Social Attraction

Predictors of Liking Others

• Similarity
• Familiarity
• Proximity
• Reciprocity
• Physical Attractiveness

Similarity-______________ hypothesis
• Byrne (1971) argued that “birds of a feather flock together”
• And the research shows he was right
• Although “opposites attract” is an appealing hypothesis, there is ______ evidence to support it

“Similarity breeds content”
• Newcombe (1961) put 17 male students together in a boarding house
• After 13 weeks, the ones who had formed the tightest friendships were also likely to be the most similar on __________ (e.g., they shared similar majors and political preferences)
• This classic finding has been replicated many times

“Phantom confederate” research
• Subjects in the lab fill out personality and attitude measures
• Later, they are told to “exchange” information with another person (phantom confederate)
• The phantom’s information is manipulated to be either similar or dissimilar to S’s
• S’s routinely express more liking for similar phantoms – in fact, the ______ similarity, the ______ the liking

Familiarity
• The more we get to know something, the more we come to like it
• Bob Zajonc (“Science”) discovered the ___________________ in the 1980’s
• S’s were exposed to novel stimuli (e.g., polygons, Turkish words, Chinese ideographs, male faces)
• The ______ exposure, the ______ the liking
• This is especially true when the exposure is ______________
Proximity
• It is no accident that we fall in love with people we meet at work or school
• The more chances you have to interact with someone, the more ________ they become (and the more opportunities for finding __________)

student housing study
• Festinger, Schachter, & Back (1950) observed friendships formed among students randomly assigned to live in dorms
• After six months, they found that people who lived on the ______ floor were more likely to be friends, compared with people who lived one floor apart
• Further, people who lived ________ were 3 times more likely to be friends, compared with people who lived down the hall from one another

Who is Right?
• Is it more true that
  • “Familiarity breeds contempt” and
  • “Absence makes the heart grow fonder”
• OR that
  • “Love depends on frequent meetings”
  • Leo Tolstoy

Physical attractiveness
• Attractive people are popular – even infants prefer gazing at them, and small children choose attractive peers as their desired friends
• Thus, we may be “hard-wired” to prefer beauty
• However, the infant research is confounded by the likely __________ of their mothers
• The researchers conducted their study in Palo Alto (upper SES); infants may have been responding to what was __________

Gender differences?
• Evolutionary theory predicts that men like women for their youth and attractiveness, whereas women like men for their ______
• This is because men ostensibly need to sow many seeds, whereas women need someone who will take care of the family
Personal ads
• If you look at personal ads, you can find evidence for this
• Women often advertise their youth and looks
• Men more often focus on their maturity, professionalism, and status

More direct evidence
• But evidence gathered directly is _______ very compelling
• For example, Elaine Hatfield asked hundreds of U of MN freshman to a mixer

Freshman mixer study
• S’s were randomly paired with 4 partners for a half-hour each (with whom they danced, talked, swapped phone numbers)
• Afterwards, Hatfield asked them to rate their partners (e.g., on physical attractiveness and personality dimensions)
• They also indicated who they would most like to see on a future date
• Both men and women chose the person they had rated as the most _______

Cross-cultural evidence
• Still, David Buss found that in 36 countries, men and women showed _______ mating preferences
• Men liked young (fertile) and beautiful women
• Women liked mature (rich) men with status
• This supports __________theory

What else could explain these data?
• Should we be satisfied with evolutionary theory’s explanation?
• Or might there be something else we should consider?

Gender status differences
• Alice Eagly and Wendy Wood reanalyzed the data (June, 2000)
• First, they got a Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) for each country
  – Number of women employed in top positions (e.g., gov’t. and business)
  – Whether women had access to equal health care
  – And were protected by equal opportunity laws
The GEM study

- The higher the GEM, the higher the status women had in the society
- If sex differences in mating preferences are due to status differences, what should they find?
- The higher the GEM, the ________ the sex difference (greater or smaller?)

Gender & Status

- These results show that gender differences ________ as women’s status ________
- The higher the GEM, the more women wanted an attractive (versus wealthy) mate
- And the less men wanted an attractive (versus wealthy) mate
- The lesson to be learned is that studying ________ differences is often confounded with studying ________ differences

Reward theory

- Your text talks about similarity, familiarity, proximity, reciprocity, and physical attractiveness in terms of reward theory
- Liking for others can be explained as a “____________” analysis

For example

- We like similar others because they reward us with ______________
- Proximity increases the likelihood of _________________ (e.g., friendly exchanges, being helped)
- We like those who like us because they reward us with their attention and favors, and boost our ______________

_____________ theory

- Your text does not cover a different (but powerful) theory about social attraction
- It is based on ______________ principles (similar to cognitive dissonance, but focused specifically on human relations)
Balance Theory

• It emphasizes our need for “harmonious, balanced, consistent” conceptions about ourselves and other people
• For the most part, it considers three things in relationship to one another at one time
• These are called _______

• For example, if you like Dave and Dave likes you, and both of you like rock music, that makes for a ______________ relationship
• But if Dave likes Susan and you do not, that makes for an imbalanced relationship
• The pressure to resolve the inconsistency often results in your either coming to like Susan more, or in your coming to like Dave less

The “A-B-X” Balance Model

• Newcomb (1961) developed this balance model
• A = you, B = another person, and X = a third element (e.g., music or a third person)
• There is a simple formula for determining whether each triad is balanced or imbalanced; multiply the signs:
• (_____________ = balanced, _______________ = imbalanced)
Similarity and Balance Theory
Similarity means that, for the most part, Dave and I will agree about X (providing harmony)

Similarity-attraction can be explained as preference for __________ cognitions in our social relationships

What about reciprocity?
• Having someone agree with you feels very self-affirming
• Simple act of agreement can boost self-esteem and cause you to want to reciprocate by liking that person in return
• For example, imagine that X = beliefs about yourself (“me”)
• If Dave shares your high opinion of yourself, that can cause you to have a high opinion of Dave

Physical attractiveness
• Moreover, once we like Dave, we typically see him as more attractive (than when we didn’t know him)
What happens when we break up? Dave becomes _________ attractive!

Summary
• Reward theory and balance theory each can explain why social attraction is linked to:
  • Similarity
  • Reciprocity
  • Physical attractiveness (and other charitable perceptions of one’s partner)

How do they differ?
• __________ theory argues that we are rational “economists” in love and friendship (weighing the costs and benefits)
• __________ theory argues that we are drawn to people in a manner that enhances cognitive consistencies
• Each is likely to play a role in our reasons for falling in love, but what happens after we fall in love?
Question
• Who is happiest as a couple?
A. People who see clearly their partners’ faults?
   Or
B. People who have an unrealistically high opinion of their partner?

Answer
• If you said _____, you are a ________ theorist; going in, you should know the costs (as well as benefits) of being in the relationship
• But the answer from research is ______

Romantic ____________ (Sandra Murray)
• Using college-student and married-couple samples, Murray consistently finds that people who have ____________ opinions about their partners enjoy happier and more long-lasting relationships

• Benefits of romantic ____________ include:
  • Less ____________ in the relationship
  • More ____________ with relationship
  • Personal well-being (e.g., less depressed)
  • Longer lasting relationships, and less chance of divorce for married couples
  • We seem to do better together with “eyes wide _____”
  • This is an interesting effect – after all, it was equally possible that acknowledging partners’ faults from the start might better prepare people to deal with the difficulties ahead
  • The opposite turns out to be true – the more ____________ our view of the other, the ____________ the relationship

Self-fulfilling prophecy
• Murray likens romantic illusions to SFP
• When partners have “great expectations” of one another, they tend to live up to them
• As a result, love is not blind, but actively ____________ the type of relationships we have
“Partner-Serving Bias”

- Romantic illusions are also akin to __________ biases (e.g., believing ourselves to be much better than average)
- If we extend these biases to the one we love we are happier as a couple, just as self-serving biases promote __________ happiness

After we fall in love, cont’d

- __________ theory suggests that we might keep our distance, and continually appraise the other person (the “What have you done for me lately?” theory)
- __________ theory suggests that our association with the other intensifies over time
- Which one do you think is correct?

The Self = Other

- It’s __________ theory
- In fact, over time, the other becomes psychologically represented as part of the self
- The bond between romantic partners results, literally, in a ________ social identity
- Aron & others (1991) first demonstrated this using a computerized judgment task

Method

- They used only married couples
- Subjects checked off adjectives from a list of 90 personality traits (3 times: once for self, once for spouse, once for a celebrity)
- This gave researchers 4 lists
  - Traits subjects shared with their spouse (not the celebrity)
  - Traits shared with the celebrity (not the spouse)
  - Traits only the spouse had
  - Traits only the celebrity had

Sample lists follow
(no need to write these down)
Hypothesis
• Subjects then made yes/no self-descriptiveness judgments for each of the 90 traits on a computer
• The computer recorded their reaction time
• If the self and spouse are cognitively represented as one unit, subjects should be faster at making “yes” judgments when the trait is shared with ________, compared to when the trait is shared with the _________
• They should also be slower to reject “spouse only” traits, compared with “celebrity only” traits

Summary
• Results suggest that subjects had trouble distinguishing themselves from their _________ (but no problem distinguishing themselves from the _________)
• On average, the couples had been married 6 years – it would be interesting to find out how long you have to be with someone before they “become part of you”
Exchange vs. Communal Relationships

- Not all relationships are marked by charitable views and intimate bonds
- Your text mentions a distinction
- _________ – based on reward theory, but particularly concerned with keeping the costs and benefits equal
- _________ – based more on genuine caring

This Chart is in Meyers

Change over time

- Relationships that start out as communal may, in time, deteriorate to _________ relationships
- This happens in marriage when, for example, women are expected to both work and care for the children and household
- Wives rightly complain about the “double shift” they have to carry – over time, this causes them to be more concerned with _________ issues in the relationship (which can lead to divorce)

Sex differences in marital happiness

- In fact, surveys of thousands of couples indicate that men are _________ being married than women are
- Are there other sex differences in the ways in which we experience love?

Which gender?

- Believes in love at first sight
- Believes in love as a basis for marriage
- Believes that love can overcome obstacles
- Believes that love relationships can be perfect
- Falls in love quickly
- More willing to let emotions guide behavior
- Falls out of love slowly
- Less likely to end a premarital relationship

Answer: _________

In several studies, _____ proved to be the more ____________ sex
Explanations for sex differences

- ____________________ theory
- Men and women are invested differently in sexual bonding (for women, the burden is literally greater, hence they are choosier)
- If the male strategy is to “sow many seeds” it behooves them to fall in love ________________

Which gender? Answer:______

- Reports liking sex the most
- Reports having sex with greater number of partners
- More actively engaged in sexual pursuits
- Fantasizes about sex often during the day
- Willing to have sex with strangers

__________, continued

- While this supports evolutionary theory, there is a snag
- Why are men slower to end relationships?
- Evolutionary theory would predict the opposite
- So let’s look at possible ____________ explanations for why men fall in love faster (and out of love slower) than women

Status

- People with _____ status are freer to let their emotions rule their behavior
- Women may be more ______________about love because their status is more often tied to that of their partners
- Falling in love quickly is a luxury that many women cannot afford
- But what about the fact that men fall out of love more slowly?

Same-sex friends: which gender?

- Touches their friends more
- Self-discloses to their friends more
- Reveals their feelings to their friends
- Shares secrets with friends
- More freely discusses their relationships
- Friendships focus on intimate conversation more than shared activities (work or play)
Socialization differences

• In fact, both men and women report that they have more ___________ relationships with female, compared with male, friends
• Of course, men are taught to self-disclose less, and to be less intimate in their friendships
• The result? Men are less likely to get their ___________ needs met by their ________________
• This may be why they are more reluctant to leave a romantic relationship – they need it more for emotional release
• It also helps to explain why men are more eager to ________ romantic relationships
• In essence, they have all their eggs in one emotional basket
• By contrast, women get their needs met by their friends as well as their romantic partners

Nevertheless

• Once women fall in love, they begin to look a lot like men
• Women in love are just as emotionally involved as men are, and just as committed to the relationship
• Further, both sexes report feelings of euphoria and passion at the onset of love relationships
• These feelings are extremely powerful

Cultural bias

• ________________ love is the main theme of most of our “cultural narratives” (songs, books, movies, etc.)
• “Love that is not madness is not love”
  - Spanish Proverb
• Your book mentions ________________ love as more enduring and stable (something to aim for)

Research bias

• Interesting, then, that most of the research has focused on passionate love!
• Like people in general, scientists appear to be more hypnotized by the strong emotions of love and lust, compared with the more stable ones of friendship and loyalty
• Still, introducing love as a scientific topic was _______ easy – and there remains an odd ___________
Introducing Romance to Science

• Many people still feel that “love” is better left to the poets and mystics
• What does science have to offer? Worse, it might strip the mystery away – which might take the fun out of it, too
• In fact, the “love pioneers” struggled for years to get romance accepted as a scientific issue, worthy of investigation

Making fun of “love” science

• While academics have now embraced romance, many others still feel we have no business putting love under a microscope
• Case in point: a recent piece in *The New Yorker* about neurological scientists studying mating behaviors in mice

Oxytocin

• The research being discussed here concerns oxytocin, a _________ hormone found to be important with respect to forming _____________
• Next week, we’ll see a film that discusses this research – which often involves prairie voles (who mate for life) and mice

“The Department of Mating”

• “Science Explains Why Men are That Way” (by James Collins)
(Don’t try to take notes; just enjoy the story)

Love Science

• Despite derision, science marches on!
• In fact, love is one of the fastest growing topics in psychology
• A PsycInfo search using “Close Relationships” as a keyword supports this

Love Science

• It’s exciting that “hard scientists” have begun taking a look
• For example, the many references that your text makes to “love as a drug” are backed up by ________________ research
• People in love are high – on endorphins and hormones
• It turns out that…
Neurological Evidence for Love

- Love “lights up your eyes” – and also, four tiny bits of your brain
- Researchers asked 17 people in love to view pictures of their lovers and their same-sexed friends, while in the fMRI magnet
- Four parts of the brain consistently lit up in response to lovers, compared with friends
- Each of these neurological areas are associated with _______________
- Moreover, viewing lovers __________ activity in three larger parts of the brain known to be active when people are upset or depressed
- Thus, being in love can literally “pump you up” emotionally – by ____________ happiness and __________ depression