

RELATIONAL QUALITIES AS FACTORS IN MATE SELECTION DECISIONS

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ABSTRACT

The range of relationship factors that enter into persons' mate selection decisions has been insufficiently articulated. Similarity, rewardingness, and complementarity have been examined amply, while other factors have been ignored. In this research, 12 relationship factors, those articulated in Davis and Todd's (1982) analysis of romantic love, are examined as considerations in mate selection decisions. These include mutual advocacy, enjoyment, intimacy, understanding, exclusiveness, trust, acceptance, respect, authenticity, fascination, sexual desire, and giving the utmost. Two basic findings were obtained. First, all but one of the Davis and Todd factors were rated by subjects as very important to them in considering prospective mates, and as more important than similarity, complementarity, and rewardingness. Second, discriminant function analysis revealed that five of the Davis and Todd factors successfully discriminated which relationships subjects ultimately chose and which they terminated; only similarity among the traditional variables did so.

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Within psychology and sociology a substantial body of literature addresses itself to the general question of what factors lead persons to commit to intimate relationships with others. This research has examined four different types of factors historically. First, it has examined characteristics of the individual making the commitment decision. Here, for example, factors such as the individual's degree of desire for a close relationship (Murstein, 1986), his or her degree of social skillfulness (Shaver, Furman, and Buhrmester, 1985; Sprecher and McKinney, 1987), and his or her possession of certain "resources" (e.g., physical attractiveness, social status, financial well-being) (Murstein, 1986), have all been found to relate positively to mate selection.

Second, research in this area has also examined characteristics of the individual chosen. Henze and Hudson (1969) and Hoyt and Hudson (1981), for example, determined that characteristics such as dependable character, emotional stability, "education-intelligence" and good looks were all important to respondents in their pool. Buss (1985) and Buss and Barnes (1986) found that kindness and understanding, intelligence, and an exciting personality were important to respondents of both genders; a good earning capacity and a college education were more important to women than to men, while physical attractiveness was more important to men than to women.

Third, a number of circumstantial or environmental factors have been related to mate selection. For example, geographic proximity (Festinger, Schachter, and Back, 1950; Segal, 1974), "mere exposure" to another (Harrison, 1977; Zajonc, 1968), the availability of certain social settings such as colleges, workplaces, and parties which are especially conducive to meeting others (Kerckhoff, 1974; Murstein, 1970, 1986; Rosenblatt, 1974), familial and social network support for one's choice of partner (Lewis, 1973; Parks, Stan, and Eggert, 1983), and the presence or absence of available alternative relationships (Berscheid and Walster, 1978; Thibaut and Kelley, 1959) have all been related to decisions to commit to others.

The fourth and final type of factor investigated has to do with different aspects of the *relationships* existing between two partners. Here the focus has been on three different factors. The first of these is similarity between the partners (Burgess and Wallin, 1943; Buss and Barnes, 1986; Walster, Walster and Berscheid, 1978), and especially similarity with respect to attitudes (Byrne, 1971; Hinde, 1979). The second is complementarity between the partners, especially with respect to roles (Kerckhoff and Davis, 1962; Winch, 1974). The third relational factor is mutual rewardingness in the relationship, a state of affairs in which each individual in the relationship is rewarded by the other for his or her actions or personal characteristics. Studies here show that in

general greater rewards lead to greater commitment (Hinde, 1979; Johnson, 1978; Rusbult, 1980, 1983).

The focus of the present research is on the last of these types of variables, that of relationship factors insofar as these enter into mate selection decisions. Specifically, our question is this: with respect to relationship factors, do we merely choose another because that other is similar to us, complements us in certain ways, and is reinforcing to us? Or are there many other relational considerations which are commonly entertained by persons choosing life partners?

DAVIS AND TODD'S PARADIGM OF ROMANTIC LOVE

Davis and Todd (1982; see also Davis, 1985), in a series of studies on intimate relationships, produced a paradigm case formulation of romantic love. This is a conceptual formulation articulating what they found to be the 12 archetypal or paradigmatic aspects of romantic love relationships. Their methodology for arriving at this formulation consisted first in creating a paradigm case or model, and then subjecting this model to three empirical studies in which it was found that subjects did discriminate between love relationships and other relationships (especially friendships) along the lines predicted by the model. The 12 aspects emerging from this conceptual and empirical work as constitutive of romantic love are the following:

1. **Mutual Enjoyment:** a relational state of affairs in which partners generally enjoy each other's company and enjoy the things they do together.
2. **Mutual Advocacy:** a relational state of affairs in which partners are invested in each other's well-being and willing to take needed action to further or to champion the other's vital interests.
3. **Giving the utmost:** a relational state of affairs in which partners are willing to sacrifice, sometimes to an extreme degree, when the other is in need.
4. **Mutual Acceptance:** a relational state of affairs in which partners accept one another as they are, as contrasted with one in which partners try to change or make the other over into a different person.
5. **Mutual Respect:** a relational state of affairs in which each partner makes the general assumption that the other exercises good judgment in making life decisions.

6. **Authenticity:** a relational state of affairs in which partners feel free to be themselves in the relationship, in contrast with one in which partners feel required to play an impersonative role or inhibit expressions of their personal characteristics.
7. **Mutual Understanding:** a relational state of affairs in which partners know important things about each other such as why the other characteristically behaves and feels as he or she does, what is important to the other, and what are areas of sensitivity for the other.
8. **Intimacy:** a relational state of affairs in which partners confide in each other about deeply private, personal matters.
9. **Mutual Fascination:** a relational state of affairs in which partners are preoccupied with each other.
10. **Mutual Exclusiveness:** a relational state of affairs in which each partner has the status for the other of "one and only"; that is, each reserves this type of relating only for the other and would count it as a betrayal if the other had the same relationship to another person.
11. **Mutual Trust:** a relational state of affairs in which each partner believes that the other will not violate the relationship in any way; for example, by exploiting or betraying or attempting to hurt him or her.
12. **Sexual Desire:** a relational state of affairs in which partners desire physical intimacy with each other—they wish to touch and be touched and to engage in sexual intercourse.

Davis and Todd's primary interest was in articulating the nature of romantic love. However, when one examines the relational qualities which emerged from their work, all may be seen as plausible candidates for factors which people might strongly consider in deciding on a life partner. Can we trust each other? Can we be intimate? Are we sexually attracted to each other? Do we enjoy each other? Do we support each other? Do we truly accept each other?

The primary purpose of the present research is to determine the extent to which Davis and Todd's 12 paradigm case features of romantic love are factors relevant to mate selection decisions. If so, they may serve to enrich our understanding of the relational bases of such decisions. In addition to evaluating these factors in an absolute sense, their importance relative to the established factors of similarity, complementarity, and rewardingness will be examined. The question here is how well the Davis and Todd factors "stack up" with these

established ones in their importance to people and in their power to predict decisions to commit to or to terminate intimate relationships.

HYPOTHESES

1. Davis and Todd's 12 paradigmatic aspects of love (PAL) will all be rated by subjects as "very important" in their mate selection decisions (operationalized here as receiving a rating of at least 7 on a 9 point Likert scale, where 1 represents "unimportant", 5 represents "moderately important" and 9 represents "absolutely essential.")
2. Subjects will rate PAL factors more important in their mate selection decisions than similarity, complementarity, and reward-
ingness.
3. PAL factors will successfully discriminate love relationships which progress to marriage from those which are terminated.
4. PAL factors will discriminate between relationships progressing to marriage and those terminated better than similarity, complemen-
tarity, and rewardingness.

METHODS

Subjects

A total of 76 subjects were solicited from a subject pool at a midwest-
ern state university for this research. Requirements for participation in
the research, clearly stated on initial sign up sheets and then restated
by the experimenter prior to questionnaire administration, were (a) that
subjects be currently married or engaged, and (b) that they had at some
point, by their own decision, terminated a romantic relationship which
they considered a very important one.

Materials

A questionnaire entitled "Factors in Intimate Relationships" (FIR)
was created for this research. This questionnaire defined, described and
gave examples of the following relationship variables: Enjoyment,
Exclusiveness, Complementarity, Sexual Desire, Intimacy, Authenticity,
Trust, Fascination, Giving the Utmost, Rewardingness, Acceptance,
Advocacy, Similarity, Respect, and Understanding. Following the
description of each separate factor, the questionnaire called for subjects

to rate their relationships with (a) their spouse or betrothed, and (b) the previous partner with whom they had personally terminated an important relationship, on how well the description of the factor fit these relationships at the time they decided to commit to or to terminate them.

For example, the item pertaining to Exclusiveness reads as follows: "In some relationships, we have a sense that we want to have this kind of a special relationship *only* with this partner. We regard this partner as our 'one and only.' We wish to form a sort of 'two person community' in which no one else is allowed in—no one else is allowed to relate to us in just the way that this person is. While we may continue other friendships just as before, there is a specialness to the relationship with our romantic partner which is unique to it and reserved for it only." To cite one further example, the narrative for Intimacy reads as follows: "In some relationships, we feel free to confide openly in each other. We are able to disclose intimate and personal experiences and feelings to each other. We feel we can really talk to each other, really open up to each other about deeply personal matters."

Following each such description, the FIR questionnaire calls for the current and past relationships to be rated, at the time of the commitment (or termination) decision, on the factor described. Six questions are posed. The first four pertain to the degree to which a given factor was present or absent in a given relationship, the last two to the importance assigned to the factor in any decision to select a mate. The questions posed are the following:

1. "At the time you decided to marry your current spouse or betrothed, to what degree did this description fit your reaction to him or her?"
2. "At the time you decided to marry your current spouse or fiance, to what degree did this description seem to fit his or her reaction to you?"
3. "At the time you decided to end your previous important relationship, to what degree did this description fit your reaction to that person?"
4. "At the time you decided to end your previous important relationship, to what degree did this description seem to fit his or her reaction to you?"
5. "In general, in making a decision to get married how important is it to you that you feel an at least reasonable degree of _____ (factor) for your partner?"

6. "In general, in making a decision to get married, how important is it to you that your partner feel an at least reasonable degree of _____ (factor) for you?"

The identical procedure is employed for all 15 factors in the FIR. All items are rated on a 9-point Likert type scale, with the extreme points designated "Did not fit" (#1) and "Fit very well" (#9) for the discrimination items; and "Unimportant" (#1) and "Absolutely essential" (#9) for the importance items (see Table 1 for FIR descriptions of each of the 15 factors).

Table 1
FIR Factor Descriptions

1. *Enjoyment.*

In some relationships, partners *enjoy* each other. That is, they enjoy being together—enjoy being in the company of the other. Even though there may be times of conflict, of boredom, or of tension in the relationship, for the most part, the experience of being with each other is an enjoyable one.

2. *Exclusiveness.*

In some relationships, we have a sense that we want to have this kind of a special relationship *only* with this partner. We regard this partner as our "one and only." We wish to form a sort of "two person community" in which no one else is allowed in—no one else is allowed to relate to us in just the way that this person is. While we may continue other friendships just as before, there is a specialness to the relationship with our romantic partner which is unique to it and reserved for it only.

3. *Complementarity.*

In some relationships, we find that our partners have personal characteristics which, while they are different from our own, help them to balance us off in certain ways (while we in turn balance them off). For example, where we may be more logical, they may be more emotional (or vice versa). Or, where we might be more adventurous and risk-taking, they may be more careful and cautious (or vice versa). Or, where we might be more outgoing, they might be more reserved with other people (or vice versa). In these or other ways, we find that our partners *complement or provide a balance* for us.

4. *Sexual Desire.*

In some relationships, there are strong feelings of sexual desire for each other. Whether the partners actually become sexually intimate or whether they do not, there is still a strong desire to touch and be touched, to hold each other, and to engage in sexual intercourse.

5. *Mutual Confiding (Intimacy).*

In some relationships, we feel *free to confide openly in each other*. We are able to disclose intimate and personal experiences and feelings to each other. We feel we can "really talk to each other", really "open up to each other" about deeply personal matters.

Table 1 (con't)
FIR Factor Descriptions

6. *Ability to be Ourselves (Authenticity).*

In some relationships, we feel *free to be ourselves* with our partners. We do not feel like we have to play a role, wear a mask, or hold back from being the way we really are. We feel like we can just relax and be the person that we really are when we are with them.

7. *Mutual Trust.*

In some relationships, we have a basic sense that we can *trust* each other—that we can count on each other not to betray or violate the relationship that we have. We confidently believe, for example, that neither of us will be sexually unfaithful, or lie about important matters, or reveal secrets or other personal information that we may have shared, or use or take advantage of each other.

8. *Preoccupation (Fascination).*

In some relationships, we find ourselves *preoccupied* with each other. That is, we find ourselves thinking about the other a great deal. He or she is on our mind a lot, perhaps even at times when we should be thinking about other things.

9. *Mutual Support/Assistance.*

In some relationships, we have a sense that each of us is *genuinely interested in supporting and assisting the other*. When one of us is hurt or suffers some misfortune or failure, we have a sense that the other cares about this. We have a sense that we can count on each other to be there, and to be there *willingly*, in times of need, trouble, or personal distress.

10. *Mutual Rewardingness.*

In some relationships, partners are *rewarding* of each other. That is, they respond to things that the other does, or ways that they are, in rewarding ways. For example, if one of them were to accomplish something, the other is likely to praise or positively acknowledge the accomplishment. Or, if one of them were to look nice on a given evening, the other would be likely to remark how nice he or she looked. Or, if one of them were to do something for the other, the other would be likely to thank him or her sincerely for what he or she has done.

11. *Mutual Acceptance.*

In some relationships, we have the sense that we are *accepted* by the other just as we are. Even though our partners may at times object to certain *actions* of ours (e.g., to our smoking or driving too fast or being late), we do not get the sense that they want us to be *different persons*. Rather, our sense in the relationship is that we are basically accepted as the person we are.

12. *Mutual Advocacy.*

In some relationships, we have a sense that each of us has a strong personal investment in the well-being of the other. We have a sense that we are “on each other’s side”, that we are “in each other’s corner” in the sense that we are really interested in, and willing to do things to further each other’s career or other personal goals. We are willing to make efforts on each other’s behalf in order to help each other to achieve our personal goals and desires.

Table 1 (con't.)
FIR Factor Descriptions

13. Similarity.

In some relationships, we find that we are *like* or *similar* to our partners in a lot of ways. For example, we might find that we want similar things out of life, that we have similar values, that we tend to enjoy the same things, that we often have the same reaction to other people and events, or that we have many common interests.

14. Mutual Respect.

In some relationships, we have the sense that each of us *respects* the other. We consider each other worthy of esteem and high regard. This respect might be based on a variety of factors. We might, for example, respect each other's judgment—consider each other to be persons who make good sound decisions. Or we might respect each other as moral persons who are honest, who will usually do the right thing even if there are pressures to do otherwise, and who will do things for the right reasons. Whatever the particular reasons might be, however, we find that each of us has a basic respect for the other.

15. Understanding.

In some relationships, we *understand* each other. In other words, we know things about the other such as what is important to the other, and why the other does the things that he or she does. We understand the reasoning and the feelings that are behind the other's actions, and are not puzzled or confused by each other. If the other is troubled or moody, we are likely to be able to make a good guess as to what is bothering him or her. We know what "makes each other tick."

Ratings were obtained not only of subjects' reactions to their partners (e.g., whether the subject trusted the partner), but of partners' perceived reactions to the subjects (e.g., whether the partner seemed to trust the subject). This was the case for all factors except Similarity and Complementarity, which describe reciprocal relationships. Thus the resultant number of factors examined was not 15, but 28.

Procedures

Subjects were brought in groups of approximately 8 to 10 to an experimental room. All were first reminded of the requirements for participation, given an opportunity to withdraw if they did not meet them, and given a written statement informing them of their rights as subjects. The experimenter read these rights aloud to subjects to ensure that they were aware of them.

Following this, the Factors in Intimate Relationships inventory was administered. This required an average of around 35 minutes for subjects to complete. At the conclusion of this, subjects were encour-

aged to state any questions or concerns that they had, and these were addressed.

RESULTS

Subject Characteristics

The 76 subjects who participated in this research ranged in age from 18 to 43, with a mean age of 22.5, and a standard deviation of 6.52. Unfortunately, despite strenuous efforts on the part of the first author, we were able to obtain only 10 male subjects. Thus, in the total sample, 66 of the 76 subjects were female. To determine if the 10 male subjects were comparable to their female counterparts, their importance rankings were correlated with those of the female subjects; the Spearman correlation coefficient between these two sets of rankings was .84. It was not possible to do such a comparison for the discrimination power rankings inasmuch as these were based upon a discriminant function analysis, and it was not possible to do such an analysis on only 10 male subjects.

Importance Ratings of PAL Factors

It was hypothesized that, on a Likert scale where the verbal designation for #1 was "Unimportant", for #5 was "moderately important," and for #9 was "Absolutely essential," that all 24 of the PAL factors would receive a rating of 7 or above. In fact, 22 out of the 24 factors received a rating of 7.5 or greater (see Table 2). The 15 highest rated PAL factors received mean importance ratings of 8.0 or greater, while the next 7 received mean ratings of 7.5 to 7.99. Especially noteworthy were means for variables such as Trusting one's partner (8.82), Being Trusted by the partner (8.80), Being Authentic in the relationship (8.68), Partner Authenticity (8.65), Partner being Intimate (8.59), and Being Intimate with the partner (8.57). Only Partner Fascination with you (6.6), and Fascination with partner (6.1) received mean ratings below 7.0.

Importance Ratings of PAL vs. Traditional Factors

When all 28 factors (24 PAL and 4 traditional) were rank ordered by their mean importance rating, the 22 highest ranked factors were all PAL factors (see Table 2). Number 23 was Rewarding one's partner, number 24 was Being Rewarded by One's Partner, number 25 was Similarity with one's partner, and number 26 was Complementarity With One's Partner.

Table 2
Importance Rankings, Means, and Standard Deviations

1. Trusting one's partner	(8.82; .51).
2. Being Trusted by one's partner	(8.80; .59).
3. Being Authentic in the relationship	(8.68; .57).
4. Partner being Authentic	(8.64; .56).
5. Partner being Intimate	(8.59; .75).
6. Being Intimate toward partner	(8.57; .77).
7. Being Enjoyed by one's partner	(8.47; .76).
8. Being Respected by partner	(8.45; .66).
9. Enjoying one's partner	(8.45; .79).
10. Partner Giving the Utmost	(8.42; .74).
11. Respecting one's partner	(8.41; .64).
12. Giving Utmost to partner	(8.39; .82).
13. Being Accepted by partner	(8.24; .99).
14. Accepting one's partner	(8.14; 1.05).
15. Advocacy toward partner	(8.07; .88).
16. Partner being Advocate	(7.99; .90).
17. Understanding partner	(7.92; 1.02).
18. Being Understood by partner	(7.88; 1.17).
19. Being Sexually Desired	(7.86; 1.06).
20. Sexual Desire for partner	(7.74; 1.14).
21. Exclusiveness towards partner	(7.67; 1.26).
22. Partner Exclusiveness toward self	(7.66; 1.26).
23. Rewarding toward partner	(7.63; 1.11).
24. Being Rewarded by partner	(7.59; 1.26).
25. Similarity	(7.25; 1.52).
26. Complementarity	(6.79; 1.75).
27. Partner Fascination	(6.25; 1.45).
28. Fascination with partner	(6.09; 1.36).

Discrimination Ability of PAL Factors

In order to determine which of the 28 factors studied would successfully discriminate between those relationships which progressed to marital commitment and those which did not, a stepwise discriminant function analysis was performed. A forward selection process using this procedure examines each of the factors and selects that one which best discriminates between the two relationships as measured by Wilkes lambda. That factor is then removed from consideration. The remaining factors are examined and the best discriminating of these is selected and removed. This continues until all of the factors which are statistically significant in their ability to discriminate are determined.

Since not all of the 28 factors were significant, and yet we wished to rank order them in terms of their discriminating ability, a backward stepwise discriminant function analysis was performed once the forward analysis had determined all of the significant factors. The backward elimination process does exactly the opposite of the forward selection. It first selects the one factor which is least discriminating between the two relationships, as measured by Wilkes lambda. That factor is then removed. The next least discriminating is then selected and removed, and so on. This continues until all of the factors which are not significant in their ability to discriminate are selected and removed. The results of the forward selection and the backward elimination were combined in order to rank the factors according to their ability to discriminate relationships progressing to commitment from those not so progressing. A significance level of $p < .05$ was employed.

Of the 24 factors comprising the PAL, five proved significant in their ability to discriminate relationships progressing to commitment from relationships terminated. In order of their discriminating ability, these were: (1) Exclusiveness towards one's partner; (2) Advocacy from one's partner; (3) Enjoyment of one's partner; (4) Trust from one's partner; and (5) Authenticity in relation to one's partner.

Discrimination Ability of PAL vs. Traditional Factors.

The five PAL factors just listed were also the five most discriminating of all the factors studied. Only one of the traditional factors, Similarity, achieved statistical significance at the $p < .05$ level, and it was ranked number 6 in its ability to discriminate.

As noted above, the employment of the forward and backward discriminant function analysis permitted the ranking of all 28 factors, regardless of whether they achieved statistical significance or not. These rankings may be seen in Table 3. In the total rankings, Similarity ranked number 6, Rewardingness towards one's partner ranked number 9, Rewardingness from one's partner ranked number 15, and Complementarity ranked number 26.

DISCUSSION

The central thesis of this study was that existing research on relationship factors in mate selection decisions has been too narrow in its focus. We predicted that the relationship qualities outlined in Davis and Todd's paradigm case formulation of romantic love would serve to enrich our picture of the complex, multiple relational factors entering

Table 3
Discrimination Ability Rankings

1. Being Exclusive to one's partner	
2. Partner being an Advocate for one	
3. Enjoying one's partner	Significant at $p < .05$
4. Being Trusted by one's partner	
5. Being Authentic in the relationship	
6. Similarity between partners	
<hr/>	
7. Trusting one's partner	
8. Being Advocate for partner	
9. Rewarding partner	
10. Partner Giving the Utmost	
11. Intimacy with partner	
12. Sexual Desire for partner	
13. Being Enjoyed by partner	
14. Being Respected by partner	
15. Being Rewarded by partner	
16. Partner being Exclusive	
17. Understanding one's partner	
18. Partner being Intimate	
19. Accepting one's partner	
20. Being Accepted by partner	
21. Partner being Authentic in relationship	
22. Being Sexually Desired by partner	
23. Partner being Fascinated	
24. Fascination with partner	
25. Being Understood by partner	
26. Complementarity between partners	
27. Giving the Utmost to partner	
28. Respect for partner	

into such decisions. In general, the results obtained in this research are supportive of this contention.

Importance Findings

As noted in the Results section, subjects rated 22 of the 24 PAL factors presented to them at a mean level of 7.5 or greater, on a scale where 9 represented an endorsement of the factor as "Absolutely Essential." Further, when rating the importance of PAL factors relative to Similarity, Complementarity, and Rewardingness, the 22 highest ranked factors were all PAL factors.

Overall, the importance data obtained in this research indicate that, when subjects review various factors and ask themselves the question, "How important is it, if I am to make a permanent commitment to

another, that an at least reasonable degree of this element be present in my relationship?", they overwhelmingly endorse both the absolute importance of PAL factors and their relative importance vis-a-vis such historically established factors as Similarity, Complementarity, and Rewardingness.

Discrimination Findings

Five out of the 24 PAL factors achieved statistical significance in their ability to discriminate between romantic relationships which progress to marital commitment and those which do not: Exclusiveness (toward partner), Advocacy (from partner), Enjoyment (toward partner), Trust (from partner), and Authenticity (toward partner). While it is disappointing that not more of the PAL factors proved significant, still over 20% of them, more than four times what one would expect on the basis of chance alone, did achieve such significance.

Of the traditional variables, only Similarity achieved statistical significance in its ability to discriminate relations chosen from those renounced, and it was ranked only sixth, ranking lower than five of the PAL factors. Rewardingness towards the partner was ranked 9th, Rewardingness from the partner 15th, and Complementarity 26th.

The overall picture emerging here is that, relative to the PAL factors, one of the three historically emphasized factors ranks fairly high in its predictive ability, two others rank in the middle range, and one ranks rather low. This suggests an overall state of affairs in which the PAL factors more than hold their own with respect to traditionally emphasized relationship quality variables, and should be considered in future accounts of this area.

Retrospective Nature of the Data

In this study, subjects were asked to recall two relationships, that with their current spouse (or betrothed) and that with a partner with whom they decided to terminate the relationship, at two previous times in their lives. The retrospective nature of this task creates the possibility that subjects will provide less than veridical information, especially the possibility that they will retrospectively reduce dissonance by justifying the paths which they took and did not take.

However, there is strong reason to conclude that such dissonance reduction was not a significant factor in the results obtained. First of all, if this were operative to any appreciable extent, then many more differences in the discrimination tests should have been observed. In fact, however, only 6 out of the 28 factors proved significant discriminators. Subjects were in the majority of cases not rating the chosen and the renounced relationships significantly differently on these dimen-

sions. Second, the existence of retrospective dissonance reduction would primarily affect the discrimination ratings, not the importance ratings. On the latter, subjects were asked to provide a rating of how important the various factors were to them *in general at the present time*, not at some time in the past.

Female Dominance of Subject Pool

We regarded it as unfortunate that the balance of subjects lay so heavily in favor of females (66 females, 10 males). To avoid this imbalance, sign-up sheets for the research were posted for an extra month, and special solicitations for males were made; both measures proved unsuccessful in attracting sufficient male subjects. The resulting imbalance renders generalization of the findings to males somewhat tenuous. As noted previously, however, we did examine whether or not the data for the ten males looked appreciably different from that for females. The one figure we were able to obtain here, a Spearman correlation of .84 between male and female importance rankings, is suggestive that males and females are quite similar in what is important to them.

Differences Between Discrimination and Importance Rankings

In general, there was a low moderate degree of agreement between the rankings based on discrimination ability and those based on importance ($r = .27$). However, there were in certain cases significant differences between the two sets of rankings. For example, Similarity, the factor with the greatest discrepancy, was ranked 6th out of 28 in its ability to discriminate chosen from renounced relationships, but 25th out of 28 in its perceived importance. Further, partner's Authenticity in the relationship, which ranked 4th in perceived importance, ranked only 21st in discrimination ability.

There are three possible explanations for these discrepancies. First, certain factors might in fact be important to persons, but they may not be aware of how important such factors are to them, and thus unable to report this. This could result in a relatively high discrimination ranking but a relatively low importance ranking, such as in the case of Similarity. Second, certain factors may be very important to persons but be present in equal degrees in relationships which they continue and in ones which they terminate. Indeed, such factors might constitute *sine qua nons* for these persons to enter into any relationship, and thus would not discriminate between relations pursued and those forsworn. This could result in a relatively high importance ranking but a relatively low discrimination ranking, such as the case of the partner being Authentic. Third, the importance ratings in this research exhibited a

very limited range, thus reducing the meaningfulness of any correlations or any close differences in rank based on them.

Conclusion

These findings, especially those for importance, provide support for the contention that a much more complex, articulated picture of the relationship factors that go into mate selection decisions is needed. The paradigm case formulation of love developed by Davis and Todd (1982) provides such a picture, embodying 22 variables which were rated by subjects as extremely important to them in an absolute sense, and as more important to them in making mate selection decisions than factors traditionally stressed in the mate selection literature. Davis and Todd's formulation also provided a number of variables which proved to be significant discriminators between romantic relationships which progress to marriage and ones which are terminated. We hope that future investigators in the area of mate selection will include and further examine these most promising factors.

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