

Attraction & formation of relationships.

Part one.



Explanations of Interpersonal Attraction.

- There are various factors involved in the formation of attraction, the five main factors are as follows:
- Physical attractiveness.
- Demographic similarity.
- Proximity.
- Attitude similarity.
- Similarity in personality.

Physical Attractiveness.

- The first thing we notice about people is their appearance, and often an assessment of physical attractiveness is made by whether they are clean/dirty.
- Women in particular are perceived as attractive if they have child like faces.
- Can you think of any women who match the description above....?*

Child like faces???



There exceptions to the rule!!!

- ❑ Wide cheekbones and narrow cheeks are also seen as attractive and these features are not commonly found in children.



What about the men?

- Square jaw, small eyes and thin lips are regarded as attractive by women, these features can be regarded as a sign of maturity, rarely found in children.



Is there any evidence to support the previous assertions??

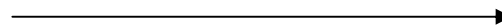
- ❑ Brigham (1971) reported physically attractive people are thought of as being generally attractive.
- ❑ Further evidence supported his hypotheses as both male and female participants stated physically attractive people are also sociable, interesting, independent exciting and sexually warm.
- ❑ This phenomenon is known as the **Halo effect**..
- ❑ The total impression formed is unjustifiably influenced by one outstanding characteristic.

The Matching Hypothesis.

- We actively seek individuals who are most like ourselves (attractive wise). This compromise is necessary because of fear of rejection from a more attractive person.



What are his chances?



Matching hypothesis cont.....

Key study = Walster et al (1966)

Walster advertised a “Computer Dance”.

752 student participants were rated on physical attractiveness by four independent judges, as a measure of social desirability.

Participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire, supposedly for the purposes of computer pairing but actually used to rate similarity. Instead, participants were randomly paired, except no man was paired with a taller woman. During the dance, participants were asked to rate their date.

Findings: the more attractive students were favoured as dates over the less attractive students, and physical attractiveness was found to be the most important factor, over intelligence and personality.

These findings don't support the matching hypothesis so we must ask ourselves the following questions.....

Matching Hypothesis cont..

- What evaluative points must we consider before arriving at any conclusions (think validity!)
- Does the matching hypothesis seem correct in your experience?
- Why does physical attractiveness play such an important part in dating behaviour and in our relationships?

Further evidence.....

- ❑ Subsequent studies have found support for the hypothesis
- ❑ Walster & Walster (1969) repeated their original study but this time the students met before hand. This resulted in similar levels of attractiveness being selected.
- ❑ Murstein (1972) The physical attractiveness of engaged couples were judged and the was firm evidence to support each couple as being physically similar.



Proximity.....



- Festinger et al (1950) found students who lived in close proximity of each other formed strong/close friendships because of the continued exposure (seeing someone who lives on the same floor as you) in his study of graduates who lived in 17 different two storey flats had close friends who lived in the same building (2/3rd)
- This factor is also important in the formation of romantic relationships that lead to marriage.
- Bossard (1932) looked at 5000 marriage licences in Philadelphia. He found evidence of couples getting together living close to each other.
- Does the concept of Proximity apply to your friends or enemies?



Attitude similarity.....

- ❑ Newcomb (1961) Paired students in a study. The initial information he collected from the students regarding beliefs and attitudes were used to pair them with someone similar or. He found friendships were much more likely to form when paired with someone similar (58% and 25% respectively)
- ❑ Bryne et al (1968) found similarity in attitude was very important for interpersonal attraction. They arranged matters so that the person seemed to have similar attitudes the participants on either 75% or 25% of topics. **Findings:** Only when similarity was related to topics of importance that it affected attraction.
- ❑ Do you think preferring the same hobbies is important in intimate relationships?

Demographic Similarity.

- ❑ Demographics such as ***age, sex, and social class*** have long since been linked with relationships. These characteristics certainly affect friendship.
- ❑ Think of your friendships at school...how similar are you?



Similarity In Personality.

- People who have similar personalities are most likely to become involved with each other...***Birds of a feather flock together!!***
- But ***what about opposites attract!***
- What are your thoughts would you become romantically involved with someone who is similar or dissimilar?
- Winch (1958) argued for opposites, however similarities have been found to be important. Burgess & Wallin (1953) obtained information from 1000 engaged couples. There was significant within couple similarities (feeling being hurt etc)

Evaluation of the five factors.

- Rubin (1973) suggested several answers to the question of why similarity is important.
 - If we like those who are similar, there is a good chance they'll like us too.
 - Communication is easier with people who are similar. (singing from the same hymn sheet!)
 - If we like ourselves, then we'll like others who are like us.
 - People who are similar to us will enjoy the same past times.
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- How artificial is research in this area, think on a scale of 1-10 how might scanning photographs in a lab!
 - Considering the factors involved in the formation of relationships, what type of person are you likely to form a successful relationship with?
Would it be someone like yourself or not?

