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## Self-other similarity, attachment styles, and duration of romantic relationships

Akiko Tamamura

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# Self-other similarity, attachment styles, and duration of romantic relationships

## Abstract

Bowlby's attachment theory states that experiences with primary caregivers and others in early childhood allow one to form internal "working models" of the self and significant others. Studies have shown that an adult's attachment style is related to his or her attachment history from childhood and subsequent working models about various relationships. An individualistic specific evaluation of one's relationship is related to his or her attachment style (secure, preoccupied, fearful, or dismissive attachment style). Attachment styles may influence both partners' levels of trust, satisfaction, love, commitment, and other emotions that are characteristically associated with a relationship. The similarity-attraction perspective from the personal attribution theory suggests that seeing oneself as similar to a partner may be associated strongly with attractions and evaluations of relationships. The concept of "self-other similarity" refers to "the evaluation of the extent to which one's own traits and opinions are shared by others". In this social comparison process, people negotiate their identities and regulate cognitive distance from significant others. Overestimating the level of self-other similarity allows one to decrease cognitive distance from others and thereby may facilitate assimilation in one's social surroundings. Underestimating self-other similarity and emphasizing one's unique traits and opinions allow one to increase cognitive distance and may facilitate differentiation from others. People overestimate or underestimate the level of self-other similarity depending on the extent to which these biases protect or reinforce their own self-view. A person's attachment style influences the estimation of self-other similarity. This survey found that: (1) people to feel similar to a partner if the partner had a secure attachment style, irrespective the one's own attachment style; (2) relationships in dyads with the perception of similar attachment styles tended to be more lasting; (3) in secure-secure relationships, perceiving self and the other highly similar, including attachment style, and the security itself may play important roles in relationship endurance; and (4) in lasting insecure-insecure relationships, perceived attachment styles similarity and self-other dissimilarity seemed to have a big influence. It is clear from the findings and other inconsistent findings of this study that more research is needed in the effects of attachment styles on estimation of self-other similarity.

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RELATIONSHIPS

By

Akiko Tamamura

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## Senior Honors Thesis

## Abstract

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Bowlby's attachment theory states that experiences with primary caregivers and others in early childhood allow one to form internal "working models" of the self and significant others. Studies have shown that an adult's attachment style is related to his or her attachment history from childhood and subsequent working models about various relationships. An individualistic specific evaluation of one's relationship is related to his or her attachment style (secure, preoccupied, fearful, or dismissive attachment style). Attachment styles may influence both partners' levels of trust, satisfaction, love, commitment, and other emotions that are characteristically associated with a relationship. The similarity-attraction perspective from the personal attribution theory suggests that seeing oneself as similar to a partner may be associated strongly with attractions and evaluations of relationships. The concept of "self-other similarity" refers to "the evaluation of the extent to which one's own traits and opinions are shared by others". In this social comparison process, people negotiate their identities and regulate cognitive distance from significant others. Overestimating the level of self-other similarity allows one to decrease cognitive distance from others and thereby may facilitate assimilation in one's social surroundings. Underestimating self-other similarity and emphasizing one's unique traits and opinions allow one to increase cognitive distance and may facilitate differentiation from others. People overestimate or underestimate the level of self-other similarity depending on the extent to which these biases protect or reinforce their own self-view. A person's attachment style influences the estimation of self-other similarity. This survey found that: (1) people to feel similar to a partner if the partner had a secure attachment style, irrespective the one's own attachment style; (2) relationships in dyads with the perception of similar attachment styles tended to be more lasting; (3) in secure-secure relationships, perceiving self and the other highly similar, including attachment style, and the security itself may play important roles in relationship endurance; and (4) in lasting insecure-insecure relationships, perceived attachment styles similarity and self-other dissimilarity seemed to have a big influence. It is clear from the findings and other inconsistent findings of this study that more research is needed in the effects of attachment styles on estimation of self-other similarity.

### **Introduction**

Bowlby (1973) hypothesized that a person's history of attachment in relationships and the formation of a particular attachment style evolve into specific strategies of distress management. Subsequently, researchers have found attachment differences in the way people cope with internal and external sources of distress (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998). The current study examines the manifestation of attachment in self-other similarity estimation and in the duration of romantic relationships.

### **Attachment Studies**

Bowlby's attachment theory (1969, 1973, 1980) has produced numerous studies on close relationships. In developing his attachment theory, Bowlby sought to understand the reasons why strong emotional bonds are formed between infants and their primary caregivers, and why infants become so distressed when separated from the caregivers. Bowlby claimed that the nearly universal sequence of emotional and behavioral reactions that follow separation. Namely, protest, despair, detachment, and readjustment reflects the operation of an innate attachment system that evolved to promote close physical proximity between vulnerable infants and their stronger caregivers. Throughout evolutionary history, this innate attachment system should have ensured the chances of survival and enhanced reproductive fitness of primates, including humans (Simpson, Rholes, & Phillips, 1996).

Attachment theory is relevant to affect regulation and how one copes with stress. Bowlby (1969) suggested that attachment processes function as protective mechanisms as one encounters dangers and threats, and that they underlie human reactions to life stressors. He also suggested that people build cognitive schemes based on their attachment styles that provide them with

guidelines for coping with stresses.

### **Attachment Styles in Children**

Although the need for proximity with caregivers is universal in young children (Bowlby, 1969), the way in which children act on this need depends on how they are treated by their caregivers (Simpson, Rholes, & Phillips, 1996). According to Bowlby (1969), the experience of a caretaker as a “safe heaven” during infancy is a necessary condition for optimal personality development. Proximity to responsive caretakers provides the child with a “secure base” from which to handle distress. In contrast, interaction with available yet rejecting caretakers leads to a sense of mistrust of the world, serious doubts about self-worth, and chronic distress (Bowlby, 1969).

According to Bowlby’s attachment theory, experiences with primary caregivers and others in early childhood allow one to form internal “working models” of the self and significant others. Bowlby (1973) also claimed that these internalized working models include mental representations of attachment figures, and that the person forms a unique and stable pattern of emotions, cognitions, and behaviors in interactions with others. Moreover, these working models are thought to become increasingly stable across the lifespan, exercising their power on adolescent and adult relationships, as well as on romantic love between adults (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Simpson, Rholes, & Phillips, 1996).

Accordingly, Ainsworth (1978) identified and named three patterns of attachment or security-seeking behavior in children: secure, ambivalent, and avoidant. According to Ainsworth, children with secure relationships used their caregivers and their proximity as a base of comfort and security to regulate and reduce distress when they were upset. Children who had ambivalent (anxious) relationships made clinging, hypervigilant, inconsistent, and conflicted attempts to

glean emotional support from their caregivers. Their actions reflected their underlying uncertainty about the caregivers' availability and supportiveness. Finally, children with avoidant relationships did not seek support from their caregivers even when distressed in an effort to deal with the impinging distress by adopting a detached attitude (cited in Mikulincer, Orbach, & Iavnieli, 1998).

### **Attachment Styles in Adults**

A number of studies have shown that an adult's attachment style is related to his or her attachment history from childhood and subsequent working models about various relationships (e.g. Feeney & Noller, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987). According to Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (1998), secure adult attachment is characterized by the combination of a positive-self model and a positive model of others. Secure individuals have an internalized sense of self-worth and are comfortable with intimacy in close relationships (Bartholomew & Shaver, 1998). Brennan et al. (1998) used the term "preoccupied" to describe what Ainsworth (1978) and Shaver & Hazan (1987) called anxious-ambivalent. Preoccupied attachment is characterized by a negative self-model and a positive model of others. The preoccupied individuals desire close relationships (positive other) but feel insecure or even worthless (negative self); (Klohn & John, 1998). Preoccupied individuals anxiously seek to gain acceptance and validation from others, seeming to persist in the belief that they could attain safety, or security, if they could only get others to respond properly toward them (Brenann et al., 1998).

Brennan et al. (1998) added two more subcategories into the original avoidant category: fearful and dismissing. Fearful individuals, like the preoccupied, are highly dependent on others' acceptance and affirmation (negative self). However, because of their negative expectations, they avoid intimacy to avert the pain of loss or rejection (negative other). Those in the dismissive

subcategory are characterized by a positive self model and a negative model of others. They feel competent and self-sufficient (positive self) but view others as not dependable or even rejecting (negative other); (Klohnen & John, 1998). Dismissive individuals, because of their negative expectations of others, also avoid closeness. However, they maintain a sense of self-worth by defensively denying the value of, or need for, close relationships (Klohnen & John, 1998).

### **Attachment styles as romantic love styles**

Adult attachment studies have shown that an individualistic specific evaluation of one's relationship is related to his or her attachment style in theoretically consistent ways. Attachment styles may influence both partners' levels of trust, satisfaction, love, commitment, and other emotions that are characteristically associated with a relationship. For example, adults with a secure attachment style tend to report higher levels of satisfaction, trust, intimacy, and commitment in their relationships than adults with either avoidant or ambivalent/anxious types of insecure attachment styles. Avoidant adults tend to report lower levels of positive emotions in romantic relationships and report avoidant behaviors. Ambivalent/anxious adults are reported to have less satisfaction and more conflicts, distress, ambivalence, jealousy, and hostility (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Simpson, Rholes, & Phillips, 1996; Feeney & Noller, 1990; Simpson, 1990; Collins & Read, 1990). However, in some cases, insecure individuals may stay in the relationships despite these negative experiences. For example, dismissive-preoccupied (avoidant-anxious) relationships tend to last longer, in spite of negative experiences and poor evaluations of their relationship (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994).

### **Similarity as Personal Attribution to Attraction and Attachment Styles**

A similarity perspective from the personal attribution theory may provide some insights for why secure-secure relationships last and relationships involving insecure persons can endure

despite the negative evaluations of their relationships. The similarity-attraction perspective suggests that seeing oneself as similar to a partner may be associated strongly with attractions and evaluations of relationships. People would tend to be attracted to and enjoy the company of like-minded individuals (Schmitt, 2002). Further, people would recognize romantic partners as satisfying and worthy of commitment if they possess characteristics that are similar to their own personal attributes (Schmitt, 2002). Complete similarity seems to have its effect on romantic outcomes, such as romantic partner choice and initial levels of satisfaction (Berscheid, Dion, Walster, & Walster, 1971).

For example, some adult attachment studies have documented the effect of similarity as a factor of initial romantic attraction. Klohnen and Luo (2003) found that secure and preoccupied individuals, both of whom score low on avoidance, were attracted to preoccupied partners (also scoring low on avoidance). On the other hand, the fearful (high in both anxiety and avoidance) and the dismissing (low in anxiety and high in avoidance) did not find the preoccupied partner as attractive. In fact, the dismissing persons found the preoccupied persons the least attractive among people of other attachment styles.

In addition, Klohnen and Luo (2003) also found that people were most strongly attracted to the romantic partner who was most similar to their own attachment style. Persons primarily with a preoccupied attachment style found the preoccupied romantic partner most attractive, when compared to persons who were not preoccupied. Fearful individuals, compared with nonfearful individuals, rated the fearful partner as significantly more attractive. Participants scoring high on anxiety were consistently more attracted to preoccupied and fearful partners, whereas participants who scored high on the avoidance dimension were more attracted to fearful and dismissing partners (Klohnen & Luo, 2003). However, Schmitt (2002) notes that similarity

may be more important to initial attraction than to the dynamics of relationship satisfaction in enduring dating relationships. Instead, how a person perceives similarity of the partner may be more important for the process of attraction or relationship endurance than the overt similarity between the two persons.

The concept of “self-other similarity,” how one perceives their similarity to others, has been investigated by some researchers (Mikulincer & Iavnieli, 1998; Mikulincer & Horesh, 1999). Self-other similarity refers to “the evaluation of the extent to which one’s own traits and opinions are shared by others” (Mikulincer & Iavnieli, 1998, p.437). In this social comparison process, according to Mikulincer and Iavnieli (1998), people negotiate their identities and regulate cognitive distance from significant others. Overestimating the level of self-other similarity and “false consensus” (Ross, Green, & House, 1977) allows one to decrease cognitive distance from others and thereby may facilitate assimilation in one’s social surroundings (Mikulincer & Iavnieli, 1998). On the other hand, underestimating self-other similarity and emphasizing one’s unique traits and opinions allow one to increase cognitive distance and may facilitate differentiation from others (Mikulincer & Iavnieli, 1998). Campbell (1986) suggests that these variations seem to be related to one’s psychological needs for belonging, uniqueness, and self-validation and may result from basic self-regulatory mechanisms (Tesser, 1980). It has been found that people overestimate or underestimate the level of self-other similarity depending on the extent to which these biases protect or reinforce their own self-view (Tesser & Campbell, 1982).

Attachment style also seems to exert its power on self-other similarity. Mikulincer and Iavnieli (1998) have found that individuals with different attachment styles have different perceptions of self-other similarity. In their study, persons differing in attachment style

systematically differed in the extent to which their own self-descriptions were similar to their views of others' traits and opinions. Mikulincer & Iavnieli (1998) report that anxious/ambivalent persons overestimated and avoidant persons underestimated subjective self-other similarity compared to secure persons when the targeted others were themselves a source of distress or when a factor unrelated to attachment elicited a negative emotion.

Mikulincer and Iavnieli (1998) suggest that the pattern of self-other similarity scores shown by avoidant persons fits the way in which they habitually deal with distress. Avoidant individuals tend to deal with distress by deactivating the attachment system, selectively forgetting traits that are shared by themselves and others, establishing distance from others, and emphasizing mastery, self-reliance, and validation. This regulating affect may lead them to overdifferentiate themselves from their social surroundings and to overemphasize unique traits and opinions at the expense of possible commonalities with others (Mikulincer & Iavnieli, 1998). Avoidant persons also tend to inflate their positive self-view to perceive other persons as different from themselves. Hence, their habitual and regulatory attempts to suppress personal deficiencies may bring more self-inflation, whereas their attempts to maximize psychological distance from others may lead to undervaluation of self-other similarity (Mikulincer & Iavnieli, 1998).

Anxious-ambivalent persons' overestimation of similarity also supports their habitual way of regulating negative effects (Mikulincer and Iavnieli, 1998). The anxious/ambivalent deals with distress by hyperactivating the attachment system and attempting to win others' love and affection (Shaver & Hazan, 1993). Mikulincer and Iavnieli (1998) state that this distress management strategy may lead anxious-ambivalent persons to maximize their sense of connectedness to significant others and to emphasize commonalities with them. In addition to

their unique distress management strategy, anxious-ambivalent persons tend to react to distress by dismissing differences between themselves, others in general, and in particular, distressing partners (Mikulincer & Iavnieli, 1998). Anxious-ambivalent individuals also tend to devalue their self-view and to perceive other persons as negative and hence as more similar to themselves. Furthermore, these attempts to overestimate personal weakness may lend them to view compassion and love in a self-devaluating way (Mikulincer & Iavnieli, 1998).

In addition to the avoidants' need to maximize distance and feel independent, and the anxious' need to maximize commonalities and connectedness with others, projection as a defense mechanism also seems to be used in service of self-other similarity regulation. Mikulincer and Horsch (1999) suggest that insecure individuals' negative perceptions of others seem to be circumscribed to the projection of negative traits that define either their actual self- or unwanted self. Mikulincer and Horsch (1999) found that avoidant persons tended to perceive themselves as dissimilar from others, which may result from the projection onto others of traits that they do not want to possess, and the projections of traits that avoidant persons deny in themselves increases self-other dissimilarity. Moreover, avoiding persons' negative evaluations toward others may reflect their tendency to project onto others traits that they overtly reject from their self-representations. Avoiding people, or chronically defensive people, tend to deny their faults, and their efforts at avoiding thoughts about their faults are accompanied by a heightened tendency to see other people as having those same faults. Hence, avoidant persons' habitual tendency to suppress personal faults and to maintain interpersonal distance may underlie the defensive projection of unwanted self-traits.

Mikulincer and Horsch (1999) also suggest that anxious-ambivalent person's negative perceptions of others may reflect their tendency to project onto others negative traits that they

actually have themselves. That is, anxious persons tend to use their own traits in processing information about others. They hold a negative self-view and tend to describe their actual self in negative terms. Then, by projecting onto others their own actual self, they may perceive others in the same negative way they perceive themselves (Mikulincer & Horesh, 1999). Anxious persons' negative perceptions of others may also result from projective identification, may reflect their search for closeness and may minimize distance from others (Mikulincer & Horesh, 1999).

### **Hypothesis**

The current study focused on the associations between subjective estimation of self-other similarity and relationship endurance. The main hypothesis was that attachment style (ATS) would influence the level of perceived similarity in traits to a partner, one's preferences for similarity in partners' ATS, and relationship endurance. It was expected that dismissive individuals would score the lowest in the self-other similarity task, and that Preoccupied individuals would score the highest. It also was expected that perceived ATS of a partner as well as subjective estimation of self-other similarity influenced by one's ATS would have an impact on relationship endurance.

### **Method**

#### Participants

One hundred and fifty seven students in psychology classes at Eastern Michigan University (97 women and 46 men ranging in age from 18 to 47, *M* of 21.69 years, *SD* of 4.52 years) participated in the for extra credit in a courses. Data from eight of the participants were excluded due to incomplete questionnaires or involvement in same-sex relationships. Ethnicity of the participants was as follows: 98 European Americans, 25 African Americans, 3 Hispanic Americans, 1 Native American, 3 Asian American, 6 Asians, 1 Arab American, 5 Arabians, 1

Middle Easterner, and 3 biracial participants.

### Material and Procedure

Participants were tested individually and were told that they were participating in a study about styles of romantic relationships. The attachment style of the participants was assessed by asking the participants to complete Brennan et al.'s (1998) Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR), a 36-item self-report attachment measure; see Appendix A. The measure was used to create three subscales: secure, dismissing, and fearful. To increase reliability of the questionnaire, 11 items which measure honesty in Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire (ZKPQ) were randomly added among the items in the ECR. The items included statements such as "It doesn't bother me if someone takes advantage of me," and "I never have any trouble understanding anything I read the first time I read it"; see Appendix B.

Next, participants were asked to complete the Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) in order to assess their partner's attachment style and partner preference; see Appendix C. This questionnaire described characteristics of each of the attachment styles. Secure, preoccupied, fearful, and dismissing are styles A, B, C, and D, respectively. Participants were asked to indicate the style that best describes their partners or the style that is closest to the way their partners are, and then they were asked to rate each of the relationship styles above to indicate how well or poorly each description corresponds to their partners' general relationship style. If a participant was not currently involved in a relationship, the participant was asked to recall and choose one particular partner from the past. If a participant has never been involved in a relationship, the participant was asked to imagine that you have a partner. Since it was the participants themselves who described the partners' ATs, not the partner themselves, the described partner ATs are considered to be perceived ATs from

the participants' viewpoints, not actual ATSSs.

The participants also were asked to complete a trait rating task (Higgins et al., 1985) to measure their estimation of self-other similarity in relation to their partners. In this task, participants were asked to choose one item from each of 16 categories, each of which contained 10 different adjectives that described personality characteristics; see Appendix D. The listed adjectives used in this study were randomly derived from items in 16 Personality Dimension Factors (16PDF). From the listed 160 adjectives, participants were asked to choose: (a) 16 traits that define themselves from their own point of view on a list and (b) 16 traits that define their current, past, or imagined partner, on two separate lists. Then they were asked to rate the extent to which they and their partner possess each of the chosen traits on a scale ranging from 1 (a little) to 5 (extreme).

Self-other similarity was computed using Higgins et al.'s (1985) procedure: I counted (a) the number of matches (that is, the number of synonyms that occurred in the two lists and did not differ in extent of more than one), (b) the number of semantic mismatches (that is, the number of traits in one list that had semantic opposites in the other list), and (c) the number of mismatches of extent (that is, the number of synonyms that differed by more than one in the participants' ratings of the extent to which they and their partner possessed a trait). Then, semantic mismatches were given a weight of 2, mismatches of extent were given a weight of 1, the two types of mismatches were summed, and the sum was subtracted from the total number of matches. The higher the score, the higher the similarity between self-description and partner description.

## **Results**

### Attachment styles of participants and their partner.

Twenty-four percent of the participants ( $n = 35$ ) classified themselves as secure, 25 % as fearful ( $n = 37$ ), 32 % as preoccupied/anxious/ambivalent ( $n = 47$ ), and 18 % as dismissing ( $n = 26$ ). The distribution of perceived partners' attachment styles were somewhat different. Forty one percent of the participants ( $n = 59$ ) described their partner's attachment style as secure, 31% as fearful ( $n = 45$ ), 16% as preoccupied/anxious/ambivalent ( $n = 21$ ), and 14% as dismissing ( $n = 20$ ). For comparison of participants' ATS and their partners' perceived ATS, see Figure 1.

These data also showed patterns of attachment style pairings of the participants with 12 % as secure-secure ( $n = 17$ ), 15% as secure-fearful ( $n = 21$ ), 21% as secure-preoccupied ( $n = 31$ ), 6% as secure-dismissive ( $n = 8$ ), 9% as fearful-fearful ( $n = 13$ ), 15% as fearful-preoccupied ( $n = 21$ ), 10% as fearful-dismissive ( $n = 14$ ), 1.4% as preoccupied-preoccupied ( $n = 2$ ), 8% as preoccupied-dismissing ( $n = 12$ ) and 4.1% as dismissive-dismissive ( $n = 6$ ).

#### Participants' Similarity Estimation and Participants' Attachment Styles

One-way ANOVA for participants' ATSs and their similarity estimation to their partner revealed no significant influences of participants' ATSs on similarity estimation and no significant differences in the estimation,  $F(3, 140) = 2.065, P > .05$ ; see figure 2. Contrary to my prior hypothesis that dismissive participants would score the lowest in the self-other similarity estimation task, in actuality, fearful persons scored lowest in self-other similarity ( $M = -14.30, SD = 8.73$ ). Also contrary to my hypothesis that preoccupied individuals would score the highest in the similarity estimation task, secure persons scored highest in the estimation ( $M = -8.91, SD = 8.95$ ), and preoccupied persons scored lower ( $M = -12.47, SD = 10.59$ ) than dismissive persons ( $M = -11.68, SD = 8.12$ ).

Similarity estimation scores among the participants ranged from -37 to + 12 ( $M = -9.8$ ,

$SD = 9.13$ ). Since there were too many discrepancies in the scores, their scores were grouped in to the level of similarity estimation (Low, Moderate, and High) in order to equalize group sizes of patterns of estimating similarity, based on the standard deviations in the similarity scores. The range of the low estimation group was from -37 to -19, the moderate estimation group was from -18 to -1, and the high estimation group was from 0 to +12.

Chi-Square for participants' attachment styles and levels of similarity estimation was used to find whether the participants' ATs were related to particular patterns of similarity estimation level. Chi-squares did not show any significant patterns between participants' attachment styles and the level of similarity estimation,  $\chi^2(9, 145) = 6.09, p > .05$ .

#### Participants' Similarity Estimation and Partners' perceived Attachment Styles

One-way ANOVA for partner's perceived ATs and participants' similarity estimation revealed that perceived partners' ATs were significantly related to the participants' estimation of similarity to their real or imagined partners,  $F(3, 39) = 5.365, p < .05$ ; see Table 1. Post Hoc Test using Tukey HSD also showed more specific partner attachment style difference in the participants' similarity estimation. The participants who were perceiving a relationship with partners with a secure attachment style estimated the similarity to their partner significantly differently ( $M = -6.48, SD = 7.13$ ) from the participants with Fearful partners ( $M = -11.48, SD = 9.40$ ) and Dismissive partners ( $M = -16.22, SD = 7.85$ ). However, participants with preoccupied partners did not significantly differ from other participants in similarity estimation.

Chi-Square for partners' perceived attachment styles and levels of similarity estimation was used to find patterns of participants' rating their similarity to their partners according to how they perceived the ATs of the partner. Chi-Square 3 X 4 table for partners' perceived four ATs

and three different levels of estimation showed significant patterns of perceived partner ATS and a level of similarity estimation,  $\chi^2(9, 145) = 26.141, p < .05$ ; See figure 3. As the figure 3 shows, the largest number of participants who judged their partners as highly similar was found among the participants with perceived or imagined secure partners (22%), compared to the participants with partners with other attachment styles (fearful partners = 6.7%, Preoccupied partners = 4.8%, dismissive partners = 0%).

No single participant who reported having real or imaginary a dismissive partner estimated that their dismissive partners were highly similar to them. Participants who scored significantly low in the similarity estimation task were found to be among the participants with either fearful partners or dismissive partners. Thirty three percent of the participants with fearful partners and 45 % of the participants with dismissive partners described themselves as dissimilar to their partners, compared to the participants with secure partners (11.9%) and the preoccupied partners (19.0 %). Participants with preoccupied partners did not significantly differ in similarity estimation from other groups.

### Combinations of Participants' and Partners' Perceived Attachment Styles for Similarity

#### Estimation

Two-way ANOVA for participants' and partners' ATSs and their effects on participants' similarity estimation showed that interactions of ATSs of a dyad indeed had a significant effect on the similarity estimation,  $F(6, 39) = 2.25, p < .05$ . The t- test for each pattern of combinations of attachment styles of participants and partners showed significant and specific patterns of attachment styles in levels of similarity estimation (Low, Moderate, and High); see Table 1. (However, the number of some patterns of relationships and degrees of freedom were too small to provide a stable estimate of the differences between relationship patterns. Hence, the

results of the t-test are only a suggestion. )

On one hand, partners who were perceived to be secure were estimated to be highly similar to the participants, irrespective of the ATSS of the participants. Secure and fearful participants perceived their preoccupied partners as highly similar. The highest percentage of perceived high-similarity to partners was found among relationships of dyads whose ATSS were both Secure (29.4%).

On the other hand, irrespective of the ATSS of participants, their dismissive partners were perceived as dissimilar. The highest percentage of estimated dissimilarity was found in relationships between fearful participants and their dismissive partners (60%). Fifty percent of preoccupied participants with preoccupied partners estimated dissimilarity to their partners, and 100% of the dismissive participants with dismissive partners estimated moderate similarity to their partners.

#### Parings of Attachment Style and Duration of Relationship

One-way ANOVA showed that significant difference in effect on relationship endurance participants' sole ATSS or among partner's sole perceived ATSS did not have significant effect on relationship endurance. However, Tests of Between-Subject effects in Multivariate Tests showed that interactions between partner's ATSS and participants' ATSS were related to duration of their relationships,  $F(6, 21) = 2.168, p < .05$ . It seemed that relationships of dyads who were perceived to have the same attachment style tended to be more lasting (secure-secure:  $M = 32.6$  months,  $SD = 35.89$ , fearful-fearful:  $M = 32.1, SD = 27.37$ , dismissive-dismissive:  $M = 42.3, SD = 27.85$ ), compared to relationships of dyads with different ATSS.

Although dyads with same ATSS seem to have the longest-lasting relationships, an exception occurred among preoccupied - dismissive relationships in the present study.

Preoccupied-preoccupied relationships were less lasting ( $M = 33.8, SD = 42.92$ ) than preoccupied-dismissive relationships ( $M = 18.0, SD = 8.48$ ). Although there were not enough number of relationships to conduct a t-test for the length of the relationships, data suggests that there may be differences in the length of relationships between combinations of ATSS.

#### Similarity Estimation, Attachment styles, and Duration of Relationship

One-way ANOVA showed that participants' subjective estimation of a self-other similarity was significantly related to the duration of relationships,  $F(39, 29) = .848, p < .05$ . Moreover, two-way ANOVA showed that interactions of similarity estimation and a participant's attachment style were significantly related to relationship duration,  $F(21, 29) = 10.04, p < .05$ . As mentioned above, relationships consisting of individuals with the same ATS tended to last longer. The t-test showed some significant differences on effects of similarity estimation and ATS on the duration of relationships; see table 2. As table 2 shows, all securely attached participants tended to rate themselves moderate or high similar to their partners who were also secure ( $M = -5.38, SD = 8.42$ ), and their relationships tended to last long ( $M = 32.62, SD = 35.89$ ). On the other hand, preoccupied, fearful, and dismissive participants with securely attached partners felt moderately or highly similar to their secure partners ( $M = -7.02, SD = 9.01$ ), but their relationships tended to be less lasting ( $M = 19.33, SD = 17.41$ ). Interestingly, preoccupied, fearful, or dismissive participants with partners whose ATS was perceived to be the same tended to see dissimilarity in their insecure partners ( $M = -16.65, SD = 7.63$ ), but their relationships were as lasting as the secure-secure relationships ( $M = 37.2, SD = 27.61$ ). (Preoccupied-preoccupied relationships did not.)

### **Discussion**

The current findings highlight the association between attachment styles (ATSS), the

duration of romantic relationships, and the subjective estimation of self-other similarity, the extent to which participants' own self-descriptions are similar to their view of their partners' traits. The main hypothesis was that attachment style (ATS) would influence one's preferences for similarity in partners' ATS, the level of perceived similarity in traits to a partner, and relationship endurance. It was expected that dismissive individuals would score the lowest in the self-other similarity task, and that preoccupied individuals would score the highest. It also was expected that perceived ATS of a partner as well as subjective estimation of self-other similarity influenced by one's ATS would have an impact on relationship endurance.

There are four findings in the present study. First, one tends to feel similar to a partner if the partner has a secure attachment style, irrespective of one's own ATS. Secondly, relationships consisting of two individuals perceived to be the same ATS tend to be more lasting. The third finding is that, in secure-secure relationships, perceived self-other similarity, perceived ATS similarity may play important roles in relationship endurance. Similarly, in lasting relationships of two individuals with the same insecure ATS, perceived ATS similarity and self-other dissimilarity seem to exercise big influence.

The diagram in Figure 4 summarizes the findings of the current study. It attempts to explain how security, perceived attachment similarity, perceived similarity as well as dissimilarity interact with each other as complementary factors, contributing to the duration of relationships. It also suggests that whether the relationships last long or end soon may depend on how these factors are combined.

First, one's security and that of one's partner seem to play an important role in estimating similarity in traits to partners. In the present study, all secure participants perceived high or moderate similarity in traits in their perceived secure partners. In addition, there were more

insecure participants who felt similar to their perceived secure partners while secure participants estimated moderate or low similarity to their insecure partners (dismissive and fearful). It was interesting that even dismissive and fearful participants, who usually perceive others as dissimilar to them, tended to perceive that their secure partners were highly similar to them.

These findings may indicate that security in secure persons may allow people to perceive themselves as similar to the secure partners. In addition to security's influence on people's perception of similarity, it may also influence people's selection of what kind of person with whom people want to become involved or have relationship. If people want to attain a sense of security for themselves, naturally they may become attracted to a secure person and come to want to be around the person. Sharing similar experiences with a secure person may lead people feeling more similarity to the person, and hence, more liking. Similarly, Klonhen and Luo (2003) found that their participants' ideal self-descriptions were also most similar to the secure prototype descriptions and found the secure partners the most attractive, compared to partners with insecure attachment styles. Their findings and the current findings may indicate that perceiving a partner as securely attached may be strongly interrelated to selection of a partner, feeling attracted to, and perceiving similarity to the partner, irrespective to perceivers' attachment style.

Findings in the present study also indicated that individuals tended to perceive the partners to be more secure than they actually are. Discrepancies were found between the number of actually secure and insecure participants (including preoccupied, fearful, and dismissive) and their perceived secure and insecure partners. There were more participants who described their partners as secure than the number of participants' partners who were actually categorized as secure by using the self-report ATS questionnaire. Also, there were fewer perceived insecure

partners than actually insecurely attached participants, which may indicate that some preoccupied participants felt that their partners were securely attached. This unequal distribution of secure and preoccupied ATS among participants and their partners suggests that individuals in relationships may perceive their partners as secure although their partners' actual ATS is not secure.

Combined Klohnen and Luo's findings (security as ideal) with the findings of the current study (overly perceived similarity to secure partners and perceiving security in a partner though it may not exist), one may suggest that a person may tend to aspire for security in a partner, and feel similar to a secure partner as ideal, regardless of whether the security is perceived or actual. One may feel similar to a secure partner perhaps because he or she wishes to feel or to become secure through identifying himself to the secure partner or because he or she shares experiences and day-to-day events with the secure partner. The perceived similarity to the (perceived) secure partner hence may lead the person to feel attracted to the partner. Fletcher et al. (2000) state that partner perception in general, and the positivity of such perception in particular, are strongly associated with relationship satisfaction and stability both concurrently and longitudinally (cited in Klohnen & Luo, 2003). Hence, one's ideals or general perceptions about what partners must be like may be more powerful for getting involved in romantic relationships than what they actually are in reality. If such ideal or perceptions are similar to one's ideal or goals, one may feel attracted to the partner and try to work for the relationship more positively.

Secondly, it was found that relationships consisting of individuals with perceived same attachment styles tended to last longer, except in the case of preoccupied-dismissive relationships. Secure-secure, fearful-fearful, and dismissive-dismissive relationships tended to last long in the present study. Unexpectedly dismissive-dismissive relationships were the most

lasting ones in the current study. This is surprising because people with dismissive attachment style are characterized by being the least able to maintain a relationship and by having the lowest level of satisfaction and commitment in relationships. This finding may imply that perceived similarity of partners' ATSs are more important than their actual attachment styles for relationships to endure.

The reason that most same ATS relationships tend to last long may be because perceiving a partner as having a similar ATS may lead an individual to feel more attracted to the partner. Also, behavior or beliefs of a partner having a similar attachment style may be found familiar and predictable to a person, hence more pleasant, safe, and more attraction (Klohnen & Luo, 2003). Perceived safeness and predictability may be an important factor for lasting relationships. Individuals choose and stay with partners who will act in ways that confirm their own expectations (i.e., working models) about relationships (Bartholomew, 1990; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994).

For example, secure people tend to expect that people are warm, friendly, and dependable, and that they should be interdependent with partners in a relationship, which may facilitate more constructive conflict solutions. Fearful individuals may expect that people are rejecting and untruthful, and that they do not like feeling inferior before others, which may create less satisfactory relationships for them. Individuals in relationships may follow their own attachment style and expect partners to behave according to their working model. The partners, in return, if their attachment style is the same as the other person's ATS, may also act in similar ways and have the same expectations for their partner's behavior. Having similar expectations and patterns of behavior toward one another may create predictability, and it may contribute to more stability in the relationship, even though it may not necessarily lead to relationship

satisfaction. In sum, it seems that similar attachment styles in individuals may look attractive and create predictable, safe atmospheres, thereby contributing to romantic relationship endurance. This suggests that we tend to choose people as partners with patterns of behavior we are familiar with.

Thirdly, in the case of secure-secure relationships, which tended to be lasting longest of all relationships, there were perceived similarities both in ATS and self-other traits. A secure attachment style may lead to perceiving similarity and feeling more attraction to a person who has a similar ATS, in addition to security in the other person being desirable and perhaps imitated.

Attraction based on similarity may be important only for initial stage of romantic relationships (Schmitt, 2002), but security in a dyad may exert a power that helps maintain the relationship positively. Security in both persons may work in such a way that it helps the persons make stronger commitment to and feel more satisfied in the relationship, and to create situations in which compromising and resolving conflict are easier for them. Not only attraction to each others' security, but also these positive aspects of secure relationships may interact with each other and contribute to more lasting relationships. Hence, in secure-secure relationships, the combination of ATS similarity between the two secure people, security as ideal in both partners, and perceived personality similarity to each other, and positive relational features brought by the dyad's security may contribute to their lasting relationships.

The security in a partner may have power for more lasting relationship only if both partners have a sense of security within themselves. In secure-insecure relationships, although insecure participants tended to feel highly similar to secure partners (security as ideal), secure participants felt dissimilar to insecure (dismissive and fearful) partners, who did not have

security within themselves. Secure people perceiving dissimilarity to insecure partners may feel less attraction to them, and their relationships in the present study actually tended to be less lasting.

In addition, even if two individuals in a relationship perceive similarity to each other, a relationship that lacks in security may not last long. In secure-preoccupied relationships, both individuals tended to perceive each other as highly similar, but their relationship tended to be short-term. Although there may have been shared perceived similarity between these individuals in the relationship, the secure individual may have felt that he or she cannot depend completely on the partner who is constantly inconsistent and anxious. Moreover, the preoccupied individual may lack skills to maintain a relationship both constructively and positively. Therefore, the effect of security in one individual in a relationship may have no influence on the length of the relationship unless the partner has a sense of security and appropriate skills to maintain the relationship, and unless there are mutual perceived similarities to each other's attachment style.

Finally, in insecure-insecure relationships (fearful or dismissive type), there seem to be an effect of perceived similarity in ATS on the length of the relationships. As with secure-secure relationships, insecure people tended to have more lasting relationships with a person who is perceived to have the same type of insecure ATS. Fearful-fearful relationships and dismissive-dismissive relationships tended to last longer than other combinations of insecure ATSs. (Exception occurred among preoccupied - preoccupied relationships and preoccupied-dismissive relationships, which will be discussed later.) In addition, whereas individuals in secure-secure relationships perceived similarities in both ATS and self-other traits, individuals in lasting insecure-insecure relationships perceived ATS similarity and perceived dissimilarity in self-other traits to partners. That is, although these insecure participants themselves indicated that their

partners were insecure, they felt that they were not similar to their partners at all. This was especially true for participants who scored high in dismissive or fearful dimensions. Also, dismissive partners were seen as dissimilar by fearful, preoccupied, and secure participants. Similarly, Klohnen and Luo (2003) found that fearful and dismissive partners tended to be rated as less attractive than secure or preoccupied partners.

These findings suggest that both secure and insecure people see anxiety and avoidance, so characteristic of insecure people's behaviors and beliefs as unattractive and contrary to their ideal for relationships. Avoidance in both fearful and dismissive individuals may be more aversive to a partner than anxiety. Anxiety about being abandoned and preoccupation about the relationship can be interpreted as sign of liking or attention, although extreme anxiety or preoccupation could be annoying or even aversive. Whereas anxiety can be seen as one way of expressing affection, avoidance may be seen as a signal of less liking, disinterest in, or less commitment to a relationship. Therefore, insecure partners, especially those high in avoidance, such as fearful and dismissive partners, may be seen as unattractive, and hence, dissimilar. Individuals, irrespective of their ATSs, may not want to see themselves as similar to anxious or avoiding partners who do not have the security that they want to attain in relationships.

Moreover, insecure individuals may perceive dissimilarity to an insecure partner due to projection mechanism may also underlie the insecure people's tendency to perceive dissimilarity to the insecure partner. In the current study, insecure participants, who perceived their fearful partners and dismissive partners as significantly dissimilar may be defensively projecting their own ATS onto their partners, and hence, described them as both fearful or dismissive, and dissimilar to them. As discussed in the introduction, Mikulincer and Hirsfeld (1999) found that avoidant persons tend to perceive themselves as dissimilar from others, which may result from

the defensive projection onto of others traits that they do not want to possess, and, hence, the projections of traits that avoidant persons deny in themselves increases self-other dissimilarity.

It is also likely that the projection mechanism allowed insecure participants to remain unaware that they are insecurely attached, which was shown in the results that more insecure participants felt similar to secure partners and dissimilar to insecure partners. Especially in the cases of individuals scoring high on dismissiveness who tend to have positive views of self and negative views of others, the mechanism may allow them to become even more unaware of their own insecurity and feel even more positive and unique about themselves and more negative about others.

Therefore, the defensive projection may allow dismissive or fearful individuals to stay in relationships with other similarly insecure individuals. As discussed above, findings indicated that people may need to perceive themselves as having ATS to the partner's ATS in order for their relationships to last longer. However, if they acknowledge that their own ATS is insecure, similar to their insecure partners, their self-esteem or confidence may be threatened. Then, the defensive strategy that they choose in order to maintain both self-esteem and relationships with insecure partner may be projection and perceiving dissimilarity to the partner.

On the other hand, it is also possible that, even though dismissive people are disinterested in other people, they can maintain a relationship as long as their partners do not cause troubles or become a burden to them. Their disinterest in others may be seen in data that all dismissive participants rated themselves as only moderate similar to their dismissive partners. Since both dismissive individuals in a relationship tend not to interfere with each other, it may appear as if they were managing the relationship quite well, and the relationship is likely to last longer. In addition, another reason they may stay in a relationship in which they do not receive much

affection from dismissive partners may be that they tend to perceive the state in which they are “in love” as desirable (Aron, 1998). They do not necessarily perceive that their romantic partner has desirable traits or that staying in a relationship with the partner is desirable. Rather, what looks desirable for them is feeling intense emotion toward someone and enacting the social role of the unreciprocated lover. Should the dismissive partner reciprocate the love, the intensity of his or her love may decline. Aron’s finding may be consistent with prototypical characteristics of dismissive ATS in which individuals feel unique and positive about themselves. Hence, love between dismissive partners is likely to be unreciprocated, and their experience of intense attraction, which may not be necessarily directed to the partner, may be maintained. However, they may in actuality just be disinterested in partners, “independent,” and having low collaboration or cohesion for a relationship (Bartholomew, 1996).

Mikulincer and Horesh (1999) suggest that anxious-ambivalent person’s negative perceptions may reflect their tendency to project onto others negative traits that define their actual self. Anxious persons hold a negative self-views and tend to describe their actual self in negative terms. Then, by projecting onto others their own actual self, they may perceive others in the same negative way they perceive themselves. Their projected identity may function as a search for closeness and may minimize distance from others (Mikulincer & Horesh, 1999). In the present study, preoccupied participants tended to see high self-other similarity only with secure partners. Fearful, dismissive, or preoccupied partners tended to perceive dissimilarity. It is necessary to investigate further whether preoccupied /anxious people perceive similarity to any person, or to what type of partner preoccupied individuals see more self-other similarity. In addition, Klohnen and Luo (2003) found that preoccupied people were mostly attracted to preoccupied partners. The findings of preoccupied - preoccupied relationships in this study

conflict with findings of other research. This is probably because there were only two pairs of preoccupied-preoccupied relationships in this study, and this was too few to permit significant or statistically reliable results.

It is not clear from the current data how projection of fearful people works, since there is no literature on the subject. Dismissive ATS (high in avoidance and low in anxiety) and fearful (high in both avoidance and anxiety) are subcategories of avoidant ATS in the categorization by Bartholomew (1991) and Brennan (1998). In terms of similarity estimation in the present study, the data of fearful participants seem to fall between those of the dismissive and the preoccupied. There were both fearful participants with fearful partners who felt similar to the partners (15.45%) and other fearful participants who perceived dissimilarity to the partner (38.5%). Like preoccupied participants, fearful participants with dismissive tended to feel dissimilar to their partners. Also, unlike participants with other insecure ATSs, fearful participants with preoccupied partners tended to feel moderately or highly similar to the partners. Since high anxiety and high avoidance are expected to coexist in fearful individuals, their projection can be used as both defensive and identification or as either a defense or identification, depending on the level of anxiety and avoidance dimensions in the partner. If the quality in an insecure partner is perceived to be less aversive (Anxiety), people may identify with the anxious partner and feel similar to the partner in negative ways. On the other hand, if people feel that their insecure partner's behaviors are signs of a lack of affection or interest (avoidance), they may protect themselves by perceiving the partners as dissimilar to them. In the case in which a partner shows both anxiety and avoidance (fearful partner), fearful individuals may perceive more dissimilarity to the partner, because avoidance may be more aversive and reflect a more undesirable aspect of the fearful individual. Experimental investigation will be needed to find how fearful individuals,

who are high in both avoidance and anxiety, use the projection mechanism and with what type of partners they use it. It also may be necessary to examine how much similarity and dissimilarity a fearful individual perceives in another fearful individual.

In contrast to fearful or dismissive individuals who tended to have longer relationships with partners of the same ATS in the present study, preoccupied individuals seemed to have longer relationships with dismissive partners, rather than with partners with the same preoccupied ATS. Neither dismissive nor preoccupied individuals had security as ideal, similar ATS as their partners, or perceived similarity for each other's traits. Kirkpatrick and Davis (1994) found that preoccupied - dismissive relationships were more lasting despite negative evaluation of the relationships. Particularly, those relationships, in which the woman was ambivalent and the man avoidant, were relatively frequent and rather enduring, even though partners reported less than satisfying relationship experiences (Collins & Read, 1990; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Simpson, 1990). Then, why does this relationship tend to last? Prior research with dating and married couples has documented that individuals do not always choose partners with similar ATSS.

Ambivalent-avoidant (preoccupied-dismissive) pairs may develop as a result of a social selection process whereby individuals choose partners who will act in ways that confirm their own expectations (i.e., working models) about relationships (Bartholomew, 1990; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994). For instance, an ambivalent person faced with an avoidant partner who fears intimacy and closeness receives confirmation of his/her working model of relationships in which others are reluctant to get close and unwilling to make a commitment to the relationship (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Kirkpatrick and Davis (1994) also suggested that anxious-ambivalent women, due to their concerns of abandonment and a preoccupation with relationships, were thought to

have the necessary skills to maintain their relationships, although the skills may not necessarily lead the preoccupied persons to positive and satisfactory relationships.

In addition, Aron (1998) found that anxious/ambivalent individuals in the study may have the greatest tendency to have unreciprocated love (UL). Aron (1998) also suggests that perceived potential value of a relationship with another and perceived probability of such a relationship, even if it is UL, may contribute to an even more intensified UL. A dismissive partner's lack of involvement in a relationship is less likely to create a perfect relationship that a preoccupied partner imagines. But it may maintain the perceived potentiality of romance (unreciprocated love) that allows the preoccupied to stay in the relationship with the dismissive. Hence, a preoccupied partner for whom potentiality for a relationship is desirable may continue to have unreciprocated love in relationships with dismissive partners who do not show affection regardless of how "satisfied" or dissatisfied they are. Thus, as Schmitt (2002) notes, personal attributes in a dyad interact in a way that affects the duration a relationship, rather than the relationship enjoyment and satisfaction of a relationship.

### **Conclusion**

Actual and overt similarity and personal traits in only one romantic partner may not have a direct influence on how long a relationship last. Rather, the extent of perceived similarity in a partner's personality traits and attachment styles may more strongly influence the types of a partner with whom an individual can maintain relationships. In both relationship maintenance and in the attraction process, "Individuals' perception of potential romantic partners rather than the partners' actual characteristics may play an even greater role" (Klohn & Luo, 2003, p.719). On one hand if a person subjectively judges that he or she is similar to the partner, there may be more attraction to the partner, even though in reality the partner is not actually similar. If a

person judges that the partner is dissimilar, projection may lead to feelings of attraction to the partner, even though the partner actually may be similar. It seems that people experience a romantic relationship in their mind with a romantic partner who fits their perception and ideas about others (working model) based on prior experience. Whether attraction occurs or a relationship endures seems to depend not on actual characteristics of only one partner, but rather on the subjective perception of both partners.

There were several methodological problems in the current study. First, the materials used for the current study did not ask the participants whether they were currently involved in the relationship mentioned in the questionnaire, or whether this was a relationship on the participants' past, or whether this was an imagined relationship. This made duration of relationship hard to evaluate; the relationship could have ended recently, or it could have started recently. In addition, because this study is a one-time study, not a longitudinal study, the results of this study are not able to predict what factors lead to a short or lasting relationship in the future. Also, there was no question that asked the level of satisfaction or happiness the participants felt in their relationships, which would have given more control on variables and results.

Furthermore, the present study could not determine accurately what partners' attachment styles were, and the influence of attachment styles on partner selection for enduring relationships, because there was not data from the partners. Attachment styles of partners were evaluated by the participants; therefore, they were likely to be influenced by recent experiences with the partner, or by the participants' own attachment styles. Further, the number of participants was not large enough to generate statistical validity of the results. The number of particular ATS patterns, such as fearful-dismissive relationships was less than five. Some

variables could not be evaluated, because there was not enough data. For future study, more participants and data from both partners in a relationship will be needed to accurately determine the power of ATS in the perception of relationships and its influence on relationship endurance; the perceived ATS could be compared to the actual ATS of partners.

Another methodological problem concerned the self-other similarity task. The participants were asked to choose adjectives to describe themselves and their partners. Words or items that were chosen by the participants and were considered to be synonyms or antonyms were given different scores to compute the degree of perceived similarity or dissimilarity. However, the same semantic meanings need not be used by all the participants; some people have a different idea about the meaning of particular words. Also, some participants seemed confused during the task. Some participants did not know the meaning of some words at all. In the questions where a word had several different meanings depending on the context, other participants seemed to interpret the meanings of those words differently than the current study intended them to be. It may be difficult to determine whether participants had the same ideas or concept when they chose words that described themselves and their partners. During the process of data collection, it is possible that the synonyms which participants chose to describe the similarity of their traits to partners actually were counted as antonym, and vice versa. It may be critical to use simpler words or to provide an explanation for the meanings of words that are likely to be confused.

Some compounding variables in terms of similarity estimation and patterns of attachment styles of partners in relationships were found among participants with particular backgrounds. Some participants had backgrounds of Arabic or Asian culture, in which there tends to be less individual choice for romantic relationships and marriages than in Western culture. In their

cultures, many of their relationship and marriage partners tend to be arranged by their family members, and their customs also tend to encourage people, especially women, to marry at a younger age than American culture does. Thus, on one hand, ATs of European American or African American participants of the same age as the Arabic participants may influence their attachment style and how they relate to partners and develop their relationships. On the other hand, ATs of Arabic or Asian participants may have less influence on their relational development or endurance due to less individual choice allowed by their culture. In addition, in Asian culture, their collectivism tends to discourage people, especially men, to express their emotions and tends to emphasize less about individuals' experiences in romantic relationships. Asian male participants may have described themselves as having fearful or dismissive attachment style due to the cultural influence on expressions of emotion, even though their ATs were not actually fearful or dismissive. Also, Asian participants who scored low in fearful or dismissive dimensions may be able to stay in a relationship with fearful or dismissive partners with fewer conflicts or less dissatisfactions because the partners' behaviors are culturally expected ones. Thus, Asian's ATs may not be consistent with prototypes of ATs among North Americans or Europeans. Hence, variables from these participants may have compounded the current investigation of how attachment style influenced the similarity estimation, or how the similarity estimation was related to relationship endurance. For future studies, these variables need to be controlled to have more stable and accurate pictures of romantic relationships common in North America.

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Appendix list

- Appendix A----- Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR)
- Appendix B -----11 items from Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire (ZKPQ)
- Appendix C--- ----- Relationship Questionnaire (RQ)
- Appendix D--- -----Self-other similarity estimation task

Appendix A. Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR)

*To answer questions that ask you to describe your partner, please recall the partner with whom you are currently having a relationship. If you are not currently involved in a relationship, please recall and choose one particular partner from the past. If you have never been involved in a relationship, please imagine that you have a partner.*

*The following statements concern how you feel in romantic relationships. We are interested in how you generally experience relationships, not just in what is happening in a current relationship. Respond to each statement by indicating how much you agree or disagree with it. Write the number in the space provided, using the following rating scale:*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/ Mixed			Agree Strongly

- 1. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.
- 2. I worry about being abandoned.
- 3. I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners.
- 4. It doesn't bother me if someone takes advantage of me.
- 5. I worry a lot about my relationships.
- 6. Just when my partner starts to get close to me I find myself pulling away.
- 7. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.
- 8. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.
- 9. Sometimes I think that nuclear war is not such a bad idea.
- 10. I worry a fair amount about losing my partner.
- 11. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.
- 12. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him/her.
- 13. I never met a person that I didn't like.
- 14. I want to get close to my partner, but I keep pulling back.
- 15. I often want to merge completely with my romantic partners, and this sometimes scares them away.
- 16. I am nervous when my partners get too close to me.
- 17. I worry about being alone.
- 18. I never have any trouble understanding anything I read the first time I read it.
- 19. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.
- 20. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.
- 21. I try to avoid getting too close to my partner.
- 22. I have always told the truth.
- 23. I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by my partner.
- 24. I have never lost anything.
- 25. I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.
- 26. Sometimes I feel that I force my partners to show more feeling, more commitment.
- 27. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.
- 28. I do not often worry about being abandoned.
- 29. I always win at games.
- 30. I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.
- 31. If I can't get my partner to show interest in me, I get upset or angry.

- \_\_\_ 32. I tell my partner just about everything.
- \_\_\_ 33. I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.
- \_\_\_ 34. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.
- \_\_\_ 35. I never get annoyed when people cut ahead of me in line.
- \_\_\_ 36. When I'm not involved in a relationship, I feel somewhat anxious and insecure.
- \_\_\_ 37. I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.
- \_\_\_ 38. I have never been bored.
- \_\_\_ 39. I get frustrated when my partner is not around as much as I would like.
- \_\_\_ 40. I don't mind asking romantic partners for comfort, advice, or help.
- \_\_\_ 41. I get frustrated if romantic partners are not available when I need them.
- \_\_\_ 42. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.
- \_\_\_ 43. No matter how hot or cold, I am always quite comfortable.
- \_\_\_ 44. I never get lost, even in unfamiliar places.
- \_\_\_ 45. When my romantic partner disapproves of me, I feel really bad about myself.
- \_\_\_ 46. I turn to my partner for many things, including comfort and reassurance.
- \_\_\_ 47. I resent it when my partner spends time away from me.

Appendix B. 10 items from Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire (ZKPQ) added into the Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR)

- Question # 4. It doesn't bother me if someone takes advantage of me.
- Question # 9. Sometimes I think that nuclear war is not such a bad idea.
- Question # 13. I never met a person that I didn't like.
- Question # 18. I never have any trouble understanding anything I read the first time I read it.
- Question # 22. I have always told the truth.
- Question # 24. I have never lost anything.
- Question # 29. I always win at games.
- Question # 35. I never get annoyed when people cut ahead of me in line.
- Question # 38. I have never been bored.
- Question # 43. No matter how hot or cold, I am always quite comfortable.
- Question # 44. I never get lost, even in unfamiliar places.

*Following are four general relationship styles that people often report. Place a checkmark next to the letter corresponding to the style that best describes you or is closest to the way you are.*

\_\_\_ A. It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me.

\_\_\_ B. I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.

\_\_\_ C. I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.

\_\_\_ D. I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me.

*Now please rate each of the relationship styles above to indicate how well or poorly each description corresponds to your general relationship style.*

<b>Style A</b>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/ Mixed			Agree Strongly
<b>Style B</b>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/ Mixed			Agree Strongly
<b>Style C</b>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/ Mixed			Agree Strongly
<b>Style D</b>						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree Strongly			Neutral/ Mixed			Agree Strongly

*A. Please write down your answers for the following questions on a separate sheet of paper provided by experiment instructor.*

*1. Please pick adjectives that describe yourself and your partner from the following lists of adjectives.*

**Step 1:** Choose 1 item from each of the scales of the adjectives. **Step 2:** Write it down on a separate sheet of paper

*(a) 16 traits that define yourself from your point of view and (b) 16 traits that define your partner (or your partner in the past or in imagination).*

**Scale 1:**

Reserved, Aloof, Formal, Impersonal, Unemotional,  
Caring, Sympathetic, Generous, Expressive, Emotionally responsive, Attentive to others' needs

**Scale 2:**

Reactive, Easily upset, Feels unable to cope, Immature, Dissatisfied,  
Calm, Mature, Steady, Even tempered, Able to cope with stress

**Scale 3:**

Deferential, Accommodating, Avoids conflicts, Submissive, Passive,  
Dominant, Assertive, Competitive, Controlling, Stubborn

**Scale 4:**

Serious, Quiet, Cautious, Restrained, Reliable,  
Enthusiastic, Spontaneous, Quick, Alert, Excitement seeking

**Scale 5:**

Careless of rules, Nonconforming, Undependable, Disregards obligations,  
Expedient, Rule-conscious, Dutiful, Conscientious, Moralistic, Conforming

**Scale 6:**

Shy, Modest, Threat-sensitive, Easily embarrassed, Sensitive to criticism and stress,  
Socially bold, Talkative, Adventurous, Thick-skinned, Attention-seeking

**Scale 7:**

Unsentimental, Tough, Realistic, Rational, Avoids sensitive feelings,  
Emotionally sensitive, Sentimental, Romantic, Sympathetic, Seeks support

**Scale 8:**

Trusting, Accepting of one's lot in life, May be taken advantage of by others, Easy to get along with, Ready to forgive and forget,  
Vigilant, Suspicious, Hard to fool, Oppositional, Resentful, Dwells on affronts and frustrations

**Scale 9:**

Grounded, Practical, Unimaginative, Concerned with concrete issues, Solution-oriented,

Creative, Absorbed in ideas, Imaginative, Absentminded, Impractical

**Scale 10:**

Open, Revealing of personal matters, Unguarded, Emotionally involved,  
Private, Discreet, Calculating, Socially sophisticated, Emotionally detached

**Scale 11:**

Self-assured, Unworried, Untroubled by guilt or remorse, Assumes self-worth, Little empathy for others' insecurity or worry,  
Apprehensive, Self-doubting, Lacks confidence, Sensitive to criticism, Concerned for others

**Scale 12:**

Traditional, Attached to familiar, Prefers status quo, Resistant to change,  
Doesn't question how things are done,  
Open to change, Questions established methods, Freethinking, Open-minded, Experimenting

**Scale 13:**

Group-oriented, Affiliative, Likes to get others' opinion, Participative, Prefers company,  
Self-reliant, Self-sufficient, Individualistic, Prefers own ideas and opinions, Solitary

**Scale 14:**

Tolerates disorder, Uncontrolled, Spontaneous, Careless, Follows own urges,  
Perfectionistic, Organized, Self-disciplined, Planful, Detailed

**Scale 15:**

Relaxed, Patient, Low drive and ambition, Content, Not easily upset or aroused,  
Tense, Full of energy and drive, Impatient, On edge, Goal-focused, always busy

**Scale 16:**

Low abstract reasoning ability, Less able to solve abstract reasoning problems, Prefers hands-on (rather than academic) training,  
High abstract reasoning ability, Good problem-solving skills, Quick at grasping abstract relationships,  
Performs well in academic settings

*2. Please rate on the separate paper the extent to which you and your partner possess each of the traits you just wrote down above, using the following rating scale.*

1	2	3	4	5
A little				Extremely

Table captions

Table 1. t-test score significant differences by pairings of attachment styles

Table 2. Most lasting relationships

Table 1. t-test scores by pairings of the attachment styles of participants and of the real or imagined partners as reported by the participants

Pairing pattern		Similarity estimations					Similarity levels (%)		
Participant	Partner	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Secure	Secure	17	- 3.65	8.06	29.4	0.0	70.6		
Fearful	Fearful	5	- 12.77	9.01	15.4	38.5	46.1	2.91	.007
Secure	Fearful	13	- 12.00	9.86	10.0	20.0	70.0	2.16	.040
Fearful	Dismissive	2	- 19.60	5.55	0.0	60.0	40.0	4.11	.001
Preoccupied	Preoccupied	6	- 17.50	6.36	0.0	50.0	50.0	2.32	.033
Preoccupied	Dismissive	6	- 18.33	10.65	0.0	42.9	57.1	3.53	.002
Dismissive	Preoccupied	5	- 15.20	8.78	0.0	20.0	80.0	2.76	.012
Dismissive	Dismissive	6	- 11.17	3.43	0.0	0.0	2.1	2.18	.040
Secure	Preoccupied	6	-10.67	6.34	16.7	0.0	83.3		
Fearful	Dismissive	5	-19.60	5.55	0.0	60.0	40.0	2.45	.036
Fearful	Preoccupied	8	- 8.50	6.00	12.5	0.0	87.5		
Fearful	Dismissive	2	-19.60	5.55	0.0	60.0	40.0	3.33	.007
Preoccupied	Dismissive	6	-18.33	10.65	0.0	42.9	67.1	2.20	.048
Fearful	Dismissive	5	-19.60	5.55	0.0	60.0	40.0		
Dismissive	Secure	6	- 5.17	8.72	33.3	16.7	50.0	- 3.18	.011
Fearful	Secure	11	- 8.09	9.14	27.3	9.1	63.6	- 2.57	.022
Preoccupied	Secure	25	- 7.80	9.15	12.0	8.0	80.0	- 2.75	.010
Dismissive	Dismissive	6	- 11.17	3.43	0.0	0.0	100.0	- 3.09	.013
Preoccupied	Dismissive	6	- 18.33	10.65	0.0	42.9	67.1		
Dismissive	Secure	6	- 5.17	8.72	33.3	16.7	50.0	- 2.34	.041
Preoccupied	Secure	25	- 7.80	9.15	12.0	8.0	80.0	- 2.45	.020
Secure	Dismissive	2	-11.50	7.77	0.0	0.0	100.0		>.05
Preoccupied	Fearful	13	-20.23	11.23	23.1	61.5	13.4		>.05

H = High similarity estimation (Scores ranging from 0 to 12). L = Low similarity estimation (Scores ranging from -37 to -18).

Table 2. Most lasting relationships

<b>Paring pattern</b>		<i>N</i>	<b>Duration (month)</b>		<b>Similarity levels (%)</b>			<i>p</i>
<i>Participant</i>	<i>Partner</i>		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>M</i>	
Secure	Secure	17	32.60	35.59	29.4	0.0	70.6	>.05
Fearful	Fearful	5	32.16	27.37	15.4	38.5	46.1	>.05
Preoccupied	Dismissive	6	33.38	42.92	0.0	42.9	57.1	>.05
Dismissive	Dismissive	6	34.00	28.85	0.0	0.0	100.0	>.05

Figure captions

Figure 1. Comparison of participants' attachment styles and partners' perceived attachment Styles

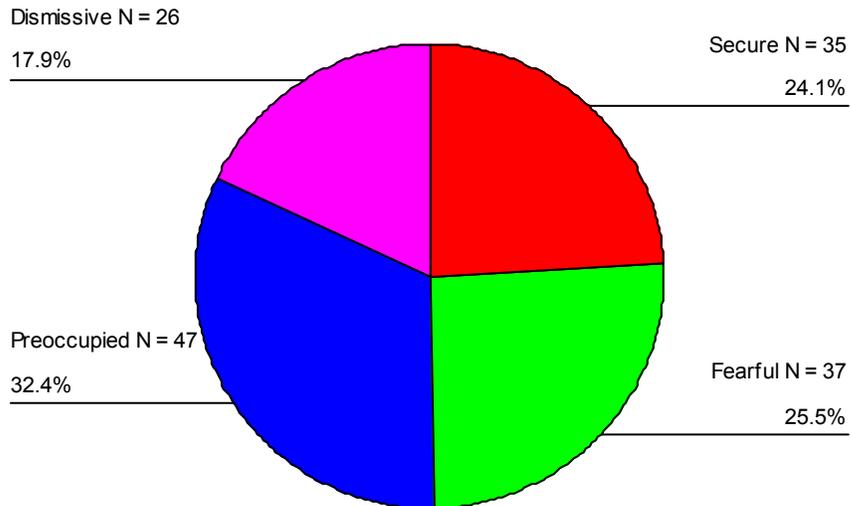
Figure 2. Similarity estimation differences by participants' attachment styles

Figure 3. Diagram of attachment styles, similarity perception, and more lasting relationships

Figure 1. Number and percent of attachment styles of the participants and of their partners as

reported by the participants.

### Percent of participants' attachment styles



### Percent of perceived partners' attachment styles

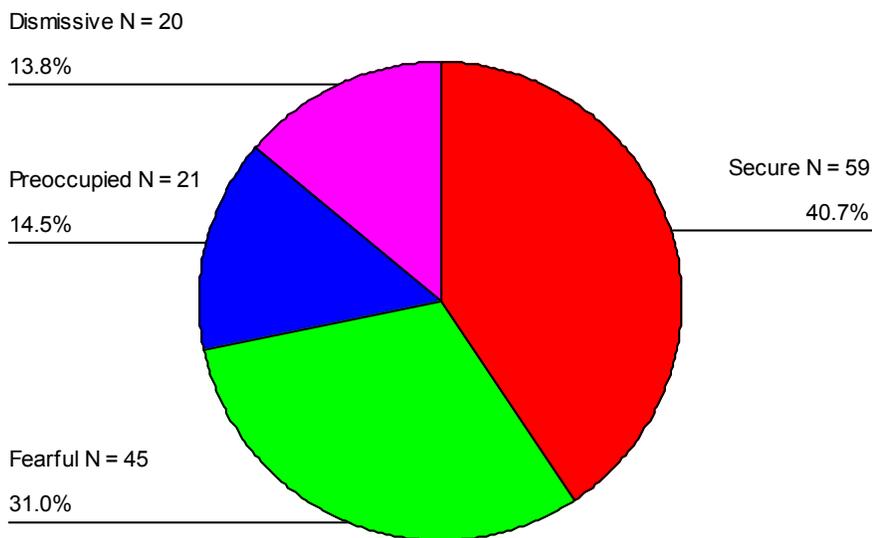
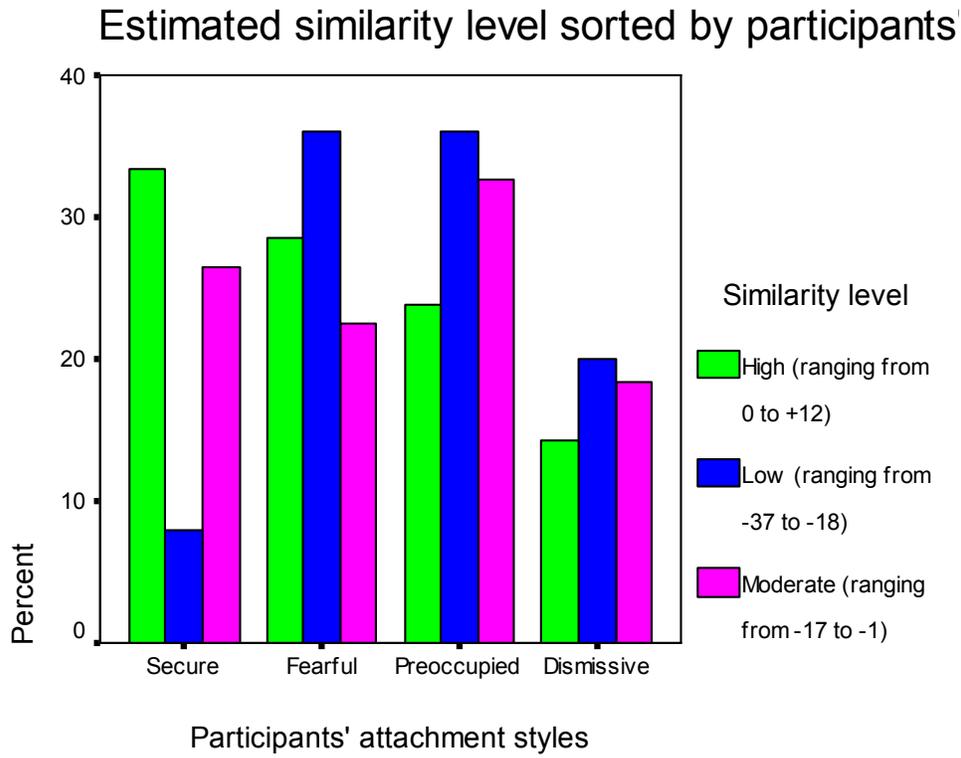
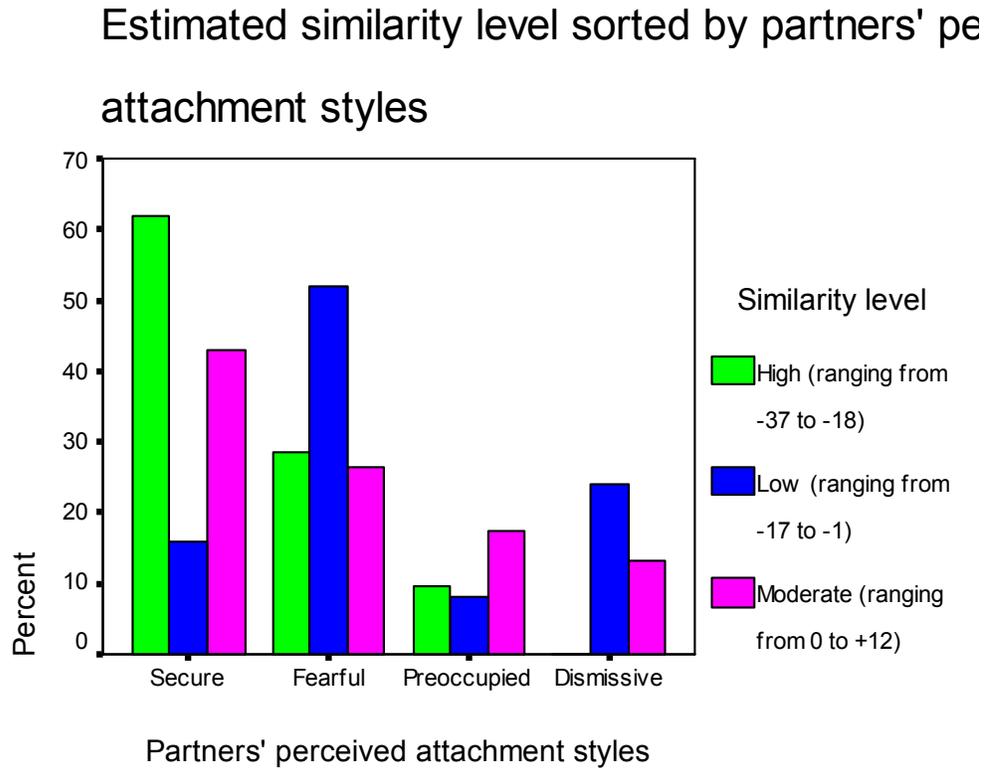


Figure 2. Similarity estimation differences by participants' attachment styles



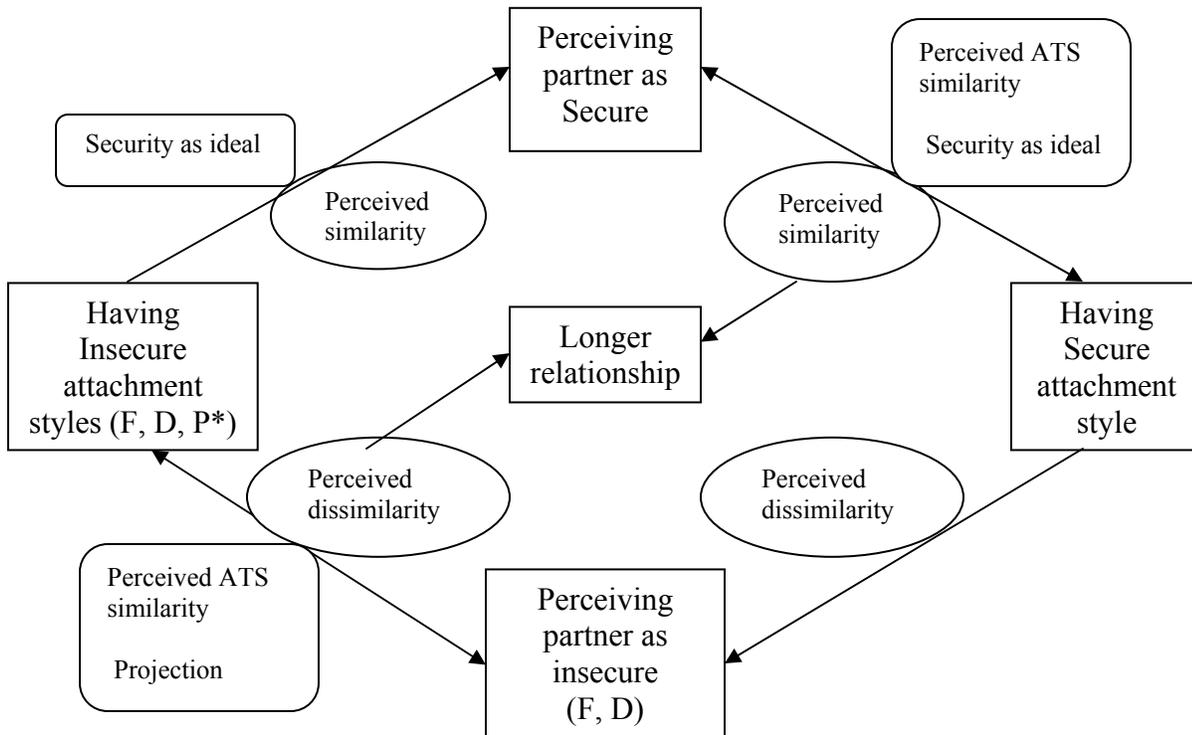
<u>Attachment style</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Secure	- 8.91	8.95
Fearful	- 14.3	8.73
Preoccupied	- 12.47	10.59
Dismissive	-11.68	8.12

Figure 3. Similarity estimation differences by partners' attachment styles



Partners' perceived attachment styles	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Secure	-6.39	8.79
Fearful	-12.09	9.20
Preoccupied	-11.57	7.13
Dismissive	-16.18	7.85

Figure 4. Diagram of attachment styles (ATS), similarity perception, and more lasting relationships



Exception:

- Preoccupied participants perceived less dissimilarity with dismissive partners but had longer relationships.
- Preoccupied participants perceived more dissimilarity with preoccupied partners but had shorter relationships.
- Secure participants perceived more similarity to preoccupied partners but had shorter relationships.

\* F = Fearful, D = Dismissive, P = Preoccupied