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Personality Similarity and Complementarity

in Adult Love Relationships

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Susan Sophie Slade

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Psychology

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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ABSTRACT

Personality Similarity and Complementarity in
Adult Love Relationships

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Concordia University, 1991.

The personality fit between partners in intimate relationships is one factor which has been associated with mate selection and relationship satisfaction. It has been suggested that people are attracted to and more satisfied in relationships with people who are similar to themselves, and/or with people whose personality needs are complementary. Previous researchers have found some support for similarity but little for complementarity. However, inappropriate measures and statistical procedures have frequently been used.

In the present study 89 couples aged between 30 and 40 years, who had been together between 8 months and 20 years, completed ten subscales of Jackson's Personality Research Form twice, to describe themselves and their partner, and three subscales of the Marital Satisfaction Inventory. Correlations and multiple regression analyses were used to evaluate similarity, and chi-square analyses and t-tests, involving only the subsample of couples where both partners scored in the upper and lower quartiles, were used to evaluate complementarity.

Only one of the correlations evaluating "actual" and "perceived" similarity between partners achieved significance: men perceived themselves and their partners as significantly similar on Desirability (a scale reflecting social desirability and self-regard). Of the subsample of couples outside the middle range, more were similar than dissimilar in Autonomy and Desirability and more men perceived their partners as similar in Desirability. There was no evidence that complementary relationships were more frequent than relationships between partners who were similar on any dimension.

Hierarchical regression analyses were performed to predict relationship satisfaction (with the association with Desirability controlled) from the actual and perceived differences between partners on personality subscales. None were significant, although there was a trend for men's perceptions of similarity on Defendence to predict their relationship satisfaction. T-tests did not reveal any significant differences in relationship satisfaction between the similar and dissimilar couples in the subsample. No support was found for a model of relationship development predicting differences in partners' perceptions of similarity-complementarity as well as in the actual fit as a function of length of relationship.

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I thank my mother and my father for their pride and faith in me throughout my life that has given me the belief that I would accomplish what I set out to do.

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Finally, I dedicate my thesis to my husband, David. Together we have learnt so much about intimate relationships. Your support, understanding and pride in me have been my strength and have made it possible for me to accomplish many things in my life, including this work, from which I can derive satisfaction and fulfillment. For me, we are as close as it gets to a perfect fit.

Sophie Slade, Ph.D.

January, 1992.

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Statement of the Problem

Intimate relationships are central to human existence throughout life from early infancy to old age. Spitz and Wolf (1946), Bowlby (1969) and Ainsworth et al. (1978), among others, have described the significance of intimate attachment in infancy and early childhood and the consequences of the lack of such attachments. Lowenthal and her colleagues (Lowenthal & Haven, 1968; Lowenthal, Thurnher, Chiriboga & associates, 1975; Lowenthal & Weiss, 1976), based on the findings of their life-span research project, have stressed that intimacy is a continuing and vital necessity for a satisfying and growth-oriented existence through old age.

The most important intimate relationship in the lives of most adults is the marital or marital-type relationship. It is the relationship around which a life-style is built and plays a major contributing role in people's sense of themselves and of their life satisfaction. It is the relationship within which much of the ongoing work of adult development takes place, similar in importance to the relationship with the parents during childhood (Colarusso &

Nemiroff, 1981; Mahler, Pine & Bergman, 1975).

Adult love relationships are of importance not only to the individual but also to society. In North American society today, more than at any other time in history, romantic love is considered the almost exclusive legitimate criterion for the formation of a marital and family unit. Such units are the basis of much of our social structure.

Writers from a wide variety of disciplines have been interested in understanding and describing the nature of interpersonal attraction (e.g. Buss, 1985, Byrne, 1971; Grant, 1976). Similarly, many have worked towards identifying the factors which contribute to on-going satisfaction and success across the course of a relationship (e.g. Bentler & Newcomb, 1978; Hendrick, Hendrick & Adler, 1988; Reedy, Birren & Schaie, 1981).

It has been proposed that one important aspect of initial attraction and relationship satisfaction is the way in which the personality characteristics of the partners come together to form a good match. Goldberg (1982) has suggested that the personality fit between partners is even more important than each partner's individual characteristics in determining both the occurrence and the success of a relationship.

Two main propositions have been suggested in popular thought and in the research literature on couple relationships as to what constitutes a good fit between

partners. It has been widely suggested that people are attracted to and more satisfied in relationships with partners who are similar to themselves (e.g. Byrne, 1961: Caspi & Hebener, 1990; Cattell & Nesselroade, 1967). Others have proposed that people are attracted to those whose personality traits and needs are complementary to their own (e.g. Dicks, 1967; Hendrix, 1990; Winch, 1958).

The similarity hypothesis is reflected in the popular maxim "Birds of a feather flock together". Proponents of this position believe that people are more attracted to, prefer to associate with and are more satisfied in their relationships with people who resemble them (e.g. Byrne, 1961; Buss, 1985; Newcomb, 1961; Walster & Walster, 1978).

Complementarity is partially expressed by the maxim "Opposites attract", but also contains the idea of completion. Webster's Dictionary (1986) defines "complement" as "that which completes or fills up" and "complementary" as "supplying a mutual deficiency, together making up a whole". White and Hatcher (1984) described complementarity as the the extent to which two people's differing needs and traits come together in an interlocking fashion, a mutual supplying of each other's lack".

These two propositions have been regarded by many as opposing theories of mate selection and relationship satisfaction (e.g. Antill, 1983; Buss, 1985; Murstein,

1961). Others have seen them as essentially compatible, with similarity expected on some dimensions and complementarity on other dimensions (e.g. Bluhm, Widiger & Miele, 1990; Mathes & Moore, 1985; Meyer & Pepper, 1977; Rosow, 1957).

The similarity hypothesis has been applied to a very wide range of diverse variables, including demographic, family background, attitudinal, physical and psychological characteristics (Buss, 1985), whereas complementarity has generally been much more restricted to refer primarily to personality needs and traits and to the interpersonal behaviors which reflect these (Campbell, 1980; Orford, 1986; Winch, 1955). It is therefore predominantly where these propositions apply to personality variables that the two theories overlap and where conceptual and methodological problems have arisen in the research which detract from the possibility of clearly interpreting the data.

Similarity and complementarity hypotheses have most commonly been tested by correlating partners' scores on some standard measure. Positive correlations have been interpreted as support for similarity between partners and negative correlations as evidence for complementarity. Buss (1985) reviewed many studies investigating partner similarity on a wide range of demographic, cognitive, physical and attitudinal variables and concluded that these have generally yielded moderate to high positive

correlations. The results of studies evaluating personality variables have been much less consistent although the majority have tended to yield low positive correlations between partners on many standard personality measures (Buss, 1985; Wright; 1968). Jensen (1978) noted that the average spousal correlation on personality scales was around .15, whereas Buss (1985) placed it at around .20. These results have been interpreted as offering some support for the similarity hypothesis and very little support for the complementarity hypothesis (Berscheid & Walster, 1978; Buss, 1985). Buss (1985), after reviewing the literature on human mate selection, concluded that "one deviation from randomness that has never been reliably demonstrated, is the tendency of opposites to marry or mate", with the one exception of sex.

To explore the association between partner fit and relationship satisfaction, some researchers have correlated a measure of relationship satisfaction with measures of partner personality similarity or complementarity (Blazer, 1963; Murstein & Beck, 1972). Other researchers have compared the interspousal correlations of happy or stably married couples with those of dissatisfied couples (Cattell & Nesselroade, 1967; Meyer & Pepper, 1977). Researchers have generally concluded that greater similarity between partners is associated with higher quality relationships

(e.g. Bentler & Newcomb, 1978; White & Hatcher, 1984).

Several important criticisms can be made of the methodology used in these studies. These include the use of personality measures which are statistically or conceptually not appropriate, and the use of measures of relationship satisfaction which overlap with the concept of similarity (Fincham & Bradbury, 1987). Most importantly, correlational statistics have been used inappropriately in many of these studies to test the complementarity hypothesis (White & Hatcher, 1984). As complementarity refers to the attraction between opposites, it is not applicable to people who score within the moderate range on personality dimensions. However, researchers have tested the theory by correlating the scores of all couples in their samples. As a result of these criticisms, the conclusions drawn from the majority of studies in this area of research should be seriously questioned.

Despite the lack of research evidence to support the complementarity hypothesis, researchers appear reluctant to abandon it. Reports of studies investigating couple complementarity have appeared on a regular basis since Winch's seminal work in the mid 1950s (e.g. Blazer, 1963; Bluhm et al., 1990; Gillam & McGinley, 1983; Meyer & Pepper, 1977). Furthermore, it is a topic which continues to receive considerable attention from couple and family therapists working in clinical settings (e.g. Dicks, 1967; Willi, 1984;

Hendrix, 1990).

There are several possible explanations for the discrepancy between the findings reported in the research literature and the writings of clinicians. It may be that the clinicians are mistaken in their theoretical formulations of the dynamics they are observing between partners. It is also possible that couples who exhibit high levels of complementarity of the type seen and described by clinicians are the exception rather than the rule and experience difficulties in their relationships which lead them to present themselves for therapy and to eventually divorce. Alternatively, couples who are dissimilar in their interests, attitudes and personalities may be less likely than similar couples to both volunteer or both agree to participate in research on couple relationships. Such couples might therefore be overrepresented in therapists' offices and underrepresented in research samples. However, it is also possible that some of the conceptual and methodological problems suggested above are obscuring the picture to be obtained from the research data.

Two factors which have not been adequately explored in the research may further detract from the accuracy of conclusions. First, many researchers have studied the "actual" similarity and complementarity between partners by comparing partners' self-ratings on standard personality

measures. However, it has been suggested that people's perceptions are not always accurate (e.g. Karylowski, 1990) and that perceptions are more important than "objective reality" in determining the way people feel about various aspects of their relationships (Hendrick et al., 1988; Levinger & Breedlove, 1966; Murstein & Beck, 1972; Sternberg & Barnes, 1985). Many writers view a certain amount of perceptual distortion as a normal and even essential aspect of romantic love relationships, especially in the early stages (e.g. Bader & Pearson, 1988; Colarusso & Nemiroff, 1981; Olson, Fournier & Druckman, 1982). It has therefore been suggested that attraction and later satisfaction might be more highly associated with the perception of similarity and/or complementarity than with the "actual" fit (e.g. Barton & Cattell, 1972; Murstein & Beck, 1972). Perceived similarity has been described as "one of the most powerful findings in the experimental literature on the social psychology of liking" (Rushton, Russell & Wells, 1984). However, relatively few researchers have explored the role of "perceived" versus "actual" personality similarity-complementarity in naturally occurring adult love relationships.

Length of relationship is a second variable which has not been adequately investigated. Relationships are not static, they change over time. Writers such as Kovacs (1983) and Gilfillan (1985), who have described models of

relationship development, have implied that the degree of perceived and actual similarity and complementarity between partners may change over time as a function of developmental processes inherent in relationships. Longitudinal studies are lacking and comparatively few researchers have systematically investigated the role of the length of a relationship on the fit between partners. Some researchers have restricted their sample by length of relationship (Winch, 1955; Meyer & Pepper, 1977; Murstein, 1961), while others have included couples who have been together for very diverse lengths of time, without exploring the impact of relationship length (e.g. Antill, 1983). Price and Vandenberg (1980) introduced a hierarchical multiple regression procedure for exploring differences in couple similarity/difference as a function of length of relationship which has since been used by several other researchers (e.g. Buss, 1984a, 1984b; Gilger, 1991; Mascie-Taylor, 1989).

Contrary to the expectations of theorists such as Buss (1984b) and Stephen and Markman (1983) who have proposed that living together in a common environment over a prolonged period of time promotes similarity, those researchers who have taken length of relationship into account have generally found little support for convergence between partners and have concluded that partners do not

become more similar over the years (Mascie-Taylor, 1989; Price & Vandenberg, 1980). Some researchers have found more evidence for divergence than convergence on certain dimensions (Buss, 1984a).

Many researchers have not adequately controlled for the possible confounding of age and length of relationship, which have been highly correlated in most studies. This approach does not allow for the differentiation of effects which are due to individual developmental processes from those which are reflective of stages of relationship development. No researchers have controlled for the age-length of relationship confound in the research design, although some have statistically partialled out the effect of age on length of relationship (e.g. Buss, 1984b).

The purpose of the present study was to explore both "actual" and "perceived" similarity and complementarity between partners in adult intimate relationships, on personality dimensions related to couple interactions. The impact of length of relationship on both perceived and actual fit was explored whilst holding age constant. Both the frequency of particular personality matches between partners and the association between personality match and relationship satisfaction were investigated for each dimension. Criticisms of previous research were addressed in the choice of measures and in the selection of statistical procedures.

Review of the Literature

Couple similarity and complementarity have long been topics of relevance and interest to many. Scientists working in a variety of spheres have developed several different lines of theory and research. Social psychologists have been interested in understanding the nature of interpersonal attraction and friendship formation (e.g. Byrne, 1961, 1971; Newcomb, 1961). Couple and family therapists are interested in the correlates of relationship success and failure and the factors which contribute to conflict (e.g. Dicks, 1967; Hendrix, 1990). Personality theorists are interested in personality continuity and change over adulthood (Caspi & Hebener, 1990; Kelly & Conley, 1987). Theorists of interpersonal behavior have used concepts of complementarity to understand and predict dyadic behaviors, based on interpersonal circumplex theory (Bluhm, Widiger & Miele, 1990; Conte & Plutchik, 1981; Dietzel & Abeles, 1975; Leary, 1957; Shannon & Guerney, 1973; Tasca & McMullen, 1988). Assortative mating, defined by Buss (1984b) as "the nonrandom coupling of individuals on the basis of resemblance on one or more characteristics" (p.361) has been of interest to geneticists and others because it can lead to changes in the genetic structure of a population by increasing genetic variance (Mascie-Taylor,

1989; Rushton et al., 1984). The personality fit between partners is also a topic of inherent interest to any observer of human relationships.

In the first part of this section the similarity hypothesis and the complementarity hypothesis will be outlined and some theoretical models of relationships will be presented detailing why people might be attracted to similar and complementary partners. A model of the main areas of couple interaction will be presented with predictions regarding the most compatible matches between partners within each of these areas. Following this, a model of relationship development will be proposed from which it is inferred that perceived and actual similarity and complementarity between partners change as a function of length of relationship. A review of the research which has been conducted to date on personality similarity and complemententarity will be presented, together with some criticisms of this body of research. Finally the purposes of the present study will be outlined.

Similarity Hypothesis

People can be similar to each other on innumerable dimensions, ranging from the insignificant to those which are likely to be important to the formation and success of a relationship. Researchers have consistently found significant positive correlations between partners in

intimate relationships on a wide variety of variables, including demographics, cognitive abilities, drinking and smoking habits, physical characteristics, values, interests, attitudes and beliefs, love styles and attachment styles, as well as personality variables (Berscheid & Walster, 1978; Buss, 1985; Buss & Barnes, 1986; Hendrick et al., 1988; Hill, Rubin & Peplau, 1976; Murstein, 1976). Buss and Barnes (1986) described the range of characteristics on which couples have been found to resemble each other as "staggering". They noted that "the pervasiveness of homogamy suggests that it is one of the most well established replicable findings in the psychology and biology of human mating" (p. 560). Condon and Crano (1988) described the similarity-attraction link as "one of social psychology's most dependable research findings", one that is "no longer questionned" (p. 789).

The results from research on personality similarity have been somewhat less consistent and compelling than from research on many other variables (Berscheid & Walster, 1978). Estimates of the average correlations between partners on personality traits range between .15 and .20 (Buss, 1985; Jensen, 1978; Mascie-Taylor, 1989).

A wide variety of reasons have been suggested as to why people might be attracted to or be more satisfied in relationships with partners who are similar. The nature of

these reasons tend to reflect the diversity of theoretical orientations and backgrounds of the authors.

Thiessen and Gregg (1980), Rushton et al. (1984) and Buss (1985) have argued that assortative mating can be explained by genetic similarity theory. They have proposed that genetically similar individuals seek each other out and provide mutually supportive environments, thereby enhancing the probability of genetic reproduction and survival. Rushton et al. cited studies using animals, birds and insects which offer support for the argument that many species are able to discriminate unfamiliar others on the basis of the degree of genetic similarity and prefer to associate with those who are genetically more similar to them. However, too much genetic similarity between mates may increase the chances that harmful recessive genes may combine so that an optimal fit, according to Rushton et al., consists of selecting a mate who is genetically similar but not a close relative.

Rushton et al. suggested that genetic similarity theory also explains the findings that matching on personality characteristics is associated with greater relationship stability. In their view cooperation and reciprocal altruism are features of close friendly relationships which are more likely to develop the greater the genetic similarity of the organisms and serve to maximize the chances for the survival of a gene.

Other writers have proposed more socially-based reasons for the similarity-attraction-satisfaction link. Byrne (1961, 1971; Byrne et al., 1986) suggested an "effectance motive" to explain the association between attraction and attitude similarity. He argued that mutual agreement provides consensual validation for one's beliefs and helps satisfy a drive to interpret the environment correctly and be effective in understanding and predicting events. Positive affect becomes associated with the other who helps satisfy this motive. Likewise it can be argued that personality similarity is socially validating by attesting to the correctness of the self. It also enhances one's sense of effectiveness in predicting the behavior of others if others are seen as similar to one's self. Berscheid and Walster (1978) also noted that it is cognitively consistent for people who like themselves to like others who are similar.

In contrast to Byrne's model, Rosenbaum (1986) has proposed a repulsion hypothesis. He argued that the similarity of attitudes is irrelevant in attraction but that dissimilarity is highly salient and leads to dislike. He noted that dissimilarity has been found to be associated with greater arousal compared to similarity, which he described as associated with "bland states lacking in affective or motivational potency" (p. 1164). In response

to Rosenbaum's suggestions, Byrne et al. (1986) proposed a two stage model of relationship development, whereby in the first stage negative information including dissimilarity serves as a basis for exluding people as potential friends and mates. For selecting from within the remaining pool of eligible candidates, people may rely increasingly on affectively positive factors, such as similarities.

Others (e.g. Aronson & Worchel, 1966; Byrne & Griffit, 1966; Condon & Crano, 1988; Walster & Walster, 1963) have suggested that the expectation of being liked by similar others and the fear of being disliked by dissimilar others are important mediating variables in people's preference for others who are similar. Condon and Crano (1988) argued that even more important than people's expectation of being liked is their expectation of having other needs, such as for food and sex, gratified by those who like them.

It has also been proposed that similarity between partners promotes both equity and equality in relationships. Walster, Walster and Berscheid (1978), have suggested that equitable relationships, where both partners receive rewards proportionate to their inputs, are more stable and more comfortable for both partners. Others, such as Deutsch (1975), have argued that the equality of rewards between partners is more important than whether each receives in proportion to what they contribute and is associated with greater satisfaction. Willi (1984) noted that, particularly

in the area of self-esteem, equality between partners is intuitively observed in mate selection. Such equality tends to be based on similarity of personal and social attributes.

Buss and Barnes (1986) found that some characteristics are consensually desired in prospective mates. Individuals who possess these characteristics are highly desirable as mates but in short supply. Buss and Barnes argued that those individuals who come closest to the consensually valued ideal should have the greatest choice from among others who also possess these desirable traits. Those who possess the least should be the least likely to marry or have the poorest selection of desirable mates. These selection criteria might be expected to promote homogamy.

Theorists interested in personality stability and change across adulthood (Buss, 1984b, 1985, 1987; Caspi & Herbener, 1990) have proposed that the selection of a similar mate is one mechanism by which personality stability is maintained over time. Buss (1987) wrote that assortative mating is an important avenue through which person-environment correspondence is established. The spouse is one of the most important aspects of a person's social environment. Selecting a partner who is similar creates an environment that both corresponds to and reinforces initial personality dispositions. Existing tendencies become crystallized through exposure to shared and mutually

selected environments.

Finally, some psychodynamically-oriented writers, such as Kohut (1971), Cashdan (1988) and Colarusso and Nemiroff (1981) have suggested that the origins of love are basically narcissistic and that people fall in love with others who reflect aspects of the self. Kohut wrote that a person falls in love with another who embodies and reflects not only the real self image but also the idealized self image. Colarusso and Nemiroff noted that people tend to see their loved one, at least initially, as similar to but better than the self. Branden (1981) wrote that people need other people to act as mirrors in which the self is reflected. The partner both reflects back an image of the self and, to the extent that he or she has similar attitudes and traits, embodies aspects of the self, thereby providing a needed external, objective experience of the self. In this way the person feels psychologically "seen" and achieves an increased knowledge and awareness of the self.

Complementarity Hypothesis

Berscheid and Walster (1978) have suggested that people marry others with complementary traits out of a wish to possess those consensually agreed upon, socially-desirable characteristics that they feel they are lacking and which they need for their self-concept and for their social and general life adjustment. They argued that everyone seeks the

same set of desirable characteristics but more so to the extent that they lack them in themselves.

Furthermore, Berscheid and Walster stated that people expect to bring different attributes to their relationships and see this as mutually enhancing. In "traditional" marriages, they argued, the roles were divided between spouses on the basis of stereotyped assumptions about the different abilities, interests and personality characteristics of men and women. As these sex-roles are being challenged in society, the division of labour within relationships may be predicated more on differences in the actual characteristics of each partner. Each contributes certain strengths to the relationship that are different from those contributed by the partner.

Another model of the complementarity hypothesis, based on self-evaluation maintenance, is presented by Campbell (1980). She suggested that individuals will be attracted to and want to associate with others who perform well on dimensions irrelevant to their own self-definition as their self-evaluation can be enhanced by reflection, i.e. by basking in the reflected glory of the close other's good performance. She argued that people tend to avoid relationships with others with similar self-definitions, where the good performance of one may represent an evaluative loss for the other by comparison, leading to envy and resentment. When partners' self-definitions are

complementary and each performs best on those dimensions which are primary to their own self definition, both partners can feel good by comparison to the other on relevant dimensions and by reflection on irrelevant dimensions. Complementarity in areas of expertise should therefore have a positive impact on attraction.

Most of the theoretical reasoning behind the complementarity hypothesis, however, has come from psychodynamically-oriented writers, such as Winch (1958), Dicks (1967) and Willi (1984). Two main hypotheses have been proposed as to why people might be attracted to or more satisfied in relationships with people whose personalities are complementary to their own: one relates to the gratification of needs and the other to the completion of the self.

Proponents of the need gratification hypothesis (e.g. Winch, 1958) have suggested that we seek out others who provide us with the maximum need gratification, whom we perceive as able to do for us what we feel unable or unwilling to do for ourselves. Inherent in the theory is the idea that the gratification of one partner is attended by a concommitant gratification of the other. For example, both a nurturant and a succorant partner get important needs met by their interactions.

Colarusso and Nemiroff (1981) suggested that we project

onto our loved ones the idealized fantasy of the all-
gratifying parent of childhood and expect them to meet all
our needs, almost without our having to verbalize them.
Gould (1978) and Goldberg (1982) have noted that people tend
to have excessive expectations of the extent to which a
spouse can gratify or fulfill their needs. The need
gratification hypothesis reflects the complementarity of
roles in parent-child relationships. Willi (1984) described
the collusive bonds between partners who adopt complementary
progressive and regressive roles in response to conflicts
within particular areas of their functioning. One partner
reverts to childlike behavior whereas the other partner
expresses only progressive behavior in an overcompensatory
attempt to conceal a similar weakness behind an adult
facade.

Other writers, for example clinicians such as Reik
(1957), Dicks (1967), and Hendrix (1990), have proposed a
model which focuses primarily on the completion of the self
to explain the attraction between opposites. Reik (1957)
proposed that individuals are most likely to fall in love
when they are dissatisfied with themselves and meet someone
who possesses characteristics they desire but feel unable to
achieve themselves. Grant (1976) stated that "attraction
and love begin when we meet someone who exhibits some of the
traits we long to have; this person represents to some
degree the ideal self".

Dicks (1968) and Hendrix (1990), among others, have suggested that as a result of childhood interactions with the primary caretakers, certain aspects of the self are denied, repressed or neglected. People are later attracted to others who possess those ambivalently valued traits which they lack in the self. They attempt, through union with the loved one, to achieve a sense of wholeness or completion, a reunification with the lost parts of the self. To the extent that an individual has developed a rigid defense against the expression of certain aspects of the personality, those aspects are sought in another.

One of the important conclusions to be drawn from these theories of complementarity is that it is only applicable to relationships to the extent that individuals are more extreme and inflexible on particular dimensions. Some writers have suggested that this reflects severe levels of individual pathology (e.g. Dicks, 1967), whilst others see it as inherent in the human condition and the common experience of less than perfect parenting, to have aspects of the personality which are conflicted (Hendrix, 1990).

Dicks (1967) emphasized that it is only in those marriages where certain roles or aspects of the self have been barred through earlier conflicts that complementary mating of opposites is really marked. He described the collusive bonds of complementarity where unconscious aims

to heal an inner split and restore a sense of wholeness through union with the other predominate.

He contrasted this pattern of complementarity with more mature relationships between partners who are both able to flexibly express a range of responses and behaviors within a variety of areas of functioning. Within such partnerships complementarity is reflected within the behaviors expressed at a particular moment in time in response to their own and their partner's changing needs. He suggested that in a good marriage, two integrated persons feel the security to be themselves in flexible role changes which allow expression to all levels of the self. Willi (1984) also noted that flexibility of progressive and regressive patterns of behavior is necessary for success in partner relationships. He wrote that couples who have a healthy relationship can alternate freely between progressive and regressive roles to meet each others changing needs.

However, Hendrix (1990) has suggested that the majority of people have areas of their personalities which are conflicted, aspects of the self which have been actively repressed or more passively neglected and not encouraged to develop as a result of deficits in parenting. He has described the complementarity between partners based on conflicts in these areas of their personalities as a fairly generalized phenomenon, not necessarily restricted to seriously pathological relationships. Whereas people may

exhibit flexibility in many areas of their personalities, they may be more rigidly polarized within these specific conflicted areas.

The need completion and need gratification hypotheses lead to different implications which can be tested empirically. The implications of the need completion hypothesis are that people are attracted to others whose traits reflect the opposite end of a continuum on any personality dimension on which they exhibit a deficit. The implications of the complementary need hypothesis are that people are attracted to others whose pattern of needs offers them the greatest possibility of gratification. On some needs, such as affiliation, a highly dissimilar partner would be unlikely to offer maximum gratification, whereas on other needs, such as nurturance, a complementary partner would be most likely to offer gratification. Winch (1967) suggested that the complementarity of needs hypothesis applies primarily to two dimensions of couple interactions: dominance-submission and nurturance-receptivity.

In this section several theories have been presented to suggest why people might be attracted to and more satisfied in relationships with others who are similar to themselves and others who are complementary to themselves. These theories are not incompatible. Rather, it might be hypothesized on the basis of the ideas presented above that

people are attracted to and more comfortable in their relationships with others who are similar to themselves in many aspects of their personalities, but who complement them in specific areas where they are more conflicted or extreme.

Dynamics of Couple Interactions

Winch (1958) and Rosow (1957) long ago pointed out that not all personality needs are equally important in couple relationships. Some needs are major and their gratification is crucial to the sense of well-being, while other needs are less important. The gratification of some needs may be sought predominantly within the couple relationship whereas others may be primarily gratified in other spheres of activity. Rosow argued that it is the fit between partners on the strong, major needs which are implicated in the primary areas of couple interaction that influences the couple's satisfaction and stability.

Goldberg (1982) proposed that underlying the surface complaints between couples regarding money, sex, children, communication, etc., lie five broad areas of interaction that seem to be of importance in determining harmony and conflict. He listed these as power, nurture, intimacy, trust, and issues of life-style and sense of order. He suggested that the fit between couples with regard to these dynamics is the essential determinant of the success of the relationship.

Goldberg also hypothesized as to the most compatible fits between partners on each of these dimensions at different levels of intensity. Regarding the power dynamic, he suggested that if one partner has a strong need to dominate and the other has an equally great need to be dominated, or if both are quite willing to share control, they may live very happily. If both partners need to dominate or if both are very submissive, problems in this area are inevitable. Thus on traits related to power, similarity might be expected to be optimal at moderate levels, whereas at more extreme levels complementarity should be associated with harmony and similarity with greater conflict.

Goldberg suggested that a good fit with regard to nurturance would result from both partners being able to both nurture and be nurtured or when one partner has a considerable ability and need to nurture and the other is highly succorant. When both partners have strong needs to be nurtured and neither is nurturant, or when both have strong needs to nurture but are both low on succorance, difficulties arise.

On personality dimensions related to intimacy, reflecting the degree of interpersonal closeness and distance that partners are most comfortable with, similarity would be expected to be optimal at all levels. Goldberg stated that if one has a strong need for affiliation and the

other a strong need for autonomy, conflicts would be expected. Likewise, on issues of trust Goldberg felt that similarity would promote greater harmony than difference, especially if distrustful partners could focus their suspiciousness toward a common external threat.

Regarding life-style and sense of order issues, Goldberg suggested that, although differences might be expected to enhance a relationship, in reality they often result in conflict. Dissimilarity between partners on such variables as cognitive styles, activity levels, ways of defending against anxiety, and sense of order can lead to many misunderstandings. Both partners make positive value judgments about their own styles and try to change the other to be more like them.

Table 1 presents the hypothesized compatible and incompatible matches between partners scoring at various levels of intensity on personality traits related to the areas of power, nurture, intimacy, trust and personal styles, which Goldberg suggested would be most likely to result in optimal need gratification.

Relationship Development

Relationships and people's perceptions of them are not static, they change over time in response to a variety of internal and external pressures (Rosow, 1957). As a result of continuing changes in each partners' personality

Table 1

Predicted Compatible and Incompatible Matches Between Couples on Personality Dimensions Related to Marital Interactions

Partner Match	Dynamics of Marital Interaction				
	Power	Nurture[1]	Intimacy	Trust	Life Style
High-Low	Complementary	Complementary (High N, Low S with Low N, High S)	Incompatible Difference	Incompatible Difference	Incompatible Difference
High-High	Incompatible Similarity	Incompatible Similarity (Both High N, Low S or both High S, Low N) / Compatible Similarity (Both High N, High S)	Compatible Similarity	Compatible Similarity	Compatible Similarity
Medium-Medium	Compatible Similarity	Compatible Similarity	Compatible Similarity	Compatible Similarity	Compatible Similarity
Low-Low	Incompatible Similarity	Incompatible Similarity (Both Low N, High S or both Low S, High N) / Compatible Similarity (Both Low N, Low S)	Compatible Similarity	Compatible Similarity (if focussed externally)	Compatible Similarity

Note. Based on Goldberg (1982).

[1] N = Nurturance, S = Succorance.

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structure and needs the actual and perceived fit between partners might be expected to change over the course of their relationship.

Although length of relationship has long been acknowledged as a factor which might be expected to affect the similarity-complementarity fit between partners (e.g. Campbell, 1980; Rosow, 1957; Winch, 1958) very few researchers have presented any clear theoretical basis to predict the direction of changes over time, particularly with regard to complementarity. The results from research have been inconsistent, with researchers finding evidence for both increasing similarity and dissimilarity between partners as a function of length of relationship (Buss, 1984a, 1984b; Gilger, 1991; Guttman & Zohar, 1987; Price & Vandenberg, 1980). Without a clear theoretical model for understanding changes between partners over time, such results cannot be clearly interpreted.

One approach to conceptualizing developmental processes within adult intimate relationships has come from writers within the object relations school. Several writers (Bader & Pearson, 1988; Gilfillan, 1985; Kovacs, 1983) have recently outlined models of relationship development based primarily on the work of Margaret Mahler and her colleagues (Mahler, 1968, 1972; Mahler, Pine & Bergman, 1975). Such models can be used to formulate specific hypotheses as to changes in similarity and complementarity between partners

over the course of their relationship which can then be empirically tested.

Many writers have described the mother-child relationship as the basis for all later love relationships and have suggested that there are many parallels between the early relationship with the mother and intimate relationships in adulthood (e.g. Binstock; 1973; Colarusso & Nemiroff, 1981; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). One aspect of the mother-child relationship which has been applied to adult love relationships is the separation-individuation process described by Mahler (Mahler et al., 1975). She proposed a sequence of developmental stages which reflected both the child's emergence from a state of symbiotic fusion with the mother and the child's assumption of his/her own individual characteristics. She noted that, although the principal achievements take place within the first three years, the process of separation-individuation continues throughout life. The on-going struggle between the wish for fusion or connectedness and the wish for separation and autonomy has been noted by many as a central dynamic in all intimate relationships throughout life (e.g. Askham, 1984; Berman & Lief, 1975; Lowenthal et al., 1975; Mann, 1985).

Kovacs (1983), Gilfillan (1985) and Bader and Pearson (1988) have described a similar sequence of stages in adult love relationships. They have suggested that intimate

relationships begin with a stage which can be likened to
Mahler's symbiotic phase, during which the lovers experience
a sense of fusion and oneness with each other, a sense of
sameness, a blurring of the boundaries between self and
other that may border on the merging of their two
personalities. Similarities are magnified and differences
overlooked. Simultaneously they perceive themselves as
highly complementary, able to gratify each others needs
instantly almost without them having to be verbalized.
However, this blissful state of oneness does not last;
inherent in the sense of fusion is the motivation for
separation. Through the process of differentiation the
lovers come to see themselves as separate and different from
each other. During the differentiation and practicing
subphases differences are emphasized, as are the other's
failures to meet all one's needs. Gradually over time the
other comes to be seen as a separate, whole person with
strengths and weaknesses, similarities and differences. The
idealized image is replaced with a more realistic image
based on the other as he or she really is rather than as
one imagines them to be.

This model relates primarily to changes in the
perception of similarity and complementarity over the course
of relationships. Based on this model it could be
hypothesized that initially in intimate relationships there
is an extremely high perception of both similarity and

complementarity, followed by a stage during which differences and the noncomplementarity of the partner are emphasized. In long standing relationships it would be expected that the perception of the partner would be congruent with the partner's self image, with actual similarities and areas of complementarity realistically perceived.

Kovacs (1983) and Gilfillan (1985) also suggested that through the mechanisms of internalization and identification which are aspects of the separation-individuation process, partners come to resemble each other increasingly over time in certain areas of their personalities. This would suggest changes in the actual degree of similarity also. As they come to see each other more realistically, with both strengths and weaknesses, they may also come to complement each other more in some areas as they compensate for each hers' deficits and each takes responsibility for gratifying their own needs and those of their partner (Bader & Pearson, 1988).

This composite model of the separation-individuation process in adult love relationships is a theoretical model of the normal stages of development. No specific time frame is proposed for passage through the various stages and it has been suggested that not all couples would develop at the same rate and that couples may get stuck at different stages

when unresolved issues from previous relationships reemerge in current relationships (Bader & Pearson, 1988). Therefore, initial attempts to validate such a model would necessarily be very tentative and exploratory, particularly regarding a time frame. Cross-sectional studies might be conducted initially to explore whether there are differences in perceived and actual personality similarity and complementarity as a function of time. However, to validly test such models researchers would need to conduct longitudinal studies, especially with small samples of couples who could be followed intensively across the course of their relationships.

Personality Similarity and Complementarity Research

The two main thrusts of research in this area have been the investigation of the association between personality fit and mate selection and between personality fit and relationship satisfaction. The following presentation of the research will therefore be organized according to these distinctions. Studies in which the issue of the perceived versus the actual fit between partners has been addressed will then be highlighted and finally the studies which have looked at length of relationship will be reviewed.

Although a considerable body of research has been conducted over the past four decades to explore the personality fit between partners in intimate love

relationships, many of these studies have been criticized on both conceptual and methodological grounds (e.g. Campbell, 1980; Fincham & Bradbury, 1987, Rosow, 1957; White & Hatcher, 1984; Winch, 1967; Wright, 1968). The main criticisms have been directed at the adequacy of the measures (Campbell, 1980; Fincham & Bradbury, 1984; Winch, 1967) and the appropriateness of the statistical procedures used to test the hypotheses (Rosow, 1957; White and Hatcher, 1984; Wright, 1968). As a result, critics have called into question the validity of the conclusions based on this research (White & Hatcher, 1984; Wright, 1968). Some of the major criticisms of the research will be presented in each section.

Personality fit and mate selection

Winch (1955, 1958) was one of the first to systematically formulate the theory of complementary needs in mate selection and to design research to test his hypotheses. In his seminal research, he studied 25 young couples within the first two years of their marriages by means of two in-depth interviews and a projective test. The first interview explored the intensity of subjects' needs and traits and how they went about obtaining need gratification or expressing traits. Twelve need categories were studied including abasement, autonomy, deference, dominance, nurturance and succorance. The second interview covered significant relationships in the subjects' lives.

Subjects also completed a 10-card version of the Thematic Apperception Test. Five trained analysts rated subjects' personality needs on the basis of these data.

Winch found that Type I complementarity (the same need is present in both partners at very different levels of intensity) was most marked on abasement, deference and succorance. Of the 44 correlations performed, 35 were negative, 8 of which were significant. Type II complementarity (different but related kinds of needs, such as nurturance and succorance, are present in each partner) was most marked on deference-dominance, abasement-dominance and abasement-hostility. Eighteen percent of the 344 predicted positive correlations were significant at the 5 percent level. Winch concluded that statistical analysis of the interspousal correlations offered "adequate, though not overwhelming, support for the theory of complementary needs in mate selection". Winch has been criticized for his conceptualization of complementarity, methods of data analysis and for his interpretations of his findings (e.g. Campbell, 1980; Murstein, 1976; Rosow, 1957).

No subsequent researchers have replicated Winch's elaborate methodology. Most researchers have sought less complex ways of testing the theory and many have relied on standardized, paper and pencil, self-report personality questionnaires. A variety of such measures have been

employed including adjective checklists (Mathes & Moore, 1985; Murstein & Beck, 1972), Cattell's Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF) (Barton & Cattell, 1972; Cattell & Nesselroade, 1967; Phillips et al., 1988), Jackson's Personality Research Form (PRF) (Buss, 1984b; Meyer & Pepper, 1977), the Eysenck Personality Inventory (Buss, 1984b; Mascie-Taylor, 1989; Mascie-Taylor & Vandenberg, 1988; Price & Vandenberg, 1980), Schutz's FIRO-B (Kerckhoff & Davis, 1962; Levinger, Senn & Jorgensen, 1970), the Comrey Personality Scales (Guttman & Zohar, 1987; Price & Vandenberg, 1980), and most frequently in the early studies, the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS) (Blazer, 1963; Bowerman & Day, 1956; Katz et al., 1960; Murstein, 1961; Schellenberg & Bee, 1960).

These instruments vary in their ability to measure inferred personality needs relevant to intimate relationships. The complexity of assessing inferred interpersonal needs by measuring personality traits has been noted by many (e.g. White & Hatcher, 1984; Winch, 1967). The EPPS and PRF were specifically designed to measure personality needs derived from Murray's manifest need system (Murray, 1938). They are therefore the most conceptually linked to the constructs being studied. In contrast, the traits measured by the Eysenck Personality Inventory and the 16PF, for example, are much less directly tied to a theory of interpersonal needs.

Several of the early researchers used the EPPS to measure personality needs (Blazer, 1963; Bowerman & Day, 1956; Katz, Glucksberg & Krauss, 1960; Murstein, 1961; Schellenberg & Bee, 1960). However, in this measure ipsative rather than normative scores are employed, i.e. the strength of each need is expressed not in absolute terms but in relation to the strength of the individual's other needs. Two individuals with identical scores may differ markedly in the absolute strength of their needs. Anastasi (1976) noted that the conversion of ipsative to normative scores is questionable and the combination of these different frames of reference makes the scores confusing and difficult to interpret. Even more importantly in terms of the studies presented, Anastasi pointed out that ipsative scores cannot be properly analyzed by the use of correlational procedures.

The results of studies in which partners' scores on the EPPS have been correlated have generally been interpreted as offering some support for the similarity hypothesis and little or no support for the complementarity hypothesis (Blazer, 1963; Bowerman & Day, 1956; Katz et al., 1960; Murstein, 1961; Schellenberg & Bee, 1960). Given the above-mentioned criticisms, the conclusions drawn from the results of these studies must be seriously questioned.

Many researchers have attempted to substantiate Winch's findings or test the theories of similarity and

complementarity by correlating partners' scores on the subscales of these various standard measures. The majority have failed to find much support for the theory of complementarity (e.g. Antill, 1983; Barton & Cattell, 1972), although some support for the similarity hypothesis has been found (e.g. Antill, 1983; Barton & Cattell, 1972; Buss, 1984a, 1984b; Lesnik-Oberstein & Cohen, 1984; Price & Vandenberg, 1980). However, there are certain conceptual and methodological problems which have not been adequately addressed which detract from the possibility of finding support for the theory of complementarity. The first problem relates to the conceptualization of complementarity and the second to the use of correlational statistics to test the theory of complementarity.

Complementarity, as it has been defined and described above, refers to the attraction of opposites, an attraction for others who exhibit traits which are lacking in the self. In the context of this body of research it is important to differentiate between the complementarity of personality traits and the complementarity of behavioral interactions. The distinction is made primarily on the basis of the degree of rigidity versus flexibility in the character structure of the individuals.

It has been argued above that complementarity of personality traits refers to relationships between individuals who are rigidly polarized in the expression of

certain aspects of their personalities. Each partner is needed by the other to express those aspects which have been denied, repressed or lost to the self and which are not available for expression by the self. Only together are the two partners able to form a balanced whole within which both poles of a dimension are represented. It would be expected that such rigidity would be reflected by more extreme scores on particular personality dimensions.

This has been contrasted with the complementarity of behaviors within a mature well functioning dyad, where both partners are able to choose, from within a range of available behaviors and roles, whether or not to express those which complemement their partner's specific needs of a particular time or situation. Such complementarity reflects a flexibility to express a range of diverse behaviors and aspects of the self, which might be reflected by scores within the moderate range on personality dimensions. The research presented here, where partners scores on personality measures have been compared, does not allow for the investigation of this type of reciprocal, interactional complementarity. Several researchers (e.g. Bluhm, Widiger & Miele, 1990; Locke & Horowitz, 1990; Orford, 1986; Strong, Hills, Kilmartin, DeVries, Lanier, Nelson, Strickland & Meyer, 1988) have conducted observational studies using interpersonal circumplex models to explore whether specific

types of behaviors elicit complementary or similar responses in various types of dyadic interactions.

Thus the theories of complementarity outlined above and reflected in the body of research to be presented refer to the relatively stable, fixed complementarity of personality traits and needs, where one partner consistently expresses aspects from one polar extreme of a dimension and the other partner expresses the opposite extreme. This conceptualization of complementarity has important implications for the research methodology employed.

Perhaps the most important criticism of the research relates to this issue and the use of correlational statistics to test the theory of complementarity. While this procedure may be appropriate for assessing the degree of similarity between couples, it has been used inappropriately to evaluate complementarity. Although many have expressly noted that the theory of complementarity applies to individuals who score at opposite poles on personality dimensions (e.g. Schellenberg & Bee, 1960; Winch, 1958), and have emphasized the necessity of retaining information regarding the level of intensity of needs (Rosow, 1957; White & Hatcher, 1984; Wright, 1968), they have correlated the scores of all couples, irrespective of where their scores fall on the continuum. As most personality traits have a normal distribution, most people fall within the moderate range. Therefore, most of the

subjects included in the statistical analyses to test the theory of complementarity are people to whom the theory does not apply. This would be expected to detract from the possibility of obtaining significant results or being able to interpret the findings. Positive correlations between partners may be validly interpreted as generally indicative of similarity between partners (although much information may be lost about similarity between partners at different levels of intensity). However, a lack of negative correlations cannot be validly interpreted as evidence against the complementarity hypothesis.

By correlating scores on a variety of personality scales, several researchers have found evidence for similarity between partners (e.g. Barton & Cattell, 1972; Buss, 1984a, 1984b; Guttman & Zohar, 1987; Price & Vandenberg, 1980). Barton and Cattell (1972) found positive correlations, significant at the .05 level, between partners' self-ratings on 12 of the 16 PF dimensions (Warmhearted, Intelligence, Dominance, Surgency, Super Ego, Sensitive, Suspicion, Shrewdness, Guilt Proneness, Radicalism, Self-Sufficiency and Self-Concept Control). Price and Vandenberg (1980) found American but not Swedish couples to be significantly similar on five out of ten selected subscales of the Eysenck and Comrey personality inventories (Trust, Compulsiveness, Social Conformity,

General Activity and Empathy). Guttman and Zohar (1987) found couples to be similar on Comrey scales of Order and Activity and Antill (1983) found partners to be similar on a measure of Femininity but not Masculinity.

Buss (1984a) found significant positive correlations between partners on 12 out of 42 subscales from a variety of personality measures. Of 16 interpersonal dispositions for which there were three data sources, partners were significantly similar in their self-ratings on 5 (Ambitious, Dominant, Calculating, Unassuming and Ingenuous), in their spouse ratings on 6 (Quarrelsome, Lazy, Ingenuous, Warm, Agreeable and Gregarious) and on interviewer ratings of seven dimensions (Ambitious, Arrogant, Calculating, Cold, Quarrelsome, Agreeable and Gregarious). Signficant negative correlations were found for interviewer ratings on Dominance and self-ratings of Communality. In another study Buss (1984b) found partners to be similar in the frequency of performance of interpersonal acts, with acts within the categories of extraverted, dominant, quarrelsome and ingenuous showing greatest spouse similarity across data sources (self ratings and spouse ratings).

In two other studies researchers also included alternative approaches to data analysis. Mascie-Taylor and Vandenberg (1988) performed a stepwise multiple regression analysis to determine the similarity between husbands and wives on personality factors, controlling for the effects of

social, educational, geographical and familial propinquity. They found partners to be similar on Extraversion and on a lie scale and concluded that both personal preference and propinquity play a role in assortative mating. Phillips, Fulker, Carey and Nagoshi (1988), using a conditional path matrix, found evidence for direct assortment between partners on Extraversion and Independence but not for Anxiety or Tough Poise.

It can be concluded from these studies in which analyses based on correlational statistics have been employed, that partners appear to be significantly similar in their self-perceptions on a wide range of personality variables and on self-reports of acts reflecting interpersonal dispositions. In light of the criticisms presented of the use of correlational statistics, it is not possible to draw any conclusions regarding complementarity between partners from these studies.

A few other researchers have used different approaches to test the complementarity theory. Kerckhoff and Davis (1962) were among the few to find any substantial support for Winch's theory. One hundred and three seriously attached college couples were assessed for value consensus, and need complementarity using Schutz's (1958) FIRO-B, a self-report questionnaire which evaluates the "wanted" and "expressed" aspects of subjects' needs for inclusion,

control and affection. Seven months later they were asked whether their relationships had progressed towards becoming more permanent, less permanent or had stayed the same. Progress towards permanence was associated with value consensus but not need complementarity for couples who had been going together less than 18 months. For couples who had been together longer the reverse was true: need complementarity but not value consensus was associated with progress towards permanence. On the basis of these data, Kerckhoff and Davis suggested that a sequence of "filtering factors" lead individuals to sort each other out, first by social background, then by consensus on familial values and only later by need complementarity. Wright (1968) criticized the formula used by Kerckhoff and Davis to compute complementarity on the basis that many combinations of scores reflecting a high degree of similarity could yield similar results.

Levinger, Senn and Jorgenson (1970) tried to replicate Kerckhoff and Davis' findings by conducting a longitudinal study of 234 "steadily attached", university couples. They found no effect on progress towards permanence for either value consensus or for need complementarity in either short-term or long term couples.

Mathes and Moore (1985) took a very different approach in testing Reik's complementarity theory. They presented college students with 8 separate personality profiles of

supposed opposite sex classmates and asked them to respond to the statement "If I met this person, I feel that I probably would fall in love with him/her". Four of the profiles were based on the subjects' own responses to the Leary Interpersonal Checklist, completed a month previously under two sets of instructions· (a) describing their actual selves, and (b) describing their ideal selves, and another four profiles served as distractors. Subjects also completed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

The hypothesis that subjects would be more attracted to opposite-sex peers embodying their own ideal characteristics than to peers who did not was confirmed. This effect was greater for low self-esteem subjects than for high self-esteem subjects. Under the assumption that similarity and complementarity are compatible theories, a test of the similarity hypothesis was also included. The hypothesis that subjects would be more attracted to opposite sex peers who embodied their actual characteristics than to peers who did not, was also confirmed. Mathes and Moore concluded that the concept of similarity and Reik's complementarity theory both received some support. Low self-esteem subjects were more likely to be attracted to romantic partners on the basis of complementarity whereas high self-esteem individuals were more likely to be attracted on the basis of actual similarity. This study highlights the possible

importance of the role of self-esteem as a mediating factor in similarity and complementarity in mate selection.

Finally, Caspi and Herbener (1990), used judges' ratings of personality traits rather than self-ratings. As part of a longitudinal study of personality continuity and change across adulthood, Caspi and Herbener explored the role of assortative mating on personality stability across middle adulthood. To assess variability among spouses in their personality similarity, Caspi and Herbener correlated each couple's Q sorts (judges' assessments of the comparative salience of subjects' attributes using the California Q set). This yielded a profile similarity correlation, reflecting the degree to which the salience and organization of attributes within a given individual were similar to or different from those of his or her spouse. Similarity and dissimilarity were thus attributes of each dyad rather than statistics characterizing the sample. Analyses were based on data collected in 1970 and 1981 from participants in two longitudinal studies, the Berkeley Guidance Study and the Oakland Growth Study.

Caspi and Hebener found a mean correlation between partners of .32. However, there was considerable variability in the distributions, with dyadic correlations ranging from -.42 to +.80 in the Berkeley sample, and from -.28 to +.70 in the Oakland sample, indicating that some couples were very similar whereas others were somewhat

dissimilar. They compared the mean correlation of their samples to 100 randomly paired samples and concluded that their study yielded above-chance estimates of assortative marriage.

In summary, it can be stated that a number of studies have been conducted to explore the similarity and complementarity between partners in adult intimate relationships. Many researchers have found, by correlating scores on a variety of measures, that partners resemble each other on a wide variety of personality traits (Barton & Cattell, 1972; Blazer, 1960; Buss, 1984a, 1984b; Caspi & Herbener, 1990; Katz et al., 1960; Guttman & Zohar, 1987; Lesnik-Oberstein & Cohen, 1984; Mascie-Taylor & Vandenberg, 1988; Murstein, 1961; Phillips et al., 1988; Price & Vandenberg, 1980). Support for the complementarity hypothesis has been much less consistent and has come primarily from the very few studies in which methodologies other than correlating partners' self-report scores on standard personality measures have been used (Kerckhoff & Davis, 1962; Mathes & Moore, 1985; Winch, 1955). Given the criticisms of the statistical procedures and measures, the results of many studies must be interpreted with caution.

Personality fit and relationship satisfaction

In this section the work of researchers who have looked at the association between personality similarity-

complementarity and relationship success will be presented. Two main approaches have been taken: (1) measures of partner similarity or complementarity have been correlated with scores on a measure of relationship satisfaction or adjustment (Blazer, 1963; Burke, Firth & McGrattan, 1974; Murstein & Beck, 1972); (2) the interspousal correlations of groups of couples who differ with regard to their marital stability or adjustment have been compared. Some researchers have assigned couples to groups on the basis of their responses to marital satisfaction questionnaires (Antill, 1983; Meyer & Pepper, 1977) while others have specifically sampled couples who have taken steps towards seeking professional help for marital difficulties or towards dissolving their relationship (e.g. Cattell & Nesselroade, 1967; Pickford et al., 1966).

It has been noted (e.g. Goldberg, 1982; Rosow, 1957; Wright, 1968) that not all personality needs and traits are equally important to the success of couple relationships. Some personality traits are more centrally involved in intimate relationships and some needs are primarily gratified within the couple relationship while others can be gratified in other spheres of activity . Rosow (1957) and Goldberg (1982) have suggested that relationship success depends on the fit between partners on the major needs central to couple interactions.

The different personality scales used in this area of research measure a wide variety of personality variables, not all of which are equally relevant to intimate relationships. Some researchers have looked at the fit between partners on a wide range of general needs and traits (Buss, 1984b), while others have limited their scope to a few variables thought to be central to the relationship (Guttman & Zohar, 1970; Meyer & Pepper, 1977). Other researchers have reworded questions to refer specifically to the relationship (Lipetz et al. 1970; Meyer & Pepper, 1977). For example, Lipetz et al. administered both the original version of the EPPS and a 60-item version reworded to apply only to the relationship with the spouse. They achieved significant results only from analyses involving the reworded version.

One of the most important criticisms of research in this area concerns the adequacy of the measures used to evaluate relationship satisfaction. Fincham and Bradbury (1987) pointed out that in research on marital satisfaction there is frequently an overlap between the constructs under study and that this is particularly true of the personality similarity research. Several researchers have used measures of relationship satisfaction or adjustment which overlap with the concept of similarity. The most widely used measure has been the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (e.g. Bentler & Newcomb, 1978; Meyer & Pepper, 1977;

Murstein & Beck, 1972) which includes several items where subjects rate their level of agreement with their partner on topics related to the marriage or the similarity of their interests and ideas. Similarly, the Dyadic Consensus subscale of the Spanier Dyadic Adjustment Scale, as well as some of the items loading on other subscales, reflect similarity or agreement between partners in their attitudes, ideas and interests. High correlations would be expected between these measures and other measures of similarity between partners leading to an overstatement of the association between similarity and adjustment.

Blazer (1963) and Murstein and Beck (1972), for example, correlated scores reflecting the overall personality complementarity or similarity between partners with their scores on the Locke-Wallace, and Antill (1983) correlated couple similarity on scales of masculinity and femininity with scores on the Spanier Dyadic Adjustment Scale. Meyer and Pepper (1977) assigned couples to a high adjustment or a low adjustment group on the basis of their scores on the Locke-Wallace and compared the interspousal correlations of these groups on Personality Research Form subscales. All these researchers found greater similarity to be associated with higher levels of relationship satisfaction.

Other researchers (e.g. Burke, Firth & McGrattan, 1974;

Caspi & Herbener, 1990), rather than using standardized measures of marital quality with known psychometric properties, have simply included a few items asking subjects to rate certain aspects of their relationships. For example, Caspi and Herbener (1990), in a study presented in the previous section, reported that, as part of the 1970 data collection, 61 couples involved in the longitudinal Berkeley Guidance Study evaluated the quality of their marriages on four items (conflict, closeness of bond, friendliness and satisfaction) each coded on a 5-point scale. Scores on these items were compared with couple Q-sort correlations based on judges' ratings of the salience and organization of each partner's personality traits.

Caspi and Herbener found that greater similarity between partners was associated with less conflict, greater friendliness and higher satisfaction in their marital relationship. They also found that people who were satisfied with their marriages were more likely to display consistency in the organization of their personality across middle adulthood.

It is difficult to draw conclusions from these studies given the criticisms of the relationship satisfaction measures. However, more substantial evidence for an association between personality similarity and relationship satisfaction comes from researchers who have correlated the scores of groups of couples sampled on the basis of their

differences in relationship satisfaction or stability. While these studies differentiate between couples in stable and unstable marriages, most do not allow for any statement concerning the association between degree of similarity and relationship satisfaction within the population of stably married couples. No conclusions can be drawn from these studies regarding couple complementarity and relationship satisfaction, in light of the criticism of correlational analysis presented in the previous section.

Pickford, Signori and Rempel (1966) included three groups of couples: happily married, having trouble but planning to stay together, and on the verge of separating They found that the happily married spouses were more similar than either of the groups of unhappy couples. Cattell and Nesselroade (1967) compared couples who had made no known step towards dissolution of their marriages and couples who were separated or had presented themselves for couple counselling. They found that the stable couples were similar on eight of the 16 PF factors and two of the second order factors, whereas the unstable couples were similar on only two and three factors reached significance in the negative direction.

Bentler and Newcomb (1978) conducted one of the few longitudinal studies exploring the relationship between personality similarity-complementarity between partners at

the time of their marriage and marital success and failure. They administered the Bentler Psychological Inventory to newly married couples and compared interspousal correlations with marital outcome four years later. Personality similarity at the time of marriage was found to be greater between the partners who were still married than between those who had subsequently divorced.

White and Hatcher (1984) reviewed the research on couple similarity-complementarity and relatationship satisfaction and concluded that trait similarity appears to be more associated with marital success and dissimilarity with marital instability and divorce. The current review leads to similar conclusions. White and Hatcher also noted that although there is little support for a complementarity model of marital adjustment, it cannot be clearly refuted by the methods of analysis used in the studies reviewed.

Perceived versus Actual Similarity and Complementarity

Many writers have proposed that people's perceptions of their loved ones are not always accurate and that perceptions are at least as important as objective reality in influencing relationship satisfaction (e.g. Byrne & Blaylock, 1963; Colarusso & Nemiroff, 1981; Gilfillan, 1985; Hendrick et al., 1988; Levinger & Breedlove, 1966; Scarr, Scarf & Weinberg, 1980; Sternberg & Barnes, 1985). For example, Byrne and Blaylock (1963) found that married

couples perceived themselves as having much more similar political attitudes than they actually had. Levinger and Breedlove (1966) found that, while satisfied spouses tended to overestimate the degree of agreement on topics regarding marriage and communication, some partners whose marital satisfaction was low, underestimated agreement. Scarr, Scarf and Weinberg (1980), studying biological and adoptive families, found that perceptions of simila ity were not related to objective measures of similarity. Sternberg and Barnes (1985) concluded from their research of partners' feelings towards each other, that it may be the partner "as perceived by the self" who is far more critical to the success of a relationship than the actual partner.

Theorists, such as Colarusso and Nemiroff (1981) and Hendrix (1990), have suggested that during childhood and adolescence people form an idealized image of the perfect mate, a composite picture made up of the qualities of primary caregivers and significant people in their lives. When they meet someone who matches this inner image in important ways they project the image onto them. They then react to the partner as if they were the image or induce the partner to behave in accordance with the image. Over time, however, discrepancies between the inner image and the partner as they really are become apparent. Colarusso and Nemiroff (1981) described the "continuous painful process" of replacing the idealized spouse representation with a more

reality based representation of the spouse as one the the major developmental tasks of adult love relationships.

Regarding the personality fit between partners, it has been argued that not only do people distort the degree to which they perceive their partners as similar to or complementary with themselves but that this perception is more important to attraction and relationship satisfaction than whether or not they actually are (Murstein & Beck, 1972). Very few researchers have adequately explored this issue in intimate couple relationships.

One of the problems in research comparing perceived and actual personality similarity between partners is the differential error variance inherent in the comparisons. Murstein and Beck (1972) noted that greater error variance would be expected, due to differences in such factors as comprehension, motivation and response style, between the self-ratings of two separate individuals than between ratings of the self and of the partner by the same individual. This would result in higher correlations for perceived similarity (two ratings from the same source) versus actual similarity (ratings from two different sources). Although it is not possible to eliminate or assess the extent of this error variance difference, it is important that measures used in these studies be well validated for ratings by others.

Another potential problem is that there may be differences in the social desirability bias when describing the self versus describing the partner. Such bias might be related to other factors such as satisfaction with the relationship. As it would be difficult to evaluate the extent or the direction of such differential biases, it is important that researchers use personality measures in which the social desirability of items has been minimized in the construction of the scales. These issues need to be taken into account in the choice of scales used in such studies.

In three of the studies mentioned in previous sections subjects were asked to rate their partners' personality traits as well as their own, allowing for comparisons of both actual and perceived similarity between partners (Antill, 1983; Meyer & Pepper, 1977; Murstein & Beck, 1972). Murstein and Beck had couples complete a 20-item adjective checklist under eight sets of instructions (self, ideal self, spouse, ideal spouse and predictions of how the partner would rate each of these sets). They also completed the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale and a marital conventionalization scale. They found that although perceived similarity between partners was consistently more highly correlated with marital adjustment than actual similarity, the magnitude of difference did not reach significance.

Meyer and Pepper (1977) had couples respond to the

Jackson Personality Research Form (PRF), reworded to refer
to marital situations, under four sets of instructions
(self, ideal self, spouse and ideal spouse). Subjects also
completed the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale. These
authors did not present the data but mentioned in a footnote
that an analysis was undertaken to measure perceived need
compatibility by comparing subjects' spouse ratings with
their self and ideal-self ratings. They reported that the
results revealed a slightly stronger relation between
marital adjustment and perceived compatibility than between
marital adjustment and actual compatibility.

In his study of the relationship between sex role
orientation and marital satisfaction, mentioned earlier,
Antill (1983) had couples complete the Bem Sex Role
Inventory as both a self-description and a description of
the spouse. They also completed the Spanier Dyadic
Adjustment Scale. Antill found that marital satisfaction
was more highly related to the degree to which the partner
was perceived as high on femininity than with actual
similarity of self-ratings.

Unfortunately, all of these researchers employed
measures of relationship satisfaction which overlap with the
concept of similarity. Although this might result in an
overestimation of the relationship between similarity and
relationship satisfaction, it should not differentially

affect the association between perceived versus actual personality similarity and relationship satisfaction.

In summary, very little research has been conducted to explore the association between perceived versus actual personality similarity-complementarity and relationship satisfaction. There is some tentative evidence to suggest that people distort their perceptions of others in a direction congruent with their feelings towards them (Beier, Rossi & Garfield, 1961; Byrne & Blaylock, 1963; Levinger & Breedlove, 1966) and that relationship satisfaction may be as closely associated or more so with perceptions of similarity as with the reality (Antill, 1984; Hendrick et al., 1988; Levinger & Breedlove, 1963; Meyer & Pepper, 1977; Murstein & Beck, 1972). One of the main problems noted in this area of research has been the differential error variance between actual and perceived comparisons (Meyer & Pepper, 1977; Murstein & Beck, 1972).

Length of Relationship

Despite the fact that length of relationship has long been mentioned as having a potentially important role in the similarity-complementarity fit between partners (Rosow, 1957; Winch, 1967), in only a few of the studies described in the previous sections has this variable been systematically studied. In this section some of the major problems with research in this area will be outlined and

then the results from the studies described above relevant to the issue of length of relationship will be presented.

Price and Vandenberg (1980) noted that most studies of assortative mating have measured "realized assortment", the degree of similarity present after some years of marriage. They suggested that the widely observed phenomenon of similarity between partners could be due to four processes: (1) initial assortment - people enter into relationships with others who are similar because of either preference or proximitiy; (2) convergence - people who live together over a period of time become increasingly similar; (3) attrition - couples who are very dissimilar tend to separate and divorce; (4) confounding with age - on any variable that varies as a function of age, couples will appear similar given the high correlations between partners for age.

Longitudinal studies are few (Bentler & Newcomb, 1978; Caspi & Herbener, 1990) but are necessary to distinguish between the first three of these factors and to draw any firm conclusions about changes in similarity and complementarity between partners (Buss, 1984a; Price and Vandenberg, 1980). The results of cross-sectional studies comparing the degree of similarity between partners who have been together for different lengths of time, are not necessarily indicative of change and have to be interpreted with great caution. However, they can be useful in identifying dimensions on which couples who have been

together for various lengths of time differ.

The fourth possibility mentionned by Price and Vandenberg (1980) to account for the observed similarity between partners is the confounding of age and length of relationship. High correlations between age and length of relationship do not allow for the differentiation of individual development, relationship development and cohort effects. For example, several writers (e.g. Gould, 1978; Izard, 1963; Maslow, 1950) have suggested that similarity may be of greater importance to younger adults than to more mature individuals and that attraction for similar partners reflects individual developmental processes. Other writers have proposed that the attraction for others who are similar is a feature of the early stages of relationship development (e.g. Aronson & Worchel, 1966; Byrne & Griffit, 1966; Colarusso & Nemiroff, 1981; Gilfillan, 1985; Kovacs, 1983; Schutz, 1958; Walster & Walster, 1963). In studies where all the new relationships are among young adult couples and all the longer standing relationships are among older couples, it is not possible to make these distinctions.

In the developmental literature on adulthood and on marital relationships, age and stage of family or marital life tend to be used interchangeably (Berman & Lief, 1975; Rapoport, 1970; Reedy, Biren & Schaie, 1981; Solomon, 1973). However, marriages which start when the partners are in

their early twenties and continue uninterrupted across the life span are no longer necessarily the rule in a society with high divorce rates and where many individuals are waiting longer before forming lasting attachments. Many people who are in their thirties, forties or older enter new intimate relationships and it is important to understand whether these relationships go through similar developmental processes as those formed in earlier adulthood or whether the developmental path differs as a function of the stage of individual development the partners have achieved when they enter the relationship.

A further issue which has not been addressed at all in previous research is the possibility that it is the perception of similarity and complementarity in the relationship which changes over time much more than the actual degree of fit between partners. The implications of the theoretical models of relationship development outlined by Bader and Pearson (1988), Gilfillan (1985) and Kovacs (1983) presented above, are that while there may be some changes in actual similarity and complementarity over the course of relationships, much more significant are the changes in the partners' perceptions of the degree of similarity and complementarity between them as a function of the ongoing process of separation-individuation.

In neither of the longitudinal studies described above were data presented addressing the issue of changes in the

degree of similarity and complementarity between partners as a function of the length of their relationship. Two types of cross-sectional studies have been conducted to explore this issue. Some researchers have assigned couples to groups on the basis of the length of their relationship and compared the degree of similarity or complementarity of these groups. For example, Murstein (1961), found non-newlywed partners to be more similar than newlyweds on EPPS subscales. Kerckhoff & Davis (1962), found that, among couples who had been together more than 18 months, need complementarity, measured by the FIRO-B, was associated with progress towards permanence seven months after assessment, whereas among couples who had been together less than 18 months it was not. Levinger, Senn and Jorgenson (1970) were unable to replicate these findings.

Other researchers have explored the association between length of relationship and partner similarity through the use of statistical procedures. Price and Vandenberg (1980), for example, found no effects for length of marriage which were independent of age when these factors were partialled out of correlational analyses of partners' scores on Eysenck and Comrey personality subscales. They subsequently reanalysed their data using multiple regression analyses whereby the statistical significance of the interaction term between length of relationship and one partner's score in predicting

the other partner's score provided an indication of differences in similarity as a function of the time variable. This procedure has since been used by several other researchers (e.g. Buss, 1984a, 1984b; Gilger, 1990). They found no significant interactions for the personality variables and concluded that initial similarity appeared to be of greater importance than convergence in accounting for realized spouse personality similarity.

Buss (1984a) used the same procedure to assess convergence between partners on a wide variety of personality measures. Eighty nine multiple regressions were performed using years married as the time variable, of which 13 (15 percent) showed significant R increments for the interaction term, 11 in the direction of divergence. Buss concluded that spouses married longer tend to be less similar than those who have been married for a shorter time. Buss (1984b) also looked at convergence between partners for the frequency of 800 interpersonal acts using the same methodology. None of multiple regression analyses for the eight categories of acts yielded significant R increments. Only 12 percent of the 800 analyses for the individual acts showed R increments significant at or beyond the .05 level when length of time known was entered as the first step, of which 56 indicated divergence and 37 convergence. In neither study did he report a corrected alpha level to take into account the large number of analyses performed.

Mascie-Taylor (1989), in another study mentioned above, also used hierarchical multiple regressions to assess differences in spouse similarity on measures of intelligence and personality as a function of length of marriage. Only one of the 26 analyses, with years of marriage entered as the first step, showed a significant interaction term. Mascie-Taylor concluded that observed similarity between spouses for IQ and personality traits appeared to be the result of initial assortment rather than convergence.

Guttman and Zohar (1987) took a somewhat different approach to avoid having to assume linearity and to allow for heteroscedasticity. Scattergrams of length of relationship and absolute difference scores between partners on Comrey Personality subscales revealed that the frequency of couples with extreme differences varied as a function of length of relationship. Beyond a certain number of years of marriage, ranging from 7 to 15 depending on the particular dimension, no cases of extreme differences were observed on the dimensions of Extraversion, Stability, Activity, Trust and Empathy, which the researchers interpreted as evidence for mild convergence between partners over time after several years of marriage. On the dimension of Order a different pattern emerged: extreme spouse differences were absent in marriages shorter than 10 years but present in marriages of longer duration. Guttman and Zohar noted that

the scattergrams provided additional information, particularly regarding highly dissimilar partners, which would not be available from correlations between difference scores and length of relationship.

From these studies it can be seen that evidence relating to the association between length of relationship and partner similarity and complementarity is inconsistent. Some researchers have found evidence to suggest that partners who have been together longer are similar on more personality dimensions than those in new relationships (Guttman & Zohar, 1987; Murstein, 1961); others have found that those who have been together longer are more dissimilar on certain dimensions (Buss, 1984a, 1984b) and others have found no effect for length of relationship (Mascie-Taylor, 1989; Price & Vandenberg, 1980).

Summary of the Main Findings and Criticisms of Personality Fit Research

Research relevant to the personality similarity and complementarity between partners in adult love relationships has been presented. General conclusions which have been drawn from this research are that there is some support for the hypothesis that couples tend to be similar to each other on various personality dimensions and that greater similarity is associated with greater relationship satisfaction. There has been only inconsistent support for

the complementarity hypothesis, primarily from studies which have used methodologies other than correlating partners' scores on standard personality measures. It would appear that people distort their perceptions of their partners, generally in the direction of greater similarity of personality than actually exists. Perceived personality similarity has been associated with greater relationship satisfaction than actual similarity. No consistent findings have emerged concerning the degree of similarity and complementarity between partners who have been in their relationships for different lengths of time and no research has addressed the issue of changes in perceived similarity-complementarity as a function of length of relationship. It has also been noted that there have been some important criticisms of many of the studies which detract from the possibility of drawing firm conclusions based on this body of research. These criticisms deal with the adequacy of the measures employed to assess personality traits and relationship satisfaction and with the statistical procedures used to test the complementarity hypothesis.

Adequacy of Personality Measures.

The instruments used vary in their ability to measure inferred personality needs relevant to intimate relationships. Some, such as the EPPs and the PRF, are more conceptually linked to a theory of interpersonal needs than others. However, the EPPS employs ipsative scores which are

inappropriate for the types of analyses employed and conversion to normative scores is questionable (Anastasi, 1976).

Self-report measures can be seriously affected by a social desirability response set and vary in the degree to which these issues have been addressed in their construction. Social desirability bias is particularly relevant when evaluating the relationship between perceived versus actual similarity-complementarity, which involves not only self-ratings but ratings of a partner. In addition, actual versus perceived similarity comparisons involve differential error variances. The extent and direction of such differences are difficult to evaluate but could lead to an interpretation favoring greater perceived than actual similarity (Murstein & Beck, 1972).

In conclusion, given the many problems in the area of personality measurement, it is essential that instruments used to compare the personality needs and traits of two different individuals be well-validated, psychometrically-sound and constructed so as to minimize a social desirability response set. It is important that they be conceptually linked to a theory of personality needs relevant to interpersonal functioning, and that they be appropriate for the statistical procedures being used.

<u>Adequacy</u> <u>of</u> <u>Relationship</u> <u>Satisfaction</u> <u>Measures</u>.

In many of the studies reported, inadequate or inappropriate measures of relationship satisfaction have been employed. Many researchers have used measures which overlap with the concept of similarity, for example, the widely used Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (e.g. Bentler & Newcomb, 1978; Meyer & Pepper, 1977; Murstein & Beck, 1972). High correlations would be expected between two measures evaluating overlapping constructs and could lead to an overstatement of the association between similarity and adjustment. Other researchers have used measures, the psychometric properties of which are poorly established (e.g. Caspi & Herbener, 1990). Unidimensional or single item measures tend to lack adequate variability for discriminating among couples within the normal range (Gray-Little & Burks, 1983) as most report themselves to be very satisfied with their relationships.

In conclusion, researchers need to choose scales which have been shown to discriminate different levels of relationship satisfaction within the normal population, and which do not include items reflecting similarity or complementarity between partners. This issue has not been addressed in any of the studies presented.

<u>Appropriateness</u> <u>of</u> <u>the</u> <u>Statistical</u> <u>Procedures</u>.

One of the most serious criticisms of the research has to do with the use of correlational statistics to test the

complementarity hypothesis. This approach does not allow for a valid test of the hypothesis, as correlational statistics have generally been based on the scores of the entire sample of couples when the theory applies only to a minority of couples whose scores are more extreme. It is important that researchers use statistical procedures which allow the level of intensity at which personality needs are present in both partners to be taken into account in evaluating the complementarity hypothesis. Although this has been frequently pointed out (Rosow, 1957; White & Hatcher, 1984; Wright, 1968), few researchers have heeded the advice.

Finally, a brief summary will be presented of the research results which relate to the primary areas of couple interaction proposed by Goldberg (1982). Given the methodological problems already mentioned and that researchers have not taken into account level of intensity on the personality dimensions, many results relate only indirectly to his proposals or provide insufficient detail.

Goldberg predicted that on dimensions relating to power couples would be similar at moderate levels and complementary at extremes. Some results have been interpreted as support for similarity between couples on traits related to the expression of the power dynamic (Barton & Cattell, 1972; Buss, 1984a, 1984b), while some

support for complementarity has come from Winch (1958), Meyer and Pepper (1977), and Buss (1984a).

Goldberg predicted that an interaction between levels of nurturance and succorance would be optimal for maximum need gratification. Here too results are conflicting. Winch (1958) and Meyer and Pepper (1977) offer some limited support for complementarity. Winch found complementarity between partners on the nurturance-receptivity axis. Meyer and Pepper found significant negative correlations between partners on Succorance but positive correlations on Nurturance.

On traits related to intimacy, Goldberg suggested that similarity would be optimal at all levels. Meyer and Pepper (1977) found considerable support for similarity between partners in their self, spouse, ideal self and ideal spouse ratings for Autonomy and Affiliation. Similarly, researchers who have presented data relevant to the dynamic of trust have obtained results supportive of Goldberg's view that similarity is optimal (Buss, 1984; Mascie-Taylor, 1989; Pickford et al., 1966). Cattell and Nesselroade (1967) found that stably married couples' scores on Suspicion were significantly positively correlated while those of unstably married couples were significantly negatively correlated.

Finally, on traits reflecting life-style and sense of order issues Goldberg predicted that similar couples would be more compatibly matched than dissimilar couples. Results

are mixed. Pickford et al. (1966), Price and Vandenberg (1980) and Guttman and Zohar (1987) found evidence for similarity between partners on activity level. Lesnik-Oberstein and Cohen (1984) found partners' scores on performance measures of reflection-impulsivity and sensation-seeking to be significantly positively correlated. Meyer and Pepper (1977) found evidence for dissimilarity between partners' spouse-spouse comparisons on Order and Impulsivity, but similarity between partners' ideal spouse ratings. Guttman and Zohar (1987) found positive correlations on Order.

Purpose of the Present Study

The present study was designed to explore the perceived and actual similarity and complementarity of personality traits between partners in adult, intimate relationships. The focus was on personality traits related to the main areas of interaction between couples, designated by Goldberg (1982) as power, nurture, intimacy, trust and personal styles. Criticisms of previous research in this area were addressed in the choice of personality and relationship satisfaction measures and in the selection of statistical procedures. Of particular importance, in the present study measures of relationship quality were employed which did not overlap with the concept of similarity and the statistical procedures employed allowed for the complementarity hypothesis to be evaluated. Ways of estimating both "actual" and "perceived" similarity and complementarity between partners were included in the design. In addition, the design of the study allowed for the effect of length of relationship to be assessed independently of age effects.

There were three main thrusts to the present study. The first was to investigate whether partners in intimate relationships are matched on the basis of the actual and/or perceived degree of similarity-complementarity of their personality characteristics. The second was to explore

whether there is a connection between the actual and/or perceived personality fit between partners and relationship satisfaction. The third was to investigate whether the degree of actual or perceived personality similarity-complementarity between partners varies as a function of the length of their relationship.

Several specific propositions were evaluated. First, it was proposed that partners would be matched on a nonrandom basis with regard to their personality traits. It was expected that partners would be similar to each other and/or perceive themselves as similar on most personality traits at most levels of intensity. Two theories of complementarity were investigated, the implications of which differed for scores outside the moderate range on some dimensions. It was predicted on the basis of the need completion principle that partners would be, or would perceive themselves to be, opposite to each other on dimensions where both scored outside of the moderate range. On the basis of the need gratification theory, it was predicted that individuals who scored outside of the moderate range would be in relationships with others who were similar (or perceived to be similar) on traits related to intimacy, trust and personal style, and complementary on traits related to power and nurturance.

Second, it was proposed that the degree of actual

and/or perceived personality similarity-complementarity would be associated with differences in relationship satisfaction. It was predicted that couples who both scored outside the moderate range, who formed or perceived themselves as forming a match which would be considered incompatible according to the predictions in Table 1, would be less satisfied with their relationship than couples who both scored outside the moderate range but who formed a compatible match.

Third, it was predicted that the degree of actual and perceived personality similarity-complementarity between partners would vary as a function of length of relationship and that the differences would be greater for perceived than for actual similarity and/or complementarity. The age range of subjects was limited to a ten year span so that the confound between age and length of relationship was minimized.

Method

Subjects

A sample of 89 cohabiting and/or married couples were recruited from the Montreal area to participate in the study. The sample was restricted to heterosexual couples between the ages of 30 and 40. Individuals were excluded from participating who had married within the past three months, were planning to marry within the next three months, were pregnant or had had a baby within the past six months, as these were considered to be transitional events in the relationship.

Most of the subjects were Canadian born. Religious affiliation was mainly Protestant, Catholic or Jewish. Subjects were predominantly from middle and upper-middle socioeconomic levels and had at least some college education - approximately one third had graduate level training. The demographic characteristics of the sample are described in Table 2.

The couples had been together for between 8 months and 20 years and all but ten were married. Three quarters of the couples had children. Thirteen percent of the sample had been married previously. The relationship characteristics of the sample are described in Table 3.

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

	Male[1]	Female[2]
Age[3]	34.69 (3.0)	33.93 (2.8)
Ethnicity[4]		
Canadian Born	73% (64)	74% (66)
Foreign Born	26% (23)	26% (23)
Current Religion		
Protestant	18% (16)	20% (18)
Catholic	34% (30)	40% (36)
Jewish	14% (12)	16% (14)
Other	6% (5)	6% (5)
None	27% (24)	18% (16)
Education		
High School	9% (8)	14% (12)
Partial College	23% (20)	16% (14)
Undergraduate	27% (24)	29% (26)
Graduate	42% (37)	30% (27)
Employment Status		
Full-time	91% (81)	51% (45)
Part-time	5% (4)	25% (22)
Homemaker	2% (2)	23% (20)
Unemployed	2% (2)	1% (1)

[1] Missing data in some cells from 2 male subjects.

[2] Missing data in one cell for one female subject.

[3] Presented as means with standard deviations in parentheses.

[4] $\underline{N}$s presented in parentheses.

Table 3

Relationship Characteristics of the Sample

___

Length of Relationship[1]	Mean	SD	Range
Time Known	11.41	5.41	15 mos.- 25 yrs.
Since Started Dating	10.25	4.85	8 mos.- 20 yrs.
Since Living Together	8.34	4.45	3 mos.- 18 yrs
Since Marriage	7.50	4.20	0 mos.- 18 yrs.

Married

Yes	89%	(79)
No	11%	(10)

Children

Yes	74%	(66)
No	26%	(23)

Previously Married

Males	12%	(11)
Females	15%	(13)

___

[1] Where couple responses differed, values represent the average of the two responses or the more precise response, e.g , a specific date was given.

Measures

The following battery of paper and pencil questionnaires was administered to each subject. Each member of the couple completed the battery independently.

Personal and Demographic Data.

Subjects completed a Personal Information Sheet regarding their age, ethnic origin, socioeconomic background (current and family of origin), religious affiliation (current and family of origin), education, employment, length of relationship, previous marriages, and children (see Appendix A).

Personality Measure.

Ten subscales of the Personality Research Form - E (PRF-E) (Jackson, 1984) were administered. The subscales of Abasement, Aggression and Dominance, Nurturance and Succorance, Autonomy, Defendence, and Impulsivity and Order were chosen as reflecting Goldberg's primary areas of interaction between couples of power, nurture, intimacy, trust and personal styles (Goldberg, 1982).

The Desirability subscale was included as a measure of test-taking attitudes. According to Jackson (1984), high scores indicate a tendency to describe oneself in highly favorable, desirable terms and also reflect high self-regard or a high degree of conventional socialization. Descriptions of the subscales and sample items are presented in Appendix B.

The shortened PRF-E version consisted of 160 statements (10 subscales of 16 items each), which were responded to in a true or false format. Each subject completed the PRF-E twice, under different sets of instructions: as it described him/herself and as it described the partner. Instructions for the two versions are presented in Appendix C.

The PRF-E is a widely used measure, designed for use with a diverse range of populations, which focuses on areas of normal functioning rather than psychopathology. The theoretical conceptualization of the PRF was derived from Murray's (1938) personality need areas, and refined by much subsequent research and theoretical development (Jackson, 1984). Normative data are based on a sample of over 2000 college and university students across North America (Jackson, 1984). The PRF norms were not used as the current sample differed from the normative sample.

Reliability of the PRF-E compares favorably with that of other personality scales of equal length. Internal reliability coefficients for the 16-item trait scales ranged from .63 to .89 for the scales used in the present study; KR-20 coefficients ranged from .62 to .85 and test-retest reliability ranged from .80 to .94 at one week interval (Jackson, 1984). Acquiescence and desirability bias have been satisfactorily controlled through item development and selection procedures (Anastasi, 1976).

Convergent and discriminant validity studies of the PRF scales have been undertaken by means of factor analysis and by using behavior ratings, trait ratings and peer ratings as external criteria (Jackson, 1984). Correlations between self-ratings and peer-ratings by roommates on the PRF-E achieved a mean validity coefficient of .52. Comparisons between self-ratings and peer-ratings have been an important aspect of the validation procedures (Jackson, 1984; Paunonen, 1989). PRF subscales have been found to correlate positively with other personality measure subscales (e.g. California Psychological Inventory and the Strong Vocational Interest Blank) bearing similar names and to be uncorrelated with theoretically unrelated measures. The trait factors which emerged across different methods in multimethod factor analysis corresponded very closely with the original trait scales (Jackson, 1984). There is therefore good evidence for both convergent and discriminant validity.

In the present study each couple yielded four scores on each personality dimension: (1) male self-rating (M[m]); (2) female self-rating (F[f]); (3) male rated by female (M[f]); (4) female rated by male (F[m]). Actual similarity-complementarity was evaluated by comparing male and female partners' self-ratings (M[m] with F[f]). Perceived similarity-complementarity was evaluated by comparing male self-ratings with female rated by male (M[m] with F[m]) and female self-ratings with male rated by female (F[f] with

M[f]). (In the above notations the target person is designated by a capital letter and the rater by a lower case letter in parentheses). Figure 1 is a diagram of the comparisons between scores which were computed for actual and perceived personality similarity-complementarity.

Relationship Satisfaction Measure.

Three subscales of the Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI) (Snyder, 1989) were administered. These were Global Distress (GDS), Affective Communication (AFC), and Problem-Solving Communication (PSC). Slight wording changes were made to some items so as to make them applicable to non-married couples, (e.g. "relationship" was substituted for "marriage", and "partner" for "spouse"). Descriptions of the scales and sample items are presented in Appendix D.

The MSI is a multidimensional self-report measure of marital interactions, designed for clinical and research use. Partners reported their subjective experience and appraisal of their relationship by answering "true" or "false" to each of 107 items. All of the scales are scored in the direction of discontent so that high scores indicate high levels of dissatisfaction within the specific areas.

The GDS scale (43 items) reflects overall dissatisfaction with the relationship and chronic disharmony. AFC (26 items) assesses dissatisfaction with the amount of affection and understanding expressed by the

TARGET
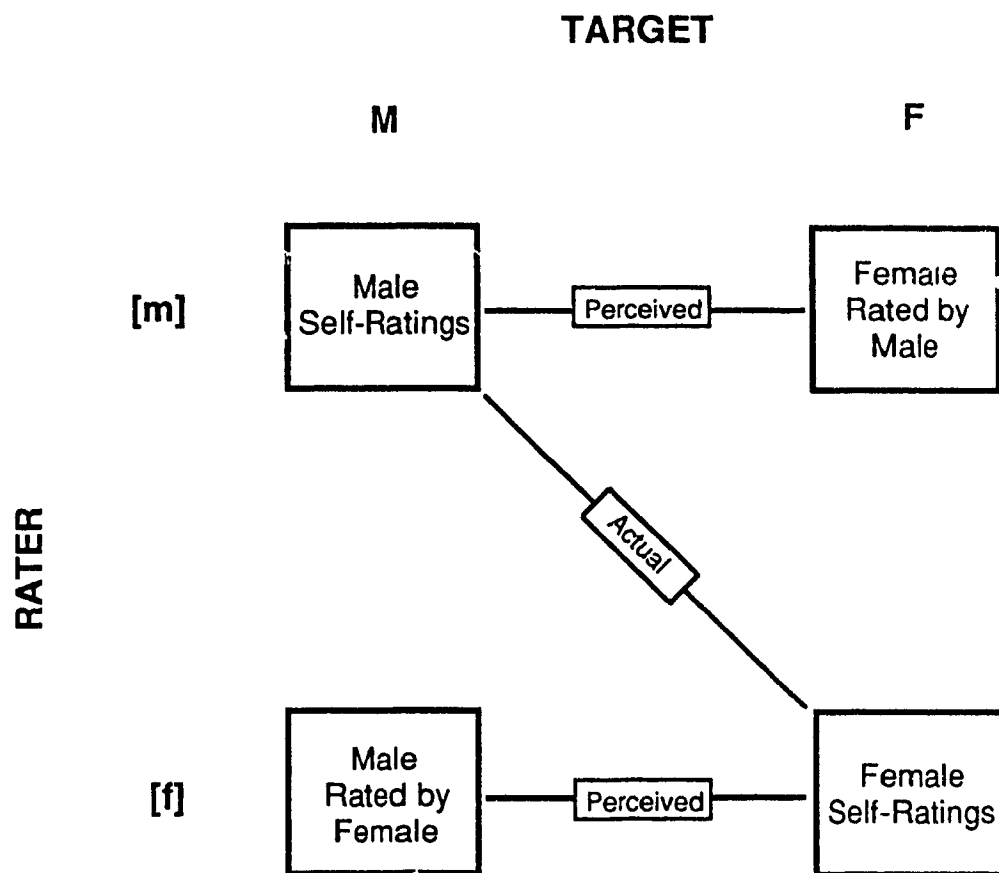
Figure 1. Diagram of the comparisons between subjects' self- and partner- ratings that were computed for "actual" and "perceived" similarity/complementarity

partner. PSC is comprised of 38 items assessing the couple's general ineffectiveness in resolving differences.

Snyder (1989) reported that the MSI scales have high internal consistency: Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the scales used in the present study were .97 (GDS), .88 (AFC), and .93 (PSC) based on combined samples of 650 persons from the general population and 100 persons in marital therapy. He reported test-retest reliability coefficients based on 37 couples tested an average of 6 weeks apart of .92 (GDS), .84 (AFC) and .91 (PSC), indicating high temporal stability.

Snyder (1989) reported that the measure has been validated against other measures of marital satisfaction. Correlations between the three subscales used in the present study and the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test were .90 (GDS), .77 (AFC) and .78 (PSC). It has good discriminant validity both in discriminating between therapy and control couples (Snyder, 1989) and also between different levels of relationship satisfaction within the general population (Scheer & Snyder, 1989).

According to Snyder (1989) the three scales used in the present study all loaded on a common factor which assesses the more global or affective components of a relationship. Correlations between the subscales ranged between .69 and .76 (see Appendix H) and correlations between partners ranged .42 (AFC) to .67 (GDS) (see Appendix I). A total Relationship Dissatisfaction score was derived for each

subject by summing scores from the GDS, AFC and PSC scales.

Procedure

Subjects were recruited through individual contacts, notices posted in public places, newsletter and small newspaper advertisements, elementary and nursery school meetings, other research projects and through former subjects. All the subjects who participated and many who were contacted but did not meet the inclusion criteria were asked to nominate other couples they knew who might meet the criteria. An opportunity to win a prize of $100 was offered as an incentive to participate. The numbers of couples recruited by different means are presented in Appendix E. Contacts were diverse and widespread and no more than three couples were recruited through any one source person, so that a selection bias from restricted networking was minimized.

Potential subjects were initially contacted by telephone by one of five researchers, who briefly described the study. They were asked a series of questions to ensure that they met the inclusion criteria. A letter describing the study in greater detail and addressing potential concerns was sent to prospective subjects (see Appendix F). They were contacted again by telephone within two weeks and asked if they would be willing to participate. Those who agreed were given an appointment time when a researcher

would come to their house. Approximately 70 percent of those contacted who met the inclusion criteria agreed to participate. Those who refused gave as reasons that they were too busy, they or their partners were not interested, it was too personal or it was too difficult to schedule a time when they would both be available.

A researcher visited the home of each couple and remained present while the questionnaires were completed to ensure that the partners responded independently and without consultation. On arrival the researcher gave each participant a brief letter outlining the procedures and emphasizing issues of confidentiality, and honesty and independence of responses (see Appendix G). Partners were asked to work in separate rooms whenever possible and to read the directions carefully.

Subjects were given the first set of questionnaires and response sheets. This consisted of one version of the PRF (either self or partner) and the relationship satisfaction measure. The first set was collected and responses placed in an envelope before the second set, consisting of the other version of the PRF and the Personal Information Sheet, was presented. This procedure was followed so that subjects could not refer back to their responses to the first version of the PRF in responding to the second. Order of presentation of the self and partner versions of the PRF was

randomized. To insure confidentility all response sheets were identified only by subject number and when all the questionnaires had been completed, response sheets were sealed in the envelope.

At the end of each testing session subjects were given a form on which to indicate their interest in participating in the draw for the prize and in receiving a summary of the results (see Appendix G). They were provided with a stamped-addressed envelope to mail these back to the researcher, so that no names or addresses were associated with the response sheets at any time. They were also asked to nominate acquaintances who might be willing to participate in the study which could be mailed back with the summary request form (see Appendix G).

Results

Overview

In the present study three main issues concerning personality similarity-complementarity between intimate partners were investigated: (1) whether partners are matched on a non-random basis with regard to their personality characteristics; (2) whether the personality match between partners is related to their satisfaction with their relationship; and (3) whether the match between partners differs as a function of the length of the relationship. These three issues were investigated from the perspective of both the "actual" similarity-complementarity match between partners and the "perceived" match.

The results of the analyses are presented in three separate sections. Within each section results which relate to the "actual" match between partners are described first. These analyses were based on comparisons between the self-ratings of male and female couple members (M[m]/F[f]). Results which relate to the "perceived" match between partners are presented second. These results were based on two further sets of similar analyses comparing self-ratings of males with their ratings of their partners (M[m]/F[m] comparisons) and self-ratings of females with their ratings of their partners (F[f]/M[f] comparisons).

Preliminary Analyses

Preliminary analyses performed to detect univariate and multivariate outliers and significant skewness indicated that distributions were adequate for the intended statistical analyses. In addition, the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity necessary for regression analyses were met. Details of these analyses are presented in Appendix J.

To evaluate whether the order of presentation of the self and partner versions of the PRF scales had an effect on subjects' responses, two sets of 10 t-tests were performed. The self-partner difference scores of subjects who had received the self-rating scale first were compared with the difference scores of subjects who had received the partner-rating scale first (M[m]/F[m] and F[f]/M[f] comparisons). It was found that three of the t-tests were significant at the .05 probability level but none were significant at the .005 level of significance required by the Bonferroni correction, given the number of tests performed within each set (see Appendix K).

Partners' scores were compared on demographic and personal background variables by means of correlations and chi-square analyses. For the chi-square analyses subjects were considered similar if they obtained an identical score on a variable and dissimilar if they obtained anything but

an identical score. Results of these analyses are presented
in Appendices L and M. As in previous research (e.g. Buss,
1985), it was found that partners were significantly similar
on several variables.

Main Analyses

I. Personality Similarity-Complementarity between Partners

"Actual" Match.

The first issue to be investigated in the present study
was whether the match between couples on personality
dimensions was non-random. In order to test the similarity
hypothesis and to compare the results of this study with
other studies which have used correlations as a test of the
association between partners' scores on personality
dimensions, the same analyses were performed on the present
data. Males' self-ratings were correlated with females'
self-ratings to compare the actual similarity between
partners on each dimension. Results from these analyses are
presented in Table 4.

As in previous research, low positive correlations were
found between partners' self-ratings, three of which reached
significance at the .05 level of probability or better.
These were on the Autonomy, Succorance and Desirability
subscales. When a Bonferroni correction was applied to
protect against alpha inflation, a more conservative
probability level was set at .005. According to this

Table 4

Correlations Between Partners' Self-Ratings on PRF Subscales
(M[m]/F[f] Comparisons)

Variables	r
Abasement	.06
Aggression	.16
Autonomy	.28[t]
Defendence	.17
Dominance	.03
Impulsivity	-.09
Nurturance	.02
Order	.11
Succorance	.21[t]
Desirability	.27[t]

Note. df = 87.

[t].005 $\leq p \leq$ .05 (Uncorrected).

criterion only the correlation for Autonomy (p<.007) approached significance.

An alternative approach was subsequently taken to more appropriately test the complementarity hypothesis. As this hypothesis does not apply to couples who score within the moderate range on personality dimensions, only couples where both partners scored outside the middle range (i.e. in the upper or lower quartiles) were included. The number of couples where both partners scored outside of the middle 50 percent of subjects varied as a function of the dimension, ranging from a low of 26 couples for Order to a high of 37 couples for Autonomy. Of these the number who were dissimilar ranged from 7 (Desirability) to 16 (Impulsivity).

Chi-square analyses were computed to test the frequency of similar versus dissimilar matches between partners among these couples. As shown in Table 5, results were significant for the Autonomy and Desirability subscales at the .005 level of probability required by the Bonferroni correction. Of those couples where both partners scored outside the middle range on the dimensions of Autonomy and Desirability, significantly more were similar than dissimilar.

Chi-square analyses were also performed to investigate complementarity between partners across the theoretically related dimensions of Dominance/Abasement, Impulsivity/Order and Nurturance/Succorance. To support the complementary

Table 5

Chi-Square Analyses of "Actual" Similarity/Dissimilarity Match Between Partners Scoring in Upper and Lower Quartiles on Self-Ratings of PRF Subscales (M[m]/F[f] Comparisons)

Variables	χ^2
Abasement	0.57
Aggression	2.94
Autonomy	7.81**
Defendence	1.13
Dominance	0.00
Impulsivity	0.13
Nurturance	0.03
Order	1.39
Succorance	3.13
Desirability	7.76**

Note. df = 1.

** $p \leq .005$ (Bonferroni Corrected).

need hypothesis it would predicted that partners score at similar levels on related need dimensions (e.g. high Dominance with high Abasement). The analyses explored the frequency of similar and dissimilar matches between partners on related need dimensions. As seen in Table 6, none of these results was significant.

"Perceived" Match.

The "perceived" match between couples involved two sets of comparisons: a) between the way the male perceived himself and the way he perceived his partner (M[m]/F[m] comparisons); and b) between the way the female perceived herself and the way she perceived her partner (F[f]/M[f] comparisons).

a) Males (M[m]/F[m] Comparisons)

As can be seen from the first column of Table 7 (M[m]/F[m]), when the self-ratings of males were compared to their ratings of their partners, significant correlations were found on the dimensions of Autonomy and Desirability at the .05 probability level. However, when the Bonferroni correction was applied, only the correlation for Desirability achieved significance at the .005 level.

Chi-square analyses were performed to explore the distribution of only those matches where the males saw both the self and the partner as scoring outside the middle range. The number of males included in these analyses ranged from 26 on Nurturance to 41 on Autonomy, of whom

Table 6

Chi-Square Analyses of "Actual" Similarity/Dissimilarity Matches Between Partners Scoring in Upper and Lower Quartiles on Self-Ratings on Theoretically Related PRF Subscales

Variables	M[m]/F[f]
Dominance/Abasement	1.88
Abasement/Dominance	.31
Impulsivity/Order	.27
Order/Impulsivity	1.09
Nurturance/Succorance	.04
Succorance/Nurturance	2.79

Note. df = 1.

Table 7

Correlations Between Self- and Partner-Ratings on PRF Subscales
for Males (M[m]/F[m]) and Females (F[f]/M[f])

| | Comparison | |
Variables	M[m]/F[m]	F[f]/M[f]
Abasement	.12	.06
Aggression	.08	.18
Autonomy	.28†	.16
Defendence	.17	.24†
Dominance	.10	.12
Impulsivity	.01	-.16
Nurturance	.18	.15
Order	.00	.10
Succorance	.15	.13
Desirability	.41**	.28†

Note. df = 87.

** p ≤ .005 (Bonferroni Corrected).

†.005 ≤ p ≤ .05 (Uncorrected).

between 8 (Nurturance) and 19 (Aggression) saw their partners as dissimilar. On the dimensions of Abasement, Autonomy, Nurturance and Desirability, significantly more males saw their partners as similar to themselves than saw their partners as dissimilar, at the .05 level. Only the result for Desirability reached the level of significance required by the more conservative Bonferroni correction. These are presented in the first column of Table 8.

b) Females (F[f]/M[f] Comparisons)

Correlations between females' self-ratings and ratings of their partners are presented in the last column of Table 7 (F[f]/M[f]). On the subscales of Defendence and Desirability correlations reached significance at the .05 level but neither of these achieved significance at the .005 level required by the Bonferroni correction.

The chi-square analyses are presented in the second column of Table 8. The number of females included in these analyses varied between a low of 25 on Order and a high of 42 on Impulsivity. The number who perceived their partner as dissimilar ranged from 8 on Desirability to 25 on Impulsivity. More females perceived their partner as similar than dissimilar on the Desirability subscale at the .05 probability level. However, this result was not significant when the Bonferroni correction was applied.

None of the chi-square analyses computed to evaluate the perceived complementarity match between partners on the

Table 8

Chi-Square Analyses of "Perceived" Similarity/Dissimilarity
Matches of Scores in Upper and Lower Quartiles on Self- and
Partner-Ratings of PRF Subscales for Males (M[m]/F[m]) and Females
(F[f]/M[f])

	Comparison (χ^2)	
Variables	M[m]/F[m]	F[f]/M[f]
Abasement	4.50[†]	0.81
Aggression	0.11	3.67
Autonomy	5.49[†]	1.00
Defendence	1.78	2.29
Dominance	1.00	0.86
Impulsivity	0.04	1.52
Nurturance	3.85[†]	3.46
Order	0.00	0.04
Succorance	1.40	0.86
Desirability	9.00**	4.48[†]

Note. df = 1.

** $p \leq .005$ (Bonferroni Corrected).

[†].005 $\leq p \leq$ .05 (Uncorrected).

theoretically related dimensions of Dominance/Abasement, Nurturance/Succorance and Impulsivity/Order was significant for either males or females, as can be seen from Table 9.

In summary, there was some evidence from both the correlations and chi-square analyses that partners were actually similar in their self-ratings on Autonomy and Desirability. There was also evidence that the men perceived their partners as similar to themselves on Desirability. There was no evidence to support the hypotheses that partners were complementary on any of the personality traits or across theoretically related traits reflecting the dynamics of power, nurture and selected aspects of personal styles.

II. Personality Match and Relationship Satisfaction

The second focus of the study was to examine whether there was an association between partner personality match and relationship satisfaction. Theories of similarity and complementarity led to different predictions regarding relationship satisfaction. Based on the similarity hypothesis it was expected that partners who were similar to each other in their personalities would be more satisfied in their relationships than dissimilar partners. Based on the need completion theory it was predicted that people would be more satisfied in relationships with partners who possessed qualities which they lacked (i.e. who were opposite to

Table 9

Chi-Square Analyses of "Perceived" Similarity/Dissimilarity Matches of Scores in Upper and Lower Quartiles on Self- and Partner- Ratings on Theoretically Related PRF Subscales for Males (M[m]/F[m]) and Females (F[f]/M[m])

Variables	M[m]/F[m]	F[f]/M[m]
Dominance/Abasement	.71	.67
Abasement/Dominance	1.39	.12
Impulsivity/Order	.17	.03
Order/Impulsivity	.36	.13
Nurturance/Succorance	.00	.29
Succorance/Nurturance	.03	3.46

Note. df = 1.

themselves on dimensions on which they were more extreme),
whereas the implications of the need gratification theory
were that people would be most satisfied with an opposite
partner on dimensions relating to power and nurture and with
a similar partner on dimensions relating to intimacy, trust
and personal styles.

In order to test these hypotheses two approaches were
taken. First, hierarchical multiple regression analyses
were computed with men's and women's relationship
dissatisfaction scores as the dependent variables. These
analyses were computed separately as the relationship
dissatisfaction scores of partners were found to be
signficantly correlated. The correlation between partners'
total relationship dissatisfaction scores was .66 (p<.01).
As the correlations between the Desirability subscale scores
(a measure of social desirability response set and level of
self-regard) and the relationship dissatisfaction scores
were found to be highly significant (r = -.44, p<.000 for
males, r = -.43, p<.000 for females), the couple
Desirability score was entered as the first step in the
regression equation, and the differences between partners on
each of the other personality dimensions were entered as the
second step.

Second, t-tests were performed to test for differences
in relationship dissatisfaction scores between partners
scoring outside the middle range who were similar versus

dissimilar on each personality dimension. These analyses were computed for both the "actual" and the "perceived" match between partners.

"Actual" Match (M[m]/F[f] comparisons).

The hierarchical multiple regression analyses predicting males' and females' relationship dissatisfaction based on the absolute difference scores between partners' self-ratings on personality scales of the PRF were both non-significant. Although the overall equation for males' relationship dissatisfaction was significant at the .001 level, when the effect of the correlation between Desirability and relationship dissatisfaction was controlled, the increase in the amount of variance accounted for by the difference between partners on the other personality dimensions was not significant (see Table 10). For women's relationship dissatisfaction, although the equation for couple Desirability was significant, the r^2 change equation and the overall equation were not significant, as seen in Table 11.

The results of the t-tests to compare the males' and females' relationship dissatisfaction scores of those couples where both partners scored outside the middle range and were similar, with those who were dissimilar are shown in Tables 12 and 13. There was a trend for men who were similar to their partners in Dominance to be more satisfied

Table 10

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Male Relationship Dissatisfaction Scores
from Absolute Difference Scores (A) Between Partners' Self-Ratings on PRF Subscales
(M[m]/F[f] Comparisons)

Variables	Step	r	sr^2
Couple Desirability	1	-.49	-.49***

$r^2 = .24$, $F(1,87) = 27.30$, $p \leq .000$

Abasement (A)	2	.08	.09
Aggression (A)		.27	.18
Autonomy (A)		.12	.07
Defendence (A)		.06	-.04
Dominance (A)		.05	.02
Impulsivity (A)		.10	.02
Nurturance (A)		.03	.00
Order (A)		.03	-.05
Succorance (A)		-.07	-.08

r^2 change = .06, $F(10,78) = .73$, n.s.

Note: $r^2 = .30$ (Adj. $r^2 = .21$), $F(10,78) = 3.31$, $p < .001$.

*** $p \leq .000$.

Table 11

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Female Relationship Dissatisfaction Scores
from Absolute Difference Scores (A) Between Partners' Self-Ratings on PRF Subscales
(M[m]/F[f] Comparisons)

Variables	Step	r	sr^2
Couple Desirability	1	-.37	-.37***
$r^2 = .14$, $F(1,87) = 13.87$, $p \le .000$			
Abasement (A)	2	.19	.16
Aggression (A)		.05	-.01
Autonomy (A)		.09	.10
Defendence (A)		.18	.08
Dominance (A)		.04	.05
Impulsivity (A)		.10	-.01
Nurturance (A)		-.05	-.09
Order (A)		.06	-.02
Succorance (A)		-.01	-.05
r^2 change = .05, $F(10,78) = .59$ n.s.			

Note: $r^2 = .19$ (Adj. $r^2 = .09$), $F(10,78) = 1.86$, n.s.

*** $p \le .000$.

Table 12

<u>T-Tests for Differences in Male Relationship Dissatisfaction Scores Between "Actual" Similar and Dissimilar Partners Scoring in Upper and Lower Quartiles on PRF Subscales (M[m]/F[f] Comparisons)</u>

Variable	t	df
Abasement	-1.62	26
Aggression	-1.54	32
Autonomy	-.97	35
Defendence	-.13	30
Dominance	-2.11[†]	26
Impulsivity	-.51	28
Nurturance	-.24	29
Order	-.53	24
Succorance	1.82	30
Desirability	.81	27

[†].005 ≤ p ≤ .05 (Uncorrected).

Table 13

T-Tests for Differences in Female Relationship Dissatisfaction
Scores Between "Actual" Similar and Dissimilar Partners Scoring in
Upper and Lower Quartiles on PRF Subscales (M[m]/F[f] Comparisons)

Variable	t	df
Abasement	$-2.35^{\dagger}$	26
Aggression	-.08	32
Autonomy	-.07	35
Defendence	-1.11	30
Dominance	-1.16	26
Impulsivity	-1.08	28
Nurturance	-.24	29
Order	-.50	24
Succorance	.67	30
Desirability	.09	27

$^{\dagger}.005 \leq p \leq .05$ (Uncorrected).

with their relationship (see Table 12). There was also a trend for the relationship satisfaction of women to vary as a function of similarity on Abasement (see Table 13). Again it was found that similar couples tended to be less dissatisfied than dissimilar couples. Neither of these results reached the .005 level of significance required when the Bonferroni correction was applied to take into account the number of t-tests which were computed in each set.

"Perceived Match".

a) Males (M[m]/F[m] comparisons)

The hierarchical multiple regression analysis in which males' relationship dissatisfaction scores were predicted from the difference between males' self-ratings and their ratings of their partners approached significance (r^2 change = .14, F (10,78) = 1.95, p<.056) (see Table 14). Again Desirability accounted for a significant portion of the variance. The increase in the variance in male dissatisfaction which was accounted for was attributable to perceived differences between males' self-ratings and their ratings of their partners on the dimension of Defendence.

T-tests were computed for those relationships where the male perceived himself and his partner as scoring outside the middle range (see Table 15). Only one was significant at the .05 probability level. Men who who perceived their partners as similar to themselves in Defendence tended to be less dissatisfied with their relationship than men who

Table 14

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Male Relationship Dissatisfaction Scores
from Absolute Difference Scores (A) Between Male's Self-Ratings on PRF Subscales
(M[m]/F[m] Comparisons)

variables	Step	r	sr^2
Couple Desirability	1	-.49	-.49 ***

$r^2 = .24$, $F(1,87) = 27.30$, $p \leq .000$

Abasement (A)	2	.14	-.03
Aggression (A)		.22	.18
Autonomy (A)		.28	.07
Defendence (A)		.43	.24 †
Dominance (A)		.03	-.02
Impulsivity (A)		.26	.06
Nurturance (A)		.16	.06
Order (A)		-.11	-.12
Succorance (A)		.08	.04

r^2 change $= .14$, $F(10,78) = 1.95$, $p = .056$

Note: $r^2 = .38$ (Adj. $r^2 = .30$), $F(10,78) = 4.76$, $p < .000$.

*** $p \leq .000$.

†.005 $< p < .05$ (Uncorrected).

Table 15

T-Tests for Differences in Male Relationship Dissatisfaction Scores Between "Perceived" Similar and Dissimilar Partners Scoring in Upper and Lower Quartiles on PRF Subscales Based on Males' Self- and Partner-Ratings (M[m]/F[m] Comparisons)

Variable	t	df
Abasement	-1.50	30
Aggression	-.71	34
Autonomy	-.99	39
Defendence	-2.38[†]	34
Dominance	-1.10	34
Impulsivity	-1.11	25
Nurturance	-1.08	24
Order	-.68	28
Succorance	-.10	33
Desirability	-.51	34

[†]$.005 \leq p \leq .05$ (Uncorrected).

perceived their partners as dissimilar. When the Bonferroni correction was applied this result was not significant.

b) Females (F[f]/M[f] Comparisons)

The results of the hierarchical multiple regression to predict females' relationship dissatisfaction from the difference between females' self-ratings and their ratings of their partners are presented in Table 16. The equation for Desirability and the overall equation were both significant at the .005 level, but no significant increase in the variance accounted for was achieved by including the difference scores in the equation.

As shown in Table 17, only one of the t-tests for the women's self- and partner-ratings comparisons was significant at the .05 level. Women who perceived their partners as dissimilar on Abasement were more dissatisfied with their relationships than women who perceived their partners as similar. This result was not significant when the Bonferroni correction was applied.

In summary, no significant association was found between the degree of actual difference between partners' traits and their level of relationship dissatisfaction. However, the multiple regression analysis predicting males' relationship dissatisfaction from the difference between their perceptions of themselves and of their partners approached significance at the .05 level. The increased variance accounted for was due to the perceived difference

Table 16

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Predicting Female Relationship Dissatisfaction Scores

from Absolute Difference Scores (A) Between Women's Self-Ratings on PRF Subscales

(F[f]/M[f] Comparisons)

Variables	Step	r	sr^2
Couple Desirability	1	-.37	-.37***
r^2 = .14, $F(1,87)$ = 13.87, $p \leq .000$			
Abasement (A)	2	.21	.09
Aggression (A)		.07	-.15
Autonomy (A)		.22	.15
Defendence (A)		.14	-.01
Dominance (A)		.10	.09
Impulsivity (A)		.03	-.08
Nurturance (A)		.31	.23†
Order (A)		-.02	-.07
Succorance (A)		.02	-.04
r^2 change = .14, $F(10,78)$ = 1.70, n.s.			

Note: r^2 = .28 (Adj. r^2 = .19), $F(10,78)$ = 3.02, $p < .003$.

*** $p \leq .000$.

†.005 < p < .05 (Uncorrected).

Table 17

T-Tests for Differences in Female Relationship Dissatisfaction Scores Between "Perceived" Similar and Dissimilar Partners Scoring in Upper and Lower Quartiles on PRF Subscales Based on Women's Self- and Partner-Ratings (F[f]/M[f] Comparisons)

Variable	t	df
Abasement	-2.57[†]	29
Aggression	.38	31
Autonomy	-.96	34
Defendence	-.66	26
Dominance	-1.46	27
Impulsivity	-.71	40
Nurturance	-1.65	33
Order	-.29	23
Succorance	-.73	27
Desirability	-.31	25

[†].005 ≤ p ≤ .05 (Uncorrected).

between partners on Defendence. Similarly, it was indicated by the t-tests for the subsample that males who perceived themselves and their partners as similar on Defendence tended to be more satisfied than males who perceived their partners as dissimilar.

Among the subsample of couples outside the middle range, there was some suggestion that, on dimensions related to the power dynamic similarity was associated with greater satisfaction. Males who were similar to their partners on Dominance tended to be more satisfied, whereas women who were similar and perceived themselves as similar to their partners on Abasement tended to be more satisfied than women who were more dissimilar to their partners. However, none of these results reached the necessary level of significance required by the Bonferroni correction to take into account the number of analyses in each set. There was no evidence to support the complementarity hypotheses.

III. Personality Match and Length of Relationship

A series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses was performed, as outlined by Price and Vandenberg (1980), to test the hypotheses that personality similarity--complementarity varies as a function of length of relationship. The statistical significance of the interaction term between length of relationship and one partner's score to predict the other partner's score provides a test of whether there is a difference in the

degree of similarity as a function of time. A positive beta weight reflects convergence, the tendency for couples who have been together longer to be more similar, whereas a negative beta weight indicates divergence, a tendency for greater dissimilarity among couples who have been together longer.

For the purposes of these analyses length of time since the couple started dating was used as the measure of length of relationship. Buss (1984a) found that length of relationship was a better predictor of couple personality convergence and divergence than length of marriage and some of the partners in the present study were not married. In addition it was felt that a romantic love relationship begins when a couple starts dating and that it is from this point, rather than when they start living together or get married that the developmental process unfolds.

Actual (M[m]/F[f] comparisons).

A series of ten hierarchical multiple regression analyses was performed to test for differences in the degree of "actual" partner similarity as a function of length of relationship. In each analysis the female's self-rating on a personality dimension was the dependent variable. Length of relationship was entered as the first step, the male's self-rating on the same dimension was entered as the second step and the interaction term entered

as the third step. As indicated in Table 18, none of the interaction terms proved to be significant at the .05 level, suggesting that there were no significant differences in the degree of similarity or dissimilarity between partners as a function of length of relationship.

Perceived.

a) Males (M[m]/F[m] comparison)

Similar results were obtained when the dependent variable was the male's ratings of the female and the male's self-score was entered as the second step in the regression analysis. As shown in Table 19, although the beta weights for the interaction terms for Aggression and Nurturance were significant at the .05 probability level, the overall equations were not significant.

b) Females (F[f]/M[f] comparison)

No significant results were obtained for the interaction between length of relationship and females' self-ratings to predict females' ratings of their partners on the ten personality dimensions (see Table 20).

These analyses offer no support for the hypotheses that either "actual" or "perceived" personality similarity or complementarity differ as a function of length of relationship.

Table 18

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses to Test for Differences in "Actual" Partner Similarity as a Function of Length of Relationship (Since Dating) (M[m]/F[f] Comparisons)

Female's Variable F[f]	Hierarchical Step	Beta	Significance of Beta
Abasement	Length Since Dating Male's Abasement M[m] Interaction	.36	n.s.
Aggression	Length Since Dating Male's Aggression Interaction	-.15	n.s.
Autonomy	Length Since Dating Male's Autonomy Interaction	-.54	n.s.
Defendence	Length Since Dating Male's Defendence Interaction	.06	n.s.
Dominance	Length Since Dating Male's Dominance Interaction	.51	n.s.
Impulsivity	Length Since Dating Male's Impulsivity Interaction	.20	n.s.
Nurturance	Length Since Dating Male's Nurturance Interaction	.46	n.s.
Order	Length Since Dating Male's Order Interaction	.19	n.s.
Succorance	Length Since Dating Male's Succorance Interaction	.48	n.s.
Desirability	Length Since Dating Male's Desirability Interaction	.55	n.s.

Note. None of the equations were significant.

Table 19

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses to Test for Differences in "Perceived"

Partner Similarity as a Function of Length of Relationship (Since Dating) (M[m]/F[m]

Comparisons)

Female's Variable F[m]	Hierarchical Step	Beta	Significance of Beta
Abasement	Length Since Dating Male's Abasement M[m] Interaction	.18	n s.
Aggression	Length Since Dating Male's Aggression Interaction	.87	.05
Autonomy	Length Since Dating Male's Autonomy Interaction	-.49	n.s.
Defendence	Length Since Dating Male's Defendence Interaction	-.38	n.s.
Dominance	Length Since Dating Male's Dominance Interaction	-.55	n s.
Impulsivity	Length Since Dating Male's Impulsivity Interaction	.07	n.s.
Nurturance	Length Since Dating Male's Nurturance Interaction	1.02	.04
Order	Length Since Dating Male's Order Interaction	.08	n.s.
Succorance	Length Since Dating Male's Succorance Interaction	-.12	n s.
Desirability	Length Since Dating Male's Desirability Interaction	.82	n.s.

Note. None of the equations were significant.

Table 20

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses to Test for Differences in "Perceived"

Partner Similarity as a Function of Length of Relationship (Since Dating) (F[f]/M[f]

Comparisons)

Male's Variable M[f]	Hierarchical Step	Beta	Significance of Beta
Abasement	Length Since Dating Female's Abasement M[f] Interaction	.51	n.s.
Aggression	Length Since Dating Female's Aggression Interaction	-.03	n.s.
Autonomy	Length Since Dating Female's Autonomy Interaction	.02	n.s.
Defendence	Length Since Dating Female's Defendence Interaction	-.09	n.s.
Dominance	Length Since Dating Female's Dominance Interaction	.22	n.s.
Impulsivity	Length Since Dating Female's Impulsivity Interaction	-.07	n.s.
Nurturance	Length Since Dating Female's Nurturance Interaction	.11	n.s.
Order	Length Since Dating Female's Order Interaction	.31	n.s.
Succorance	Length Since Dating Female's Succorance Interaction	-.00	n.s.
Desirability	Length Since Dating Female's Desirability Interaction	.26	n.s.

Note. None of the equations were significant.

Discussion

Personality Similarity-Complementarity in Couple
Relationships

The first issue to be addressed concerned whether
partners in intimate relationships are, or perceive
themselves to be, similar or complementary to each other on
the personality dimensions of Abasement, Aggression,
Dominance, Nurturance, Succorance, Autonomy, Defendence,
Impulsivity and Order. These were chosen to reflect the
major dynamics of couple interactions listed by Goldberg
(1982) as power, nurture, intimacy, trust and personal
styles. A social desirability subscale was also included.

Similarity

Support was found for the hypothesis that partners in
intimate relationships resemble each other in their
personality traits on only two dimensions - Autonomy and
Desirability. Trends towards actual similarity between
partners on these dimensions were observed among the whole
sample and these findings reached significance among the
subsample where both partners scored outside the middle
range. Thus it would appear that the partners in the present
sample, especially those who were less moderate on these
traits, were actually similar to each other on a personality
dimension associated with the expression of intimacy, as

predicted by Goldberg (1982), and in the degree to which they presented themselves in a favorable manner.

Regarding the hypothesis that people would perceive their partners as similar to themselves, little support was found. It was only on the Desirability subscale that significant perceived similarity was observed; men presented themselves and their partners in a similarly favorable manner and there was a trend also for women. These results were consistent for correlations involving the whole sample and the chi-square analyses involving the subsample of couples outside the middle range. There were also trends for men to see themselves and their partners as similar on Autonomy (whole sample and subsample), Abasement and Nurturance (subsample only) and for women to see their partners as similar on Defendence (whole sample only). It would appear that the men tended to see their partners as somewhat more similar to themselves than did the women.

The results of the correlational analyses were generally consistent with the work of many previous researchers, who have found low positive correlations between partners on most dimensions (e.g. Jensen, 1978; Buss, 1985). Many of the previous studies which have reported a greater number of significant correlations between partners have included a wider range of dimensions and have not corrected the alpha level to take into account

the number of correlations computed (e.g. Barton & Cattell, 1972; Bentler & Newcomb, 1978; Buss, 1984a, 1984b; Guttman & Zohar, 1987; Meyer & Pepper, 1977). None of the researchers cited in the previous sections have reported on the similarity between partners on a social desirability scale. Further comments on the possible implications of these findings will be presented later.

Thus the most consistent results reflect actual and perceived similarity between partners on the dimensions of Autonomy and Desirability. The degree to which people need closeness and distance, togetherness and separateness appears to be an important aspect of the fit between partners, as does the extent to which they view and/or present themselves in a favorable manner.

Complementarity

Despite the use of more appropriate statistical procedures than have been employed previously, no evidence was found which would offer support for the complementarity hypotheses. There was no evidence that one partner compensates for a lack in the other partner in any of the areas of personality included in the present study, nor that partners are matched in such a way as to provide maximum need gratification by being complementary on dimensions related to power and nurture. Nor was there any evidence that partners are complementary on theoretically related traits reflecting power, nurturance and personal styles.

However, from the current analyses it could be observed that on each dimension there was a small group of couples who were dissimilar (i.e. one partner scored in the upper quartile and the other in the lower quartile). There was also a number of couples on each dimension where one partner perceived the other as dissimilar. By the very liberal criterion used in the present study, between 8 and 18 percent of the couples were actually complementary or dissimilar on each personality dimension, and between 9 and 28 percent perceived themselves as such. On none of the dimensions did the frequency of such dissimilar couples significantly exceed the frequency of similar couples where both partners scored outside the middle range and there was no evidence that dissimilarity on these dimensions was an important aspect of the match between these partners.

It would appear from the present data that both actual and perceived complementarity or extreme dissimilarity is a phenomenon limited to a few couples on each dimension.

<u>Personality Similarity-Complementarity and</u>

<u>Relationship Satisfaction</u>

No substantial support was found for the predictions that relationship satisfaction would be associated with the degree of similarity-complementarity between partners from analyses which included the whole sample. It was not possible to predict the level of relationship

dissatisfaction from either the actual or the perceived differences between partners on any of the personality dimensions when the association between Desirability and relationship satisfaction had been removed. Thus there was also no evidence, based on analyses which included the whole sample, to support the prediction that relationship satisfaction would be more highly associated with the perceived fit than with the actual fit between partners.

A similar picture emerged from analyses involving the subsample of couples where both partners scored outside the middle range. No differences in relationship satisfaction were found between similar and dissimilar couples which were significant at the Bonferroni corrected alpha level. However, consistent with predictions based on the similarity hypothesis and contrary to predictions based on the complementarity hypothesis, there was a trend suggesting that couples who were more similar or perceived themselves as more similar, primarily on dimensions related to the power dynamic, were more satisfied with their relationships. Higher levels of male satisfaction were associated with actual similarity on Dominance and perceived similarity on Defendence. Female satisfaction was associated with actual and perceived similarity on Abasement. It may be that some aspects of the power dynamic between couples have differential salience for males and females and that the fit

between them on these dimensions relates differently to their relationship satisfaction.

Several of the researchers whose work was mentioned in the review of the research literature, who have reported a stronger association between similarity and relationship satisfaction, used measures of relationship satisfaction which overlapped with the concept of similarity or whose psychometric properties were not adequately demonstrated (e.g. Antill, 1983; Blazer, 1963; Caspi & Herbener, 1990; Murstein, 1961; Meyer & Pepper, 1977; Murstein & Beck, 1972). Previous researchers have frequently performed large numbers of correlations without correcting the probability level (Bentler & Newcomb, 1978; Buss, 1984a, 1984b; Cattell & Nesselroade, 1967; Meyer & Pepper, 1977). The only researchers who reported taking into account the effect of social desirability were Murstein and Beck (1972) who covaried out the effect of marital conventionalization and found this had little effect on the relationship between marital satisfaction and couple similarity. All of these factors may contribute to the less substantial associations between similarity and relationship satisfaction in the present results. These issues will be addressed further later in this section.

Couple Similarity-Complementarity and Length of Relationship

There was no support from the present data for the

hypotheses that the degree of actual and perceived similarity-complementarity differed as a function of length of relationship. None of the hierarchical multiple regression analyses predicting one partner's score from the interaction between the other partner's score and length of relationship was significant. Only two of the interaction terms were significant but the overall equations did not account for a significant proportion of the variance.

In the present study the age range of subjects was limited to a ten year span to reduce the confounding of age with length of relationship, so that the possible effects of relationship developmental factors could be more clearly differentiated from the effects of individual age related developmental factors. There was no evidence, based on the present analyses, for a developmental process in relationships which relates to the degree of actual or perceived personality similarity-complementarity between partners. This issue will be addressed further below.

Major Differences from Previous Research

The present study differed from previous research in several important ways. These differences will be highlighted and some possible implications of these methodological changes, based on the present research findings, will be presented.

1. "Actual" and "Perceived" Personality Fit

Little evidence was found in the present research to suggest that there were important differences between the actual personality similarity-complementarity fit and partners' perceptions of the fit, although there were some minor differences. Men, especially in the subgroup who scored outside the middle range, tended to perceive more similarity than was present or was perceived by women. Women appeared to perceive even less similarity between themselves and their partners than was actually present.

Again only minor differences were found when the association between actual versus perceived personality similarity-complementarity and relationship satisfaction was investigated. There was a trend for men's perceptions of similarity with their partners on Defendence (reflecting the degree to which people feel they have to defend themselves against harm and criticism) to be predictive of male satisfaction, which was not evident from the actual similarity comparisons. In analyses involving the subsample who scored outside the middle range on the personality dimensions, there were trends for women's satisfaction to be associated with both actual and perceived similarity on Abasement, whereas men's satisfaction tended to be associated with actual similarity on Dominance but perceived similarity on Defendence. None of these results was significant at the corrected alpha level.

There was no evidence, based on the hierarchical regression analyses with length of relationship entered as the first step, that either perceived or actual similarity or complementarity varied as a function of length of relationship. Thus no support was found for the models of relationship development described by Kovacs (1983), Gilfillan (1985) and Bader and Pearson (1988). In these models predicted changes in the perceptions of similarity-complementarity as a function of time follow a non-linear progression. Price and Vandenberg (1980) noted that although the association between similarity and length of relationship is essentially a non-linear concept it can be fitted to a linear model using the regression equation. Examination of scatterplots of residuals and of partner difference scores plotted by length of relationship revealed no evidence for a non-linear relationship.

If people do indeed go through a process of separation-individuation in their adult intimate relationships similar to that described by Gilfillan and Kovacs, it is possible that time frames differ from couple to couple, depending on a variety of factors including external circumstances and each partners' previous experiences with separation-individuation issues. Bader and Pearson (1988) suggested that many couples get stuck at different stages in the process and do not necessarily progress through the whole sequence of stages. Although no support for the models was

found in the present initial, exploratory analyses, much more intensive longitudinal studies would be needed to properly test such complex models.

A confounding factor when comparing actual and perceived similarity is the difference in error variance when two ratings come from one source versus two separate sources which Murstein and Beck (1972) suggested might contribute to an overestimation of perceived similarity. A failure to find differences between actual and perceived similarity between partners might result because there were no real differences and the differences in error variance were small. Alternatively identical scores for perceived and actual similarity might result from the actual similarity score reflecting small real differences with large error variance, and the perceived similarity score reflecting large real differences and small error variance. This could lead to an underestimation of the degree to which people perceive their partners as dissimilar.

In the present study the perception of similarity and complementarity was evaluated indirectly by measuring the discrepancy between subjects' self-ratings and ratings of the partner. Subjects were not directly told the purpose of the study and were prevented from comparing responses to self and partner rating versions. Some subjects may have accurately guessed the purpose while others may have made

wrong assumptions. The assumptions subjects make about the purpose of research creates demand characteristics which can differentially influence their responses. For example, subjects who assumed it was to evaluate accuracy in predicting partners' responses might slant their responses in favor of responding as they thought the partner would rather than as they themselves actually perceived the partner to be. This might result in invalid estimates of perceived similarity. Future researchers might reduce error variance due to different assumptions regarding the purpose of the study, by informing subjects of the purpose or by having them directly rate the degree of difference between self and partner on personality items.

2. Choice of Relationship Satisfaction Measure

In the present study an extensive, well validated, multidimensional measure of relationship satisfaction was used which did not overlap with the concept of similarity. Little significant association was found between relationship satisfaction and partner similarity- complementarity. In the sample as a whole no such association was evident and in the subsample of couples who scored outside the middle range there were only trends for partners who were more similar on dimensions related to the power dynamic to be less dissatisfied. Previous studies (e.g. Blazer, 1963; Caspi & Hebener, 1990; Meyer & Pepper, 1977; Murstein & Beck, 1972) found stronger associations

between similarity and relationship satisfaction.

The lack of significant support for previous findings in the present study, may indicate that part of their observed results was due to the overlap between their measures. However, there was still some suggestion from the trends observed among the smaller subsample that for couples who score at less moderate levels on personality traits, similarity was more closely associated with satisfaction than was dissimilarity.

From the results of the present study it would appear important that future researchers carefully select measures of relationship satisfaction which do not reflect an inherent assumption that similarity and agreement are aspects of a satisfying relationship when these are the hypotheses being tested.

3. Controlling for Age in Length of Relationship

In the present study the age range was limited to a 10 year span to reduce the potential confounding of age and length of relationship. The correlations between age and length of relationship (since started dating) in the present sample were .42 ($p<.000$) for males and .35 ($p<.001$) for females, considerably lower than in previous research. For example, Price and Vandenberg (1980) reported correlations between age and years of marriage of .82 for husbands and .87 for wives. No evidence was found in the present

research that couples in their thirties who had been together for shorter periods were or perceived themselves to be either more or less similar or complementary than couples who had been together longer.

The construction of theoretical models of adult developmental processes (e.g. Gould, 1978; Levinson, 1978; Lowenthal et al., 1977; Sheehy, 1977; Vaillant, 1977) and of relationship development (e.g. Gilfillan, 1985; Kovacs, 1983; Tamashiro, 1978; Wynne, 1984) is a relatively recent endeavour and research designed to evaluate these models is still very limited. However, it would appear important that for theorists and researchers to validate such models, distinctions must be made between age and length of relationship so that processes attributable to individual development can be differentiated from processes attributable to stages of relationship development and potential interactions between these explored.

In order to make these kinds of distinctions future researchers would ideally need to select subjects within different age groups who were entering new relationships and follow them longitudinally. Alternatively, researchers could select subjects from several different age groups who had been in relationships for different lengths of time.

4. Choice of Statistical Procedures

In the present study statistical procedures were employed which were more appropriate for testing the theory

of complementarity than have generally been used previously. It was noted that this concept theoretically applies only to couples where both partners have a lack or deficit in certain areas of their personalities (e.g. Dicks, 1967; Hendrix, 1990; Reik, 1957; Willi, 1984; Winch, 1955). These theoretical considerations were taken into account in conducting analyses which only included those couples where both partners scored outside of the middle range on each personality scale. As these analyses were exploratory, a very liberal definition of a complementary relationship was used so as to have sufficient numbers of complementary couples to be able to conduct meaningful analyses. No statistical support was found for the theory of complementarity.

It is possible that other operational definitions of complementarity might yield different results. A more rigid definition, such as both partners scoring at least one or even two standard deviations from the mean on a personality dimension, might be used to explore whether the concept of complementarity should be limited to only the most extreme cases. Very large sample sizes would be needed to conduct such research. Alternatively, more liberal definitions of complementarity might be used to more evenly distribute couples between groups of very similar, moderately similar, moderately different and very different partners. However,

the more liberal the definition the greater the risk of losing the essential flavor of complementarity as a dynamic interaction between two partners, both of whom need the other to express those traits and roles which are unavailable to them within their own personality structure. Future researchers might use different definitions of complementarity to explore whether the degree of extremity of one or both partners' personality traits interacts with the degree of similarity between partners on those traits. Again large samples would be needed to provide adequate numbers in the groups to be able to draw conclusions relevant to the concept of complementarity.

The present study does offer some evidence that dissimilar and/or complementary couples do exist, a fact which was not evident from the correlational analyses. There was a number of couples on each dimension who were dissimilar by the quartiles criterion applied although there was no indication that the fit between them on these dimensions was related to their mate selection. On none of the dimensions included were there significantly more of these couples than there were couples who were similar where both scored outside the middle range. The dissimilar couples did not differ significantly from the couples who were or perceived themselves as similar in their relationship satisfaction. However, there were trends for the couples who were or perceived themselves as dissimilar

on dimensions related to the power dynamic to be more dissatisfied. This might suggest that dissimilarity in this area, rather than providing a compatible fit as suggested by Goldberg (1982), may contribute to frustration and discontent, as has been suggested by others (e.g. Willi, 1984).

It is important for researchers who wish to investigate complementarity to use statistical procedures which can identify those couples who are dissimilar and the dimensions on which such dissimilarity is present. It is neither theoretically nor statistically meaningful to assume that most couples will be complementary on any particular dimension or that some couples will be complementary on most dimensions.

It might also be important for future researchers to offer an incentive which might entice dissimilar couples to participate. Reasons given by a few of the subjects who refused to participate in the present study were the difficulty for both of them be available at the same time, or the lack of interest of one or the other partner. It is not possible to evaluate the extent to which highly dissimilar couples might be more likely to refuse to participate in such research but if there are differences in participation rates related to the degree dissimilarity between partners, it might be that dissimilar partners are

underrepresented. Researchers might give some thought to how to motivate these couples to participate.

5. Inclusion of a Desirability Subscale

A Desirability subscale was included in the present study as a response bias check. It was interesting to find that this was the scale on which some of the most significant results were achieved.

The present sample distribution was negatively skewed on three of the four Desirability scales (M[m], M[f] and F[m]), suggesting that the men generally reported themselves as high on Desirability and both men and women reported their partners as high on Desirability. This may have been due to sampling bias: subjects who wish to present a good impression of themselves and their relationship might be more likely to be nominated for, volunteer for or agree to participate in couples research. It may also have been an artifact of the procedure of having a researcher enter their homes and interact on a one-to-one personal basis with the couples. Such personal contact, however brief, may motivate people to try to create a positive impression of themselves and their partners. Several of the subjects made comments which indicated that they had tidied their house prior to the researcher's visit, suggesting that the impression which they created on the researcher was important to them.

Of all the dimensions of the PRF, the Desirability subscale scores generally achieved the highest correlations

with relationship satisfaction. Men's relationship dissatisfaction scores correlated -.44 (p<.000) with self-ratings and -.52 (p<.000) with their ratings of their partners on Desirability. Women's relationship dissatisfaction scores correlated -.43 (p<.000) with their self-ratings and -.48 (p<.000) with their partner ratings. Although the hierarchical regression analyses predicting relationship satisfaction from couple difference scores were not significant, the first step equations, where the average couple Desirability scores were entered as the independent variable, were all highly significant.

The general tendencies for the subjects in the present sample to present themselves in a positive manner and for those who presented themselves in a positive manner to also report themselves as high in relationship satisfaction, do not account for the interesting findings that couples were significantly similar and perceived their partners as significantly similar to themselves on this dimension. This was the strongest, most consistent finding across different types of analyses involving the whole sample and the subsample of couples outside the middle range.

Jackson (1984) described the Desirability scale as a validity scale and noted that the average subject tends to respond in a desirable manner. However, he also noted that the tendency to respond desirably might also reflect

important personality characteristics. High scores may indicate a conscious or unconsious focus on the Desirability aspect of items, deliberate distortion or impression management, a high degree of conventional socialization, and/or atypically high self-regard, while low scores may indicate malingering or very low self-regard.

This description suggests that the Desirability scale may include aspects of self-esteem. Positively scored items reflect the individual's perceptions of him/herself as able to function well and make good decisions, as having an interesting life, as having a positive view of his or her childhood and as living by high moral standards. Negatively valenced items reflect feelings of uneasiness and lack of purpose, difficulties concentrating and doing things well, a sense of the self as bad, and a dislike of many of one's daily activities.

It might be that similarity between partners in their level of self-esteem is an important aspect of couple relationships that is significantly associated with their level of satisfaction. Partners in satisfying relationships might both be expected to experience higher levels of self-esteem and people who feel good about themselves might have more satisfying interpersonal relationships than people with low self-esteem.

The notion that people are attracted to and more satisfied in relationships with others who place similar

value on themselves is consistent with an equity model of relationships (Walster, Walster and Berscheid, 1978). Willi (1984) noted that equality between partners in the area of self-esteem is intuitively observed in mate selection. Self-esteem may be an important mediating variable in personality similarity between partners which has been largely neglected in previous research.

Reik (1957) suggested that people fall in love when they are dissatisfied with themselves and meet someone who possesses the traits they lack but wish they had. Mathes and Moore (1985) found some support for this. Subjects who scored low on a measure of self-esteem were more likely than high self-esteem subjects to respond that they would fall in love with supposed opposite sex classmates who possessed traits they valued but lacked, whereas high self-esteem subjects were more likely to be attracted to someone who posssessed similar traits to themselves.

It would appear, based on the present findings, that it is important for researchers in this area to include a measure of social desirability. More direct measures of self-esteem should also be included in future studies so that the effect of individual levels of self-esteem and the degree of similarity between partners can be directly evaluated.

Overall Suggestions for Future Research

Future researchers interested in furthering our understanding of the personality similarity-complementarity fit between partners in adult intimate relationships should respond to two types of deficits in this area of research. First, there is a need for studies with large numbers of subjects so that appropriately rigorous criteria can be applied in defining the concept of complementarity whilst including enough subjects who meet these criteria to allow for the meaningful use of powerful statistical analyses. Second, there is a need for studies which involve smaller numbers of couples who can be studied in much greater depth using multiple methods of data collection such as interviews, questionnaires and possibly peer ratings. Such an approach might allow researchers to identify with much greater specificity whether there are particular areas where the actual or perceived fit is salient to couples in their choice of mate and in later relationships satisfaction. This would provide a more qualitative means of evaluating couple relationship which could guide and supplement the more quantitative approach of large scale studies. In both of these approaches there is a need for longitudinal research in order to understand couple relationships from a developmental perspective. These approaches are costly and time consuming but are necessary at this point to further

our knowledge of adult intimate relationships.

Another aspect of this issue which needs to be addressed in future research is the development of ways of quantifying the fit between partners across many aspects of their personalities. Tversky (1977) proposed that objects are represented as collections of features and judgments of similarity can be described as feature-matching processes. He proposed a contrast model whereby the similarity between objects is expressed as a linear combination of the measures of their common and distinctive features. Within such a model features which differ in salience could be weighted according to their intensity and diagnostic value.

Theoretical models of similarity such as the one proposed by Tversky might be productively applied to couple relationships so that a composite picture of both the similarities and differences between partners which are differentially weighted according to their salience might be formed. This composite measure could then be compared to other aspects of their relationship such as couple satisfaction. This might offer a productive alternative to investigating the fit between partners on each dimension separately and treating each comparison as if it represented the entirity of the relationship between the couples for the purposes of each separate analysis. Systems of weighting features would need to be developed which reflected the salience of specific dimensions to each individual couple.

Concluding Remarks

All human relationships are tremendously complex and perhaps adult love relationships are among the most complex. To attempt to capture the complexity and diversity of human mate selection and relationship satisfaction within a few statistical analyses is perhaps a somewhat overwhelming endeavour. However, it appears to be an inherent aspect of human nature to struggle towards an understanding of our world; to try to make sense of our physical and social environment.

There are many factors which play a role in the selection of an intimate partner and which contribute to ongoing relationship satisfaction on a day-to-day basis and over the course of a lifetime. There are many events and factors both external to and internal to the relationship which contribute to or detract from a person's attraction to and sense of satisfaction with a partner. These factors may be individual, relational or social and may impact on relationships in a diversity of ways.

Given this complexity in human relationships, it is important that researchers in this area not expect any one aspect to account for a large amount of the variance in the dependent variable under investigation. Any significant result achieved through a careful and systematic search is a

valuable piece in a large and complex puzzle. A great diversity of research investigating many aspects of couple relationships is needed to build a meaningful picture. The current research has investigated one small piece - the similarity-complementarity fit between certain aspects of partners' personalities thought to be involved in the dynamics of couple interactions. Some significant results were found, methodological improvements were introduced which challenged the findings of previous research and new lines have been suggested for future research.

The value of continuing research in this area is inestimable; adult intimate relationships warrant much research attention. Intimate relationships are central to the lives of human beings and fundamental to the structure of society. The failure of such relationships has a profound effect not only on the two individuals directly involved but frequently also on others, including children. These effects can be far-reaching. The success of such relationships can improve the whole fabric of society by providing a safe, well-functioning environment within the context of which the partners can develop to their fullest potential and in which future generations can grow and learn.

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Appendix A

Personal Information Sheet

Sex: M   F   I.D. No.: _____
(Circle one)

PERSONAL INFORMATION SHEET

Please answer the following questions to provide background information
necessary for the interpretation of the results. Please remember that
your responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and at
no time will your name be associated with your responses.

Age: _____   Date of birth: ____/____/_____

Ethnic origin:
    Canadian born: francophone ____   anglophone _____
       other (specify - e.g. Italian, Greek) _____
    Foreign born - (specify nationality) _____

How would you classify the socioeconomic status of your family of
origin (i.e. the family you grew up in)? _____
1. = Lower;   2. = Lower-middle;   3. = Middle;   4. = Upper-middle;
5. = Upper.

What was your position in your family of origin (e.g. oldest, second
youngest, etc.)? _____
Number of siblings: _____
Gender and Ages of siblings: _____
_____

Would you describe your family of origin as emotionally:
1. Very close; 2. fairly close; 3. about average; 4. fairly distant;
5. very distant? _____

Would you describe your parents' marital relationship as:
1. extremely happy; 2. moderately happy; 3. about average;
4. moderately unhappy; 5. extremely unhappy? _____

Did your parents' divorce or separate? Yes ____   No ____
If yes, what age were you when they divorced or separated? _____

Religion of Family of Origin: _____
1. = Protestant;   2. = Catholic;   3. = Jewish;   4. = Other (specify),
5. = None.
How important was religion in your family of origin (circle one):
          1   2   3   4   5
    Not at all   Somewhat   Extremely
    important   important   important

Your current religion: _____
1. = Protestant;   2. = Catholic;   3. = Jewish;   4. = Other (specify),
5. = None.
How important is religion to you currently (cirle one):
          1   2   3   4   5
    Not at all   Somewhat   Extremely
    important   important   important

Years of education completed: (check highest level completed)
_____ Elementary school (less than 7th grade)
_____ Junior high school (9th grade, Secondary II)
_____ High school (whether private preparatory, parochial,
        trade or public school)
_____ Partial college (at least one year) or specialized training
        (e.g. CEGEP)
_____ Undergraduate university graduation (e.g. B.A.)
_____ Graduate professional training (graduate degree)

Current occupation(s) (include homemaker and work outside the
home if applicable, placing your primary occupation first):
1. _____
Full-time ____   Part-time (approx. hours per week) _____
2. _____
Full-time ____   Part-time (approx. hours per week) _____
If full-time homemaker what was your previous occupation? _____

Relationship history:
How long have you known your present partner: _____
When did you start dating your present partner: _____
When did you start living with your present partner: _____
Date of marriage (if married): _____

Have you been married previously? Yes___   No___
If "Yes", please answer the following questions:
     Are you: Separated _____, Divorced _____, Widowed _____ ?
     How long were you married? _____
     How long ago were you separated, divorced or widowed? _____

Do you or your partner have any children? Yes ___   No ___
If "Yes", please complete the following section.
Children:

Mine (M) Partner's (P) Ours (O)	Age	Gender (M or F)	Living with you (yes/no)	Living elsewhere (yes/no)
1. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Others: _____
_____

Appendix B

Jackson Personality Research Form Subscale Descriptions
and Sample Items

Appendix B

Personality Research Form Subscale Descriptions and Sample Items (Jackson, 1984, pp. 6-7)

Scale: Abasement

Description of High Scorer: Shows a high degree of humility; accepts blame and criticism even when not deserved; willing to accept an inferior position; tends to be self-effacing.

[1]Sample items: i) I like to be the first to apologize after an argument. (T)

ii) I would never call attention to any of my weaknesses. (F)

Scale: Aggression

Description of High Scorer: Enjoys combat and argument; easily annoyed; sometimes willing to hurt people to get own way; may seek to "get even" with people perceived as causing harm.

Sample Items: i) I go out of my way to prevent anyone from getting the best of me. (T)

ii) When I bump into a piece of furniture, I don't usually get angry. (F)

Scale: Autonomy

Description of High Scorer: Tries to break away from restraints, confinement, or restrictions of any kind; enjoys being unattached, free, not tied to people, places or obligations; may be rebellious when faced with restraints.

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Sample items: i) I delight in feeling unattached. (T)

ii) Family obligations make me feel important. (F)

Scale: Defendence

Description of High Scorer: Ready to defend self against real or imagined harm from other people; takes offense easily; does not accept criticism readily.

Sample items: i) I would get into a long discussion rather than admit I was wrong. (T)

ii) I don't get angry when people laugh at my errors. (F)

Scale: Dominance

Description of High Scorer: Attempts to control environment, and to influence or direct other people; expresses opinions forcefully; enjoys the role of leader and may assume it spontaneously.

Sample items: i) I feel confident when directing the activities of others. (T)

ii) I avoid positions of power over people. (F)

Scale: Impulsivity

Description of High Scorer: Tends to act on the "spur of the moment" and without deliberation; gives vent readily to feelings and wishes; speaks freely; may be volatile in emotional expression.

Sample items: i) Often I stop in the middle of one activity in order to start something else. (T)

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ii) I am careful to consider all sides of an issue before taking action. (F)

Scale: <u>Nurturance</u>

Description of High Scorer: Gives sympathy and comfort; assists others whenever possible, interested in caring for children, the disabled, or the infirm; offers a "helping hand" to those in need; readily performs favors for others.

Sample items: i) I would rather have a job serving people than a job making something. (T)

ii) I feel no great concern for the troubles of other people. (F)

Scale: <u>Order</u>

Description of High Scorer: Concerned with keeping personal effects and surroundings neat and organized; dislikes clutter, confusion, lack of organization; interested in developing methods for keeping materials methodically organized.

Sample items: i) A place for everything and everything in its place is the way I like to live. (T)

ii) I am often disorganized. (F)

Scale: <u>Succorance</u>

Description of High Scorer: Frequently seeks the sympathy, protection, love, advice and reassurance of other people; may feel insecure or helpless without such support; confides

Appendix B

difficulties readily to a receptive person.

Sample items: i) I often seek other people's advice. (T)

ii) I prefer to face my problems by myself. (F)

Scale: Desirability

Description of High Scorer: Describes self in terms judged as desirable; consciously or unconsciously, accurately or inaccurately, presents favorable picture of self in responses to personality statements.

Sample items: i) I am quite able to make correct decisions on difficult questons. (T)

ii) I am never able to do things as well as I should. (F)

Note: Direction of scoring is indicated in parentheses.

(T) = True, (F) = False

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Appendix C

<u>Directions</u> <u>for</u> <u>Completing</u> <u>Jackson</u> <u>Personality</u> <u>Research</u>
<u>Form</u> <u>for</u> <u>Self-rating</u> <u>Version</u> <u>and</u> <u>Partner-rating</u> <u>Version</u>

SECTION I.

DIRECTIONS

Attached is a **Statement Booklet** containing a series of statements that a person might use to describe him or herself

Please read each statement and decide whether or not it describes you. Then indicate your answer on the separate **Answer Sheet** marked Section I. If you agree with a statement or decide that it does in general describe you, answer TRUE. If you disagree with a statement or feel that it is not generally descriptive of you, answer FALSE. Please answer as truthfully as possible as you see yourself to be rather than as you would like to be

Please **respond to every statement** and record your responses on the answer sheet. In marking your answers on the answer sheet, be sure that the number of the statement you have just read is the same as the number on the answer sheet. **Do not omit** any item even if you are not completely sure of your answer.

Do not spend too much time on any one question. Give each question a moment's thought and then answer it.

Please do not mark the **Statement Booklet**.

SECTION III.

DIRECTIONS

Attached is a **Statement Booklet** containing a series of statements that a person might use to describe him or herself.

Please read each statement and decide whether or not it describes **your partner**. Then indicate your answer on the separate **Answer Sheet** marked Section III. If you decide that the statement describes your partner or his/her attitudes, answer TRUE. If you feel that the statement is not descriptive of your partner or does not express his/her attitudes, answer FALSE. Please answer as truthfully as possible **as you see your partner to be**, not necessarily as you think s/he would answer the question or as you would like him/her to be.

Please **respond to every statement** and record your responses on the answer sheet. In marking your answers on the answer sheet, be sure that the number of the statement you have just read is the same as the number on the answer sheet. **Do not omit** any item even if you are not completely sure of your answer.

Do not spend too much time on any one question. Give each question a moment's thought and then answer it.

Please do not mark the **Statement Booklet**.

Appendix D

<u>Descriptions</u> <u>of</u> <u>Marital</u> <u>Satisfaction</u> <u>Inventory</u> <u>Subscales</u>

<u>and</u> <u>Sample</u> <u>Items</u>

Appendix D

Descriptions of Marital Satisfaction Inventory Subscales and Sample Items[1]

Scale: Global Distress

Description: "The Global Distress (GDS) scale contains items measuring individuals' overall dissatisfaction with the marriage. Item content reflects global marital discontent, chronic disharmony, desire for marital therapy, and thoughts about separation or divorce. GDS responses align along two dimensions: (1) general unhappiness with the marriage, and (2) uncertain commitment to the current relationship." (Snyder, 1989, pp. 1-2).

Sample items: i) At times I have very much wanted to leave my partner. (T)

ii) I am certain our decision to get married was the right one. (F)

Scale: Affective Communication

Description: "The Affective Communication (AFC) scale looks at individuals' dissatisfaction with the amount of affection and understanding expressed by their spouse. This scale focuses on the process of verbal and nonverbal communication rather than its content. It is the best single index of the affective quality of the couple's relationship. Items are grouped into three dimensions: (1) complaints of inadequate affection and caring from spouse, (2) lack of empathy and

Appendix D

understanding from spouse, and (3) failure of spouse to self-disclose." (Snyder, 1989, p. 2).

Sample items: i) I'm not sure my partner has ever really loved me. (T)

ii) My partner almost always responds with understanding to my mood at a given moment. (F)

Scale: <u>Problem-Solving Communication</u>

Description: "The Problem-Solving Communication (PSC) scale is comprised of items assessing the couple's general ineffectiveness in resolving differences. It measures overt disharmony, rather than underlying feelings of detachment or alienation. Item content falls along four dimensions: (1) minor disagreements become major arguments, (2) differences remain unresolved or are not discussed, (3) spouse is overly sensitive to criticism, and (4) spouse is overly critical or punitive." (Snyder, 1989, p. 2).

Sample items: i) There are some things my partner and I just can't talk about. (T)

ii) My partner has no difficulty accepting criticism. (F)

Appendix E

Number of Couples Recruited through Different Sources

Appendix E - <u>Number</u> <u>of</u> <u>Couples</u> <u>Recruited</u> <u>Through</u> <u>Different</u>
        <u>Sources</u>.

<u>Source</u>	Percent (N)
Individual contacts	35 (31)
Former subjects	34 (30)
Public notices	13 (12)
Other research projects	9 (8)
Nursery and elementary schools	6 (5)
Newsletter advertisements	3 (3)

Appendix F

Letter of Introduction to Potential Participants

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

Dear

Thank you for considering to participate in my doctoral research project on couple relationships. The couple relationship is one of the most central aspects in the lives of many adults, contributing to the way we feel about ourselves and about our lives in general. We all know that couple relationships tend to change over time in many ways as partners face new challenges at different points in their lives together. Given the significance of the couple relationship both to the partners and to society, it is extremely important to understand more about the changing nature of these relationships. Some of the questions that have been asked are "What are the specific ways in which relationships do change over the course of the years?", "Are there predictable stages that relationships go through?" and "if we understand more about relationship development, can this help couples to more successfully negotiate the changes that their relationships undergo?"

Several theories of relationship development have been proposed to answer these questions but as yet there is little systematic research to substantiate them. My research is directed at remedying part of this lack. I am interested in understanding how people who have been in their relationships for different lengths of time perceive themselves and their partners and how these perceptions relate to how they feel about their relationship. In order to do this I am asking 80 married or cohabiting couples between the ages of 31 and 39, who have been in their present relationship between 6 months and 20 years, to complete some questionnaires which address these issues. As it is a study on couples, it is essential that both partners agree to participate.

When asked to be part of a study on couple relationships people often have certain concerns and questions:

What would I have to do? - Complete some pencil and paper questionnaires regarding your perceptions of yourself, your partner and your relationship, which would take about two hours of your time. A researcher would come to your home at a time convenient to you and be present whilst you and your partner independently complete the questionnaires as it is essential that you not discuss your responses until you are finished.

Are you going to ask about our sexual relationship? - No Although this is an important aspect of couple relationships it is not the focus of this study.

Appendix G

Letter to Participants, Request Form for Participation in
$100 Draw and for Summary of Results, and Request Form for
Names of Other Couples

Appendix G

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM BY MAIN IN THE ATTACHED ENVELOPE

If you would like to participate in the draw for a prize of $100, and/or would like to receive a summary of the research results, please write your name, address and telephone number on this form and return it to the researcher by mail. It will thus not be associated with your answer sheets at any time and will be destroyed after the final mailing.

_____ I would like to be eligible for the $100 prize.

_____ I wold like to receive a summary of the res᠆arch results.

I am therefore providing my name and address so that I can be contacted for these purposes only:

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Postal code: _____

Telephone no.: _____

Appendix G

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM SEPARATELY FROM YOUR ANSWER SHEETS

I am looking for other couples to participate in my research project. They should be between 30 and 40 years of age and have been involved in their present relationship between 6 months and 20 years. If you know of other married or cohabiting couples (friends, neighbours, co-workers, etc.) who may meet these criteria, who might possibly be willing to give me a couple of hours of their time, I would very much appreciate it if you would provide their names and telephone numbers in the space below. I will contact them, explain the study and ask them if they are interested in participating. No pressure will be put on them to do so.

To ensure that all participants complete the questionnaires under equivalent conditions, I ask that you not discuss the specifics of the questionnaires with any one whose name you have provided, beyond the information that was given to you in the letter of introduction to participants. I thank yo very much for your cooperation.

Name:_____   Name:_____

Phone:_____   Phone:_____

Name:_____   Name:_____

Phone:_____   Phone:_____

Your Name:_____

Appendix H

Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI) Subscale Intercorrelations

	1.	2.	3.
1. Global Distress (GDS)	-	.75***	.69***
2. Affective Communication (AFC)	.69***	-	.72***
3. Problem Solving Communication (PSC)	.76***	.76***	-

Note. df = 87. The intercorrelation matrix for females appears below the major diagonal and for males above the diagonal.

*** $p \leq .001$.

Appendix I

Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI) Intercorrelations Between
Partner on Subscales (GDS, AFC, PSC)

Global Distress (GDS)   .67***

Affective Communication (AFC)   .42***

Problem Solving Communication (PSC)   .62***

Note. df = 87.

*** p ≤ .001.

Appendix J

Summary of Preliminary Analyses

Appendix J - Summary of Preliminary Analyses

Each variable was checked for univariate outliers and for significant skewness. Scores further than three standard deviations from the mean were considered outliers. One outlier was found on each of the following dimensions: M[m] Dominance (low), Impulsivity (high), Nurturance (low); M[f] Desirability (low); F[m] Abasement (high), Autonomy (high). No two outlier scores were from the same couple and no transformations were made.

Among the personality measures significant positive skewness was observed on Impulsivity (M[m], M[f], F[f] and F[m]), and significant negative skewness on Nurturance (M[m]) and Desirability (M[m], M[f] and F[m]). This indicated that the sample generally reported themselves and their partners as low on impulsivity, that men tended to see themselves and both men and women to see their partners as relatively high on Desirability and the men reported themselves as high on Nurturance. The extent of the skewness ranged up to 4.24 (F[f] Impulsivity). As this was only moderately severe and only present on a total of three of the ten dimensions (on a total of 8 of the 40 scales), it was decided that no transformations would be made.

On the relationship satisfaction measures significant positive skewness was observed on males' ratings of Global Distress and Affective Communication and on both males' and

Appendix J

females' composite Total Dissatisfaction scores. The reflected a generally high level of satisfaction among couples with their relationships. As the skewness on the composite measures was again only moderately severe (4.25, $p < .001$ for males, and 3.92, $p < .001$ for females) and there were no outliers on these variables, no transformations were made.

Evaluation of the assumptions for hierarchical regression revealed that these were adequately met so that no transformations were necessary. No multivariate outliers were detected by means of the Mahalanobis distance. Examination of the residuals scatterplots indicated adequate normality, linearity and homoscedasticity between the predicted relationship dissatisfaction scores and errors of prediction.

Appendix K

T-Tests of Differences Between Self- and Partner- Ratings to Test for Effects Due to Order of Presentation of Self- and Partner- Rating Scales of Personality Research Form (PRF)

Variables	M[m]/F[m]	F[f]/M[f]
Abasement	-2.08[t]	1.09
Aggression	-.08	.07
Autonomy	1.91	-.48
Defendence	.23	-2.28[t]
Dominance	.23	-1.78
Impulsivity	-.31	-.96
Nurturance	-2.23[t]	.41
Order	-1.32	.36
Succorance	-.47	11
Desirability	1.03	.74

Note. df = 85.

[t].005 ≤ p ≤ .05 (Uncorrected).

Appendix L

<u>Correlations Between Partners on Demographic and Personal</u>
<u>Background Variables</u>

Variable	r
Age	.60 ***
Family of Origin	
Number of Children	.06
Emotional Closeness	-.13
Current Importance of Religion	.54 ***

<u>Note.</u> <u>df</u> = 87.

*** $p \leq .000$

Appendix M

Chi-Square Analyses of Similarity/Difference Between Partners on Demographic and Personal Background Variables

Variable	χ^2	
Family of Origin		
SES	5.94	*
Ethnicity	.28	
Religion	1.36	
Parental Divorce	12.24	***
Current Religion	5.94	*
Occupational Level	26.98	***
Previously Married	39.11	***

Note. df = 1.

* p ≤ .05

*** p ≤ .000