

Non-theoretical interpersonal attraction literature focused on individuals who share similar communication values. Burleson, Kunkel, and Birch (1994) identified four different types of communicative values in dating relationships, which included comforting, ego support, conflict management, and regulation. They hypothesized that

partner similarity on these dimensions was positively correlated with feelings of interpersonal attraction. Indeed, results indicated that similar communication values were associated with increased feelings of attraction for an interpersonal partner.

Finally, nonverbal communication scholarship evaluated the correlation between interpersonal attraction and similarity. A speed-dating study by Gueguen (2009) revealed that men were more interpersonally attracted to women who mimicked their nonverbal behavior during a first meeting in comparison to women who did not engage in similar behaviors. Prior research by Dabs (1969) suggested that individuals felt higher levels of rapport for partners who displayed similar nonverbal postures. Thus, both of these findings imply that similar nonverbal behaviors can result in greater attraction during interpersonal communication.

Other literature devoted to nonverbal similarity and interpersonal attraction has produced strong claims concerning the relationship between attitude similarity and nonverbal communication. For instance, Cappella and Palmer (1992) argued that “nonverbal similarity depresses the effect of attitude similarity on attraction and satisfaction to the point of non-significance” (p. 184). In an earlier study, Cappella and Palmer (1990) claimed that a causal relationship existed between nonverbal similarity and attraction in such a way that “attitude similarity works through behavioral similarity in accounting for attraction and satisfaction judgments without having a direct effect itself” (p. 178). Stated differently, similar nonverbal actions speak louder than similar attitudes.

The salience of the similarity-attraction hypothesis remains a topic of considerable debate. While disciples from the Byrne camp continue to argue that

similarity causes attraction, Sunnafrank advocates steadfastly maintain that attraction is inherently tied to the potential for positive outcomes in the future. Comparatively speaking, both philosophical approaches have advanced strong empirical support. Perhaps, situational factors related to perceived intelligence, physical proximity, initial communication, individual perceptions, and impression formation mediate whether attraction develops. As such, this paper now discusses each of these elements and their correlation with interpersonal attraction.

Intellectual Ability and Source Attractiveness

Scholarship dedicated to intelligence and perceptions of physical appearance is deeply rooted. Perhaps the most notable research on these variables came from Thorndike (1920) who reported that positive ratings on the physical qualities of others strongly correlated with elevated judgments concerning the intelligence of others. The label ascribed to the cognitive process that Thorndike unearthed became reified and is now referred to as the halo effect. Since that time, the halo of physical attractiveness and its correlation with measures of competence and intelligence have been of particular interest to several other academics.

Succeeding research on perception and attraction has provided additional support for the seminal findings of Thorndike. A classic study by Dion, Berscheid, and Walster (1972) found that physically attractive individuals were rated as more competent parents and more likely to secure a prestigious job in comparison to less physically attractive persons. While Dion and associates did not specifically measure intelligence, their famous “what is beautiful is good” (p. 285) aphorism tacitly suggested that individuals of higher physical attractiveness are also more likely to be perceived as intellectually gifted.

Along a similar line, Cann (1991) reported “the relationships of competence to other socially desirable qualities, interpersonal attraction and intelligence, fit the emerging pattern. Competence of either type made anyone more interpersonally attractive” (p. 229). Put differently, both intelligence and attraction share a strong correlation with social competence.

Newer scholarship devoted to attraction and intelligence has focused on when these variables are most salient. For instance, Haselton and Miller (2006) proposed that ovulatory cycles affected female attraction towards either a high or low intelligence potential mate. Specifically, they hypothesized that women would be more attracted to intellectually creative men compared to wealthy men when females were especially fertile. In order to test their hypotheses, researchers had mid-cycle female participants choose a short-term mate based on two contrasting scenarios that featured either a less talented wealthy man or an intellectually creative potential mate. As hypothesized, results suggested that females had the tendency to choose intellectually creative men over wealthy potential mates when females were mid-cycle and nearing peak fertility. Thus, it appears that female biology can affect whether women are more or less attracted to an intelligent potential romantic partner.

Other research on how gender mediates perceptions of intelligence and attraction has been conducted in the standard college environment. For instance, a study by Lao, Upchurch, Corwin, and Grossnickle (1975) required male and female confederates to role-play either a high, medium, or low assertive demeanor in front of a committee of university faculty members. They argued that study participants would rate females who enacted the highly assertive disposition as less likeable and intelligent. Indeed, findings

indicated that perceptions of intelligence and likeability were lower in the condition during which the female acted in a conventionally inappropriate sex-role manner. Put another way, it appears that liking for another as well as perceptions of intelligence are dependent on whether females enact their traditional social role.

There are at least two studies that have examined how communicative information affects perceptions of interpersonal attraction and intelligence. In one study, Bailey and Garrou (1983) supplied potential daters information concerning the religious involvement of other single individuals. More specifically, researchers asked participants to rate their perceptions of the attractiveness and intelligence of potential daters who were either labeled as either high or low in religious involvement. Results indicated that both females and males perceived the targets who were classified as highly religious as more intelligent and physically attractive in comparison to the non-religious individuals. While this particular study used upper body slides (or pictures) to assess perceptions of intelligence and attraction, other empirical research has looked at how nonverbal communication affected perceptions of these same variables.

A second study on how communicative information affects individual perceptions was conducted by Elliot and Niesta (2008). For this particular investigation, researchers were interested in whether the color red influenced perceptions of intelligence and attraction. With regard to methodology, participants were asked to examine female photographs that were featured against either a red or white background. Once completed, participants were then asked to measure the physical attractiveness, kindness, and intelligence of the photographed women. Findings indicated that men perceived females who were set against a red background as more attractive physically in

comparison to females who were featured against a white background. However, results also suggested that male perceptions of female intelligence were not influenced by the color of the background used in the photograph. Therefore, it appears that the color red can influence male perceptions of physical attractiveness but not male perceptions of intelligence.

Existing scholarship devoted to perceptions of physical attractiveness and intelligence has yielded several findings that are pertinent to this study. First, a halo effect exists whereby increased ratings on one measure correlate with increased ratings on the other measure. Second, female attraction to intelligent men is vulnerable to biological process. Third, individuals who are categorized as religious are also more likely to be perceived as attractive and intelligence. All things considered, perhaps Feingold (1982) best summarized the extant research on these two variables in stating “a reasonable conclusion, however, is that attractiveness and mental ability covary in an unpredictable manner” (p. 284). While additional research on perceptions of physical attractiveness and intelligence are forthcoming, scholarship focused on propinquity and attraction has been much more predictable.

The Correlation Between Propinquity and Liking

The concepts of proximity and interpersonal attraction have shared a robust connection in previous scholarship. Berscheid and Walster (1969) broadly summarized the correlation between these two phenomena in stating “other things being equal, the closer two individuals are located geographically, the more likely it is that they will be attracted to each other” (p. 46). In a classic study of how propinquity mediates attraction, Bossard (1932) investigated the effects that proximity had on mate selection during the

dating stages of relationships that eventually resulted in marriage. Findings suggested that as the physical distance between dating individuals increased the number of petitions for marriage licenses decreased. Put differently, it appears that potential feelings of romantic attraction are hindered by geographic separation.

Extant quantitative research devoted to attraction and proximity has commonly employed experimental design to scientifically test independent variables. Some of the more succinct studies such as Arkin and Burger (1980) reported that individuals who directly interacted with others were more likely to report greater amounts of attraction in comparison to control conditions in which participants experienced lessened amounts of direct social interaction. In a similar vein, Byrne, Baskett, and Hodges (1971) focused on the effects that similarity had on both proximity and attraction. Although the results for male participants were not significant, this study indicated that female participants were more likely to sit physically closer to similar strangers as well as report greater attraction towards that similar individual. While both of these studies contributed additional understanding on physical distance, the majority of existing literature on propinquity has sought to determine whether proximity impacts attraction or whether attraction impacts proximity.

The lion's share of prior social scientific literature devoted to propinquity has identified proximity as a determinant of interpersonal attraction. For instance, a specialized investigation by Zajonc (1968) examined the relationship between "mere exposure" (p. 1) and source liking. He hypothesized that repeated access to a given stimulus would eventually result in more favorable perceptions of that stimulus. Not surprisingly, results indicated that as time passed individuals eventually held more

favorable perceptions of a photographic stimuli that occurred with a greater frequency in comparison to photographic stimuli that occurred at a lesser frequency. Zajonc nicely summarized his central finding in stating: “If the function of orienting behavior is eventually to change a novel stimulus into a familiar one, it is also its consequence to render the stimulus object eventually more attractive” (p. 21). This study demonstrated that feelings of interpersonal attraction can be induced from something as simple as repeated exposure.

Other empirical studies have further investigated proximity as a cause of attraction processes. Burgoon and associates (2002) found that closer proximity resulted in more favorable ratings on measures of task attraction. With regard to organizational communication, Quinn and Judge (1978) proposed that employees who worked physically closer to one another were more likely to interact and thus potentially develop feelings of interpersonal attraction. Along this same line, a survey by Anderson and Hunsaker (1985) indicated that 68% of workplace romances occurred between two employees who worked in a close immediate vicinity. Taken together, these investigations proposed further evidence that attraction can develop as result of maintaining close employment proximity.

Additional literature has examined how reciprocity influences propinquity and interpersonal attraction. As Kubitschek and Hallinan (1998) suggest, “persons may not approach others deemed more attractive, more competent, or of higher status because they anticipate their attraction will not be reciprocated” (p. 4). Similarly, Kenny and LaVoie (1982) reported that propinquity exerted greater influence over attraction and reciprocity during the early stages of acquaintanceship as opposed to the latter stages of

acquaintanceships. Either way, it appears that reciprocity is a salient independent variable in the marriage between propinquity and liking.

There are at least two studies that illustrate how changes in proximity can sway feelings of interpersonal attraction. First, a longitudinal study by Priest and Sawyer (1967) indicated that attraction was less affected by changes in proximity when initial perceptions of source attractiveness were relatively high. In a similar vein, a second study by Mehrabian (1968) found that as the distance between communicators decreased, the amount of liking between dyadic partners increased. In other words, it appears that maintaining a close physical proximity to another individual can result in increased levels of attraction if the initial perceptions of that individual are positive.

Finally, some research has downplayed the significance of proximity as determinant of interpersonal attraction. For instance, a study by Blass and Schwarz (1982) examined the relative importance of attitude similarity, need similarity, frequency of exposure, and proximity. More specifically, a sample of skilled researchers were asked to rank order these four variables in terms of their empirical ability to predict feelings of attraction. Comparatively speaking, respondents rated physical proximity as being the least statistically significant determinant of interpersonal attraction. While all of the studies discussed thus far have focused on how proximity affects attraction, other investigations have assessed the influence that attraction has on physical proximity.

Extant scholarship on whether attraction is a determinant of physical proximity has a less celebrated history. Nevertheless, one study by Byrne, Ervin, and Lambert (1970) sought to further analyze the relationship between attraction and proximity in a non-laboratory setting. With regard to their methodology, researchers introduced a pair of

opposite sex partners and asked them to interact for a period of thirty minutes. Shortly thereafter, measures of interpersonal attraction were administered to both male and female participants. Interestingly, findings indicated that individuals who reported higher levels of attraction for a fellow interlocutor were more likely to stand closer together to that individual while the experimenter debriefed participants. Therefore, it appears that individuals who experience larger amounts of interpersonal attraction are more likely to seek out closer physical proximity.

A second study by Allgeier and Byrne (1973) investigated similarity in the arena of propinquity and how it affected interpersonal attraction. Researchers proposed that both female and male participants would sit closer to a stranger they perceived as attitudinally similar in comparison to a stranger they viewed as dissimilar. Indeed, results indicated that participants were more likely to choose a seat that was two feet closer to a stranger they viewed as both attractive and attitudinally similar. Put another way, it seems that similarity can impact attraction, which in turn can affect the role of proximity.

In summary, considerable amounts of research have examined the correlation between proximity and attraction. Some studies have indicated that mere exposure eventually results in more favorable perceptions of a given phenomenon. However, many other studies have evaluated the correlation between propinquity and attraction over lengthy periods of time. While it is vital to consider the function of proximity, it is of greater importance to appreciate the nature of theory in potentially romantic relationships. As such, the next section of this dissertation examines the theoretical foundations of social interaction and perceptions of others. More specifically, this paper meticulously unpacks the interaction appearance theory (IAT) of communication in order to

strategically highlight the interconnectedness of interpersonal communication and physical attractiveness.

Communication and Attraction During Initial Interactions

Several empirical theories have examined communication during initial interactions. For example, social penetration theory (SPT) suggests relational closeness develops through a gradual process of matched self-disclosures (Altman & Taylor, 1973). According to Altman and Taylor, strangers engage in four stages of communication that include orientation, exploratory affective exchange, affective exchange, and stable exchange. Empirical research on SPT has indicated the depth of information shared during first meetings is limited. Instead, new acquaintances engage in ordinary conversation that is characterized by limited amounts of self-disclosure.

A second theory that focuses on communication during first meetings is uncertainty reduction theory (URT). URT proposes strangers participate in a series of communicative behaviors that are designed to reduce cognitive and behavioral uncertainty (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). One of the central assumptions of URT is that interlocutors enter initial interactions with high levels of anxiety. As a direct result, individuals employ information-seeking strategies in order to minimize uncomfortable feelings. In other words, communication is a tool for collecting information during initial interactions. While both SPT and URT effectively analyze dialogue during first meetings, the aforementioned interaction appearance theory (IAT) evaluates initial interactions and beyond.

The interaction appearance theory (IAT) of communication examines the correlation between social interactions and perceptions of physical appearance (Albada,

Knapp, & Theune, 2002). The philosophical underpinnings of this theory are embedded in four inter-related assumptions that address the link between communication and feelings of romantic interest. The first supposition is that social interaction and physical attraction are interdependent variables. Second, social interactions exist whereby participants evaluate dyadic partners as not attractive enough to romantically pursue, but not unattractive enough as to disregard as a potential partner. The third assumption of IAT proposes that individuals eventually place more emphasis on positive social interactions than on physical attributes. Finally, IAT suggests initial perceptions of physical attraction are adjusted because of continued social interaction. When taken together, IAT concisely posits that communication can alter opinions of physical appearance.

Albada and colleagues (2002) completed three separate studies in order to validate IAT. In their first investigation, they interviewed participants who had been or were currently in a committed heterosexual relationship for a period of at least 60 days. Participants were asked to describe specific occasions during which their perceptions of a partner's physical appearance positively changed over time. Several participants indicated they had experienced this phenomenon. In fact, one response was: "Which one do you want me to talk about?" (p. 17). Moreover, interviewees were able to frequently cite positive interactions that caused them to favorably evaluate the physical appearance of a romantic partner. Or, as one interview participant succinctly suggested: "The more time I spent with her, the more I noticed her personality outshining her physical attributes" (p. 21).

Surveys were used in the second study to determine the salience of physical attractiveness for individuals who were currently involved in a committed heterosexual relationship (Albada et al.). For this portion of the investigation, Albada and colleagues proposed four straightforward assumptions. They argued that: (1) physical attraction was an important aspect of relationship involvement; (2) individuals would prefer attractive partners; (3) daters would favor quality interactions in relationships; and (4) romantic partners would view physical attraction and social attraction as interrelated variables. In order to test these hypotheses, researchers used a sample of undergraduate participants who were currently involved in a dating relationship. Support was found for all hypotheses as 89% of participants suggested physical attraction was an important relationship component, 58% claimed satisfying romantic relationships involved a physically attractive partner, 99% stated that interaction satisfaction was an important component of good relationships, and 92% acknowledged the interdependence of social and physical attraction.

The third study by Albada and associates (2002) involved participant diaries. For this portion of their analysis, researchers instructed 20 romantic couples to anonymously rate their initial perceptions of their partner's physical attractiveness. Next, participants used written diaries to record positive and negative interactions that occurred over a three-week period. Finally, participants re-evaluated their partner's physical appearance after they described their social interactions. Results for male participants yielded no statistically significant results for positive interactions. However, researchers reported that perceptions of physical appearance decreased for men after negative exchanges. Moreover, a significant shift occurred for females after both positive and negative social

interactions. That is, females' initial ratings of physical attraction significantly changed after non-neutral interactions with their romantic partner.

A scarce amount of scholarly literature has further investigated the perceptions of physical appearance claim proposed in IAT. Lewandowski Jr., Aron, and Gee (2007) examined whether trait information affected ratings of physical attraction. They hypothesized that positive personality variables would cause participants to see others as more physically attractive. On the other hand, they argued negative qualities would result in lesser amounts of physical attraction. Study participants evaluated yearbook photos of opposite sex participants, engaged in a non-related distraction task, and then re-examined the original set of photos. However, during the re-examination, the original photos were accompanied with either positive or negative information about the pictured individual. Findings indicated that perceptions of physical attraction increased after participants were supplied with positive information and decreased when photos were accompanied with non-flattering information.

Persuasion theorists recently examined compliance within an IAT context. For instance, Hendrickson and Goei (2009) analyzed the relationship between interpersonal favors and date requests. One of their hypotheses was that female participants would experience increased levels of attraction for men who provided them a drink. Furthermore, researchers posited that one implication of increased attraction would be improved chances for compliance with an impending date request. In other words, researchers maintained that perceptions of physical appearance would function as a mediating variable in compliance requests.

Participants in the Hendrickson and Goei study watched a series of videotaped vignettes in order to test IAT's claims on perception and physical attraction. The vignettes featured confederates role-playing a 90-second interaction at a rented-out bar filled with extras. The various scenes featured social interactions during which a free drink was either offered or not offered to a female confederate. Next, participants viewed the interaction and rated indebtedness, compliance, and physical attraction. Results indicated that free drink favors resulted in more positive assessments of source attraction. That is, this finding provided additional empirical support for the IAT axiom which suggests positive social interactions induce greater perceptions of physical attractiveness.

Subsequent research on IAT has examined the correlation between perceptions of physical attraction and the absence of social interaction. For example, a recent computer-mediated communication (CMC) study exposed research participants to the Facebook pictures of attractive and unattractive strangers to determine if physical appearance affected the probability of initiating a social interaction (Wang, Moon, Kwon, Evans, & Stefanone, 2010). Findings suggested that participants were more likely to initiate friendships with strangers who displayed attractive photos in comparison to participants who displayed unattractive photos. In terms of implications for IAT, this study demonstrated that physical attraction influenced social interactions in the same way that social interactions influenced attraction.

Specialized investigations have extended IAT into different academic disciplines. Research by Griffin, Polit, and Byrne (2007) found that physical attractiveness did not influence social interactions in a medical setting. Specifically, they reported that nurses treated all patients similarly regardless of physical attractiveness. Therefore, this finding

indicated that the relationship between physical attraction and social interaction is contextually dependent. Put another way, IAT is vulnerable to the social environment.

Campbell (2005) applied IAT outcomes to retirement care facilities. One of the main goals of this report was to develop a specialized model of attraction that illustrated the relationship between attractiveness and the treatment of nursing home residents. In order to accomplish this objective, Campbell cited the fundamental IAT premise that suggests positive social interactions result in greater perceptions of physical appearance. Based off of case study data, she concluded that physical appearance and communication behaviors worked in tandem to impact perceptions of attractiveness, approaches to care, quality of care, and client outcomes. Stated differently, both central variables of IAT (physical appearance and social interaction) were fundamental elements in her attraction model.

To briefly summarize, IAT maintains that social interactions influence perceptions of physical attractiveness. The majority of subsequent research on IAT has offered support for the fundamental axioms of this communication theory. As previously mentioned, one of the central roles of IAT in the present study is to provide a conceptual framework for examining whether a single conversation can impact evaluations of physical beauty. While IAT provides a solid foundation for understanding the implications of multiple social interactions, it is also critical to understand how constructs such as impression formation, positive communication, and negative communication function in the courtship arena. As such, this paper now discusses each of these variables and their correlation with interpersonal attraction.

The Significance of Impressions When Strangers First Meet

Social scientific literature has thoroughly examined the salience of first impressions. In terms of a formal definition, an impression can be conceptualized as the “perceiver’s cognitive representation of another person” (Hamilton, Katz, & Leirer, 1980, p. 1051). Scholars have examined the function of impression formation in a variety of different communication contexts ranging from public communication in an educational environment (Kelley, 1950) to applied interpersonal settings involving personal counseling (Brown, 1970). While the majority of extant literature devoted to impressions has taken place in the niche of behavioral psychology, some studies have sought to marry the concepts of impression formation and interpersonal attraction within the world of interdisciplinary scholarship.

Numerous investigations have examined how nonverbal communication affects impression formation and perceptions of physical appearance. For instance, Ambady and Rosenthal (1993) reported that independent observers accurately predicted how students would evaluate instructors from watching the nonverbal behaviors of a teacher in a brief video clip. Moreover, this study also suggested that “students’ ratings of teachers were somewhat influenced by the physical appearance of the teachers” (p. 435). Along this line, subsequent research by Ambady, Hallahan, and Conner (1999) indicated that participants could correctly evaluate the sexual orientation of strangers at better than chance levels from merely watching a 10-second video. Taken together, these empirical investigations suggested that impressions based on physical appearance are made almost instantaneously via observing thin slices of nonverbal behavior.

A classic study by Zuckerman, Miyake, and Hodgins (1991) sought to determine whether a correlation existed between physical attractiveness and vocal attractiveness. They hypothesized that impressions of attractiveness in one channel (i.e. auditory or visual) would influence perceptions of attractiveness in the other channel. Stated differently, they posited that individuals would infer an overall impression of attractiveness based on exposure to a single variable. In terms of their methodology, participants were exposed to either a facial picture or the voice of another individual. Participants were then asked to rate the attractiveness of the individual on the opposite measure. Results indicated that favorable impressions on physical attractiveness correlated with favorable impressions of vocal attractiveness and vice versa. Thus, it appears that vocal features have the ability to affect perceptions of physical attractiveness.

Related scholarship on impressions and attraction has examined whether communication influences individual perceptions. For example, a study by Wyer, Budesheim, and Lambert (1990) claimed that speakers who described others favorably were more likely to leave a positive impression about her or himself. Comparable research by Gawronski and Walther (2008) indicated “the evaluations endorsed by a given source can recursively transfer to the source, such that people tend to form positive attitudes toward sources who like other individuals” (p. 1288). Moreover, Ames, Bianchi, and Magee (2010) argued that speakers who talked positively of others were more likely to be seen as giving off a likeable demeanor. As a whole, the aforementioned scholarship has yielded evidence that liking can occur via positive impressions of another individual.

Extant literature that exclusively focuses on negative first impressions and attraction is rare. In fact, most studies such as Rosen, Cheever, Cummings, and Felt (2008) discussed the unflattering aspects of negative first impressions as an afterthought to the reported findings on positive first impressions. However, scholars like Denrell (2005) have conducted entire investigations devoted to the effects of negative first impressions. With regard to latter, Denrell found evidence of a recency effect, during which the negative effects of first impressions diminished as a result of continued positive social interactions. Put another way, initial negative impressions start subsiding as feelings of liking for another individual continue to increase.

A novel empirical investigation of impression formation by Clark, Klesges, and Neimeyer (1992) sought to determine whether smoking status impacted initial judgments of interpersonal attractiveness. Researchers proposed that participants would have more negative first impressions of individuals who smoked in a videotaped vignette in comparison to others who did not smoke. Results suggested that both male and female participants reported higher levels of interpersonal attraction for the nonsmoking models. Additionally, findings indicated that smoking female models were rated as less healthy and less likable. Stated simply, this study nicely demonstrated that negative impressions could result in lower ratings of physical attractiveness.

In summary, the existing literature focused on initial impressions and liking has presented straightforward insight on how individuals assess perceptions of interpersonal attraction. First, the literature suggested that impressions based on physical appearance are made very quickly via thin slices of behavior. Second, prior literature suggested that nonverbal communication commonly impacts impressions of source attractiveness.

Finally, scholarship indicated that negative impressions resulted in decreased amounts of social attractiveness. Now that an overview of impressions and attraction has been undertaken, this paper now examines the relationship between positive communication and interpersonal attraction.

Positive Communication and Attraction for Others

The broad umbrella of positive communication has been regularly investigated in previous literature devoted to developing and established romantic relationships. For instance, Burgoon and LePoire (1993) reported that individuals who engaged in a pleasant communication style were rated favorably on measures of credibility, positive expectancies, and source attractiveness. Subsequent research on positive messages indicated that happy relational partners engaged in “more frequent and special types of pleasurable communication” (Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Schlee, Monson, Ehrenshaft, & Heyman, 1998, p. 208). According to Knapp, Ellis, and Williams (1980), positive communication in potentially romantic and romantic relationships changed over time as individuals offered more personalized positive comments after escaping banal conversation. When taken together, these studies illustrated that individuals are attracted to pleasant interlocutors, favor pleasurable communication, and consciously alter their positive communication behaviors when appropriate.

There are at least four types of positive communication that have the ability to influence feelings of interpersonal attraction. First, research has suggested that compliments are an effective tool for strategically building interpersonal rapport (Greer & Buss, 1994). Along this line, Aronson and Linder (1965) found that participants rated confederates as most attractive in experimental conditions during which the confederates

spoke about other participants in a complimentary fashion. Moreover, Grant, Fabrigar, and Lim (2010) reported that compliments resulted in increased amounts of liking for a message sender in the arena of interpersonal compliance research. Indeed, these empirical reports offered strong documentation that compliments are a regular staple in interpersonal attraction scholarship.

One of the more noteworthy studies on compliments and interpersonal attraction was conducted by social scientists Katz and Beach (2000). In this particular investigation, researchers sought to determine whether potential romantic partners reacted favorably to individuals who offered both supportive and enhancing comments. That is, one of the goals of this study was to determine what effects these examples of positive communication had on other individuals. Results indicated that participants reported high amounts of initial attraction for individuals who offered both enhancing and verifying statements. Therefore, it appears that compliments can be used in conjunction with other positive comments as a means to effectively increase romantic desirability.

Comparable research from Wildermuth, Vogl-Bauer, and Rivera (2006) evaluated the salience of compliments as communication strategy for initiating a romantic relationship. As part of their methodology, researchers employed a content analysis in order to determine the prevalence of complimentary communication in initial interactions. Results indicated that complimenting others was a tactic that individuals frequently used to build rapport with a potential romantic partner. However, since the impressions of compliment receivers were not ascertained in this investigation, one who embraces the use of complimentary communication to build interpersonal attraction should proceed with care.

A multi-faceted study by Doohan and Manusov (2004) examined relational outcomes and the most common types of compliments. In terms of the latter, findings indicated that flattering statements about the physical appearance of another individual occurred with the greatest frequency. With regard to the former, results suggested that complimentary behavior was positively correlated with perceptions of relational satisfaction. Stated simply, we like dyadic partners who compliment us. Additionally, researchers reported that individuals prefer emotional compliments (e.g. expressing feelings about being happy with the other person) over positive comments related to her or his physical appearance. Although this study offered additional evidence that compliments are omnipresent in social interactions, other research has investigated the correlation between attraction and other types of positive communication.

A second type of positive communication that has been heavily researched in the arena of interpersonal attraction is humorous messages. For example, Fraley and Aron (2004) reported that individuals felt closer to interpersonal strangers who used humor in a first meeting in comparison to individuals who did not use humorous communication during an initial interaction. Further support for this claim emerged in the work of Wanzer, Booth-Butterfield, and Booth-Butterfield (1996) who suggested:

The more entertaining and humorous communicators are, the more they should be desired as social partners. Certainly humor isn't the only communicative transaction occurring in relationships, but especially at a relatively superficial or acquaintance-level stages of relationships, successful humor enactments probably serve to make the communication more rewarding. (p. 46)

Perhaps the most intriguing finding from the Wanzer and colleagues study was that individuals who enacted humorous messages were rated as more socially attractive. Indeed, both of these studies tacitly illustrated that humor is a common type of positive communication that is especially regarded when strangers first meet.

Newer research on humorous messages and interpersonal attraction examined how these constructs work together to influence mate selection. For instance, McGee and Shevlin (2009) hypothesized that individuals who possessed a good sense of humor would be rated high on measures of physical appearance and mate suitability. As proposed, this hypothesis was supported as targets who were rated as having a good sense of humor were also rated high on aspects of attractiveness and suitability. In addition, it is also interesting to note that males rated females with an average or no sense of humor relatively high on both measures. Thus, this finding infers that males place less emphasis on selecting a potential mate who is regarded as humorous.

A specialized investigation by Kuiper and Leite (2010) focused on whether different humor types had the ability to influence liking for another. Specifically, researchers proposed that individuals who employed affiliative and self-enhancing humor approaches would be received more positively than participants who embraced aggressive and self-defeating humor types. Findings suggested that participants who utilized affiliative and self-enhancing humorous communication were seen as more friendly than those who did not. Interestingly, this study also highlighted that not all types of humor positively influenced a dyadic partner.

A study by Weber, Goodboy, and Cayanus (2010) sought to investigate how humorous flirtation would be perceived during an initial interaction. Participants in this

investigation watched a series of simulated interactions during which male participants initiated a conversation with a female stranger via either a humorous attempt, direct compliment, direct introduction, flippant line, or through a third-party introduction. Next, a modified version of the conversational appropriateness scale (Canary & Spitzberg, 1987) was administered to all participants. Comparatively speaking, attempts at humor were rated second to last in terms of their appropriateness and effectiveness as an opening gambit with a potential romantic partner. Therefore, individuals who use humor as an opening line to build interpersonal rapport might want to caveat emptor.

Additional literature focused on humorous messages as a form of positive communication and interpersonal attraction sought to evaluate long-term preferences in mate selection. For instance, Lundy, Tan, and Cunningham (1998) reported that women rated humorous men as more desirable in terms of consideration for a serious relationship or marriage. Comparable scholarship by Gueguen (2010) extended previous research in suggesting:

Humor for women may perhaps be interpreted as a personal level trait related to intelligence; intelligence is an important trait in evaluating the probability of obtaining higher status and success in financial prospects. This effect could explain why men used humor more frequently than women because the lack of humor is associated with less interest in the female's mental activity. Such a lack of interest might have decreased the opportunity for men to find a possible partner. (p.152)

Gueguen also uncovered evidence that men who employed humor during interpersonal interactions were viewed as highly attractive potential mates. When examined collectively, the majority of these studies demonstrated that humorous messages are a salient type of positive communication that frequently induce feelings of interpersonal attraction.

A third type of positive communication that can affect interpersonal attraction is self-disclosure. Initial empirical research on this phenomenon indicated that individuals who disclose personal information about her or himself are more likely to be perceived as attractive and well-adjusted socially (Cozby, 1973). The theoretical groundwork on self-disclosure was also sowed during this time as scholarship suggested that sharing personal information with others helped facilitate the development of personal relationships (Altman & Taylor, 1973) and alleviate feelings of uncertainty (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Simply put, this literature laid a strong foundation for understanding the correlation between self-disclosure and interpersonal relationship development.

Two empirical studies by Banikiotes and colleagues nicely illustrate the correlation between interpersonal attraction and self-disclosure. In the first study, Banikiotes and Daher (1976) reported that individuals experienced increased amounts of interpersonal attraction for participants who self-disclosed similar amounts, similar types, and similar levels of personal information. Less than a decade later, Winum and Banikiotes (1983) investigated the correlation between self-disclosure flexibility and interpersonal attraction. In other words, they were interested in whether attraction was positively correlated with the ability to consciously alter self-disclosure tendencies. Findings indicated that individuals who were flexible with their self-disclosure were seen

as more interpersonally attractive. As a collective whole, these investigations suggested that participants are attracted to individuals who share similar information, disclose at a comparable level (i.e. high, medium, low), and modify their self-disclosure as the situation requires.

Additional investigations examined impressions and how different genders perceive the attractiveness of self-disclosers. For instance, scholarship has suggested that high amounts of appropriate self-disclosure resulted in positive first impressions on measures of social attractiveness (Clark, Dockum, Hazeu, Huang, Luo, Ramsey, & Spyrou, 2004). Moreover, findings from this investigation indicated that both males and females believed they were liked more when they increased their self-disclosure. While it has been stated that everyone's favorite subject to talk about is themselves, this study was unique because it inferred that some individuals believe self-disclosing can be used as a tool for increasing her or his social attractiveness.

Finally, flirtatious nonverbal communication represents a fourth type of positive communication behavior that is often investigated by interpersonal attraction researchers. Along this line, McCormick (1979) reported that females demonstrated positive body language as a means to telegraph interpersonal attraction. With regard to specific nonverbal behaviors, Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1970) indicated that smiles and eyebrow flashes were positive communication behaviors that females regularly displayed during courtship. Complementing these studies, Burgoon, Manusov, Mineo, and Hale (1985) found that an interlocutor was rated more positively in terms of attraction and credibility when she or he demonstrated average or high amounts of gazing during an interpersonal

interaction. Taken together, these studies demonstrated that subtle nonverbal cues are a strong indicator of interpersonal attraction.

A novel study by Clore, Wiggins, and Itkin (1975) sought to draw comparisons between positive and negative nonverbal behaviors in terms of their effect on interpersonal attraction. With regard to perceptions, they hypothesized that participants would observe that males would experience greater attraction for females who demonstrated cold and then warm nonverbal behaviors in comparison to females who consistently displayed warm behaviors. In terms of their methodology, researchers compiled a list of the most frequently employed warm and cold behaviors in the world of interpersonal attraction. Participants were then randomly assigned to watch videotapes in which a female demonstrated either cold and then warm nonverbal behaviors or only warm nonverbal behaviors. As hypothesized, results indicated that participants viewed interpersonal attraction as more prevalent in the cold and warm condition in contrast to the warm only condition.

Other studies on the relationship between flirtatious nonverbal communication and attraction have been conducted in applied settings. For instance, Moore (1985) studied specific types of playful gestures and movements at a singles bar, university library, snack bar, and at a university center for women. One of the main findings from her investigation was that women were significantly more likely than men to use nonverbal behaviors to demonstrate attraction. In a related study, McCormick and Jones (1989) conducted participant observation of flirtatious nonverbal behaviors in bars, lounges, and nightclubs. Results suggested that women were more likely to engage in attraction-enticing behaviors such as exhibiting positive facial expressions, grooming

gestures, hair stroking, and briefly touching others in comparison to men. Thus, it appears that women embrace nonverbal channels as a means to covertly telegraph interpersonal attraction.

In summary, positive communication shares a strong connection with increased amounts of interpersonal attraction. Prior research has identified compliments, humor, self-disclosure, and flirtatious nonverbal behaviors as four specific types of positive communication that commonly result in additional liking for another. However, with the good also comes the bad. As such, this document now discusses how negative communication can adversely affect feelings of interpersonal attraction.

Negative Communication and Attraction for Others

The study of negative communication in close interpersonal relationships has been a topic of interest in several academic disciplines. For instance, Sher and Baucom (1993) reported that negative communication in distressed marital relationships resulted in increased levels of interpersonal dissonance. Within the arena of family psychology, Corenelius, Shorey, and Beebe (2010) found that a strong correlation existed between negative communication and aggressive behaviors in romantic relationships. Moreover, behavioral psychologists suggested that depressed females are more likely to engage in negative communication if they regularly maintain a sad emotional state (Rehman, Ginting, Karimiha, & Goodnight, 2010). Taken together, these studies imply that negative messages produce detrimental interpersonal outcomes.

Communication researchers have also investigated negative communication. For example, Vangelisti and Crumley (1998) indicated that acquiescent responses such as apologizing and crying were common retorts to negative communication in close

interpersonal relationships. Comparable research by Sanford (2007) claimed that expressions of anger during a disagreement resulted in increased amounts of negative communication. Similarly, Domingue and Mollen (2009) reported that couples who had insecure attachments to partners were more likely to avoid and withdraw than were relationship partners who demonstrated secure attachment styles. Thus, it appears that negative communication encourages damaging feedback from a fellow interlocutor.

There are at least three specific types of negative communication behaviors that are regularly investigated in the world of interpersonal attraction. First, deceptive communication has indicated that physically attractive potential mates are more likely to be lied to in comparison to less attractive potential mates (Rowatt, Cunningham, & Druen 1999). Similarly, Toma and Hancock (2010) investigated the role of physical appearance and deception in online dating. Results from their study indicated that less attractive participants were more likely to be dishonest about variables related to age, height, and weight. In terms of implications for the present research, these studies put forth evidence that deceptive messages have a negative effect on interpersonal attraction development.

One of the more engaging studies that evaluated deception and physical attractiveness emerged from DePaulo, Tang, and Stone (1987). One of the main themes that guided their research was whether physically attractive individuals had more skill at detecting deception in comparison to individuals who were not as physically attractive. Findings from their investigation indicated that participants who were rated as high in attractiveness were able to detect lies told to other highly attractive participants more frequently than individuals who were rated as moderately attractive. Therefore, based on

the results of this study it appears that similarity in attractiveness corresponds with the ability to identify deceptive communication.

A second type of negative communication behavior that is especially prevalent in interpersonal attraction research is ingratiation. While many individuals would characterize ingratiation behavior as the evil cousin of complimentary communication, a more formal definition of ingratiation would be “the act of giving esteem to another with the view in mind of obtaining rewards or benefits from the recipient” (Berscheid & Walster, 1969, p. 62). That is, ingratiation communicators speak favorably of others as a means to strategically promote their own self-interests in forthcoming social interactions. As the following paragraphs will illustrate, the concepts of ingratiation and interpersonal attraction have shared a relatively prosperous yet sordid empirical history.

A classic study by Jones, Jones, and Gergen (1963) was one of the first investigations to evaluate the correlation between ingratiation communication and interpersonal attraction. One of the major implications that emerged in this study was a preliminary model of how ingratiation affected attractiveness. Moreover, Jones and associates also reported that individuals who were rated as high in ingratiation communication were eventually perceived as less attractive. In contrast, individuals who use ingratiation messages less frequently were eventually perceived as more attractive. In addition to proposing a general model on ingratiation and attractiveness, another central finding from this study was that participants liked other individuals less in conditions where participants believed that an ulterior motive was present. Stated differently, individuals were received less favorably if they were perceived as an ingratiation communicator.

A separate study on attraction and ingratiation conducted by Pandey and Bohra (1986) focused on evaluating these constructs in a simulated organizational context. That is, researchers were interested in whether praising a superior, supporting the views of a person who was in a position of power, asserting the significance of an influential individual, or changing attitudes to match those of prominent superiors would affect feelings of liking. They hypothesized that witnesses to ingratiating behaviors would be more interpersonally attracted to individuals who communicated in a non-ingratiatory style. Indeed, results indicated that participants viewed non-ingratiators more favorably and socially attractive in comparison to their ingratiating counterparts.

Two investigations have examined ingratiation and attraction during the courtship stage of romantic relationships. In one study, Stretch and Figley (1980) investigated whether ingratiation could significantly predict feelings of interpersonal attraction for a potential mate. Results from their study indicated that ingratiation did not statistically predict ratings of attractiveness. A second study by Plesser (1995) focused on how men used ingratiatory behaviors as a means to build rapport with potential romantic partners. Findings from this doctoral dissertation indicated that men claimed similar attitudes with attractive women in order to promote feelings of liking. Moreover, this study suggested that men rarely engaged in ingratiatory behaviors in the presence of less attractive females. In sum, these empirical pursuits found evidence that ingratiatory behavior is especially common when one is desirous of attracting a potential mate.

A study by Kahn and Young (1973) added a nice touch to the extant literature on ingratiation and interpersonal attraction because it employed an unorthodox methodology. In fact, this study was one of the first to empirically test ingratiation

outside of a highly controlled laboratory setting. Instead, participants in this study utilized ingratiation tactics in a “relatively free social situation” (p. 580) that involved a 15-minute discussion with a stranger. Findings suggested that ingratiation participants were statistically unsuccessful at getting an interpersonal partner to like her or him in comparison to the control group. Hence, it appears that using verbal ingratiation to strategically build attraction can be a daunting challenge.

Finally, negative expectancy violations represent a third type of negative communication behavior that is of regular interest in interpersonal attraction research. For example, Afifi and Burgoon (2000) investigated how various amounts of negative expectancy violations affected uncertainty and source attractiveness. They concluded that, “attraction is more strongly affected by the violation valence than the violation’s impact on uncertainty, the valence of prior information, or the pure magnitude of the violation” (p. 227-228). Interestingly, they go on to assert that, “individuals behaving unpleasantly during the initial portion of the interaction were able to ‘repair’ their attractiveness by positively violating observers’ expectations later in the interaction” (p. 228). Stated differently, negative violations hurt perceptions of attraction yet are redeemable via positive violations.

A decade earlier Kellerman and Reynolds (1990) analyzed whether negative violations affected our desire to associate with other individuals. As part of their methodology, they utilized a series of unconventional negative violations including an individual wearing a suit to an amusement park. One of their conclusions was that strong negative violations resulted in other individuals judging the violator in a non-flattering manner. Moreover, they also reported that individuals were less desirous of conversing

with those participants who significantly violated social decorum. Thus, it seems that negative violations hinder not only attraction but also our motivation to engage in future interactions with negative expectancy violators.

Empirical investigations by Burgoon and associates have focused on how nonverbal violations affect ratings of interpersonal attraction. For instance, Burgoon and Hale (1988) sought to extend prior research via conducting a social experiment on how nonverbal expectancies impacted attraction for another individual. They hypothesized that significant violations on measures of nonverbal immediacy would result in less attraction during social interaction. While statistically significant results did not emerge for this hypothesis, a separate study on specific nonverbal expectancies by Burgoon, Coker, and Coker (1986) found that individuals who violated normal eye gazing expectancies were viewed as less interpersonally attractive. In terms of implications from these Burgoon studies, perhaps procedural differences influenced whether these nonverbal expectancies produce lessened amounts of attraction.

Other empirical research devoted to specific types of negative communicative behaviors and interpersonal attraction can be categorized as choppy. For instance, a crude study by Stapleton, Nelson, Franconere, and Tedeschi (1975) reported that attraction for other individuals decreased as the number of electric shocks administered by a fellow interpersonal partner increased. Stanley, Markman, and Whitton (2002) claimed that negative communication experiences such as invalidation and escalation were positively correlated with lessened amounts of relationship satisfaction and feelings of liking for another. Similarly, Gottman (1999) suggested that liking for a relational partner decreased as critical, contempt, and defensive messages increased amongst dyadic

partners. Back in the communication laboratory, McCroskey, Richmond, Daly, and Cox (1975) found that as feelings of interpersonal attraction decreased, levels of communication apprehension increased. Despite the fact that all of these studies employed different methodologies, one commonality that emerged in most of these investigations was that a strong inverse relationship existed between negative communication and feelings of interpersonal attraction.

Summary of Positive and Negative Communication

The extant literature devoted to positive and negative communication has yielded consistent results. Positive communication has shared a strong correlation with increases in social satisfaction and interpersonal attraction. In contrast, negative communication tends to generate feelings of dislike and interpersonal animosity. Even though these results make logical sense, all of the previously cited studies were valuable as each offered specific conclusions concerning communication in close interpersonal contexts.

One of the major limitations of positive and negative communication scholarship is that comparatively few studies have looked at how these diverse phenomena function when strangers first meet. Moreover, the majority of the investigations that have examined positive and negative communication during initial interactions have done so in tightly controlled laboratory settings. Thus, there is a need to further study these communication processes in a more naturalistic context. Recently, a new methodology emerged that is suited for studying how positive and negative communication impact interpersonal attraction after an initial interaction. Along this line, this paper highlights an attraction-relevant methodology for assessing how communication is correlated with perceptions of physical attractiveness.

Background on Speed-dating

Speed-dating is a romantic matchmaking process that allows individuals to go on several short dates in a limited amount of time. While the exact origins of this cutting-edge phenomenon are debatable, most sources credit Rabbi Yaacov Deyo as being the founder of this innovative dating paradigm (Deyo & Deyo, 2002; Finkel, Eastwick, & Matthews, 2007; Houser, Horan, & Furler, 2007). Deyo, a Harvard graduate, first introduced his round-robin dating system in southern California during the late 1990s. In its original format, speed-dating provided local Jewish singles an efficient means to quickly assess interpersonal attraction.

National interest in speed-dating started to flourish in the early 2000s. According to Finkel, Eastwick, and Matthews (2007) the popularity of speed-dating can be partially attributed to unique portrayals on popular television shows such as *Sex and the City* and *Frasier*. In addition, several mainstream media programs have also depicted speed-dating in a favorable light. For instance, in 2004 CBS journalist Bob Simon reported on *60 Minutes II* that “these dating systems work so well because the shame of looking for love is disappearing” (Fager, 2006). Indeed, speed-dating has become successful because it has bonded with a new generation of daters who embrace less conventional approaches to courtship.

The popularity of speed-dating has continued to grow more than a decade into the new millennium. For example, in 2010 pre-dating.com[®] advertised that thousands of singles attend monthly events in over 190 different cities across the United States and Canada. In terms of global considerations, speed-dating has become increasingly popular in eastern cultures like Japan, Singapore, and China (“History of Speed-Dating,” 2010).

In fact, MacFarquhar (2006) reported that the matrimonial banquet (the speed-dating event) was one of the most popular events at the Islamic Society of North America's 2006 annual convention. In another specialized investigation, Jones (2009) found that speed-dating sessions were used to enhance the social experiences of learning disabled individuals. Although these reports demonstrated the pervasiveness of speed-dating, one question that naturally emerges is: How does speed-dating work?

Speed-Dating Procedures

The speed-dating process is comprised of three basic stages. First, participants are required to pre-register with a commercial dating agency prior to speed-dating sessions. Event registration normally occurs online several days in advance. As part of the registration process, speed-dating participants are required to pay a fee. This initial enrollment cost can range anywhere from 30 to 80 dollars depending on location and the type of speed-dating service provided ("History of Speed-Dating," 2010). For example, participation in specialized speed-dating events that involve racially specific, age controlled, or same-sex participants costs more than standard speed-dating sessions ("History of Speed-Dating," 2010). Once enrollment is completed, e-mail notification is sent to daters along with information regarding an upcoming event. Participants can then accept or decline an invitation to partake in an upcoming session.

The second stage of the speed-dating process occurs at the actual event. Upon entrance, event organizers immediately separate male and female daters as a means to eliminate happenstance encounters before the event begins. This initial separation ensures that all participants secure equal face time with other speed-dating partners. Participants are then assigned a number or given a nametag for identification purposes. Next, event

organizers distribute evaluation forms to both male and females. Finally, female participants are seated at a series of small personal tables and the event is set to begin.

The formal speed-dating process starts when male participants are brought in the room and matched with their first female dating partner. The length of the interaction and subsequent interactions is predetermined; yet, all mini-dates occur for an equivalent amount of time. The event coordinator rings a bell after a predetermined amount of time has passed (generally three to eight minutes) in order to let male participants know it is time for them to rotate to the next female dater. In terms of conversation, participants are allowed to discuss a wide range of topics including both impersonal and intimate information. While the total number of participants at a speed-dating event can vary, the majority of sessions involve 14-24 total participants (“Frequently Asked Speed-Dating Questions,” 2011). Finally, the speed-dating event concludes after all male and female participants have had a chance to interact.

The last stage of the speed-dating process occurs after the event has concluded. Upon event completion, all participants fill out evaluation forms to identify which dating partners they would like to have contact with in the future. The evaluation forms may be physically submitted or entered online depending on the type of speed-dating agency. For most events, there is no limit on the number of potential suitors a person can identify as a match. Event organizers then review the evaluation forms to look for matches. Lastly, within two to four days speed-daters are informed only of their matches and are provided with contact information. Participants then have the autonomy to contact, not contact, or date any of their matches.

The evolution of speed-dating has both academic and non-academic implications. One non-scholarly result is that speed-dating affects how love-seeking strangers communicate in certain contexts. As Deyo and Deyo (2002) explain:

SpeedDating™ offers a smarter and faster way to date to find a lifelong relationship. Given the proper tools – such as knowing which questions to ask before the dating process begins and as the relationship unfolds – you can quickly and more confidently assess a relationship. (p. xiv)

That is, strategic communication impacts relational outcomes. Moreover, another non-academic benefit of speed-dating is that it provides love-seekers an efficient way to quickly interact with potential dating prospects (Deyo & Deyo, 2002). Put simply, speed-dating saves time.

One important communication benefit of speed-dating is that it eliminates certain types of rejection feedback (Finkel & Eastwick, 2008). For instance, the formal structure of speed-dating eradicates uncomfortable verbal conversations that naturally ensue when one partner declines a date request. Instead, speed-dating provides participants an easy way to offer negative feedback in a non-direct, less hurtful manner that does not involve face-to-face conversation. In fact, speed-dating participants never directly communicate their dating disinterest to non-matches. In addition to these communication implications, speed-dating also provides several benefits for researchers.

The restricted structure of speed-dating yields several scholarly advantages. First, it allows attraction scholars a controlled means to understand interpersonal dynamics

(Finkel & Eastwick, 2008a). As social scientists Finkel, Eastwick, and Matthews (2007) succinctly stated:

Speed-dating provides a promising methodological paradigm for studying initial romantic attraction and early relationship development because it enables investigators to assess a large battery of background information about individuals before they meet one another, to introduce them to one another in a controlled laboratory setting (the speed-dating event), and to follow them after the laboratory session to examine relationship dynamics over the ensuing days, weeks, and beyond. (p. 151)

In terms of other research benefits, Finkel and associates (2007) have argued that speed-dating methodologies offer researchers strong ecological validity, efficient observational benefits, and numerous ways to manipulate experimental variables. When taken together, it can easily be seen that speed-dating offers both academic and non-academic benefits.

Empirical Studies On Speed-Dating

Several contemporary scholars have used speed-dating to gain additional insight on interpersonal attraction. For example, a recent study by Place, Todd, Penke, and Asendorpf (2009) focused on whether independent observers could accurately predict romantic interest in interpersonal dyads. In order to test their hypotheses, Place and colleagues had participants watch videos of strangers meeting for the first time at a speed-dating event. The results from their investigation indicated that participants could better identify male interest during speed-dating than female interest. Nevertheless,

research participants were able to accurately predict both male and female interest at above-chance levels.

A similar study by Wilson, Cousins, and Fink (2006) was also devoted to predicting speed-date outcomes. In this investigation, Wilson and associates had speed-daters complete a 25-item compatibility measure before attending a speed-dating event. Correlation analyses indicated that participants who had similar compatibility scores were more likely to either request a second date or desire friendship. Additionally, results suggested that age was a strong predictor of speed-dating outcomes. That is, findings indicated that both males and females favored potential relationships in which the female was younger than the male.

Comparable speed-dating research by Todd, Penke, Fasolo, and Lenton (2007) had participants complete a pre-event questionnaire. One of the main goals of this study was to assess whether stated mate preferences accurately predicted second dates. In other words, researchers were curious if speed-daters would select partners who possessed qualities they identified as most important before the event. They found that pre-event preferences did not affect selections for a second date. Moreover, Todd and associates reported that men were more inclined to select physically attractive women, while women were more likely to choose men who shared similar levels of self-perceived attractiveness.

Two separate journal articles analyzed participant data from a large commercial speed-dating firm. In their first study, Kurzban and Weeden (2005) reported that facial attractiveness, body physique, and taller stature were strong predictors of male desirability. On the other hand, male participants viewed females who possessed

attractive facial features, a fit body, and a younger age as most desirable. Subsequent research by Kurzban and Weeden (2007) indicated that pre-event racial preferences were most predictive of whom individuals eventually chose for a second date. This empirical finding resulted in subsequent scholarship looking more closely at the function of race at speed-dating events.

The racial component of speed-dating has been analyzed in numerous contexts. For example, Fisman, Iyengar, Kamenica, and Simonson (2008) evaluated racial preferences and the ethnic background of speed-daters. In an effort to improve generalizability, Fisman and colleagues employed a diverse sample of relatively older graduate students. Additionally, their data was collected from 17 speed-dating sessions that occurred over a rather extensive two-year period. One of their main findings was that women preferred dating racially similar partners more so than men. Moreover, some empirical support was found for the claim that participants who grew up in non-racially segregated zip codes were less likely to date outside their race. Or, as Fishman and associates concisely stated, “familiarity can decrease tolerance” (p. 18).

Prior research by Fisman, Iyengar, Kamenica, and Simonson (2006) concentrated on the socio-economic backgrounds of speed-daters. Interestingly, Fisman and colleagues reported that females valued speed-dating partners who came from affluent neighborhoods and were perceived as intelligent. In contrast, findings suggested that males did not appreciate women whose intelligence was perceived as greater than their own. Additionally, men were not inclined to choose second dates with women who were perceived as relatively ambitious. Instead, further support was found for the claim that men were more concerned with physical appearance than other attributes.

Newer studies have replicated and extended previous research on mate preferences in speed-dating. For instance, Finkel and Eastwick (2008) hypothesized that men would choose physically attractive partners, while females would prefer speed-dating participants who possessed increased earnings potential. They also posited that males would demonstrate greater pursuit of partners who were viewed as more physically attractive and that women would aggressively pursue participants with strong earnings prospects after a speed-dating event concluded. While no statistically significant results emerged for the latter claims regarding relationship pursuit, Finkel and Eastwick did report further evidence that physical attractiveness in women and strong earnings potential for men were both positively correlated with romantic interest during an initial interaction.

Eastwick and Finkel (2008b) also examined how interpersonal attachment affected speed-dating outcomes. In order to measure partner attachment, researchers had participants complete a pre-event questionnaire that measured anxiety, reassurance, and the perceived interest of a potential romantic partner. They hypothesized that participants who scored higher on the partner-specific anxiety scale (PSAnx) would be more likely to initiate the first contact with matches after the speed-dating event was finished. Indeed, results indicated that participants who reported higher levels of partner attachment anxiety were more likely to send the first message to matches after a first meeting. When examined collectively, the empirical studies of Finkel and Eastwick are influential because they were the first to report participant behavior after a speed-dating event concluded. Moreover, their research has been particularly important because it has acknowledged the importance of interpersonal dynamics in a speed-dating context.

Some experimental studies have examined the type of relationship that speed-daters pursue. For example, an investigation by Provost, Kormos, Kosakowski, and Quinsey (2006) evaluated the correlation between participant openness to sexual experiences and the type of relationship that speed-daters desired. They found that females who were not open to having numerous sexual experiences were more likely to pick less masculine males for long-term relationship purposes. In contrast, females who were comparatively liberal about past and future sexual behaviors were more interested in highly-masculine men for short-term relationships. Although the findings from this investigation indicated that relational intentions might influence preferences, other studies have looked at self-characteristics and their connection with interpersonal attraction.

Extant literature has indicated that personality attributes influence interpersonal attraction at speed-dating events. For instance, a recent study by Luo and Zhang (2009) focused on reciprocity, similarity, and the self-reported personality characteristics of speed-daters. While little empirical support was found for the value of reciprocity and similarity, study results indicated that significant correlations existed between several personality features and attraction. Most notably, Luo and Zhang reported a positive correlation existed between interpersonal attraction and women who were extroverted, open, and younger. In other words, females who possessed these characteristics were more likely to report feelings of interpersonal attraction while speed-dating than were females who did not possess these characteristics.

Technology scholarship has analyzed the relationship between online dates and offline speed-dates. A recent study by Frost, Chance, Norton, and Ariely (2008)

randomly assigned participants to either a control group that reviewed online dater profiles or an experimental group that had participants go on virtual dates during which they shared real-time messages with online dating partners. Once completed, participants in both conditions attended a speed-dating event, which allowed researchers to draw comparisons between the two groups. Results indicated that participants who virtual dated online had more favorable reactions after meeting face-to-face at speed-dating than did participants in the control condition who merely examined online profiles before meeting at the speed-dating event.

Other empirical studies devoted to speed-dating have analyzed communicative functions. Most notably, Houser, Horan, and Furler (2008) recently evaluated how communication impacted speed-dating results. They hypothesized that interpersonal attraction and nonverbal immediacy would affect speed-dating decisions. In an effort to further examine predicted outcome value theory (Sannafrank, 1986), they collected data from 157 speed-daters over a six-month period. Correlation analyses indicated that a positive correlation existed between predicted outcome value judgments and both interpersonal attraction and nonverbal immediacy. That is, the ability to convey positive social characteristics and nonverbal immediacy were likely to affect decisions about whether participants desired a second date.

Another study by Houser, Horan, and Furler (2007) examined verbal and nonverbal communication during speed-dating. One of the goals of this investigation was to evaluate the initial assessments that participants made after a brief period of time. Thus, researchers had speed-daters interact for 30 seconds before pausing the date. During the pause, participants completed an initial evaluation of their partner. Thematic

analyses indicated that men cited positive communication behaviors most frequently in dates where they had a pleasant initial assessment after the first 30 seconds. In terms of nonverbal communication, females strongly favored men who demonstrated either a nice, cute, or warm smile after the brief encounter. Taken together, these results suggested that both verbal and nonverbal behavior were salient during the first meetings of potential romantic partners.

Subsequent nonverbal communication scholarship has examined nonverbal similarity during speed-dating. In a mimicry study, Gueguen (2009) instructed female confederates to imitate the nonverbal behaviors of their male speed-dating partners. Specifically, Gueguen advised confederates to match behaviors like arm-folding, facial touches, and scratching approximately three to four seconds after male participants demonstrated these specific behaviors. Findings indicated that men rated the interaction higher in the experimental condition during which female confederates imitated their nonverbal behaviors. Interestingly, results also suggested that men rated their female dates as more sexually attractive in the condition where their nonverbal behaviors were matched.

To briefly summarize, speed-dating allows singles an efficient means to quickly assess feelings of interpersonal attraction. Newer investigations have used a speed-dating methodology to study communication during initial interactions. However, no studies have examined the correlation between communication and perceptions of physical appearance within a speed-dating environment. As such, this paper now outlines an empirical study devoted to communication and speed-dating.

The Current Research

The purpose of this study is to test whether a brief conversation can significantly influence interpersonal perceptions. The main goal of this experiment is to determine if a single communication event can positively or negatively impact initial opinions of physical attractiveness. The secondary goal of this project is to examine whether a brief chat can affect perceptions of intelligence and similarity. Two separate conditions are being created in an effort to systematically test these constructs. Specifically, this study features a positive communication condition and a negative communication condition. Each condition is comprised of verbal and nonverbal elements. In order to empirically test whether positive and negative communication influences perceptions, an attraction-relevant context is being used to strategically analyze the aforementioned dependent variables.

The role of speed-dating in the current research is three-fold. First, it is being used as a tool for investigating perceptions of others. Along this line, a speed-dating environment is appropriate for the current research because it offers a naturalistic context for analyzing the initial communication of potential romantic partners. Moreover, speed-dating is a valuable instrument for studying interpersonal attraction because it has become increasingly popular among young singles. Finally, speed-dating is being used to examine construct salience because it is during initial interactions that impressions of physical attractiveness, intelligence, and similarity are especially volatile. In sum, utilizing a speed-dating environment for the present investigation is advantageous because it yields an efficient means for studying perceptions, provides a naturalistic context, and allows the investigator to examine multiple social constructs.

The second function of speed-dating in the current research is to serve as a distraction task. That is, speed-dating will occur between the pre-test and post-test administration in order to strategically divert the minds of study participants. As a direct result of intentionally placing social interaction between two separate data collection points, participants will be less likely to remember their initial perceptions of physical attractiveness, intelligence, and similarity. Put simply, speed-dating will occur between assessments to ensure that participants do not recall their initial ratings.

The central rationale for this dissertation is to learn about the effects of a single interpersonal communication event. One of the main results that can be discovered via analyzing single interaction contexts is whether male or female perceptions change after a brief conversation. Moreover, studying the effects of a single interaction context can yield practical understanding of the attraction-related processes that significantly influence interpersonal relationship development. Another reason why we should study whether communication influences perceptions during first meetings is because it will determine the overall volatility of intelligence and similarity judgments after initial interaction. As such, the findings from this part of the investigation are important because they can be applied not only to dating environments but also to organizational contexts like the traditional employment interview. When taken together, the current research has the ability to offer both novel and applied data to the empirical foundations of several different interpersonal communication niches.

A second rationale for this dissertation is to further explore gender differences within an attraction relevant context. Extant scholarship (e.g. Finkel & Eastwick 2008; Todd, Penke, Fasolo, & Lenton, 2009) has consistently suggested that male daters place

more emphasis on physical attractiveness than female daters at the onset of social interaction. However, comparatively little research has examined which gender appreciates a physical attractive mate more after dating commences. Females have regularly cited intelligence as a desirable attribute in a potential partner while other empirical studies have demonstrated that males are intimidated by highly intelligent females within various dating contexts. Studies focused on perceived similarity and actual similarity have produced evidence that men and women conceptualize these social constructs very differently. In sum, gender differences exist within attraction relevant environments but additional research can offer further insight.

One of the central conclusions that can be drawn from the review of related literature is that interpersonal attraction is a heavily researched topic. Numerous studies have demonstrated that similarity is positively linked with feelings of attraction. Prior scholarship has also suggested that intelligence and physical attractiveness operate in tandem as components of the halo effect. Theoretically based literature has illustrated that feelings of interpersonal attraction are particularly salient during initial meetings. Moreover, a robust amount of previous scholarship has found that first impressions of verbal and nonverbal behaviors affect initial liking for another. Despite the fact that we know a healthy amount about the general function of interpersonal attraction, there are still many avenues of research that have yet to be explored. Perhaps the next area of empirical development is the one devoted to analyzing if judgments of physical attractiveness are influenced by conversation. Thus, there is a need for this investigation.

Interpersonal Outcomes Related to Positive and Negative Communication

Some of the main questions that are not addressed in previous literature fall underneath the positive communication umbrella. Prior research tells us that positive communication has the tendency to produce feelings of attraction over significant periods of time. A further unpacking of empirical scholarship offers evidence that compliments, humorous messages, appropriate self-disclosures, and flirtatious nonverbal communication are especially prevalent in the study of interpersonal attraction. Extant research has also demonstrated that perceptions of similarity induce feelings of liking for another but has not detailed when these similarity judgments are most volatile. Yet, there is reason to believe that perceptions of others are highly unstable at the onset of social interaction. For instance, scholarship has indicated that perceptions of physical attractiveness significantly increased when participants were exposed to a single positive vocal cue of a non-familiar other (Zuckerman, Miyake, & Hodgins, 1991). In terms of gender differences, Albada, Knapp, and Theune (2002) provided evidence that male perceptions of others were more volatile than female perceptions of others. While theories like IAT illustrate how perceptions of others change over significant periods of time, no studies have investigated the relative impact of positive communication in a single attraction-relevant context. Similarly, no studies have examined how positive communication affects perceptions of physical attractiveness, intelligence, and similarity after just one social interaction. In sum, additional research on positive communication would be empirically beneficial.

Negative communicative behaviors tend to produce negative relational outcomes. While this broad statement is not surprising, there have been a moderate amount of

studies that have investigated negative communication in the arena of interpersonal attraction. Some of the more prevalent types of negative communication that have achieved status in the realm of interpersonal attraction research are deceptive, ingratiation, and expectancy violation communicative behaviors. Scholarship devoted to these negative constructs has tacitly implied that perceptions of others are vulnerable to limited information. For example, empirical evidence has suggested that initial perceptions of others decreased when participants were exposed to a single piece of negative information concerning the overall personality of another individual (Lewandowski Jr., Aron, & Gee, 2007). With regard to gender differences, research has suggested that male perceptions are more unstable than female perceptions after negative social interactions (Albada, Knapp, & Theune, 2002). Nevertheless, and akin to the literature on positive communication, no studies were found to assess how perceptions of intelligence and similarity were affected by a single chat in a dating relevant context. Moreover, no investigations have determined whether negative communication has the ability to impact perceptions of physical attractiveness after just one conversation. Therefore, based on these gaps in prior scholarship, the following hypotheses and research question are being offered:

H1: A single positive communication will cause participants to increase their perceptions of the physical attractiveness of a dating partner from pre-test to post-test while a single negative communication will cause participants to decrease their perceptions of the physical attractiveness of a dating partner from pre-test to post-test.

H2: A single positive communication will cause participants to increase their perceptions of the intelligence of a dating partner from pre-test to post-test while a single negative communication will cause participants to decrease their perceptions of the intelligence of a dating partner from pre-test to post-test.

H3: A single positive communication will cause participants to increase their perceptions of the attitudinal similarity of a dating partner from pre-test to post-test while a single negative communication will cause participants to decrease their perceptions of the attitudinal similarity of a dating partner from pre-test to post-test.

H4: A single positive communication will cause participants to increase their perceptions of the background similarity of a dating partner from pre-test to post-test while a single negative communication will cause participants to decrease their perceptions of the background similarity of a dating partner from pre-test to post-test.

RQ1: What effect will participant gender have on perceptions of physical attractiveness, intelligence, attitudinal similarity, and background similarity from pre-test to post-test after a single positive or a single negative communication occurs within a dating environment?

In summary, the current research is examining whether a single social interaction can significantly impact individual perceptions. In order to accomplish this objective, speed-dating is being used to investigate perceptions and serve as a distraction task. A

review of the extant scholarship devoted to positive communication and negative communication resulted in the emergence of four hypotheses. Now that the central purpose of this dissertation has been revealed, this document proceeds forward as it describes methodological considerations.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology of this study. The first section focuses on securing study participants. The second section discusses the materials that were utilized in this social experiment. The author then presents an overview of the pre-event, during-event, and post-event procedures. The last section of this chapter examines the process of data analysis. All of the aforementioned items were approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Southern Mississippi (Appendix A).

Participants

The participants in this study were 104 undergraduate students (53 women, 51 men) at a large southeastern university. The age range for participants was between 18 years old and 48 years of age; the mean age was 20.97 ($sd = 4.27$). The majority of the sample was Caucasian (63.5%), followed by African American (29.8%), Asian (3.8%), and Hispanic (2.9%). With regard to relationship status, 70.2% of participants indicated they were single, 19.2% claimed they were in a relationship, and 10.6% suggested they were casually dating. None of the study participants were married.

Participants were recruited via a series of efforts. First, a total of 25 teaser advertisements (See Appendix B) were strategically placed on campus kiosks and classroom bulletin boards four weeks prior to the first speed-dating session. Next, the investigator promoted this study by completing a series of brief five-minute class visits to six different introductory level communication courses. Third, participants were verbally encouraged to engage in snowball sampling; it was during the series of class visits that

potential participants were informed they could “*bring a friend and meet new friends,*” which is akin to a previous speed-dating slogan utilized by Finkel, Eastwick, and Matthews (2007). Fourth, 25 detailed advertisements (See Appendix C) were posted on campus bulletin boards 10 days before the first speed-dating session. Fifth, a one-person manned advertisement table was set up inside the lobby of the university union after the initial speed-dating sessions were completed; the table was set up on seven different occasions. Sixth, a brief article (See Appendix D) appeared in the campus newspaper; the article provided the contact information of the investigator and discussed the general purpose of this study. Finally, a casual form of direct marketing was used as the investigator and a research assistant passed out flyers to potential participants in the minutes leading up to the final two speed-dating sessions.

One additional component of this study that is related to study participants involved a power analysis. Specifically, the investigator used the G-Power program (Erdfelder, Faul, & Buchner, 1997) to investigate effect size, sample size, and the like. The power to detect main effects and interactions was 0.998 when the input parameters were set at a total sample size of 104 and an effect size of .25. In sum, this program allowed the investigator to compute a general power analysis.

Materials

Perceptions of Others Measurement Scale

The present study used a 19-item instrument to assess individual perceptions of other speed-daters. This instrument contained four sub-scales designed to measure the variables of interest. All items featured a seven point response continuum (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). First, the variable of physical attractiveness was measured

with a physical attractiveness sub-scale that was originally created by McCroskey and McCain (1974). The sub-scale is comprised of eight items that measure perceptions of: (1) handsomeness (prettiness); (2) sexy looking; (3) very attractive physically; (4) don't like the way a person looks; (5) is somewhat ugly; (6) not very good looking; (7) wears neat clothes; and (8) clothes are not becoming. Items four, five, six, and eight are reverse coded. Extant literature has frequently utilized this sub-scale as Cronbach's coefficient alpha (reliability) scores have ranged between the lower .80s and upper .80s. It has consistently exceeded the acceptable social scientific threshold of .70 (Baxter & Babbie, 2004). Thus, the physical attractiveness sub-scale was included in this study.

A second set of items on the 19-item instrument focused on perceptions of intelligence. Specifically, the intelligence dependent variable was measured with a perceptions of others intelligence scale that was originally created by Murphy (2007). In that study, Murphy used three separate items to evaluate perceived intelligence. The three items used in the Murphy investigation involved perceptions of: (1) competence; (2) brightness; and (3) smartness. A nine-point response continuum was utilized in that particular study. Cronbach's coefficient alpha (reliability) was calculated at .79 in her investigation. This satisfactory reliability level resulted in the perceptions of others intelligence scale being incorporated into this social experiment.

Perceptions of attitudinal similarity (homophily) were also represented on the 19-item instrument that was utilized in the current research. In order to test attitudinal similarity, the investigator employed McCroskey, Richmond, and Daly's (1975) similarity (homophily) scale. Four items from this scale are devoted to attitudinal similarity and look at whether another person: (1) is like me; (2) is different than me; (3)

thinks like me; and (4) doesn't behave like me. Items two and four are reverse coded. Scale reliability for this construct has commonly landed in the mid .80s. As such, this sub-scale was included in the present research.

The final set of items on the 19-item instrument analyzed perceptions of background similarity. The principal researcher once again utilized McCroskey, Richmond, and Daly's (1975) similarity (homophily) scale. The four items from this scale that were dedicated to background similarity looked at perceptions as to whether another person: (1) has status like me; (2) is from a different social class than me; (3) is culturally different than me; and (4) is economically like me. Items two and three are reverse coded. Rocca and McCroskey (1999) calculated reliability for this sub-scale at .69 in their study. Reliability for this sub-scale generally hovers around .70. Nevertheless, these four items were integrated into this study.

Match Sheet

The final piece of material that warrants discussion in this section of the paper is the speed-dating match sheet. As stated previously, this form was structured so that participants would first write their name and nametag number in the upper right hand corner. Most importantly, this sheet of paper allowed participants to indicate those individuals with whom they desired future contact. While no statistical testing was completed on this form per se, this material did yield interesting empirical data that is subsequently discussed in the results section of this paper.

Procedure

Pre-Event Procedures

The speed-dating process for this study can be broken down into three separate sections: pre-event, during-event, and post-event. The first pre-event activity was a two-hour training session for study confederates. The male confederate was a 22-year old undergraduate student who was majoring in communication studies. The female confederate was a youthful looking 26-year old graduate student who was completing her second year of communication studies doctoral coursework. Both of the confederates were current students at the large southeastern university where the present research was conducted. The male and female confederate were each paid \$200.00 for their participation. These two individuals were personally selected by the investigator for two main reasons. First and foremost, both confederates were familiar with the discipline. That is, both the female and male confederate had completed formal coursework in the areas of interpersonal communication, nonverbal communication, and communication theory. The second reason these individuals were chosen was because of their availability to participate at the pre-arranged speed-dating dates and times.

The initial matter of business for the two-hour training session was to provide an overview of the current study. As such, the confederates for this investigation were not blind but instead conscious of the central thesis that was guiding the present research. Moreover, confederates were also educated on how speed-dating works so they knew what to expect at each individual session. It was also during the training session that confederates were exposed to the physical space where the impending speed-dating sessions would take place. In fact, the majority of the two-hour training session was

conducted in the conference room where all of the speed-dating experiments subsequently unfolded.

The central matter of business for the two-hour training session was to instruct study confederates on how to behave during their speed-dating interactions. More specifically, confederates were given precise instructions regarding verbal comments, tonality, and nonverbal communication. With regard to the negative communication condition, confederates were advised to employ a *“conceited and somewhat standoffish communicative demeanor.”* It should also be noted that confederates were not advised to be critical of her or his speed-dating partners. Instead, they were instructed to display an overly confident disposition. For example, one of the questions that confederates were encouraged to ask in the negative communication condition was: *“I don’t mean this in an arrogant way, but I know that I am pretty attractive, what do you have going for you more than your looks, what do you have going for you more than the eye meets?”* The confederates were instructed to employ similar types of haughty comments in the negative communication condition as much as each three-minute speed-date allowed (See Appendix E for the positive and negative communication script). In addition, confederates were asked to execute a condescending tonality and exhibit disengaged nonverbal communication. Explicit instructions were given concerning eye contact. Specifically, confederates were told to maintain a minimal amount of mutual eye contact and to look down at the table when eyes met for a period of more than three seconds. With regard to a general demeanor for the positive communication condition, confederates were advised to *“smile constantly, maintain a cheerful disposition, demonstrate high immediacy non-verbal behaviors, and offer complimentary verbal*

communication.” In line with previous scholarship on attraction and positive communication, confederates were told to be friendly, cordial, flirtatious, and engaging during their three-minute positive communication speed-dates. For instance, one of the comments that study confederates were advised to communicate at the end of their positive communication speed-dates was: “*Are you on Facebook? You should friend me!*” Structurally speaking, confederates were asked to engage in cheerful communication for the duration of each three-minute speed-date. They were also advised to demonstrate a peppy voice tonality; confederates were instructed to positively inflect their voice in a flirtatious manner. In addition to smiling throughout the duration of each three minute date, confederates were told to maintain consistent and comfortable eye contact with their dating partners. In fact, they were told to smile with their eyes or smize during each of their individual speed dates. Immediately after study confederates had a relatively solid grasp on the verbal comments, tonality, and nonverbal communication that were being expected of them, they were given a 15-minute window to individually review and rehearse the positive and negative communication script.

The final aspect of the two-hour training session involved study confederates enacting a series of role-playing interactions. Both male and female participants role-played the positive and negative condition. The investigator watched each interaction and coached study confederates after each simulated interaction was completed. While the initial role-play manipulation was too strong and somewhat forced, it was during the fourth role-play that the simulated interactions began to feel more natural and ecologically valid. Shortly thereafter, more practice and individual coaching ensued. Finally, the investigator videotaped the last two role-plays. In the first videotaped role-

playing session, the male engaged in positive communication while the female enacted the negative communication script. In the second videotaped role-playing session, the female engaged in positive communication while the male enacted the negative communication script. Both sessions were videotaped with the exact same conference table, chairs, and background that were utilized during actual speed-dating sessions.

The second pre-event activity involved collecting information on the negative and positive manipulation before actual speed-dating sessions commenced. In order to accomplish this objective, a 12-item validation measure (Appendix F) was created and administered to 22 students in an introductory level communication class. Six of the items applied to the first video and six of the items were applicable to the second video. The measure featured a seven point response continuum that ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). Methodologically speaking, the communication class was exposed to several different procedures. First, they were instructed that participation was voluntary. Second, the validation measure was distributed. Third, the students who elected to participate were informed that they were about to view two separate social interactions. Fourth, classroom students were told that they would need to indicate their perceptions of the two videotaped social interactions. Next, the first video was played. As alluded to previously, this video featured the male enacting the positive communication script while the female executed the negative communication script. After the video ended, classroom students filled out the six scale items devoted to the first video. Once completed, the second video was played. In the second video, the opposite occurred as the female role-played the positive communication script while the male engaged in negative communication. Students then

completed the six items dedicated to the second video. Each video was three minutes in length, which matched the duration of each individual speed-date. Both of the videos were shown at the start of the 50-minute class session.

Statistical analyses were then conducted on the obtained data from the introductory level communication course. First, reliability analyses were conducted for the six items focused on positive communication and for the six items dedicated to negative communication. Cronbach's coefficient alpha (reliability) was .837 for the positive communication items and was .743 for the negative communication items. A paired-samples t test was then calculated to determine if the positive and negative communication were identifiable. The results of the paired-samples t test were statistically significant ($t(21) = 14.370, p < .001, \text{Cohen's } d = 4.66$). The mean for the positive condition was 6.51 ($sd = .68$) while the mean for the negative condition was 1.98 ($sd = .97$). These findings suggested that the manipulation was successful and easily observed.

The third pre-event activity involved participants sending a letter of interest e-mail to the investigator. A new e-mail account was created for this aspect of the study to lend credibility to this experiment; the e-mail address was usmspeeddating@yahoo.com. As part of the registration process, participants supplied basic demographic information including name, class status, and future contact information in their initial correspondence. In addition, participants also indicated their availability for speed-dating in the body of this particular e-mail.

The fourth pre-event activity was a reply e-mail that was sent by the investigator. This correspondence highlighted the general purpose of the study, described speed-dating

attire, and briefly discussed speed-dating procedures. Figure 1 (see below) uses fictional names to demonstrate the general structure of this message. As the subsequent item illustrates, the reply e-mail also identified a specific date and time for participants to *Speed-dating Session on Sunday, April 10th*:

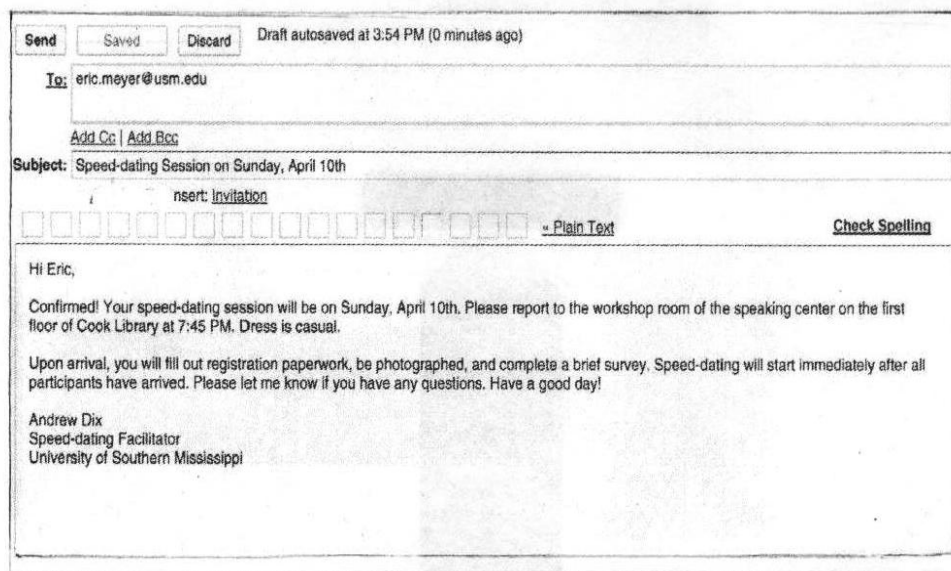


Figure 1. Fictional Sample of Reply E-mail. This correspondence illustrates the grammatical structure and language that was used to confirm speed-dating registration. speed-date. In sum, the central purpose of this correspondence was to confirm an exact time and date for study participants.

The fifth pre-event activity involved preparing the speed-dating room. The location of all speed-dating sessions was a medium-sized conference room that was located on the first floor of the university library. While the space is normally used for public speaking classes, the overall ambiance of the room was remarkably conducive for a speed-dating experiment. The room itself can be characterized as contemporary. The floors feature trendy carpeting and three of the walls are a soothing off-white color. The final wall is an accent wall that is a light turquoise color. In terms of non-stagnant features, bottled water and soft drinks were laid out on a small coffee table that was

located immediately adjacent to the main door. The same coffee table also featured complimentary finger foods, plates, napkins, and plastic utensils. Thirteen medium-sized conference tables were strategically arranged as a means to maximize the overall potential of the speed-dating space. Two cushioned chairs were placed at each conference table so all participants would have a place to sit. It should also be noted that the tables were individually marked with an assigned number so participants would have a sense of where to sit at various times. The table numbering system helped make the rotation aspect of this experiment significantly more time efficient. Female participants were instructed to report to this room 15 minutes before their speed-dating session started.

The sixth pre-event activity involved preparing a waiting room for male participants. While the particular room that was utilized generally functions as a practice area for public speaking students, the same room ended up being conducive for seating male participants beforehand. The space itself is approximately 1/8 the size of the speed-dating room and is located approximately 20 feet away from the speed-dating conference room. The waiting area displayed carpeting and walls that were similar to the overall style of the speed-dating conference room. However, no conference tables were situated in the male waiting area. Instead, a total of 15 chairs were placed in this room so the male participants would have a comfortable place to sit. Akin to the tables in the speed-dating conference room, the chairs in the male waiting area were individually numbered in order to maximize organizational efficiency. Male participants were asked to report to this room 15 minutes before their speed-dating session began.

The seventh pre-event activity required the investigator to pre-test technical equipment in the speed-dating conference room and the small waiting room for the male

participants. Both the speed-dating conference room and the small waiting room for male participants featured large monitors that were A/V compatible. In addition, both monitors had the ability to upload digital photographs in just a matter of seconds. Once the investigator pre-tested the two separate monitors, he then pre-tested the camera to make sure that it was functioning properly.

The final pre-event activity was a meeting with study confederates. It was during this time that confederates were informed of which communication script she or he would be enacting for that particular night. Two additional points should be made in relation to the pre-speed-dating meeting. First, confederates were told during this meeting that they should execute the same script for the entire night. That is, all of the dates for that night were either positive or all of their dates for that night were negative. This non-alternation between the positive and negative communication script kept the confederates in character for that particular evening. Second, confederates enacted the same scripts for each night. For example, the female confederate engaged in positive communication on the same night that the male confederate engaged in positive communication. Similarly, the female confederate engaged in negative communication on the same night that the male confederated engaged in negative communication. In sum, the major pre-event activities included a training session for confederates, validating the manipulation, receiving a letter of interest e-mail from potential speed-daters, sending a confirmation e-mail to enroll speed-daters, preparing the speed-dating room, preparing the male waiting area, pre-testing the required technical equipment, and meeting with study confederates.

During-Event Procedures

There were also a series of during-event procedures that unfolded in this study. First, the investigator or a research assistant individually greeted, seated, and numbered study participants. Upon arrival, females were seated at the conference tables in the speed-dating room. Concurrently, males were being seated in the waiting room area. It was also during this period of time that participants were assigned a dating number based off of their time of arrival. For instance, the first female who arrived was female dater number one for the evening, while the second female who arrived was female dater number two for the evening, and so forth. The same random number assignment was concurrently administered to male participants.

The second during-event activity required the investigator or the research assistant to take digital photographs of study participants. A Polaroid PoGo digital camera was used to take full body photographs of participants from a distance of three feet away. Participants were seated in a chair when their photograph was taken. Their entire body was visible. Once all of the photographs of the female participants were taken, the investigator subsequently uploaded this material to the large computer monitor in the male waiting room area. Likewise, the photographs of the male participants were uploaded to the large computer monitor in the speed-dating room where the female participants were presently situated. During this process, each photograph was tagged with a number that corresponded with the nametag number of the photographed participant. It is noteworthy to mention here that the female and male confederates engaged in the exact same process (e.g. being greeted by the investigator, individually photographed, etc.) as other study participants. This precaution was taken as a means to

ensure that study participants would not become cognizant of the presence of study confederates.

The third during-event activity involved participants completing an array of methodological items. In order to accomplish this objective, every female seat in the speed-dating room and every male seat in the male waiting room area had a blue pen, nametag, and two manila folders resting beside them. The manila folders were placed on top of one another. The top manila folder was labeled: "*Female Dater Pre.*" The second manila folder was directly underneath the top folder and was labeled: "*Female Dater Post.*" The layout of the folders was identical for the male participants yet the label: "*Male Dater*" was used instead of the label: "*Female Dater.*" The contents of the top folder included two copies of an informed consent form that were signed by the investigator (Appendix G), one copy of a basic demographic information sheet (Appendix H), four copies of a 19-item measurement scale (Appendix I) that served as the pre-test assessment, and one copy of a speed-dating match sheet (Appendix J). The second manila folder contained four copies of the 19-item measurement scale that functioned as the post-test measure for this investigation. Participants were first asked to write their first name and dater number on their nametag. Next, the investigator explained the informed consent form and described the study. Participants were then given time to read as well as sign the informed consent form if they were still interested in speed-dating. Shortly thereafter, the investigator informed participants that one copy of the informed consent form was for them while the other copy of the informed consent form was for the investigator. Once completed, the investigator instructed participants to fill

out the basic demographic information form. Participants were then ready to complete the 19-item measurement scale that was created for this study.

The primary dependent measures in this study were the 19-item pre-test and the 19-item post-test. With regard to the pre-test, the investigator first instructed participants to number their form in the upper right hand corner. Specifically, the investigator stated: *“You are about to be shown a series of different photographs. Please label each photograph individually. At this time, please write number one where it says photograph # in the upper right hand corner of your form.”* The investigator then used the large computer monitor to unveil the first photograph of an opposite-sex speed-dater. Once displayed in full view, the investigator said the following: *“Please indicate your perceptions of the person in the photograph. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you strongly disagree one, disagree two, somewhat disagree three, undecided four, somewhat agree five, agree six, or strongly agree seven. You should look at the item, look at the photograph, and then answer. So, you should look at the photograph after you answer each individual item. Again, look at the photograph, look at the item, and then answer. Look at the photograph, look at the item, and then answer and so forth and so on until you have completed all 19 items. Please begin now.”* Participants were then given a three-minute window of time to assess their perceptions of the person in photograph number one. After this period of time expired, the investigator removed the photograph from plain view and stated: *“Okay, moving on. On the second sheet of paper, please write photograph number two in the upper right hand corner and the same set of instructions will apply. You should look at the photograph, look at the item, and then answer. Okay? Please indicate your*

perceptions of the person in the photograph starting now.” The investigator then displayed the second photograph of an opposite-sex speed-dater. The same three-minute window of time was provided to participants so they could complete all 19-items for the second photograph. The investigator continued this process until each participant had examined either three or four photographs; participants were not exposed to all of the photographs of other speed-daters so as to maximize time efficiency and thereby reduce potential discomfort and possible fatigue. Along a similar line, the photographs of the male and female confederates were always included in the unveiled mix. The order in which the photograph of the female and male confederate were displayed changed at each individual session. For instance, in the very first session the female confederate photograph was photograph number three in the mix and the male confederate photograph was photograph number three in the mix. At the second session, the female confederate photograph was photograph number one and the male confederate photograph was photograph number four. Now that an initial assessment of perceptions was ascertained, participants were then advised to peruse the final item in their first manila folder.

The final form that was enclosed in the top manila folder was the speed-dating match sheet. This document allowed participants to identify those persons with whom they desired to have future contact with after their speed-dating session concluded. In terms of the overall procedure, the investigator or the research assistant announced the following: *“The final sheet of paper in your manila folder is your speed-dating match form. This is the document you will use to indicate whether or not you felt you were a match with someone else. Now, it doesn’t necessarily have to be a romantic match, it*

could just be someone you think is cool or someone you might like to spend time with as friends in the future. Or, it could be someone you wish to romantically date in the future. Either way, what you need to do is this. You will write one of two things for each date that you complete. So, for date one, you will write the first name of the other speed-dater and their dater number. You should do this when you first meet this other individual. At the end of the night, after you have gone on all of your dates, you will then write one of two things in the comments line. You will write either 'Match. My e-mail address is _____' followed by your own individual e-mail address or 'Not a match based on our speed-date.' Does this kind of make sense to everyone? Does anyone have any questions?" After these instructions were given, the investigator or the research assistant then briefly explained to participants how the speed-dating process would unfold.

The third major during-event activity involved seating the male participants in the speed-dating conference room. In order to complete this task, the investigator escorted the male participants into the speed-dating room where the female participants were eagerly waiting. Immediately before the male participants entered the room, the investigator opened the main door to the speed-dating conference room and stated to the already seated female participants: *"Okay ladies! Are you all ready to meet your future husbands?"* Seconds later, the investigator brought the male participants into the room and directed male participant number one to sit at the table with female participant number one, male participant number two to sit at the table with female participant number two, and so on and so forth. Once all of the male participants were seated directly across from their first female speed-dating partner, the investigator excitedly announced: *"Okay. Here is what is going to happen folks. You will have three minutes to meet with*

your date. At the start of each date, you should write the first name and dater number of your fellow speed-dater at the top of your speed-dating match sheet. After three minutes of time have passed, I will flip off the lights in this room. At that moment, there will be a 30-second window of time during which the male participants will rotate to the table on their immediate left. Ladies you will stay seated; the guys are going to be coming to you. Now, don't write any comments on your match sheet at this point in time. That form will be completed after the entire session has been completed. Okay? Without further adieu, let's get things started by meeting your speed-dates! Mingle with your first partner everyone!" At this moment in time, the three minute stopwatch began and the speed-dating process was finally underway.

The last major during-event activity involved facilitating the social interactions. With regards to proximal considerations, the investigator and or the research assistant stood next to the light switch and carefully monitored the time. As stated previously, each speed-date lasted for a period of three minutes. After the allotted amount of time had passed, the investigator or the research assistant flipped the light switch off so as to signal that the present date had concluded. In addition to the nonverbal lighting cue, the investigator or the research assistant verbally stated at the end of each three minute date: *"Okay. Guys. Please take a moment and rotate to your next date."* This process subsequently continued until all of the male and female participants had the chance to socially interact. In sum, the central during-event activities included numbering participants, photographing participants, completing all of the forms in the first manila folder, escorting male participants into the speed-dating room, and then facilitating the social interactions.

Post-Event Procedures

Four post-event procedures began immediately after speed-dating concluded. First, the investigator separated the male and female participants. While the female participants were advised to remain seated in the speed-dating room, the male participants were escorted by the investigator back to the male waiting room area. The investigator or the research assistant then personally met with both groups. The first matter of business involved the speed-dating match sheet. For this particular item, participants were given anywhere from five to nine minutes to complete this document. The time it took to complete the match sheet depended on the total number of speed-daters attending any given session. For instance, only five minutes were given to complete the speed-dating match sheet at the smallest speed-dating session that featured a total of five male participants and a total of five female participants. In contrast, participants were given nine minutes to complete the speed-dating match sheet at the largest speed-dating session, which featured 13 male participants and 11 female participants. Hence, as the number of session participants increased so too did the amount of time that was allocated for the speed-dating match sheet. Once the investigator or the research assistant noticed that the allotted amount of time had passed, he or she then proceeded to administer the post-test measurement scale for this study.

The second major post-event activity required participants to re-evaluate the exact same set of photographs that they had examined before they completed their speed-dating session. Participants were first instructed to remove their four 19-item perceptions of others post-test forms from their second manila folder. Once removed, the investigator then displayed the same first photograph on the large computer monitor. Participants

were then given the exact same set of instructions by the investigator. He stated: *“Please indicate your perceptions of the person in the photograph. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you strongly disagree one, disagree two, somewhat disagree three, undecided four, somewhat agree five, agree six, or strongly agree seven. You should look at the item, look at the photograph, and then answer. So, you should look at the photograph after you answer each individual item. Again, look at the photograph, look at the item, and then answer. Look at the photograph, look at the item, and then answer and so forth and so on until you have completed all 19 items. Please begin now.”* Participants were then given the same three-minute window of time to assess their perceptions of the person in photograph number one. After this period of time expired, the investigator removed the first photograph from plain view and stated: *“Okay, moving on. On the second sheet of paper, please write photograph number two in the upper right hand corner and the same set of instructions will apply. You should look at the photograph, look at the item, and then answer. Okay? Please indicate your perceptions of the person in the photograph starting now.”* The investigator then displayed the same second photograph of an opposite-sex speed-dater on the computer monitor. The same three-minute window of time was provided so that participants could complete all 19-items related to photograph number two. The investigator subsequently continued this process to ensure that each participant had examined the exact same set of photographs. The photographs of the female and male confederate were always included in the mix because the exact same set of photographs were being evaluated by study participants. The other assessments besides those of the confederates were merely distractors. The re-evaluation of the confederate photographs served as the post-test

dependent measure for this study. Now that the post-test empirical data had been collected, the investigator was ready to inform participants about the specific purpose of this social experiment.

The third major post-event activity involved debriefing participants. The investigator met with the male participants first and the female participants second. It is especially important to note here that it was during this time that study participants were informed about the presence of the female and male confederate. The investigator specifically identified these individuals and stated: *“Before your speed-dating session began, two of your fellow speed-daters who were conscious of the purpose of this study were instructed to enact either a positive or negative communication script during your individual speed-dates. Put differently, these two individual were acting a part, they were role-playing an interaction. So, they will not be matched up with anyone. All things considered, the central purpose of this study was to determine if a single interaction could influence perceptions of another. And these two confederates or actors were used to statistically determine if your perceptions would change from before speed-dating to after speed-dating. Does that kind of make sense to everyone? That was the goal of this study. Does anyone have any questions?”* If questions emerged, the investigator answered them in a candid and straightforward manner. In most circumstances, study participants either smiled or chuckled after the confederate information was disclosed. Once discussion on the confederates subsided, the investigator informed participants: *“Here is what is going to happen now. Within 48 hours you will receive an e-mail from me that will identify your speed-dating matches. If you don’t have any matches, you will still receive an e-mail from me letting you know of this. Does anyone have any additional*

questions or comments at this point? Okay, please leave all of your materials including your manila folders in your seat. Thank you again for your participation today. I really appreciate it. Have a good day!" Male participants were then dismissed. Shortly thereafter, the investigator gave the same debriefing, e-mail information, and thank you to the female participants. If no questions emerged, then the female participants were subsequently dismissed from the speed-dating room.

The final post-event activity involved the investigator individually e-mailing all study participants within 48 hours of their individual speed-dating session being

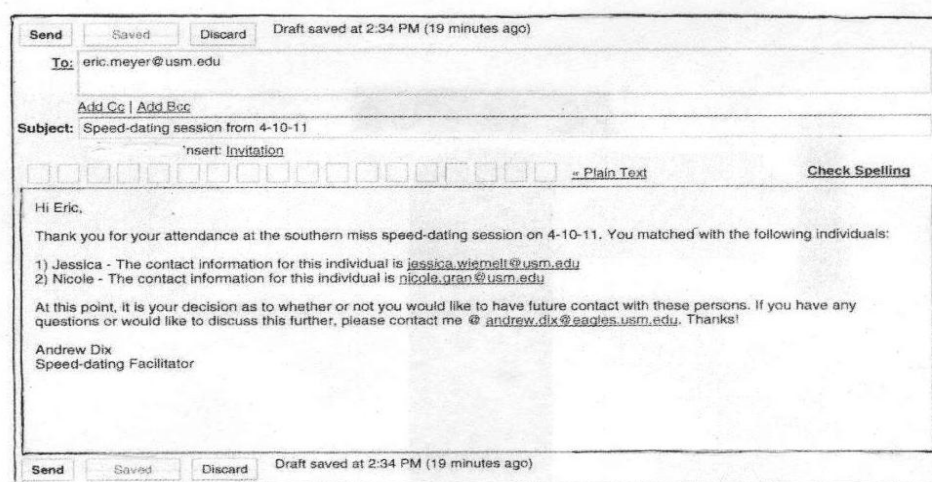


Figure 2. Fictional Sample of Matches E-mail. This correspondence illustrates the grammatical structure and language that was used to identify speed-dating matches.

completed. Figure 2 uses the same set of fictional names to illustrate the overall structure of this correspondence. Usually, the investigator e-mailed participants the following day. As the preceding example illustrates, the subject line of the e-mail was “Speed-dating Session from” followed by their actual speed-dating date. In the body of the e-mail, the investigator again thanked the participant for their attendance as well as supplied match information. If study participants did not receive a match, the investigator moderately personalized their individual e-mail (See Figure 3 on the following page). Specifically,

the investigator included his cellular phone number in the correspondence to provide participants an additional way to get in touch with him because some study participants may have desired to talk about not making any matches at their speed-dating event. As

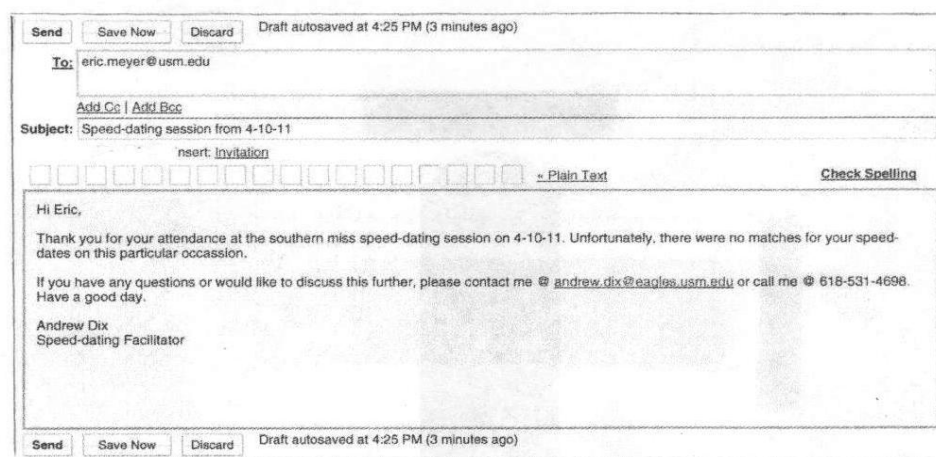


Figure 3. Fictional Sample of No Matches E-mail. This correspondence illustrates the grammatical structure and language that was used when no matches were identified.

noted, study participants were also encouraged to contact the investigator if they had any additional questions about their speed-dating session. In sum, the central post-event activities included separating male and female participants, completing the speed-dating match sheet, administering the post-test, debriefing participants, and e-mailing match information to study participants.

Data Analyses

Quantitative Data Analysis

The data analysis portion of this study involved importing the empirical data into the statistical program SPSS. Once inputted, the three physical attractiveness items that were reverse coded were then recoded into a different variable. Next, a composite score for each participant for the physical attractiveness dependent variable was calculated in SPSS. This composite score represented the mean pre-test perception of the physical

attractiveness of the confederate for that specific participant. Shortly thereafter, the reverse coded post-test data were then recoded into a different variable. Once again, an overall composite score was computed for each participant concerning the overall physical attractiveness of the confederate for the post-test. This composite score represented the mean post-test perception of the overall physical attractiveness of the confederate for that specific participant. Now, each participant had a mean score for their pre-test perception of the physical attractiveness of the opposite-sex confederate and a mean score for their post-test perception of the physical attractiveness of the opposite-sex confederate. The investigator subsequently completed this exact same process for the intelligence, attitudinal similarity, and background similarity dependent variables. In other words, each participant had a composite score for each dependent variable on both the pre-test and the post-test.

The next data analysis step involved quantitatively testing the newly transformed SPSS data. The investigator conducted a 2 (participant gender – male and female) x 2 (communication condition – positive and negative) x 2 (repeated measure – pre-test and post-test) mixed factorial ANOVA on the physical attractiveness dependent variable to uncover statistically significant results.¹ Participant gender (male or female) and communication condition (positive or negative) were entered as the between subjects factors while pre-test and post-test were entered as the within subjects factor. This type of 2 x 2 x 2 design allowed the investigator to test for main effects and interactions. If found, appropriate follow-up measures were completed. The same series of steps and statistical tests (2 x 2 x 2 mixed factorial ANOVAs and appropriate follow-up tests) were subsequently completed on the intelligence, attitudinal similarity, and background

similarity dependent variables. While these analyses represented the main aspect of this experiment, additional empirical testing was also conducted in this social scientific investigation.

One additional type of quantitative data analysis that was completed focused on second date selection. That is, a number of basic statistical tests were completed on dating outcomes. Specifically, the investigator calculated the total number of matches that emerged from this experiment. Next, the investigator determined what percentage of the matches involved interracial dating parting partners. The investigator then ran a series of tests to assess the dating selectiveness of each gender. Most importantly, findings focused on second date selection with study confederates were also examined.

To briefly summarize, a series of different steps were executed in order to quantitatively test the emergent data from this study. First, the perceptions of others pre-test scale and perceptions of others post-test scale were matched up for every study participant. Next, the obtained data was imported into SPSS. Third, a series of different statistical tests included 2 x 2 x 2 mixed factorial ANOVAs were completed on the emergent data. Fourth, a number of general analyses were conducted in order to assess dating outcomes and dating selectiveness. Lastly, the level of statistical significance for this study was set at $p < .05$.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The current study scientifically tested whether perceptions of physical attractiveness, intelligence, attitudinal similarity, and background similarity were influenced by three minutes of interpersonal communication. The present chapter discusses the results of this social experiment as it focuses on: 1) reliability analyses; 2) 2 x 2 x 2 mixed factorial ANOVAs; and 3) follow-up tests. Study findings are presented in aggregate form by dependent variable.

Physical Attractiveness Dependent Variable

Reliability Testing on Physical Attractiveness

The reliability analysis for the physical attractiveness sub-scale was initially completed on the conventional eight items for the pre-test in the positive condition. This produced an alpha reliability of .879, which is considered very strong. When question eight (the clothes of the person in the photograph are not becoming) was removed from the analysis, reliability for the positive condition decreased negligibly to .877.

A reliability analysis was then conducted using the conventional eight items for physical attractiveness for the pre-test in the negative condition. This yielded a reliability of .829. However, when question eight (the clothes of the person in the photograph are not becoming) was deleted from the pre-test portion of the negative condition reliability increased somewhat moderately to .840. While this differential provided initial evidence that utilizing the 7-item sub-scale would help improve overall reliability, the investigator decided to conduct additional analyses on the physical attractiveness sub-scale before making any decisions.

The next reliability analysis was completed on the eight item post-test for physical attractiveness in the positive condition. This produced an estimate of .850. When question eight (the clothes of the person in the photograph are not becoming) was removed, reliability analyses for the seven item post-test for the positive condition increased negligibly to .858. Indeed, more evidence emerged that the seven item sub-scale would be more reliable.

Finally, a reliability analysis was conducted on the 8-item post-test for physical attractiveness in the negative condition. This produced a reliability estimate of .862. When question eight (the clothes of the person in the photograph are not becoming) was deleted, the reliability analysis for the seven item post-test for the negative condition once again moderately increased to .874. Thus, additional evidence emerged in support of the 7-item sub-scale.

In total, reliability analyses increased either negligibly or moderately in three out of the four conditions where the seven item physical attractiveness sub-scale was utilized. Since one of the primary objectives of a researcher is to “desire the highest reliability possible” (Frey, Botan, & Kreps, 2000, p. 112) the eighth item (the clothes of the person in the photograph are not becoming) was deleted from this study. Instead, the seven item physical attractiveness sub-scale was used for subsequent statistical tests. Now that a highly reliable physical attractiveness sub-scale was obtained, the investigator focused on testing for main effects and interactions.

2 x 2 x 2 Mixed Factorial ANOVA on Physical Attractiveness

The following results emerged after a 2 x 2 x 2 mixed factorial ANOVA was completed on the physical attractiveness dependent variable. The participant gender main

effect (between subjects) was not statistically significant ($F(1, 100) = .150, p = .70$, Partial Eta Squared = .001). A communication condition main effect (between subjects) was not observed ($F(1, 100) = .011, p = .91$, Partial Eta Squared = .000). The pre-test and post-test administration main effect (within subjects/repeated measures) did not produce statistically significant results ($F(1, 100) = .331, p = .56$, Partial Eta Squared = .003). No two-way interaction was observed between participant gender and communication condition ($F(1, 100) = 3.591, p = .06$, Partial Eta Squared = .035). Similarly, a two-way interaction between participant gender and administration was not uncovered ($F(1, 100) = .096, p = .75$, Partial Eta Squared = .001). However, a two-way interaction (See Figure 4) between communication condition and administration was

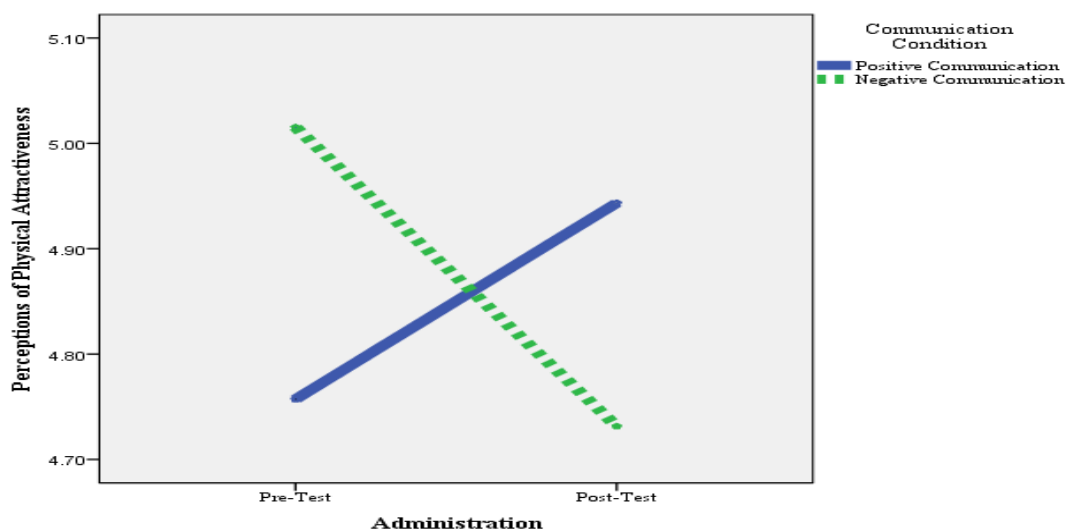


Figure 4. Interaction Plot for Communication Condition and Administration on Perceptions of Physical Attractiveness.

observed ($F(1, 100) = 7.689, p = .007$, Partial Eta Squared = .071). Finally, a three-way interaction between participant gender, communication condition, and administration was not found ($F(1, 100) = 3.363, p = .07$, Partial Eta Squared = .033). Taken together, only one interaction was observed for the physical attractiveness dependent variable.

Hypothesis one proposed that a single positive communication would cause participants to increase their perceptions of the physical attractiveness of a dating partner from pre-test to post-test while a single negative communication would cause participants to decrease their perceptions of the physical attractiveness of a dating partner from pre-test to post-test. This hypothesis was partially supported; it was in the positive condition that perceptions of physical attractiveness negligibly increased from pre-test to post-test

Table 1

Means for Interaction between Communication Condition and Administration on Perceptions of Physical Attractiveness

Condition	Administration	Mean	Std. Err
Positive Communication	Pre-Test	4.757	.156
	Post-Test	4.943	.183
Negative Communication	Pre-Test	5.015	.148
	Post-Test	4.731	.173

while it was in the negative communication condition that perceptions of physical attractiveness significantly decreased from pre-test to post-test (See Table 1). Thus, an interaction was observed between communication condition and administration for this hypothesis. Two follow-up tests provided additional insight on how perceptions of physical attractiveness were influenced by interpersonal communication. First, results indicated that perceptions of physical attractiveness did not significantly increase in the positive communication condition ($F(1, 47) = 3.363, p = .07$, Partial Eta Squared =

.067). More specifically, the mean pre-test rating of the physical attractiveness of study confederates before positive communication occurred was 4.76 ($sd = 1.15$) while the mean post-test rating of the physical attractiveness of study confederates after positive communication occurred was 4.94 ($sd = 1.31$). Despite the fact that a difference was found to exist, the observed increase from pre-test to post-test was not strong enough to be considered statistically significant. That is, three minutes of positive communication are not enough to make another individual appear more physically attractive.

The second follow-up test examined whether participants rated the physical attractiveness of a dating partner significantly lower after negative communication occurred during a single social interaction. Indeed, the negative communication data set yielded evidence that perceptions of physical attractiveness were in fact influenced by a single interpersonal communication event ($F(1, 53) = 4.629, p = .03$, Partial Eta Squared = .080). Findings indicated that initial perceptions concerning the physical attractiveness of study confederates before negative communication were a mean of 5.02 ($sd = 1.03$) whereas post-test perceptions of the physical attractiveness of study confederates after negative communication were a mean of 4.73 ($sd = 1.29$). As stated previously, this decrease from pre-test to post-test was statistically significant. Put differently, three minutes of negative interpersonal communication can actually make another person appear less attractive physically.

Summary on Participant Gender and Perceptions of Physical Attractiveness

The research question for this study asked: What effect will participant gender have on perceptions of physical attractiveness, intelligence, attitudinal similarity, and background similarity from pre-test to post-test after a single positive or a single negative

communication occurs within a dating environment? As previously stated, findings from the physical attractiveness dependent variable indicated that participant gender did not interact with communication condition ($F(1, 100) = 3.591, p = .06$, Partial Eta Squared = .035) or administration ($F(1, 100) = .096, p = .75$, Partial Eta Squared = .001). However, the observed increase from pre-test to post-test for the male participants in this study was significant in the positive communication condition ($t(23) = -2.358, p = .03$). As for the female participants, a minimal increase in perceptions of physical attractiveness was observed from pre-test to post-test in the positive communication condition albeit not statistically significant ($t(24) = -.376, p = .71$). In terms of the negative communication condition, male perceptions of the physical attractiveness of the female confederate significantly decreased after negative interpersonal communication occurred ($t(26) = 2.107, p = .04$) while female perceptions of the physical attractiveness of the male confederate did not significantly decrease from pre-test to post-test after negative interpersonal communication occurred ($t(27) = .692, p = .49$). Interestingly, and perhaps the most intriguing finding for the physical attractiveness portion of the aforesaid research question was that: females do not experience less physical attraction for a man who engages in negative communication during a single social interaction while males do experience less physical attraction for a woman who engages in negative communication during a single social interaction.

Intelligence Dependent Variable

Reliability Testing on Intelligence

The second set of items on the 19-item instrument focused on perceptions of intelligence. For the present investigation, Cronbach's alpha for the intelligence items

was .82 in the positive condition and .90 in the negative condition. Further reliability analyses on the perceptions of others intelligence scale yielded an alpha of .81 for the pre-test. A test of reliability for perceptions of intelligence on the post-test also produced a high alpha reliability that was calculated at .84. In sum, all of the computations for the reliability of the perceptions of others intelligence scale for this study were .81 or higher.

2 x 2 x 2 Mixed Factorial ANOVA on Intelligence

A 2 x 2 x 2 mixed factorial ANOVA that was calculated on the intelligence dependent variable produced the following results. The participant gender main effect (between subjects) was not statistically significant ($F(1, 100) = .974, p = .32, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .010$). A main effect for communication condition (between subjects) was not discovered ($F(1, 100) = .638, p = .42, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .006$). The pre-test and post-test administration main effect (within subjects/repeated measures) was also not statistically significant ($F(1, 100) = .058, p = .81, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .001$). In addition, no two-way interaction was observed between participant gender and communication condition ($F(1, 100) = .453, p = .50, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .005$). A two-way interaction was observed between participant gender and administration ($F(1, 100) = 6.995, p = .009, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .065$). A two-way interaction was also found between communication condition and administration ($F(1, 100) = 16.244, p < .001, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .140$). These two-way interactions were qualified by a statistically significant three-way interaction between participant gender, communication condition, and administration ($F(1, 100) = 4.362, p = .04, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .042$).

Hypothesis two proposed that a single positive communication would cause participants to increase their perceptions of the intelligence of a dating partner from pre-

test to post-test while a single negative communication would cause participants to decrease their perceptions of the intelligence of a dating partner from pre-test to post-test. This hypothesis was supported; an interaction was observed between communication condition and administration (See Figure 5 below). Two follow-up tests were then

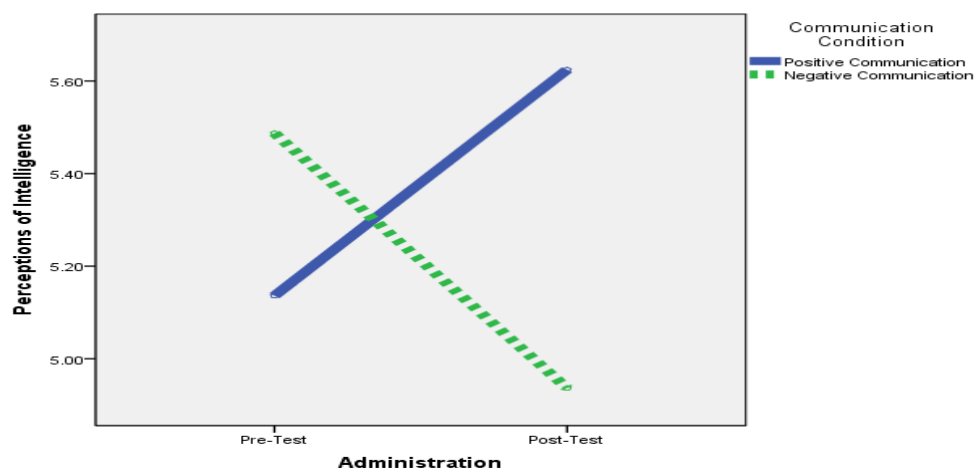


Figure 5. Interaction Plot for Communication Condition and Administration on Perceptions of Intelligence.

completed in order to further examine the interaction between communication condition and administration on perceptions of intelligence (See Table 2 on the following page). First, the data from the positive communication condition revealed that perceptions of intelligence increased in a statistically significant manner from pre-test to post-test ($F(1, 47) = 9.430, p = .004, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .167$). Specifically, the perceived intelligence rating of study confederates before positive interpersonal communication ensued was 5.14 ($sd = 1.16$) while the perceived intelligence rating of study confederates after positive interpersonal communication ensued was 5.62 ($sd = 1.22$). Thus, it can be said that three minutes of positive communication during a single social interaction can actually make another person appear more intelligent.

Table 2

Means for Interaction between Communication Condition and Administration on Perceptions of Intelligence

Condition	Administration	Mean	Std. Error
Positive Communication	Pre-Test	5.136	.157
	Post-Test	5.624	.199
Negative Communication	Pre-Test	5.487	.149
	Post-Test	4.937	.188

The second follow-up test for this dependent variable further analyzed the interaction between communication condition and administration. Results indicated that participants rated the intelligence of a dating partner significantly lower after negative communication occurred during a single social interaction ($F(1, 53) = 7.755, p = .007$, Partial Eta Squared = .130). It was in the negative communication condition that study participants initially assigned confederates a relatively high intelligence rating of 5.49 ($sd = 1.03$) but later assigned confederates a lower intelligence rating of 4.94 ($sd = 1.58$) after negative communication transpired. Indeed, negative interpersonal communication during a single social interaction causes individuals to see another person as less intelligent.

The crossover interaction between participant gender and administration also warranted additional examination (See Figure 6 and Table 3 on the following page). Therefore, two follow-up tests were completed. First, a significant difference was not

observed on male perceptions of intelligence from pre-test to post-test ($F(1, 50) = 3.410$, $p = .07$, Partial Eta Squared = .064). Male pre-test perceptions of the intelligence of the female confederate were a mean of 5.38 ($sd = 1.23$) while male post-test perceptions of the intelligence of the female confederate were a mean of 5.01 ($sd = 1.73$). Second, a

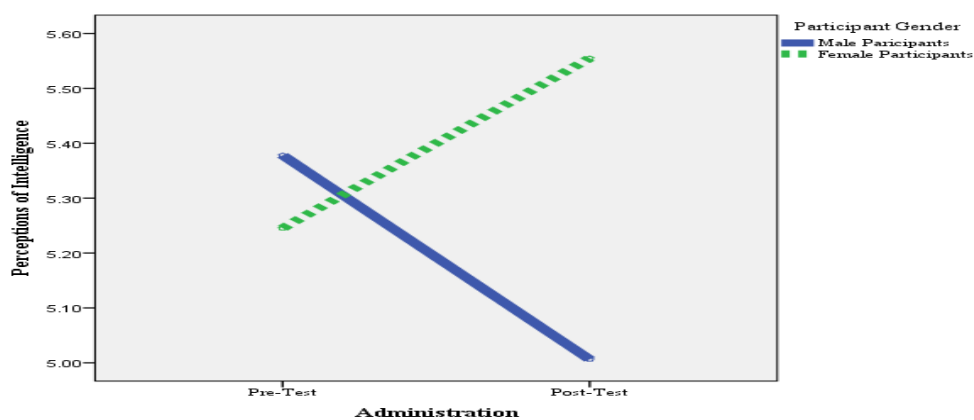


Figure 6. Interaction Plot for Participant Gender and Administration on Perceptions of Intelligence.

Table 3

Means for Interaction between Participant Gender and Administration on Perceptions of Intelligence

Gender of Participants	Administration	Mean	Std. Error
Male	Pre-Test	5.378	.155
	Post-Test	5.006	.196
Female	Pre-Test	5.245	.152
	Post-Test	5.555	.192

statistically significant difference was not found on female perceptions of intelligence from pre-test to post-test ($F(1, 52) = 3.162, p = .08$, Partial Eta Squared = .057). Female pre-test perceptions of the intelligence of the male confederate were 5.25 ($sd = .96$) while female post-test perceptions of the intelligence of the male confederate were 5.55 ($sd = 1.07$). When taken together, pre-test to post-test main effects negligibly increased for females and negligibly decreased for males which resulted in a complete crossover. Indeed, neither main effect was individually significant but the two main effects were significantly different from each other. Thus, a crossover interaction was observed.

Finally, the three-way interaction (See Figure 7A and 7B on the following page) that was observed on this dependent variable resulted in four additional follow-up tests being undertaken. First, a statistically significant increase was uncovered on the male participant data from pre-test to post-test in the positive communication condition ($t(23) = -2.378, p = .03$). The mean pre-test perception of the intelligence of the female confederate was 5.14 ($sd = 1.20$) whereas the mean post-test perception of the intelligence of the female confederate was 5.56 ($sd = 1.37$). As alluded to previously, three minutes of positive interpersonal communication during a single social interaction causes males to regard a female as more intelligent.

A second follow-up test was then completed on the observed three-way interaction for this dependent variable. The results illustrated that female perceptions of intelligence significantly increased from pre-test to post-test in the positive communication condition ($t(23) = -2.135, p = .04$). Findings from this follow-up test indicated that the mean intelligence rating of the male confederate before positive communication was 5.13 ($sd = 1.15$) while the mean intelligence rating of the male

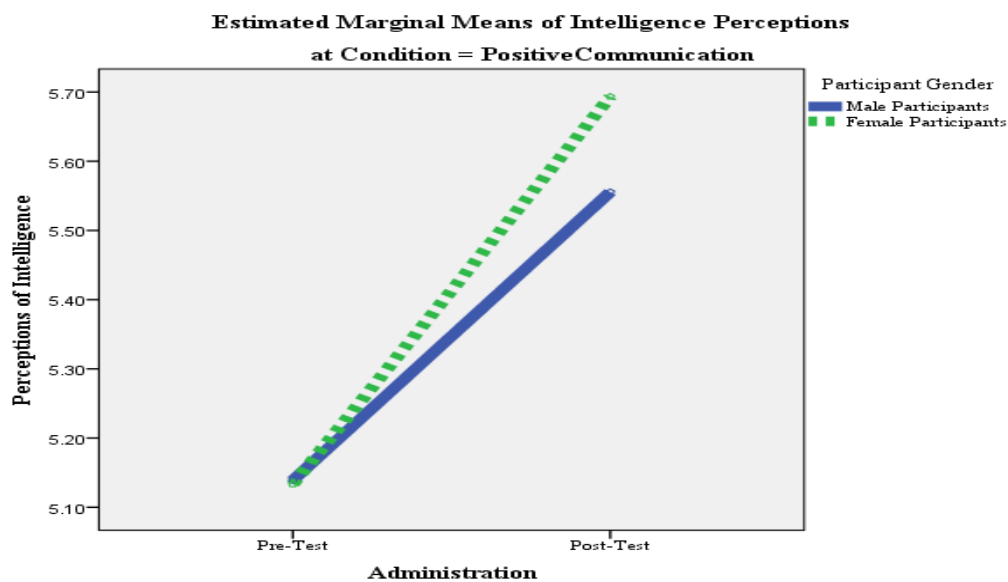


Figure 7A. Three-Way Interaction Plot between Participant Gender, Positive Communication, and Administration on Perceptions of Intelligence.

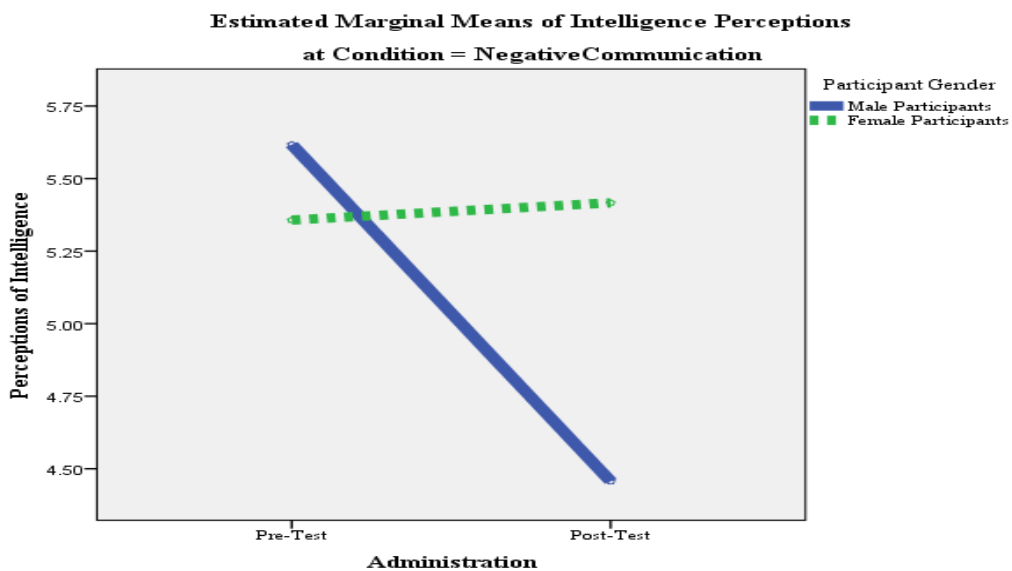


Figure 7B. Three-Way Interaction Plot between Participant Gender, Negative Communication, and Administration on Perceptions of Intelligence.

confederate after positive communication was 5.69 ($sd = 1.09$). Thus, a male who engages in three minutes of positive communication during a single social interaction can make women perceive him as more intelligent.

The third follow-up test on the three-way interaction analyzed male perceptions of intelligence from pre-test to post-test in the negative communication condition. A statistically significant decrease was observed from pre-test to post-test for the male participants in the negative communication condition ($t(27) = 3.389, p = .002$). Pre-test perceptions of the intelligence of the female confederate were 5.61 ($sd = 1.24$) while

Table 4

Means for Three-Way Interaction between Participant Gender, Communication Condition, and Administration on Perceptions of Intelligence

Gender of Participants	Condition	Administration	Mean	Std. Error
Male	Positive	Pre-Test	5.139	.225
		Post-Test	5.556	.285
	Negative	Pre-Test	5.617	.212
		Post-Test	4.457	.269
Female	Positive	Pre-Test	5.133	.220
		Post-Test	5.693	.279
	Negative	Pre-Test	5.357	.208
		Post-Test	5.417	.264

post-test perceptions of the intelligence of the female confederate were 4.45 ($sd = 1.88$). Therefore, it can be argued that negative communication during a single social interaction will cause men to perceive a female as less intelligent.

A final follow-up test provided additional insight on the three-way interaction that was observed for this dependent variable. A statistically significant decrease was not discovered from pre-test to post-test for the female participants in the negative communication condition ($t(27) = -.291, p = .77$). In fact, a slight increase was observed as pre-test perceptions of the intelligence of the male confederate were a mean of 5.36 ($sd = .774$) while post-test perceptions of the intelligence of the male confederate were a mean of 5.42 ($sd = 1.06$). Nevertheless, it can be said that negative interpersonal communication during a single social interaction does not cause females to evaluate a male as less intelligent.

Summary on Participant Gender and Perceptions of Intelligence

The effects of participant gender on the intelligence dependent variable are also interesting to note. Most notably, a three-way interaction was observed between participant gender, communication condition, and administration ($F(1, 100) = 4.362, p = .04$, Partial Eta Squared = .042). In terms of specific gender differences, findings indicated that male perceptions of intelligence significantly increased from pre-test to post-test in the positive communication condition ($t(23) = -2.378, p = .03$) as did female perceptions of intelligence from pre-test to post-test in the positive condition ($t(23) = -2.135, p = .04$). Also, it was found that male perceptions of intelligence significantly decreased from pre-test to post-test in the negative communication condition ($t(27) = 3.389, p = .002$) while female perceptions of intelligence did not significantly decrease

from pre-test to post-test in the negative communication condition ($t(27) = -.291, p = .77$). In sum, one of the central findings for the perceptions of intelligence portion of the research question was that: females do not perceive a dating partner as less intelligent after a single negative social interaction while males do perceive a dating partner as less intelligent after a single negative social interaction.

Attitudinal Similarity Dependent Variable

Reliability Testing on Attitudinal Similarity

Reliability analyses were also conducted on the attitudinal similarity dependent variable. Findings indicated that reliability for the four items focused on attitudinal similarity for the pre-test in the positive condition was .824 while reliability for the post-test in the positive condition was .690. On the other hand, reliability analyses for the attitudinal similarity items for the pre-test in the negative condition was .784 while reliability for the post-test in the negative condition was .864. All in all, reliability was fairly strong for this dependent variable.

2 x 2 x 2 Mixed Factorial ANOVA on Attitudinal Similarity

A 2 x 2 x 2 mixed factorial ANOVA was calculated on this dependent variable to uncover main effects and interactions. The main effect for participant gender (between subjects) was statistically significant ($F(1, 95) = 5.791, p = .02$, Partial Eta Squared = .057). However, the main effect for communication condition (between subjects) was not statistically significant ($F(1, 95) = 2.009, p = .16$, Partial Eta Squared = .021). A pre-test and post-test administration main effect (within subjects/repeated measures) was not observed in the present study ($F(1, 95) = 1.861, p = .18$, Partial Eta Squared = .019). Nevertheless, a two-way interaction between participant gender and communication

condition was observed ($F(1, 95) = 4.689, p = .03, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .047$). Moreover, a two-way interaction between participant gender and administration was uncovered ($F(1, 95) = 7.308, p = .008, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .071$). A two-way interaction was also observed between communication condition and administration ($F(1, 95) = 16.005, p < .001, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .144$). However, a three-way interaction between participant gender, communication condition, and administration was not discovered ($F(1, 95) = 2.361, p = .13, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .024$).

Hypothesis three proposed that a single positive communication would cause participants to increase their perceptions of the attitudinal similarity of a dating partner from pre-test to post-test while a single negative communication would cause participants to decrease their perceptions of the attitudinal similarity of a dating partner from pre-test to post-test. This hypothesis was partially supported as an interaction was observed between communication condition and administration (See Figure 8 below and Table 5 on the following page). The initial follow-up test for this dependent variable centered on

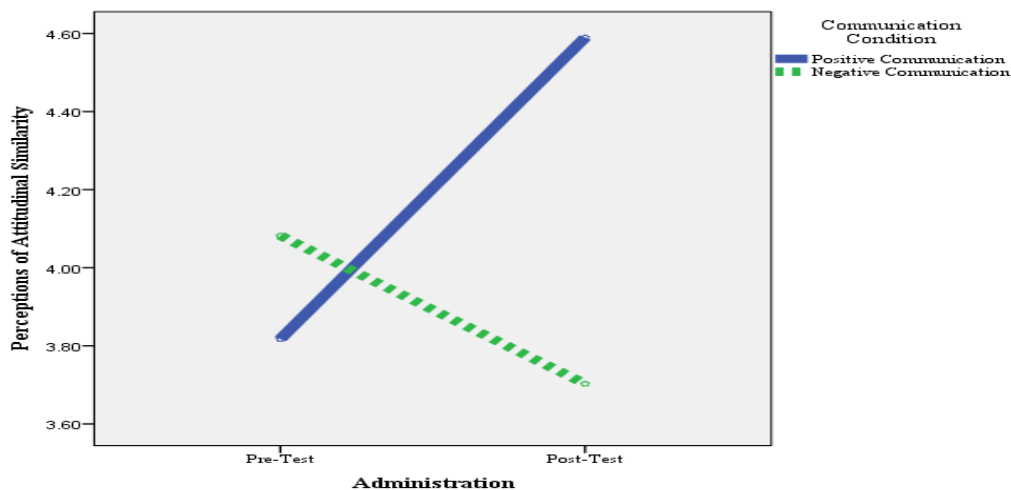


Figure 8. Interaction Plot for Communication Condition and Administration on Perceptions of Attitudinal Similarity.

the positive communication data set and demonstrated that perceptions of attitudinal similarity were significantly higher after positive communication occurred during a single social interaction ($F(1, 47) = 28.500, p < .001, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .377$). Results from the positive communication condition illustrated that pre-test perceptions of the attitudinal similarity of confederates were 3.82 ($sd = 1.14$) while post-test perceptions of the attitudinal similarity of confederates were 4.59 ($sd = 1.11$). In the end, perceptions of attitudinal similarity increased as a direct result of three minutes of positive interpersonal communication during a single social interaction.

Another follow-up test on the two-way interaction between communication condition and administration on perceptions of attitudinal similarity was completed on the data that was obtained in the negative communication condition. Perceptions of

Table 5

Means for Interaction between Communication Condition and Administration on Perceptions of Attitudinal Similarity

Condition	Administration	Mean	Std. Error
Positive Communication	Pre-Test	3.818	.168
	Post-Test	4.590	.203
Negative Communication	Pre-Test	4.082	.166
	Post-Test	3.703	.201

attitudinal similarity did not significantly decrease after a negative social interaction ($F(1, 48) = 2.356, p = .13, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .047$). Initial perceptions concerning the attitudinal similarity of study confederates were 4.08 ($sd = 1.20$) before negative communication occurred whereas post-test perceptions of the attitudinal similarity of study confederates were 3.70 ($sd = 1.84$) after negative communication occurred. Although a decline was observed, it was not statistically significant from pre-test to post-test. Put differently, negative communication during a single social interaction does not have the power to significantly influence attitudinal similarity perceptions.

The next series of follow-up tests for this dependent variable focused on the two-way interaction between participant gender and communication condition (See Figure 9 below and Table 6 on the following page). First, it was found that male perceptions of attitudinal similarity significantly differed between the positive communication condition and the negative communication condition ($F(1, 46) = 9.195, p = .004, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .167$). Male participants in the positive communication condition perceived the

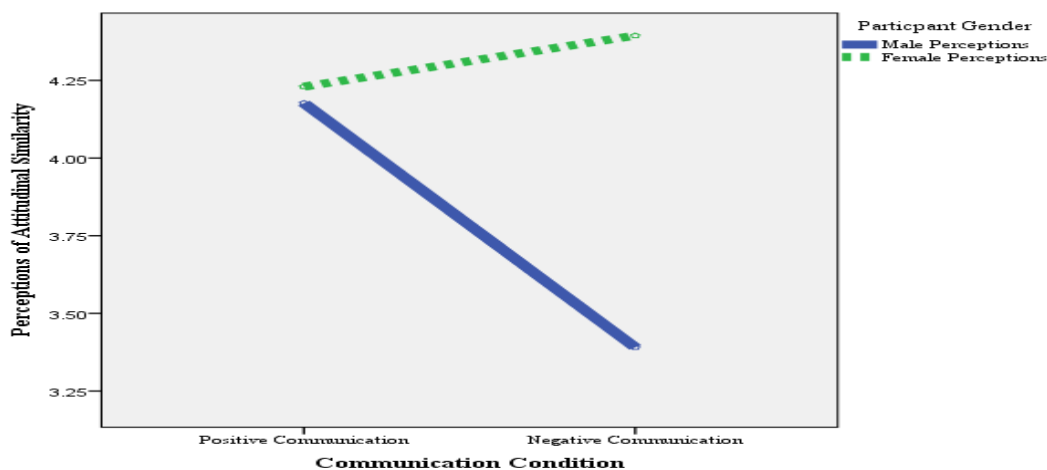


Figure 9. Interaction Plot for Participant Gender and Communication Condition on Perceptions of Attitudinal Similarity.

attitudinal similarity of the female confederate at a mean of 4.17 ($sd = 1.15$) while male participants in the negative communication condition perceived the attitudinal similarity of the female confederate at a mean of 3.39 ($sd = 1.18$). It seems that males perceive a female to be more attitudinally similar when she engages in positive communication relative to when she engages in negative communication.

Table 6

Means for Interaction between Participant Gender and Communication Condition on Perceptions of Attitudinal Similarity

Gender of Participants	Condition	Mean	Std. Error
Male	Positive	4.177	.223
	Negative	3.391	.223
Female	Positive	4.230	.218
	Negative	4.394	.214

A subsequent follow-up test for this dependent variable further examined the two-way interaction between participant gender and communication condition. Results suggested that female perceptions of the attitudinal similarity of the male confederate were not influenced by whether positive or negative communication occurred ($F(1, 49) = .222, p = .64, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .005$). The female participants in the positive communication condition evaluated the attitudinal similarity of the male confederate as a 4.23 ($sd = 1.11$) whereas the female participants in the negative communication condition

evaluated the attitudinal similarity of the male confederate as a 4.39 ($sd = 1.61$). As hinted at previously, female perceptions of attitudinal similarity were not affected by whether positive or negative communication transpired.

The last set of follow-up tests for this dependent variable focused on the two-way interaction between participant gender and administration (See Figure 10 below and Table 7 on the following page). It was found that male perceptions of attitudinal similarity from pre-test to post-test did not increase in a statistically significant manner when the positive and negative communication data were combined ($F(1, 47) = .577, p = .45$, Partial Eta Squared = .012). When taken together, male pre-test perceptions of the attitudinal similarity of the female confederate were a mean of 3.88 ($sd = .95$) while male post-test perceptions of the attitudinal similarity of the female confederate were a mean of 3.69 ($sd = 1.59$). Next, a statistically significant difference was observed on female perceptions of attitudinal similarity from pre-test to post-test when the positive and negative communication data were combined ($F(1, 50) = 9.885, p = .003$, Partial Eta

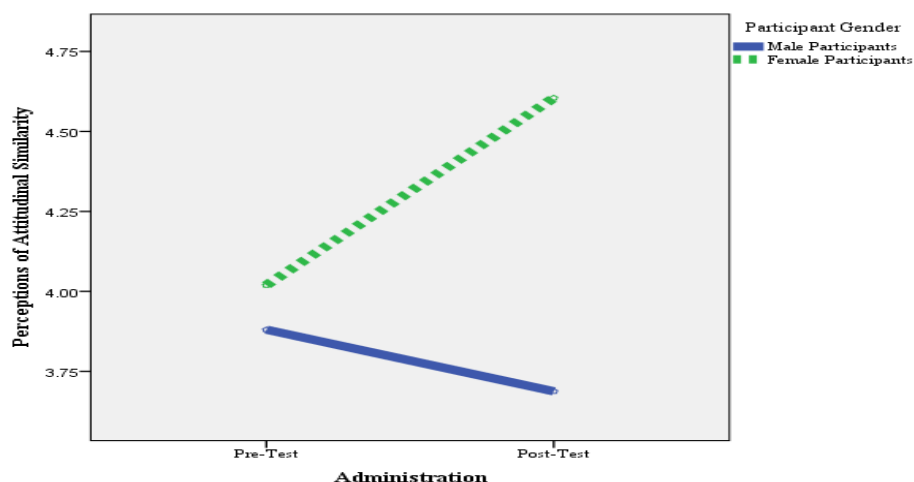


Figure 10. Interaction Plot for Participant Gender and Administration on Perceptions of Attitudinal Similarity.

Table 7

Means for Interaction between Participant Gender and Administration on Perceptions of Attitudinal Similarity

Gender of Participants	Administration	Mean	Std. Error
Male	Pre-Test	3.880	.170
	Post-Test	3.688	.205
Female	Pre-Test	4.019	.165
	Post-Test	4.605	.199

Squared = .165). Female pre-test perceptions of the attitudinal similarity of the male confederate were 4.02 ($sd = 1.35$) while female post-test perceptions of the attitudinal similarity of the male confederate were 4.60 ($sd = 1.44$). Interestingly, females evaluated the attitudinal similarity of the male confederate more favorably after conversation regardless of whether positive or negative communication occurred during their single social interaction.

Summary on Participant Gender and Perceptions of Attitudinal Similarity

Perceptions of attitudinal similarity and their relationship with participant gender required further analysis. While findings highlighted a two-way interaction between participant gender and communication condition ($F(1, 95) = 4.689, p = .03$, Partial Eta Squared = .047) as well as a two-way interaction between participant gender and administration ($F(1, 95) = 7.308, p = .008$, Partial Eta Squared = .071), subsequent

analyses further illustrated the relationship between participant gender and perceptions of attitudinal similarity. Results indicated that male perceptions of attitudinal similarity significantly increased from pre-test to post-test in the positive communication condition ($t(23) = -3.117, p = .005$) as did female perceptions of attitudinal similarity from pre-test to post-test in the positive communication condition ($t(23) = -4.398, p = .001$). In addition, male perceptions of the attitudinal similarity of the female confederate significantly decreased from pre-test to post-test after negative social interaction transpired ($t(23) = 2.399, p = .02$) while female perceptions of the attitudinal similarity of the male confederate did not significantly decrease from pre-test to post-test after negative social interaction transpired ($t(23) = -.812, p = .42$). In response to the proposed research question that focused on the role of participant gender: it seems that perceptions of attitudinal similarity differ between men and women after negative communication occurs during a single social interaction.

Background Similarity Dependent Variable

Reliability Testing on Background Similarity

The final set of reliability analyses were conducted on the background similarity sub-scale items. Results suggested that reliability for the pre-test in the positive condition was .718 while reliability for the post-test in the positive condition was .713. On the other hand, reliability for background similarity in the negative condition was .728 for the pre-test items and was .844 for the post-test items in the negative condition. When taken together, the range of reliability for the background similarity sub-scale varied from a low of .71 to a high of .84.

2 x 2 x 2 Mixed Factorial ANOVA on Background Similarity

The following set of results emerged after a 2 x 2 x 2 mixed factorial ANOVA was calculated on the background similarity dependent variable. Statistically significant results emerged on the main effect (between subjects) for participant gender ($F(1, 95) = 6.271, p = .01, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .062$). However, statistically significant results did not emerge on the main effect (between subjects) for communication condition ($F(1, 95) = .554, p = .46, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .006$). The pre-test and post-test administration main effect (within subjects/repeated measures) was not statistically significant ($F(1, 95) = 1.499, p = .22, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .016$). Yet, a two-way interaction between participant gender and communication condition was observed ($F(1, 95) = 7.950, p = .006, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .077$). In addition, a two-way interaction between participant gender and administration was also discovered ($F(1, 95) = 6.647, p = .01, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .065$). However, the two-way interaction between communication condition and administration was not statistically significant ($F(1, 95) = 1.868, p = .18, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .019$). A three-way interaction was discovered ($F(1, 95) = 6.418, p = .01, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .063$).

Hypothesis four proposed that a single positive communication would cause participants to increase their perceptions of the background similarity of a dating partner from pre-test to post-test while a single negative communication would cause participants to decrease their perceptions of the background similarity of a dating partner from pre-test to post-test. This hypothesis was not supported because an interaction was not observed between communication condition and administration. The results from the positive communication data illustrated that perceptions of background similarity did not

significantly increase after positive social interaction ($F(1, 47) = .012, p = .91$, Partial Eta Squared = 0.00). It was in the positive communication condition that pre-test perceptions of the background similarity of study confederates were 4.26 ($sd = 1.05$) while post-test perceptions of the background similarity of study confederates were 4.28 ($sd = 1.09$). This negligible increase in perceptions of background similarity from pre-test to post-test was not statistically significant. Similarly, perceptions of background similarity did not significantly decrease after negative social interaction ($F(1, 48) = 2.873, p = .09$, Partial Eta Squared = .056). Findings from the negative communication condition indicated that initial perceptions of the background similarity of study confederates were a mean of 4.26 ($sd = 1.20$) while post-test perceptions of the background similarity of study confederates were a mean of 4.01 ($sd = 1.59$). When taken together, the pattern for positive communication did not significantly increase from pre-test to post-test and the pattern for negative communication did not significantly decrease from pre-test to post-test.

Initial follow-up tests for this dependent variable were devoted to the two-way interaction between participant gender and communication condition (See Figure 11

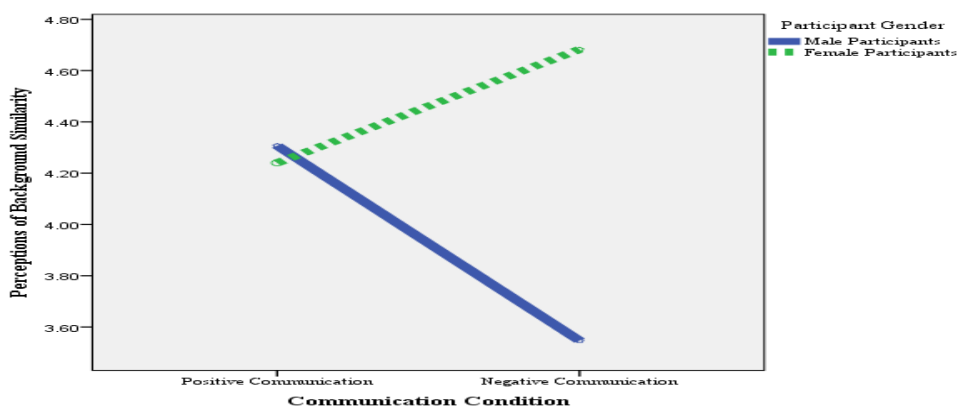


Figure 11. Interaction Plot for Participant Gender and Communication Condition on Perceptions of Background Similarity.

Table 8

Means for Interaction between Participant Gender and Communication Condition on Perceptions of Background Similarity

Gender of Participants	Condition	Mean	Std. Error
Male	Positive	4.307	.217
	Negative	3.547	.217
Female	Positive	4.240	.212
	Negative	4.683	.208

and Table 8). First, male perceptions of background similarity significantly differed between the positive communication condition and the negative communication condition ($F(1, 46) = 11.239, p = .002, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .196$). Male participants in the positive communication condition perceived the background similarity of the female confederate to be a mean of 4.30 ($sd = 0.91$) while male participants in the negative communication condition perceived the background similarity of the female confederate to be a mean of 3.54 ($sd = 1.02$). It seems that males who are exposed to positive communication will perceive that a female will possess a background more similar to his own relative to males who are exposed to negative communication.

The next follow-up test for the background similarity dependent variable further examined the two-way interaction between participant gender and communication condition (See Table 8 above). Female perceptions of background similarity were not

influenced by whether they participated in the positive or negative condition ($F(1, 49) = 1.559, p = .21, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .031$). The female participants in the positive communication condition rated the attitudinal similarity of the male confederate as a 4.24 ($sd = 1.24$) whereas the female participants in the negative communication condition rated the attitudinal similarity of the male confederate as a 4.68 ($sd = 1.44$). Simply put, female perceptions of background similarity did not differ depending on whether they were exposed to either positive or negative communication.

The two-way interaction between participant gender and administration on perceptions of background similarity also required that additional follow-up tests be undertaken (See Figure 12 and Table 9). First, results indicated that male perceptions of background similarity significantly decreased from pre-test to post-test regardless of whether positive or negative communication occurred during a single social interaction ($F(1, 47) = 5.035, p = .03, \text{Partial Eta Squared} = .097$). Male pre-test perceptions of the background similarity of the female confederate were a mean of 4.13 ($sd = .83$) while male post-test perceptions of the background similarity of the female confederate were a

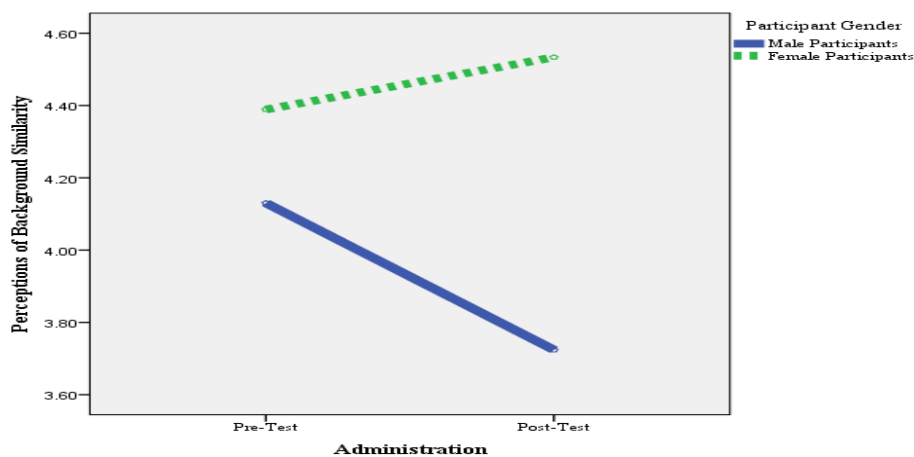


Figure 12. Interaction Plot for Participant Gender and Administration on Perceptions of Background Similarity

Table 9

Means for Interaction between Participant Gender and Administration on Perceptions of Background Similarity

Gender of Participants	Administration	Mean	Std. Error
Male	Pre-Test	4.130	.162
	Post-Test	3.724	.180
Female	Pre-Test	4.389	.158
	Post-Test	4.534	.174

mean of 3.72 ($sd = 1.25$). Second, a statistically significant difference was not observed on female perceptions of background similarity from pre-test to post-test when the positive and negative communication data were combined ($F(1, 50) = 1.301, p = .26$, Partial Eta Squared = .025). Female pre-test perceptions of the background similarity of the male confederate were 4.39 ($sd = 1.34$) while female post-test perceptions of the background similarity of the male confederate were 4.53 ($sd = 1.36$). Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that male perceptions of background similarity decreased from pre-test to post-test regardless of the communication condition.

The next follow-up tests examined the three-way interaction between participant gender, administration, and communication condition (See Figure 13A and Figure 13B on the following page). Four follow-up tests looked at the differences between participant gender from pre-test to post-test in the positive and negative communication conditions.

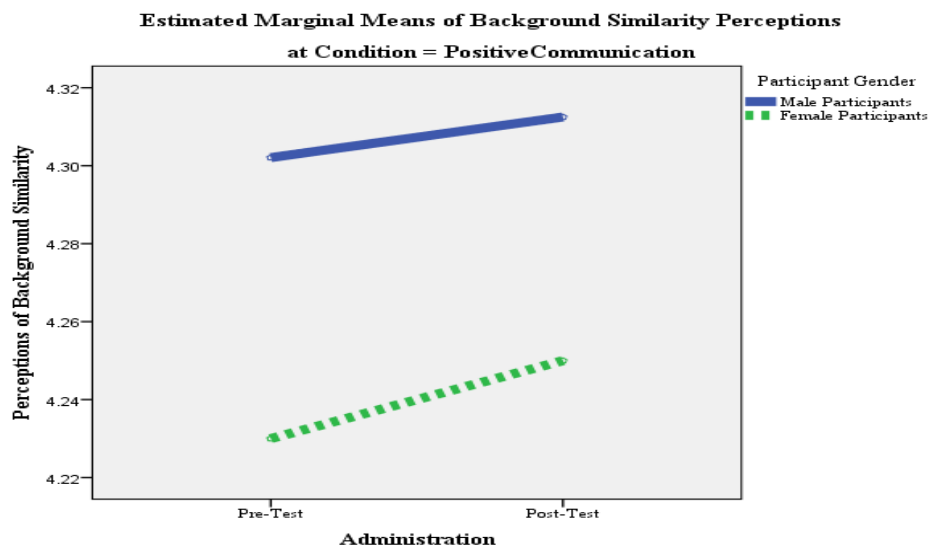


Figure 13A. Three-Way Interaction Plot between Participant Gender, Positive Communication, and Administration on Perceptions of Background Similarity.

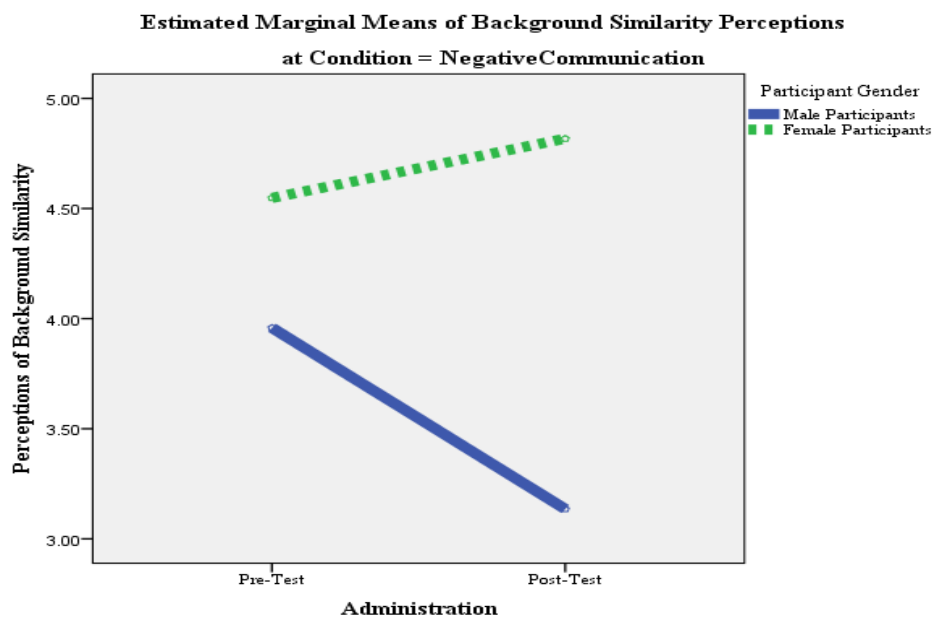


Figure 13B. Three-Way Interaction Plot between Participant Gender, Negative Communication, and Administration on Perceptions of Background Similarity.

Results indicated that male perceptions of background similarity were virtually stagnant from pre-test to post-test in the positive communication condition ($t(23) = -.053, p = .96$). Specifically, the male participant data from the positive communication condition demonstrated that initial perceptions of the background similarity of the female confederate were 4.30 ($sd = .869$) and that post-test perceptions of the background similarity of the female confederate were 4.31 ($sd = .959$). This minimal increase suggests that three minutes of positive interpersonal communication will not cause men to regard a female dating partner as having a background similar to his own.

Table 10

Means for Three-Way Interaction between Participant Gender, Communication Condition, and Administration on Perceptions of Background Similarity.

Gender of Participants	Condition	Administration	Mean	Std. Error
Male	Positive	Pre-Test	4.302	.230
		Post-Test	4.313	.254
	Negative	Pre-Test	3.958	.230
		Post-Test	3.135	.254
Female	Positive	Pre-Test	4.230	.225
		Post-Test	4.250	.249
	Negative	Pre-Test	4.548	.221
		Post-Test	4.817	.244

The second follow-up test for the observed three-way interaction focused on the data that was obtained from the female participants in the positive communication condition. No statistically significant effect was found ($t(23) = -.104, p = .91$). Initial perceptions of the background similarity of the male confederate in the positive communication condition were 4.23 ($sd = 1.23$) while post-test perceptions of the background similarity of the male confederate in the positive communication condition were 4.25 ($sd = 1.24$). Indeed, there is no evidence that three minutes of positive interpersonal communication will cause females to evaluate the background similarity of a male dating partner any differently.

The third follow-up test analyzed the background similarity dependent variable for the male participants in the negative communication condition. A significant effect was observed as male perceptions of the background similarity of the female confederate significantly decreased from pre-test to post-test ($t(23) = 2.896, p = .008$). Additional evidence illustrated that male pre-test perceptions of the background similarity of the female confederate were 3.95 ($sd = .789$) while male post-test perceptions of the background similarity of the female confederate were 3.13 ($sd = 1.26$). Three minutes of negative interpersonal communication resulted in men perceiving a woman as having a background as less similar to his own personal background.

The final follow-up test for the observed three-way interaction for this dependent variable examined the female participant data that was collected in the negative communication condition. A significant effect was not found ($t(25) = -1.560, p = .13$). Female pre-test perceptions of the background similarity of the male confederate in the negative communication condition were 4.54 ($sd = 1.44$) while female post-test

perceptions of the background similarity of the male confederate were 4.81 ($sd = 1.44$). In the end, negative interpersonal communication during a single social interaction does not cause females to lower their perceptions of the background similarity of a male dating partner from pre-test to post-test.

Summary on Participant Gender and Perceptions of Background Similarity

The background similarity dependent variable also produced evidence of some gender differences. As stated previously, a three-way interaction was observed between participant gender, administration, and communication condition ($F(1, 95) = 6.418, p = .01$, Partial Eta Squared = .063). When further broken down, male perceptions of background similarity did not significantly increase from pre-test to post-test after positive communication occurred ($t(23) = -.053, p = .96$) and female perceptions of background similarity did not significantly increase from pre-test to post-test after positive communication occurred ($t(23) = -.104, p = .91$). It was also found that male perceptions of background similarity significantly decreased after negative communication ($t(23) = 2.896, p = .008$) but female perceptions of background similarity did not significantly decrease after negative communication ($t(25) = -1.560, p = .13$). Thus, in response to the aforesaid research question which asked what effect will participant gender have on perceptions of background similarity from pre-test to post-test after a single positive or a single negative communication event: it seems that perceptions of background similarity differ between men and women after the occurrence of a single negative communication event.

To briefly summarize, the first part of this chapter focused on main effects and interactions. The opening pages illustrated that perceptions of physical attractiveness

significantly decreased after negative communication occurred during a single social interaction. Next, a three-way interaction was observed on the perceptions of intelligence dependent variable. In terms of attitudinal similarity, three different two-way interactions were found for this dependent variable. A three-way interaction was also observed on the background similarity dependent variable. Study findings also indicated that some individual perceptions varied as a result of participant gender. Lastly, it should be noted here that some of the aforementioned findings from this section have negligible application to real world contexts. That is, some of the reported results that were not focused on the central hypotheses or research question were described in order to maintain a consistent writing style from dependent variable to dependent variable. Even though individual perceptions and interpersonal communication were the central variables in this study, other miscellaneous data collaterally emerged as a direct result of employing a speed-dating methodology.

Additional Findings

There are several supplemental findings that materialized after this study was completed. To begin, a total of 54 matches were made in the present investigation. Of that total, only three (or 5.55%) of the matches involved interracial dating partners (e.g. a Caucasian male matching with an African American female, a Hispanic female matching with an Asian male, etc.). Second, female speed-daters were almost three times choosier in terms of second date selection than their male speed-dating counterparts. Specifically, females identified a male speed-dater as a “match” on 72 different occasions on their speed-dating match sheets. In contrast, male participants identified a female speed-dater as a “match” on 201 different occasions on their speed-dating match sheets. While the

aforementioned data did not include instances where a confederate was picked as a match, the findings related to identifying the male or female confederate as a match are also interesting to note.

Findings concerning the selection of study confederates for a second date are intriguing. Overall, the female confederate was picked for a second date on 17 different occasions out of her 51 total dates. Statistically speaking, she was identified as a match in 33.3% of her dates. When broken down further, the female confederate was selected for a second date 12 times (or 50% of the time) out of her 24 total positive communication speed-dates. In contrast, the female confederate was selected for a second date five times (or 18.5% of the time) out of her 27 total negative communication speed-dates.

The male confederate was picked for a second date on 14 different occasions out of his 53 total dates. Mathematically speaking, the male confederate was identified as a match in 26.4% of his dates. When further broken down, the male confederate was picked for a second date three times (or 12% of the time) out of his 25 total positive communication speed-dates. On the other hand, the male confederate was selected for a second date 11 times (or 39.2% of the time) out of his 28 total negative communication speed-dates. Since an analysis of dating outcomes has now been undertaken, the last paragraph of this chapter briefly summarizes the additional results.

To conclude, several supplementary findings emerged after the completion of this study. First, the total number of matches was calculated by the investigator. Next, findings illustrated that a relatively small amount of matches involved interracial dating partners. Third, study data indicated that women were significantly choosier than men with regards to identifying a fellow speed-dater as a match. Now that the empirical

findings of this study have been presented, the final chapter of this dissertation will focus on discussing results, identifying limitations, and proposing avenues for future research.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted because it supplied novel and practical data on cognitive processes and interpersonal communication. Interaction appearance theory was discussed in the opening chapters of this dissertation as it provided a strong foundation for understanding the relationship between social interaction and personal judgments. The third chapter highlighted how a speed-dating methodology could be used to determine if three minutes of communication had the ability to perceptually alter impressions of another. It was also in the third chapter that an overview of the positive and negative communication conditions were provided; confederates were instructed to maintain a cheerful disposition, demonstrate high-immediacy non-verbal behaviors, and offer complimentary verbal communication in the positive communication condition while confederates were instructed to make haughty verbal comments and sustain a standoffish communicative demeanor in the negative communication condition. The most recent chapter presented an array of mixed empirical results and highlighted dating outcomes. The last chapter of this dissertation demonstrates how the main findings from this study can be applied as well as generalized to various communicative contexts. Finally, this dissertation concludes by discussing limitations and identifying directions for future research.

Physical Attraction Changing Because of Social Interaction

This study's first hypothesis focused on perceptions of physical attractiveness. It proposed that three minutes of positive social interaction would cause participants to experience more physical attraction for a dating partner from pre-test to post-test while

three minutes of negative social interaction would cause participants to experience less physical attraction for a dating partner from pre-test to post-test. This hypothesis was partially supported. Evidence related to the proposed research question demonstrated that males and females evaluated perceptions of physical attractiveness differently after a single negative social interaction. Less specifically, overall perceptions of physical attractiveness significantly decreased after a single negative interpersonal communication event. In contrast, overall perceptions of physical attractiveness did not significantly increase after a single positive interpersonal communication event. Interestingly, the latter finding contradicts previous literature by Albada, Knapp, and Theune (2002) who reported that perceptions of physical appearance were vulnerable to positive interpersonal communication events. While this conflicting result might seem puzzling at first glance, it can rather easily be explained by comparing methodological approaches.

There are three methodological reasons why conflicting results emerged between this experiment and the Albada et al. investigation. First, this study examined the effect of a single interpersonal communication event whereas the Albada et al. report focused on multiple social interactions. Second, the present study featured a sample of primarily single participants while the Albada and colleagues investigation only enlisted participants who were in a committed dating relationship. Thus, the relational stage may make a difference in terms of perceptions as they are highly unstable during interpersonal relationship development but relatively stable after dating ensues. Third, this dissertation employed a speed-dating methodology whereas the Albada et al. study relied on a diary method of data collection. Indeed, having to intrapersonally assess the physical attractiveness of multiple speed-dating partners brought about a different result than

merely evaluating and re-evaluating the physical attractiveness of the same person repeatedly in a diary. As a collective whole, these three fundamental differences suggest why contradictory results emerged between this investigation and the diary method study of Albada and associates.

Two theoretical conclusions can be drawn based on the results from the physical attractiveness dependent variable. Most notably, this study successfully extends the underlying attraction mechanism that represents the heart of IAT. That is, IAT was originally predicated on the axiom that it takes multiple social interactions for individuals to alter their perceptions of the physical attractiveness of another individual (Albada, Knapp, & Theune, 2002). Instead, this study demonstrated that a single chat can make another person appear more or less physically attractive. Moreover, this study also illustrated that male perceptions of physical attractiveness were in fact vulnerable to positive social behaviors while the seminal reporting of IAT indicated that male ratings of physical attractiveness were not impacted by positive interaction. When taken together, both of these findings broaden the empirical parameters of IAT.

One general reason why the results from the physical attractiveness variable are interesting to note is because they further highlight the significance of interpersonal communication in burgeoning romantic relationships. Specifically, the present research illustrated that it takes only 180 seconds of communicative behavior for individuals to evaluate another person as physically different. While prior scholarship has found that perceptions of others are made based on relatively thin slices of behavior (e.g. Ambady, Hallahan, & Connor, 1999; Ambady & Rosenthal, 1993), lesser amounts of scholarship have documented how much communication is required for these initial perceptions to be

cognitively altered within a dating environment. Indeed, conventional wisdom suggests that first impressions are lasting impressions. At the same time, this study offers evidence that first impressions are not always lasting impressions as it nicely illustrates the volatility of perceptions during initial interaction.

The data that emerged from the negative communication condition for the physical attractiveness dependent variable are discussion worthy. The finding that overall perceptions of physical attractiveness decreased after just three minutes of negative interpersonal communication was consistent with prior literature that suggested judgments of physical appearance should decrease after negative social interactions (Albada, Knapp, & Theune, 2002). While it may not be surprising that a single negative social interaction would cause individuals to evaluate others less favorably, it is at least moderately surprising to see that only three minutes of negative communication would induce such a strong perceptual shift on the physical attractiveness variable. It appears that most individuals are opposed to negative communication during initial interaction. It could also be argued that a small number of persons may desire to critically evaluate the physical attractiveness of a dating partner immediately after a single negative interpersonal communication event. All things considered, the unfavorable post-test evaluations phenomenon appeared to be especially prevalent in the minds of male participants relative to the minds of female participants. In fact, additional follow-up tests demonstrated that male speed-daters post-test evaluations of the physical attractiveness of the confederate were much lower than their female speed-dating counterparts. Thus, it can be argued that negative communication during a single social interaction has a more powerful effect on men compared to women. All in all, the finding that overall

perceptions of physical attractiveness statistically decreased further exemplifies the interconnectedness of these two constructs (e.g. communication type and physical attractiveness) in most communicative contexts and conditions.

Assessing the Intelligence of Others

The second hypothesis examined perceptions of intelligence. The investigator posited that three minutes of positive social interaction would cause participants to see a dating partner as more intelligent from pre-test to post-test while three minutes of negative social interaction would cause participants to see a dating partner as less intelligent from pre-test to post-test. Support was found for this hypothesis. In addition, follow-up tests on the three-way interaction produced valuable information concerning the proposed research question. Specifically, findings indicated that male perceptions of female intelligence significantly decreased from pre-test to post-test in the negative communication condition. However, female perceptions of male intelligence did not significantly decrease from pre-test to post-test in the negative communication condition. All things considered, several discussion points emerged for this dependent variable.

The finding that intelligence perceptions changed from pre-test to post-test is applicable to several communicative contexts. First, the results on the intelligence variable have dating implications as single individuals often cite intelligence as a desirable attribute for potential mates to possess (Cann, 1991). As such, an individual who can strategically make her or himself appear intelligent during a three-minute social interaction can thereby increase her or his chances of being desired as a potential mate. In other words, intelligence can be used a tool for increasing desirability. Akin to the findings on the physical attractiveness dependent variable, it would be interesting to note

whether tonality, nonverbal communication, or verbal comments are most influential in terms of their overall ability to impact intelligence ratings within various attraction relevant contexts. Indeed, some research has suggested that humorous verbal comments are highly correlated with perceptions of intelligence and desirability (Gueguen, 2010). However, the results from this study provide only circumstantial evidence as to which communicative dimension (i.e. tonality, nonverbal communication, verbal comments, etc.) is strongest in terms of its relative ability to make another person appear more intelligent. Although this intelligence finding merely adds to prior interpersonal attraction scholarship, this same result is nevertheless unique because it offers insight on a completely separate avenue of communication research.

The results from the intelligence dependent variable can also be applied to organizational communication scholarship. Specifically, it is interesting to note the findings on the intelligence variable because they can be applied to employment interviewing in an organizational setting. That is, newer scholarship has indicated that speed-dating for jobs has become en vogue for some academic institutions and corporate organizations (Orum, 2010). In fact, a recent Ph.D. candidate in sociology named Tennant (2008) stated the following in an online article after she speed-dated for her first tenure track faculty position:

My advisor and some well-meaning members of my dissertation committee urged me to give it a shot. ‘It’s good practice,’ they said. ‘And what have you got to lose?’ Actually, I lost \$45 the minute I signed up for the service, but I assured myself it would be worth it for the interview experience and possible job offers.

Even though Tenant did not secure employment from her sociological speed-dating session, the fact that speed-dating has entered a new realm of society makes the findings on the intelligence dependent variable particularly intriguing. Most notably, results from the present study suggest that potential employees who can successfully maintain positive communication for only three minutes can thereby make themselves a more appealing job candidate. Similarly, less savvy interviewers who are armed with the findings from this study now have a strategic tool for marketing her or himself as a highly intelligent potential employee. In terms of implications for the other side of the table, hiring managers need to exert more diligence before assessing the overall intelligence of a potential employee. Regardless, the finding that perceptions of intelligence were highly variable in a speed-dating environment is applicable to daters, potential employees, as well as potential employers.

One general reason why the overall findings concerning the intelligence dependent variable are interesting to note is because intelligence perceptions can positively or negatively correlate with other personal attributes. As stated previously, the famed halo effect (Thorndike, 1920) suggested that favorable impressions on one quality regularly induce positive judgments on a separate and often unrelated variable. In fact, Thorndike specifically analyzed intellect as he argued:

Different traits such as intelligence, industry, technical skill reliability, etc., were very highly correlated and very unevenly correlated. It consequently appears probable that those giving the ratings were unable to analyze out these different aspects of the person's nature and achievement and rate each in independence of others. (p. 25)

Thus, if a potential romantic partner or potential employee is regarded as highly intelligent because of positive communication then she or he might be overestimated in terms of her or his sociability, attractiveness, competence, and the like. Conversely, an individual who is regarded as less intelligent because of negative communication might be underestimated on various personal and professional qualities. Either way, single individuals and hiring managers who become cognizant of the intelligence perceptual shift that occurs during a single social interaction will now be less prone to misjudge the other attributes of another individual.

The three-way interaction that materialized for this dependent variable is intriguing. It appears that participant gender influenced the pre-test to post-test differences that were dependent on whether positive or negative communication occurred. This result was partially due to the finding that female perceptions of intelligence negligibly increased in the negative communication condition. While counterintuitive to the anticipated ramifications of negative conversation, it could be argued that this particular result emerged because females are more thoughtful than males. That is, the finding that females did not regard a male dating partner as less intelligent after negative communication while males did regard a female dating partner as less intelligent after negative communication suggests that females differentiate between intellectual ability and negative social interaction. It appears that women are perhaps more reflective about a negative chat during a single social interaction than are men. In fact, the females in this study appeared to more closely analyze the specific negative comments that emerged in this experiment in comparison to the male participants. Female participants did not observe intellectual ability unfavorably because

the male confederate did not offer unintelligent communication. Instead, female participants were exposed to haughty comments and a standoffish communicative demeanor. Thus, female perceptions of the intelligence of the male confederate did not decrease because they engaged in a thoughtful communication analysis. On the other hand, slightly different results emerged concerning the male participants in this study. For men, negative communication was married to negative intelligence perceptions regardless of intellectual content. In the end, it appears that some gender differences exist between men and women in terms of how they perceive the intelligence of another after a single negative social interaction.

How do We Receive Attitudinally Similar Others?

The third hypothesis for this study looked at perceptions of attitudinal similarity. It was hypothesized that three minutes of positive social interaction would cause participants to see a dating partner as more attitudinally similar from pre-test to post-test while three minutes of negative social interaction would cause participants to see a dating partner as less attitudinally similar from pre-test to post-test. Partial support was found for the attitudinal similarity hypothesis. Evidence related to the proposed research question revealed that both male and female perceptions of attitudinal similarity increased after positive communication. Along this line, prior research by Byrne (1961; 1969; 1971) and his associates (Byrne & Nelson, 1965; Byrne, Clore, & Worchel 1966; Byrne, Ervin & Lamberth, 1970; Byrne, Baskett, & Hodges, 1971) has yielded consistent support for the claim that individuals experience increased amounts of attraction for similar others. Based on Bryne's research, it makes logical sense that participants evaluated the attitudinal similarity of confederates more favorably after they were

exposed to a single positive communication event. That is, these results probably emerged because most individuals generally believe that they in fact possess an overall positive attitude. Simply put, most people believe that they consistently maintain a positive attitude. As such, it would be expected that perceptions of attitudinal similarity would increase after the confederates demonstrated positive communication behaviors because participants who believe that they consistently maintain a positive attitude would upon seeing the positive behaviors of another regard them as similar to her or his own attitudinal tendencies. Stated differently, most people consider themselves to be attitudinally positive and thus found attitudinal similarities after positive communication ensued.

The finding that perceptions of attitudinal similarity did not significantly decrease from pre-test to post-test after negative communication should also be noted. It appears that the attitudinal similarity dependent variable may have been less prevalent than other variables during the negative communication speed-dating sessions. This was particularly true for the female participants. One possible reason why this result emerged is because female speed-daters during the negative communication speed-dating sessions may have been more pre-occupied with other variables (e.g. physical attractiveness, intelligence, etc.) than were their male speed-dating counterparts during the negative communication sessions. It is also conceivable that female speed-daters in the negative communication sessions perhaps chalked the negative communication of the male confederate up to him just merely having a bad day and not up to him maintaining an overall negative attitude. Either way, the female participants in the negative communication sessions were less

likely to negatively evaluate their overall perception of the attitudinal similarity of the male confederate after negative social interaction.

Additional findings for this dependent variable indicated that male pre-test to post-test perceptions of attitudinal similarity were virtually unchanged regardless of which communication condition they were exposed to. This was an expected finding because the post-test evaluations contained the data from both the positive and negative manipulations. One unexpected finding for this dependent variable was that female perceptions of attitudinal similarity increased in a statistically significant manner in both communication conditions. It is possible that communication whether positive or negative allows females to experience an attitudinal similarity connection with males. For females, it is conceivable that the mere presence of interpersonal interaction is enough to instill a feeling of rapport with another individual. Thus, this connection via dyadic communication could have made it more difficult for females to unfavorably evaluate the attitudinal similarity of their male dating counterpart during the post-test assessment. Or, it is also feasible that some female participants misperceived some of the nonverbal communication that occurred in the negative communication condition. For instance, some females might perceive a lack of eye contact as being consistent with a shy disposition while other females might perceive a lack of eye contact as being symbolic of a negative attitude. While the findings on this dependent variable may have produced more questions than answers, the results concerning the final dependent variable were much easier to interpret.

Perceptions of Background Similarity in a Dating Environment

The final hypothesis evaluated perceptions of background similarity. It was proposed that three minutes of positive social interaction would cause participants to perceive that a dating partner possessed a background as more similar to her or his own personal background while three minutes of negative social interaction would cause participants to perceive that a dating partner possessed a background as less similar to her or his own personal background. This hypothesis was not supported. Findings related to the proposed research question indicated that some gender differences existed between male and female perceptions of background similarity after a single negative social interaction. Follow-up tests demonstrated that perceptions of background similarity did not significantly increase after positive interpersonal communication. Moreover, perceptions of background similarity did not significantly decrease after negative interpersonal communication.

The observed three-way interaction produced novel data on participant gender and the proposed research question. One interesting discussion point relates to why perceptions of background similarity did not increase after a single positive communication event. It appears that pre-test and post-test scores were stagnant for this dependent variable because some participants may have inferred perceptions of background similarity based solely on aesthetic observations. That is, the construct of background similarity may have been ascertained autonomous of the enacted communicative behaviors if some participants developed conclusions based off of peripheral nonverbal indicators. Specifically, visual cues such as ethnicity, haircut, dress, and economic status could have been perceived without social interaction. At the same

time, it is also possible that visual cues made no difference in terms of swaying individual perceptions. Either way, it is at least conceivable that non-controllable features like ethnicity may have influenced some individual perceptions of background similarity.

It should also be noted that very few gender differences were observed on this dependent variable relative to other study variables. In fact, the only difference identified in the present research was on perceptions of background similarity in the negative communication condition. It was in this condition that male perceptions of the background similarity of the female confederate significantly decreased after negative communication. However, negative communication did not cause females to lower their perceptions of the background similarity of the male confederate. In fact, female perceptions of male background similarity negligibly increased after negative communication. This effect may have been observed because the male confederate in this study was native to the state where the present research was conducted. In essence, his background was similar to the majority of the female participants who participated in this study. In the end, this unexpected finding partially facilitated the three-way interaction that was observed for this dependent variable.

There are a couple of reasons why male perceptions of female background similarity decreased after negative communication. One possible explanation is that the female confederate in this study was from the upper Midwest. In contrast, all male participants in this study were students at a large Southeastern university. Thus, highly observant participants may have detected a negligible Midwest accent in the female confederate (or a lack of a southern accent) and thereby drew assumptions concerning background similarity based on that vocal cue. Perhaps a more plausible explanation as to

why male perceptions of female background similarity decreased after negative communication is that during some of the social interactions the male participants asked the female confederate where she was from in the opening seconds of their speed-date. Therefore, some inadvertent background data leaked during some of the social interactions. Even though the female confederate firmly adhered to the negative communication script, she was also instructed beforehand to not blatantly lie during her social interactions. Moreover, since the female confederate answered all demographic questions honestly, the male participants might have drawn irreversible assumptions concerning the background similarity of the female confederate based off of this single question. When taken together, subtle vocal cues and casual verbal comments may have potentially tipped off some participants on the lack of background similarity possessed.

Additional Findings and Implications

The finding that women were more discriminating than men in terms of second date selection is consistent with previous literature. In fact, Todd, Penke, Fasolo, and Lenton (2007) reported in their speed-dating investigation that “men ‘propose’ to nearly every woman above some certain attractiveness threshold, independent of their own desirability as a mate” (p. 15015). Indeed, this same phenomenon was evident in this study as several male participants were so desirous of landing a second date that they subsequently indicated ‘match’ for every female they speed-dated. Put differently, the male participants in this study were quite open to exploring second date possibilities.

A somewhat related psychological process comparable to the phenomenon identified by Todd and associates (2007) appeared to be consuming the minds of female speed-daters. To begin to describe this effect, it should first be noted that some females

were moderately unhappy about the lack of quality male speed-daters. Specifically, some female participants suggested that their male speed-dating partners were socially awkward and not very attractive physically. While some of these claims might have been warranted, the central byproduct of this perception was that the regular male confederate subsequently became overly desired in both communicative conditions. In other words, perceptions of the physical attractiveness and fundamental social competence of the male confederate were rated exceedingly high because of the other male speed-daters in attendance. As such, the “I don’t want to go home empty-handed” effect seemed especially prevalent for female participants. Thus, it appears that physical attractiveness (relative to the other male speed-daters) induced female participants to select the male confederate for a second date at a relatively high frequency.

One final theoretical implication that should be noted is that perceptions of various other social constructs are applicable to IAT. The original foundation of IAT was solely devoted to perceptions of physical attractiveness. This study demonstrated that perceptions of intelligence, attitudinal similarity, and background similarity were also vulnerable to interpersonal outcomes in certain circumstances. Put differently, it seems that a single positive or a single negative social interaction will cause individuals to alter multiple perceptions of a fellow dyadic partner. All things considered, IAT is not merely limited to perceptions of physical attractiveness but can instead be applied to various other dependent and independent variables.

Recurring Themes Across Multiple Dependent Variables

The data from this study yielded several supplementary findings that can be characterized as moderately related to the central hypotheses and research question. As

hinted at previously, some gender differences were prevalent in this empirical investigation. Comparatively speaking, male perceptions of the female confederate were more likely to change from pre-test to post-test than were female perceptions of the male confederate from pre-test to post-test. Along a similar line, female perceptions were less likely to gravitate towards the proposed directional shift in comparison to the male participants. This was a recurring pattern that was especially noticeable on the intelligence and background similarity dependent variables. It is conceivable that the female participants in this study placed less emphasis on their interpersonal communication with the male confederate relative to the male participants. Stated differently, female participants may have been more fixated on the physical attractiveness of the male confederate. Or, it could also be argued that male participants placed more emphasis on the interpersonal communication that occurred during speed-dating relative to the female participants. Either way, female perceptions in this study were less volatile but more surprising than the perceptions of their male speed-dating counterparts.

There is one consistent pattern that occurred across every dependent variable that is discussion worthy. Specifically, male perceptions of physical attractiveness, intelligence, attitudinal similarity, and background similarity significantly decreased from pre-test to post-test in the negative communication condition. This was a constant pattern. There are two possible explanations as to why this particular result consistently developed. First, it appears that males are perhaps more critical than females immediately after negative communication transpires. A second possible reason why this pattern developed is because males do not differentiate between various types of negative communication. As alluded to previously, the findings from this study suggest that for

male daters negative communication is consistently and inherently tied to across the board negative perceptions of a female dating partner. Regardless of the explanation, the significant decrease for males after negative communication is consistent with prior literature by Markman and Kraft (1989) who reported from a psychological perspective that both men and women are adversely affected by negative interaction. The results from this study suggest that males are particularly vulnerable to the results of a single negative social interaction.

One additional theme that cut across multiple dependent variables involves the size of the observed effects. More specifically, the effect sizes in this investigation generally ranged from small to medium based on a classification system that was developed by Cohen (1988). While statisticians quibble over the relative importance of effect size, the recurring theme of non-large effects from this study is noteworthy because it demonstrates the observed changes were not especially powerful. That is, perceptions of others can be altered in a statistically significant manner because of three minutes of interpersonal communication but the extent or degree to which perceptions are altered is not particularly strong. All things considered, it seems that three minutes of communication can cause individuals to see another person somewhat differently albeit not substantially different.

Limitations and Future Research

Limitations

This empirical study like all scholarly research featured methodological limitations. One major limitation was the speed-dating room. Even though the speed-dating space was trendy, attraction-relevant, and centrally located, it was altogether too

small for some of the larger speed-dating sessions. Thus, the medium-sized conference room at times felt physically uncomfortable and congested despite the fact that the air conditioning was set at a relatively cool 65 degrees Fahrenheit. Moreover, the ventilating system for the speed-dating area was below average. The amalgamation of a medium-sized area, warm bodies, and poor ventilation caused some participants to become physically hot. In fact, some participants were lightly sweating. Along a similar line, the confined quarters of the speed-dating room resulted in stronger smells lingering in the said environment. For instance, a male participant at the fifth session decided to speed-date immediately after he completed an outdoor soccer practice. This non-showered male was so soiled that one female participant remarked during the debriefing session: "his feet smelled like stale milk." Sadly, this situation was further exacerbated because the male participant wore his soccer cleats over his shoulder like a duffle bag as he rotated from date to date. At this particular session, it is feasible that some female participants may have slightly rushed through their post-test evaluations because the said environment was not physically comfortable. In any event, a moderately larger room with better air circulation would have been a better dating environment.

A second limitation of this study involved participant use of technology during speed-dates. The use of iphones, blackberries, and the like was problematic because it allowed participants to easily exchange contact information immediately after or during a good speed-date. It was difficult to definitively ascertain whether or not this happened largely because of the multi-purposeful nature of cellular technology. In all likelihood, the exchange of contact information between participants while speed-dating probably occurred at least once but less than five times total. This may have influenced some of the

matching data that emerged in this study. In contrast, it is the speculation of the investigator that some participants may have strategically used their cell phones as a tool for communicating disinterest to other speed-daters. That is, participants who brought their cellular phones with them to the event could easily focus on that accessory instead of her or his date in circumstances where a fellow speed-dater did not meet her or his minimum physical attractiveness standards. In addition to being rude, a participant who texted during speed-dating would have also been less focused on the communicative behaviors that occurred during the dates with the confederates and other participants. While this was not a major issue, it could easily be resolved in future research if the investigator instructs participants beforehand to turn off all technological devices before speed-dating begins.

A third limitation of this study was the participant sample. This empirical investigation was only open to undergraduate students at the current university. As such, the participants in this study were from a relatively homogenous group. Future empirical research that employs a speed-dating methodology should secure a non-college aged sample. Similarly, the results from a sample comprised of homosexual participants would also be interesting to note. This would allow investigators to compare and contrast the function of speed-dating between two populations who embrace different sexual preferences.

An additional limitation of this study involves experimenter effects. The confederates in this study were conscious of the original hypotheses that were driving this empirical investigation. Thus, it possible that confederates were trying to please the experimenter by speed-dating in such a way that would ensure that statistically significant

results would emerge. This affect may have been further confounded because confederates were provided financial compensation for their participation. Indeed, it seems that a blind experimental procedure in which confederates were not aware of the central purpose may have been more appropriate for this social sciences project.

A final limitation of this study was that only two confederates were employed for this empirical investigation. It is conceivable that the observed and non-observed effects were limited to the two individuals who served as confederates in the present research. It also possible that confederates may have varied at their degree of proficiency with regard to executing each communication script. That is, the female confederate (or the male confederate) may have been exceedingly skilled at performing the positive communication script but not as skilled at performing the negative communication script or vice versa. Perhaps this limitation impacted the background similarity dependent variable the most of all. Either way, using additional confederates could have strengthened or diminished the reported effect sizes and brought more consistency to the enactment of each communication script. All things considered, it would have made better methodological sense to have utilized at least two female and two male confederates.

Future Research

There are several intriguing avenues for future research. One interesting area for future speed-dating research involves incorporating additional verbal and nonverbal variables into the experimental design. With regards to the latter, only one empirical study (Guegen, 2009) has investigated the function of nonverbal communication in a speed-dating environment. As such, it would be fascinating to test if a brief hand touch

could make a fellow speed-dater appear more attractive, intelligent, or similar. While related scholarship by Hubbard, Tsuji, Williams, and Seatriz Jr. (2003) found that a light touch induced higher gratuities, it would be interesting to note if the psychological effects of touch during an initial dating interaction would also yield favorable outcomes. With regards to the verbal component, focusing on specific types of verbal communication could also produce fascinating empirical data. For instance, one could assess the role of humor in an attraction-relevant environment by having a confederate share a joke during speed-dates in order to determine if that type of communication influences individual perceptions in a statistically significant manner. Moreover, focus group research could be completed after each speed-dating session in order to qualitatively ascertain what specific types of communicative behaviors made a fellow dating partner appear more or less physically attractive, intelligent, and similar.

A second area of future research on speed-dating involves altering the traditional face-to-face interaction. Newer research could physically mask study participants, utilize a poorly light environment, or place a screen between participants as a means to ensure that social interaction is especially salient. By doing so, more emphasis would be placed on interpersonal communication while less attention would be devoted to other constructs like physical attractiveness, attire, status, and the like. Now that some future avenues for speed-dating research have been identified, this paper will now explore future research devoted to liking for another.

Future interpersonal attraction scholarship should examine the role of imagined interactions in various dating contexts. As the preceding pages have insinuated, the confederates in this study mentally rehearsed both the positive and negative

communication scripts before completing their speed-dates. Not surprisingly, this intrapersonal focus on forthcoming communication helped produce statistically significant results on some of the proposed hypotheses. In the future, it would be interesting to scientifically test whether individuals who pre-script their social interactions with others thereby increase their chances of landing a romantic date in comparison to individuals who merely rely on situational communication to obtain a date with another single individual. That is, future social scientific research could examine if pre-planned pick-up banter is more effective than spontaneous pick-up banter in environments like coffee shops, singles bars, and the like. This line of research could thereby empower less-savvy communicators as she or he could then intrapersonally rehearse effective pick-up rhetoric beforehand in order to systematically improve her or his chances of securing a romantic date.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this study provided evidence that perceptions of physical attractiveness, intelligence, attitudinal similarity, and background similarity were influenced by three minutes of interpersonal communication. In addition, this paper offered empirical support that the philosophical underpinnings of interaction appearance theory are germane not only to judgments of physical appearance but can also be applied to constructs such as intelligence and similarity. Moreover, the findings from this study pertain to an array of diverse social arenas that include both interpersonal relationship development and interviewing within an organizational communication setting. Thus, the present research has both theoretical implications as well as practical applications. While this dissertation began with a quote from popular author Neil Strauss, this dissertation

now concludes by reaffirming that interpersonal communication has an influential impact over our individual perceptions.

APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL



THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Institutional Review Board

118 College Drive #5147
 Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
 Tel: 601.266.6820
 Fax: 601.266.5509
 www.usm.edu/irb

**HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE
 NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION**

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subject must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 11022401

PROJECT TITLE: **Attraction Rating via Speed-dating: How a Single Communication Event Alters Perceptions of Physical Appearance**

PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: 01/15/2010 to 04/10/2011

PROJECT TYPE: **Dissertation**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: **Andrew Dix**


COLLEGE/DIVISION: **College of Arts & Letters**

DEPARTMENT: **Communication Studies**

FUNDING AGENCY: **N/A**

HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: **Expedited Review Approval**

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: **03/14/2011 to 03/13/2012**



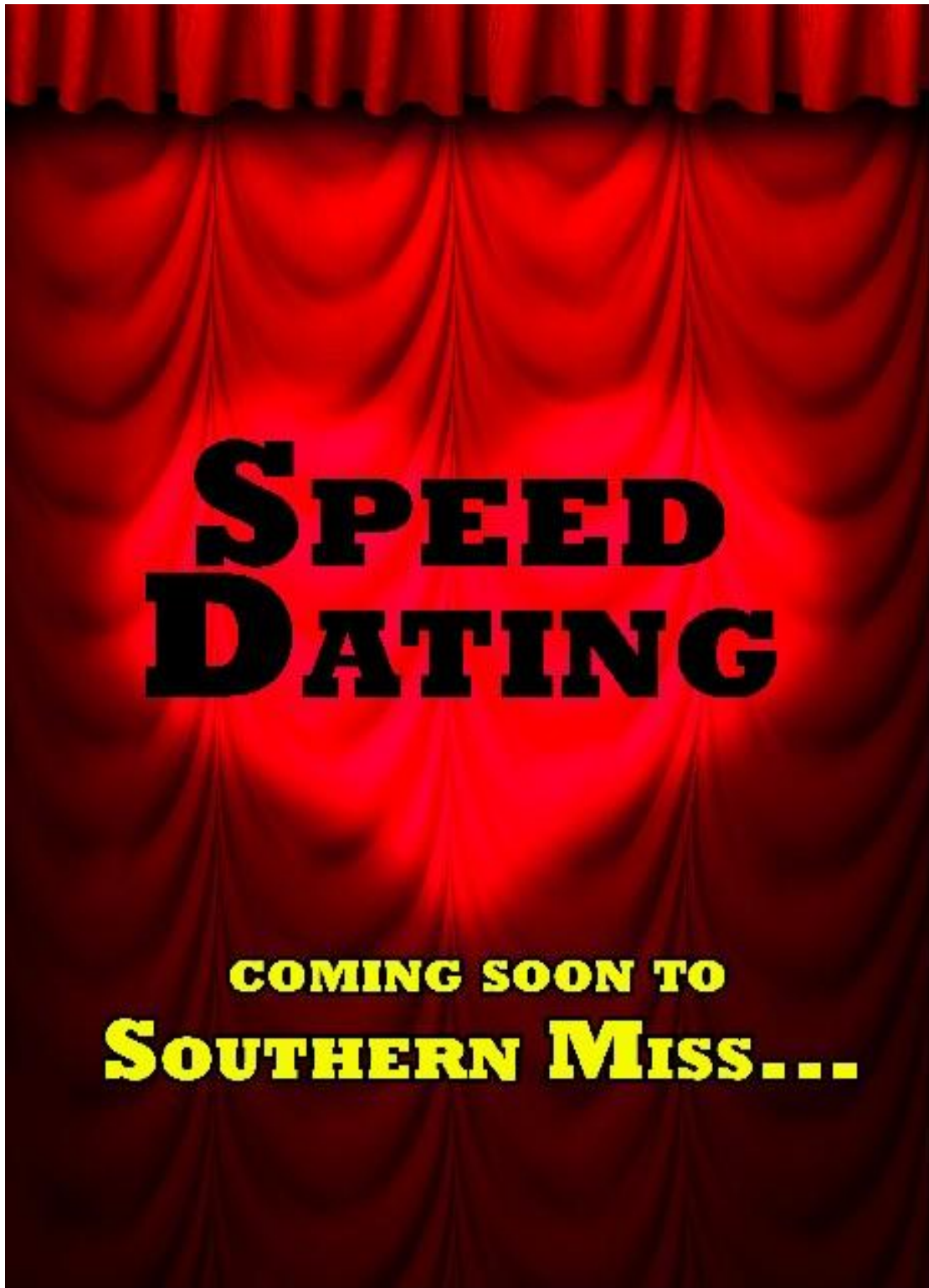
 Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
 HSPRC Chair

3/14/2011

 Date

APPENDIX B

SPEED-DATING TEASER ADVERTISEMENT



APPENDIX C

SPEED-DATING DETAILED ADVERTISEMENT

HAPPY BEING SINGLE? (LIAR!)

**SOUTHERN MISS
SPEED-DATING**

Some of the benefits include:

- A month of dates in just one night
- Free complimentary finger foods
- And the chance to make several matches!

**BRING A FRIEND.
MEET NEW FRIENDS.**

Participants will be accepted on a first come first serve basis. Space is limited. Speed-dating will take place in the workshop room of the USM speaking center located inside of Cook library. Only six speed-dating sessions will take place. Dates and times will be provided when registration is completed.

**START REGISTRATION NOW
E-MAIL YOUR NAME AND AVAILABILITY (SAT OR SUN) TO:
usmspeeddating@yahoo.com**

APPENDIX D

BRIEF ARTICLE IN CAMPUS NEWSPAPER

Parking garage opens Thursday

Members of the Southern Miss community are invited to attend the grand opening of the university's new parking garage Thursday, April 7, at 10:30 a.m. Located off of West Fourth Street and next to Speed Hall, the two-story facility will include approximately 1,200 parking spaces and will offer open area parking for faculty, staff and students. The facility will be open to pack-

ing following the conclusion of the grand opening ceremony.

For more information, contact the Department of Parking Management at (601) 256-3447.

Doctoral student seeks participants for study

Doctoral student in the communication studies department, Andrew Day, is seeking volunteer participants for a speed dating study. Day will host a series of six to

News in Brief

eight speed-dating sessions in order to see whether brief 3-minute speed-dating encounters are more effective than longer encounters. The sessions will be conducted in the workshop room of the Southern Miss Speaking Center located in Cook 2100. All undergraduate students are eligible to participate and will have the opportunity to meet other people, dating partners, find a change, receive complimentary food and get the chance to go on several dates in one night. The sessions commencing on April 9 and April 10. Interested students should email and send a photograph to andrew.day@usm.edu.

Planned Parenthood visits USM

Planned Parenthood (PP) will be stopped at USM on its national tour, educating students, faculty and staff on reproductive support for their potential partners. "It was not one to be aware of it" said Zach Booth, a senior from Vicksburg and a member of SOU, the USM student organization. Voice for Planned Parenthood (VPP). The volunteer's partner would feel an ethical dilemma to reject the extreme proposal that would her Partner. Planned Parenthood from receiving federal funding is possible health care, including blood and cancer screening, family planning, birth control, and testing.

Recently transferred information

See [www.usm.edu/transfer](#) for more information about Planned Parenthood visits USM.

Big Foot Field Salami

The annual Big Foot Field Salami, the Big Foot Field Salami, is a tradition of the Hattiesburg community by doing different charitable services every year across the city. Last year's event brought in around 150 people to help, while this year's event brought in around 200 people. See [www.usm.edu/transfer](#) for more information about the Big Foot.

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APPENDIX E

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE COMMUNICATION SCRIPT

Positive communication script:

- 1) “Hi! So nice to meet you. Are you having fun tonight?”
- 2) “You are too funny and cute, how are you single?”
- 3) “I was a little nervous to come to this, but I am so glad to see cute boys (girls) like you!”
- 4) “I feel like I have meet you before, like we have a weird connection, a dejavu, you know?”
- 5) “Are you on Facebook? You should friend me!”
- 6) “I really enjoyed speaking with you! I wish we had longer to talk. Ohhhh.”

Negative communication script:

- 1) “I don’t mean to be rude, but I just don’t see me and you as having a connection.”
- 2) “I just don’t feel like you are my type, besides my friend brought me to this so I just kinda came for her.”
- 3) “I don’t mean this in an arrogant way, but I know that I am attractive, what do you have going for you?”
- 4) “I’m over this. This whole speed-dating thing has been lame. I had no idea it was going to be like this.”
- 5) “So, if we see someone else we would like to talk to, can we just move?”
- 6) “Did the speed-dating organizer just ring the bell?”

APPENDIX F
VALIDATION MEASURE

Video 1:

Directions: Please indicate your judgments on this videotaped social interaction. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies by using the following options:

Strong Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Somewhat disagree = 3; Undecided = 4 Somewhat Agree = 5; Agree = 6; Strongly Agree = 7

- _____ 1) The verbal comments of the female were negative in this social interaction.
- _____ 2) The tone of the female was negative in this social interaction.
- _____ 3) The tone of the male in this social interaction was positive.
- _____ 4) The male demonstrated positive nonverbal behaviors in the social interaction.
- _____ 5) The nonverbal communication of the female in the interaction was negative
- _____ 6) The male used positive nonverbal communication in the social interaction.

Video 2:

Directions: Please indicate your judgments on this videotaped social interaction. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies by using the following options:

Strong Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Somewhat disagree = 3; Undecided = 4 Somewhat Agree = 5; Agree = 6; Strongly Agree = 7

- _____ 1) The verbal comments of the female were negative in this social interaction.
- _____ 2) The tone of the female was negative in this social interaction.
- _____ 3) The tone of the male in this social interaction was positive.
- _____ 4) The male demonstrated positive nonverbal behaviors in the social interaction.
- _____ 5) The nonverbal communication of the female in the interaction was negative.
- _____ 6) The male used positive nonverbal communication in the social interaction.

APPENDIX G

INFORMED CONSENT

**THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI
AUTHORIZATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH PROJECT**

Consent is hereby giving to participate in the study titled: Attraction rating via speed-dating: How a single communication event can alter perceptions of physical appearance.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study is to examine communication and feelings of romantic attraction. Findings from this investigation will provide additional understanding on what conversation topics can help stimulate liking for another individual.

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY: Speed-dating will be the central procedure in this study. The participants in this study will go on approximately 10 -15 brief 3-minute dates. Participants will also decide whether they would like to have future contact with a fellow speed-dater immediately after the conclusion of each individual speed-date. Participants will be given the opportunity to exchange e-mail addresses to those individuals with whom they felt a potential romantic connection. In addition, participants will complete a brief scale before and after their speed-dating session.

BENEFITS: Participants in this study will have the opportunity to meet potential dating partners without having to pay a standard dating fee that is normally associated with speed-dating. Participants will also receive free food and beverages for participating in the speed-dating session.

RISKS: The main risk of this study is the potential for social rejection. Specifically, it is highly conceivable that one speed-dater may be interested in future contact, while their speed-dating partner might not desire future social contact. It is also possible that some participants might not be chosen for future contact by all other speed-daters. Another potential risk is that awkward conversation might occur between speed-daters who feel uncomfortable initiating discussion with a stranger. Lastly, there is an extremely low probability risk that a participant could meet someone while speed-dating and be harmed by this individual at some later point in time.

If participants experience distress caused by any of the aforementioned risks, they should notify the principal researcher (Andrew Dix) immediately at 618-531-4698 or 601-266-4987.

CONFIDENTIALITY: All of the data collected in this study will be destroyed after 7 years. The results from the speed-dating portion of this study will be presented as a collective whole (aggregate form). In other words, all of the speed-dating data will be presented as a lump sum to ensure confidentiality. Furthermore, all potential identifying information will be removed to help further ensure confidentiality. Specific quotations

from the speed-dating portion of this study could be used in the final paper; participants will be given an alias name in this possible circumstance to promote the anonymity of all study participants. As stated previously, all photographs and paper data will be kept in a locked file cabinet while data is being collected.

Once data collection is completed, all photographs and paper data will be shredded in a shredding machine.

PARTICIPANT ASSURANCE: Whereas no assurance can be made concerning results that may be obtained (since results from investigational studies cannot be predicted) the researcher will take every precaution consistent with the best scientific practice. Participation in this project is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits. Questions concerning the research should be directed to Andrew Dix at 618-531-4698 or by e-mail at andrew.dix@eagles.usm.edu. This project and this consent form have been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001, (601) 266-6820. A copy of this form will be given to the participant.

SIGNATURES: In conformance with the federal guidelines, the signature of the participant or parent or guardian must appear on all written consent documents. The University also requires that the date and the signature of the person explaining the study to the subject appear on the consent form.

Signature of the Research Participant

Date

Signature of the Person Explaining the Study

Date

APPENDIX H

BASIC DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1) What is your Gender?

- A) Female
- B) Male

2) What is your age? _____

3) What is your class status?

- A) Freshman
- B) Sophomore
- C) Junior
- D) Senior
- E) Other

4) How do you describe yourself? (please check the one option that best describes you)

- A) American Indian or Alaska Native
- B) Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- C) Asian or Asian American
- D) Black or African American
- E) Hispanic or Latino
- F) Non-Hispanic / White

5) How would you describe your current relationship status?

- A) Single
- B) Casually dating
- C) In a relationship
- D) Married

6) What is your reason for attending speed-dating today?

7) Have you ever attended a speed-dating session before?

- A) Yes
- B) No

8) How did you hear about this study? _____

APPENDIX I

PERCEPTIONS OF OTHERS MEASUREMENT SCALE

Photograph # _____

Directions: Please indicate your perceptions of the *person in the photograph*. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by marking whether you:

Strong Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; Somewhat disagree = 3; Undecided = 4 Somewhat Agree = 5; Agree = 6; Strongly Agree = 7

- _____ 1) The person in the photo appears competent
- _____ 2) The person in the photo appears bright
- _____ 3) The person in the photo appears smart
- _____ 4) The person in the photograph is quite handsome (pretty)
- _____ 5) The person in the photograph is very sexy looking
- _____ 6) I find the person in the photograph very attractive physically
- _____ 7) I don't like the way the person in the photograph looks
- _____ 8) The person in the photograph is somewhat ugly
- _____ 9) The person in the photograph is not very good looking
- _____ 10) The person in the photograph wears neat clothes
- _____ 11) The clothes of the person in the photograph are not becoming

Directions: Please indicate your feelings about the *person in the photograph* using the scale below. Numbers 1 and 7 indicate a very strong feeling. Numbers 2 and 6 indicate a strong feeling. Numbers 3 and 5 indicate a fairly weak feeling. Number 4 indicates that you are unsure or undecided.

- | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|
| 12) Is like me | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Is unlike me |
| 13) Is different from me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Is similar to me |
| 14) Thinks like me | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Not think like me |
| 15) Doesn't behave like me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Behaves like me |

16) Status like me	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Status different than me
17) Different social class	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Similar social class
18) Is culturally different	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Is culturally similar
19) Economically like me	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Economically different

APPENDIX J

SPEED-DATING MATCH SHEET

Instructions: Please write your first name and nametag number at the top of this paper. Please write one of the following on the comments line after all of your speed-date have concluded:

A) *“Match. My e-mail address is _____”*

B) *Not a match. I do not feel like we are a match based on our speed-date.”*

Date # 1	First Name:	Nametag #
----------	-------------	-----------

Comments:

Date # 2	First Name:	Nametag #
----------	-------------	-----------

Comments:

Date # 3	First Name:	Nametag #
----------	-------------	-----------

Comments:

Date # 4	First Name:	Nametag #
----------	-------------	-----------

Comments:

Date # 5	First Name:	Nametag #
----------	-------------	-----------

Comments:

Date # 6

First Name:

Nametag #

Comments:

Date # 7

First Name:

Nametag #

Comments:

Date # 8

First Name:

Nametag #

Comments:

Date # 9

First Name:

Nametag #

Comments:

Date # 10

First Name:

Nametag #

Comments:

Date # 11

First Name:

Nametag #

Comments:

APPENDIX K
AUTHORIZATION OF LOCATION

Authorization 1

Authorization to Conduct Research

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between dyadic communication and interpersonal attraction. Specifically, the first goal of this investigation is to determine if a brief social encounter can cognitively affect opinions of physical attractiveness. Similarly, the second goal of this project is to identify what types of communicative behavior affect judgments of physical appearance. In order to accomplish these objectives, a speed-dating methodology is being utilized by the principal investigator.

The data used in this project will be collected in the workshop room of the University of Southern Mississippi Speaking Center. This data will be collected between February of 2011 and April of 2011. Approximately 120 participants will be involved in this study. The researcher will conduct a total of six speed-dating sessions. All chairs, desks, and other materials will be returned to their original location at the conclusion of each session.

This document hereby authorizes the principal investigator and a research assistant to collect data in the aforementioned location during the spring of 2011 academic semester. Furthermore, all data collected in this study will be the intellectual property of the principal investigator. As alluded to previously, it is anticipated that all research will be completed by April of 2011.



Signature of Student Investigator



Signature of Qualified Personnel

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Footnotes

¹ The data from the 2 x 2 x 2 mixed factorial ANOVAs were also examined with a Bonferroni technique. The .05 social sciences standard was adjusted to .0125 after dividing significance level by the number of dependent variables (Frey, Botan, & Kreps, 2000). The results for the hypotheses were not statistically impacted by this correction. However, secondary findings concerning perceptions of physical attractiveness in the negative communication condition, the three-way interaction for perceptions of intelligence, the two-way interaction between participant gender and communication condition on perceptions of attitudinal similarity, and male perceptions of background similarity from pre-test to post-test were not statistically significant after a Bonferroni adjustment was made. The statistically significant three-way interaction for the perceptions of background similarity dependent variable was not affected by the Bonferroni correction.

