

Interpersonal Attraction and Close Relationships

Interpersonal attraction

- Attitudes towards another person
 - Range from strong dislike to strong liking
- Positive emotions → positive attitudes
- Internal (mostly related to the self) and external (mostly related to the environment or the other person) determinants of attraction
 - Interactive factors are also very important

Internal factors

- Need for affiliation
 - Genetically predisposed to interact with people
 - Would have been highly adaptive in prehistory
 - Children are born with the capacity for seeking contact, and mothers are especially predisposed to respond positively to children's contact seeking behaviour

Internal factors

- Affiliation allows for *social comparison*, which provides some certainty or clarity in ambiguous situations
- Need to affiliate differs from person to person, and from time to time
 - Reminders of mortality lead to a desire not to be isolated from others (Terror Management Theory: Greenberg, Solomon, & Pyszczynski, 1997; Wisman & Koole, 2003)

Internal factors

- *Direct effect* - Evaluations are based on how another person *makes you feel*
 - Positive feelings → Liking
 - Negative feelings → Disliking
- *Evaluative conditioning* (associated effect) - Evaluations are also based on negative emotions aroused in the presence of another person (*even if they have nothing to do with the emotion*)

External factors

- We tend to like people in close physical proximity to ourselves
 - How does this apply with respect to Facebook?
- Repeated exposure (Reis et al, 2011)
 - Stronger when not aware of the exposure
 - Stronger for people who are less open to newness
 - Weaker when very negative initial evaluation

External factors

- Physical attractiveness
 - Liking
 - Perceived popularity (Borch et al, 2011)
 - Grades (Ritts et al, 1992)
 - Guilt and sentencing?
 - Income (Roszell et al, 1989; Judge et al, 2009)
 - But not for women in certain contexts (Johnson et al, 2010)
- The Halo Effect – extrapolation from general impression to unknown attributes
- Many attractiveness stereotypes are wrong, but some are true (self-fulfilling prophecy?)

External factors

- More agreement than disagreement in ratings of attractiveness across cultures
 - Baby face features (Livingston & Pearce, 2009)
 - Facial symmetry
 - Averageness effect
- *Contrast effect* – looking at an attractive person decreases perceived attractiveness of another person (Little et al , 2011)

External factors

- Other factors that affect attraction:
 - Neatness
 - Bright coloured clothing
 - Lack of observable disability
 - Desirable body size and shape
 - Age
 - Facial hair
 - Name

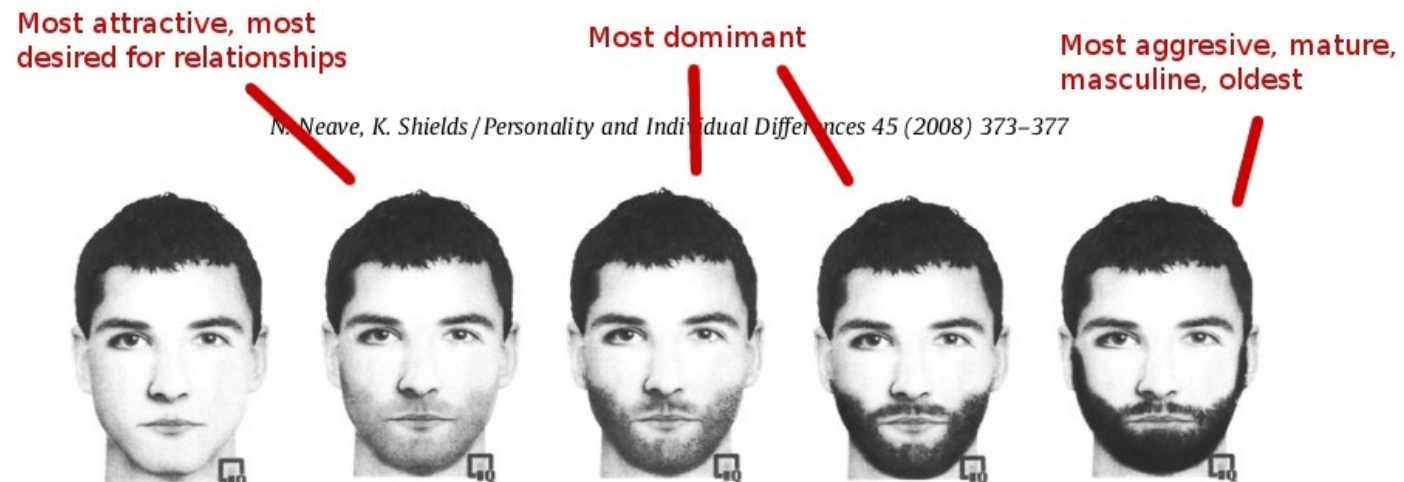


Fig. 1. An example of one of the faces used in the current study with each stage of facial hair represented.

(Neave & Shields, 2008)

External factors

TABLE 2: Sample High- and Low-Scoring Names on Each of the Six Name Connotation Factors

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Male Names</i>		<i>Female Names</i>	
	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low</i>
Successful	Alexander	Otis	Elizabeth	Mildred
	Charles	Tyrone	Katherine	Wanda
	Kenneth	Wilbur	Victoria	Aida
Moral	Solomon	Roscoe	Prudence	Tracy
	Joshua	Heywood	Mary	Mona
	Ernest	Bruno	Esther	Terry
Popular	Steven	Melvin	Kelly	Harriet
	Mark	Orville	Jessica	Esther
	Craig	Norbert	Tanya	Prunella
Warm	Joseph	Bertrand	Ann	Gertrude
	Timothy	Ogden	Hope	Bernice
	Henry	Abbot	Rose	Freida
Cheerful	Scott	Willard	Kimberly	Agnes
	Michael	Harlow	Daphne	Agatha
	Ross	Wilmer	Brittany	Constance
Masculine/feminine	Archer	Nunnally	Brunhilda	Isabella
	Octavius	Seymour	Bronwyn	Camelia
	Taylor	Eugene	Rosalyn	Coral

NOTE: Masculine-feminine is a bipolar dimension. For both male and female names, names listed under "high" (e.g., Archer, Brunhilda) were judged high on masculinity (or low on femininity), whereas names listed under "low" (e.g., Nunnally, Isabella) were judged low on masculinity (or high on femininity).

Mehrabian & Piercy, 1993

External factors

- *Implicit egotism* – we like people more similar to ourselves, including people with more similar names (Pelham, 2002)
- But these results are controversial, and might be due to numerous other factors
 - Ethnicity confound (Simonsohn, 2011)
 - Ease of pronunciation (Laham et al, 2012)

Interaction factors

- Well established effect of similarity on attraction
- *Matching hypothesis* - We tend to affiliate with people who are similar to us in terms of:
 - Attitudes
 - Attractiveness
 - Race
 - Interests
 - Values
- Are we attracted to similarity, or repulsed by differences?
- Importantly, there is evidence that we base our liking on *perceived* similarity and not *actual* similarity (Tidwell et al, 2012)

Interaction factors

- Self-comparison theory (again)
- Being with similar people allows us to compare ourselves fairly realistically
 - It feels good to have our beliefs and attitudes validated by others
- Perceiving the similar as being attractive is adaptive

Interaction factors

- Mutual liking
- Positive evaluation of a person increases the positive affect for both individuals
- Non-verbal signs of liking (Moore, 2010):
 - Synchronization of movement
 - Mutual gaze
 - Laughter
 - Head tossing/leaning
 - Hair flipping
 - Physical roughhousing (teenagers)
 - Grooming behaviours
- These signals can increase positive feelings in others

Close relationships

- Close relationships involve *interdependence*, a situation where two people influence each other's lives and engage in activities together
- Biological need for interdependence is well established in mother-child bonding
- Oxytocin
 - Maternal-infant pair bonding (Galbally et al, 2011)
 - Trust (Mikolajczak et al, 2010)
 - Maternal sensitivity (Strathearn et al, 2012)
 - Response to couple conflict (Ditzen et al, 2012)

Family

- Bowlby's (1958) theory of attachment style
 - Early experiences with the mother helps us form a basic “working model” of interpersonal interactions, which will affect later relationships
 - Infant learns two things from early relationship: schema of self (self esteem), and scheme of others (trust)
 - Mary Ainsworth's (1979) “strange situation” experiment
 - Virtually all research in this area is conducted on mothers

Family

		Self Esteem	
		Positive	Negative
Trust	Positive	SECURE Comfortable with intimacy and autonomy	PREOCCUPIED Preoccupied with relationships
	Negative	DISMISSING Dismissing of intimacy Counter-dependent	FEARFUL Fearful of intimacy Socially avoidant

Family

- Sibling relationships are generally positive, despite some degree of affective ambivalence
 - Children with siblings are perceived as being less aggressive than only children
 - Bullies tend to report worse sibling (and parental) relationships
- Siblings tend to be closest during childhood and middle age

Friendship

- Close friends are characterized by self-disclosure, modesty, honesty, emotional support, and time spent together
- Gender differences exist in expectations of friendship; women expect more self-disclosure and emotional support than men
- Opposite-sex friendships are mostly the same as same-sex friendships, although men tend to see sexual attraction as more important than women
- What about FWB relationships? (Bisson & Levine, 2009)

Loneliness

- Anxiety, depression, pessimism, and social maladjustment are consequences of loneliness
- Social anxiety is both a cause and consequence of loneliness
- Dispositional loneliness – some people are more likely to experience loneliness
- Situational loneliness – resulting from social rejection (by one individual) or social exclusion (by a group of people)
- Cognitive discrepancy model – difference between actual and desired level of social involvement (Russell et al, 2012)

Romantic relationships

- Most research on romantic relationships has been conducted on heterosexual couples
 - But the majority of findings that have been replicated in homosexual and bisexual couples have been consistent
- Romantic relationships arise from the same processes and needs as close friendships, with the addition of sexual attraction
- Schemas about partners are often unrealistically positive early in a relationship

Romantic relationships

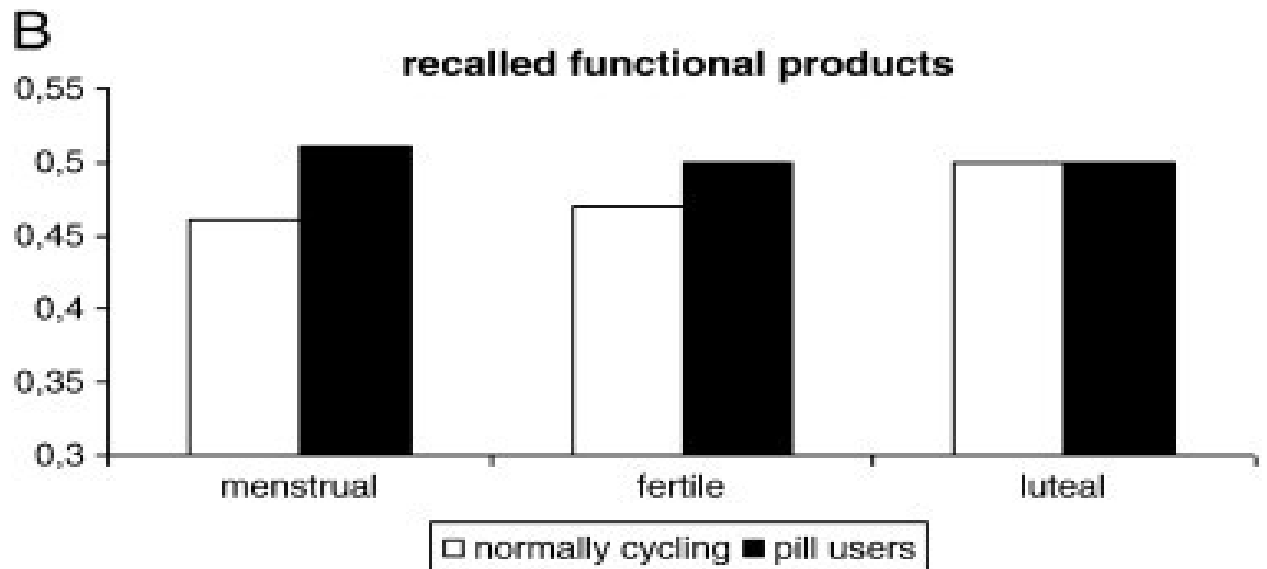
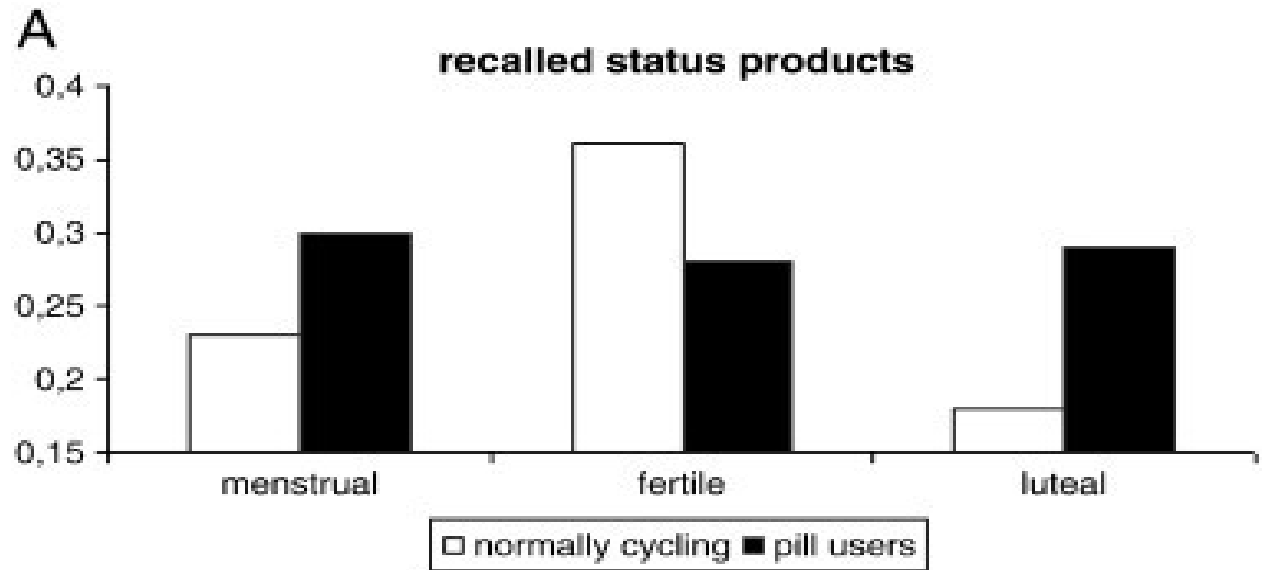
- Males and females differ in their decision making regarding partners
 - Each adopt the decision making that would be most advantageous (result in more genes being passed on) in an evolutionary context
 - Of course, these are only tendencies and a huge amount of individual variation exists
 - And many of these tendencies are related to societal influences

Romantic relationships

- Males tend to seek partners with high reproductive fitness
 - Youth and beauty
- Females tend to seek partners with resources
 - Ability to raise and protect children
- Both males and females look for bilateral symmetry
- Women's mate preferences and behaviour change slightly over the menstrual cycle

Romantic relationships

- Lens et al, 2012



Romantic relationships

- Miller et al, 2007

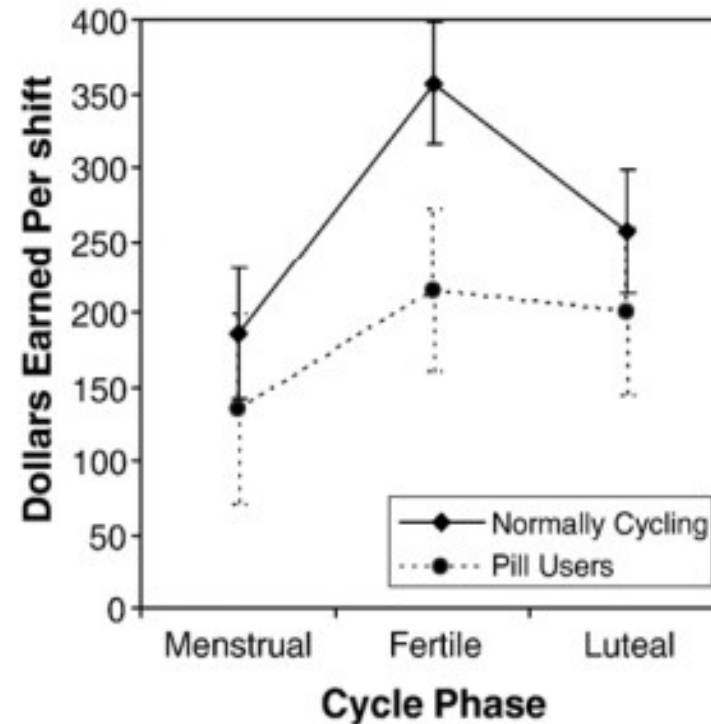


Fig. 2. Effects of ovulatory cycle phase (menstrual phase, fertile estrous phase, or luteal phase) on tip earnings per shift, for normally cycling women versus women using hormonal contraception (pill users). Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Romantic relationships

- Alvergne & Lummaa, 2010

Table 1. Effects of oral contraceptive pill use for women's mate preferences and attractiveness^a

	Trait	Non-pill users	Pill users	Design	Sample size	Refs
Preferences	Symmetry	Increased preferences for scents of symmetrical men at mid-cycle	No preference for either symmetrical or asymmetrical men's scent	B	17 NPU-35 PU	[65]
		Increased preferences for scents of symmetrical men at mid-cycle	No preference for either symmetrical or asymmetrical men's scent	B	16 NPU-66 PU	[72]
	Masculinity	Increased preferences for facial and vocal masculinity at mid-cycle	Weaker change across the cycle	B	307 NPU-112 PU	[35]
		Increased preferences for facial masculinity when paired or when seeking short-term relationship	No change according to the relationship status	B	214 NPU-102 PU	[33]
	MHC scents	Preferences for MHC-dissimilar men	Preferences for MHC-similar men	B	31 NPU-18 PU	[37]
		Preferences for MHC-dissimilar men	Preferences for MHC-similar men	B	32 NPU-26 PU	[31]
	No preferences for either MHC-similar or dissimilar men during fertile phase	Increased preference for MHC-similar men	W	60 NPU-40 PU	[39]	
Attractiveness	Voice	Attractiveness ratings by men are increased for women at mid-cycle	No variation in attractiveness ratings by men	B	17 NPU-21 PU	[19]
	General	Attractiveness ratings by men are increased for women at mid-cycle	No variation in attractiveness ratings by men	B	11 NPU-7 PU	[4]
	Body scent	Attractiveness ratings by men are increased for women at mid-cycle	No variation in attractiveness ratings by men	B	42 NPU-39 PU	[38]

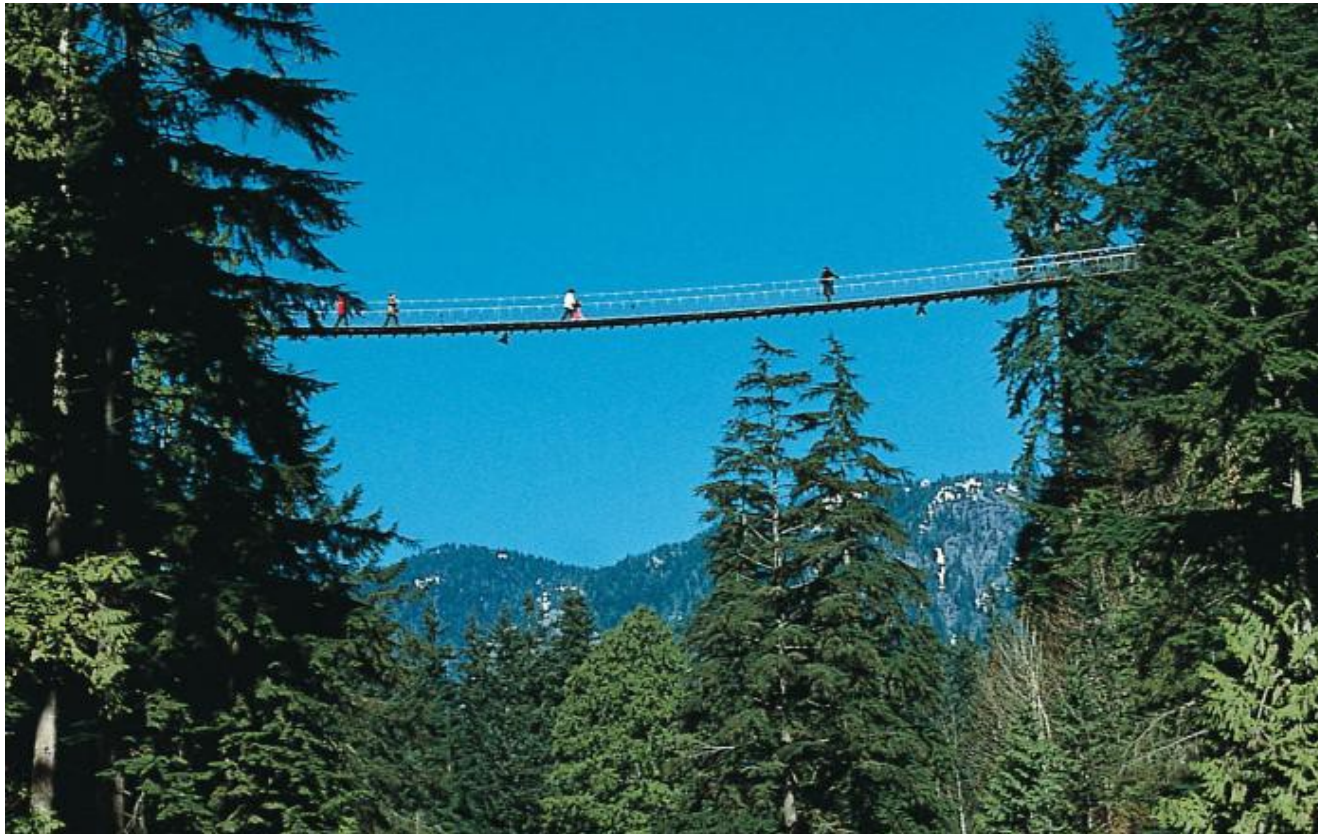
^aAbbreviations: B: between-individual design; NPU: non-pill users; PU: pill users; W: within-individual design.

Romantic relationships

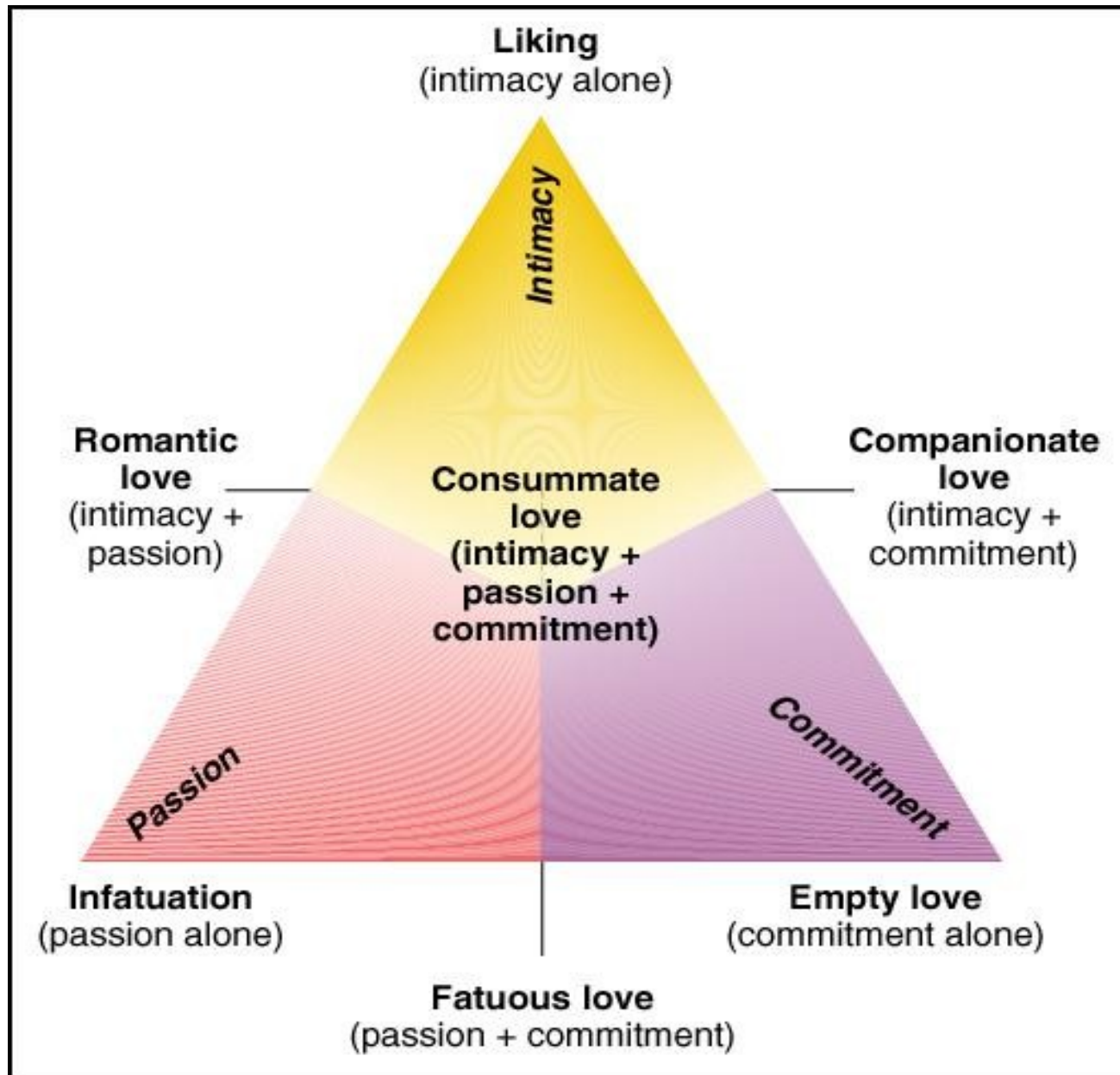
- Passionate love refers to an intense and unrealistic affective reaction to another person
- Cultural explanation: culturally based expectations (schemas) about love, culturally acceptable object, and physiological arousal
- Evolutionary explanation: Love (along with the desire to provide for offspring together) would have been adaptive

Romantic relationships

- The most famous Canadian study on the topic of love and romance: Dutton & Aron, 1974



Romantic relationships

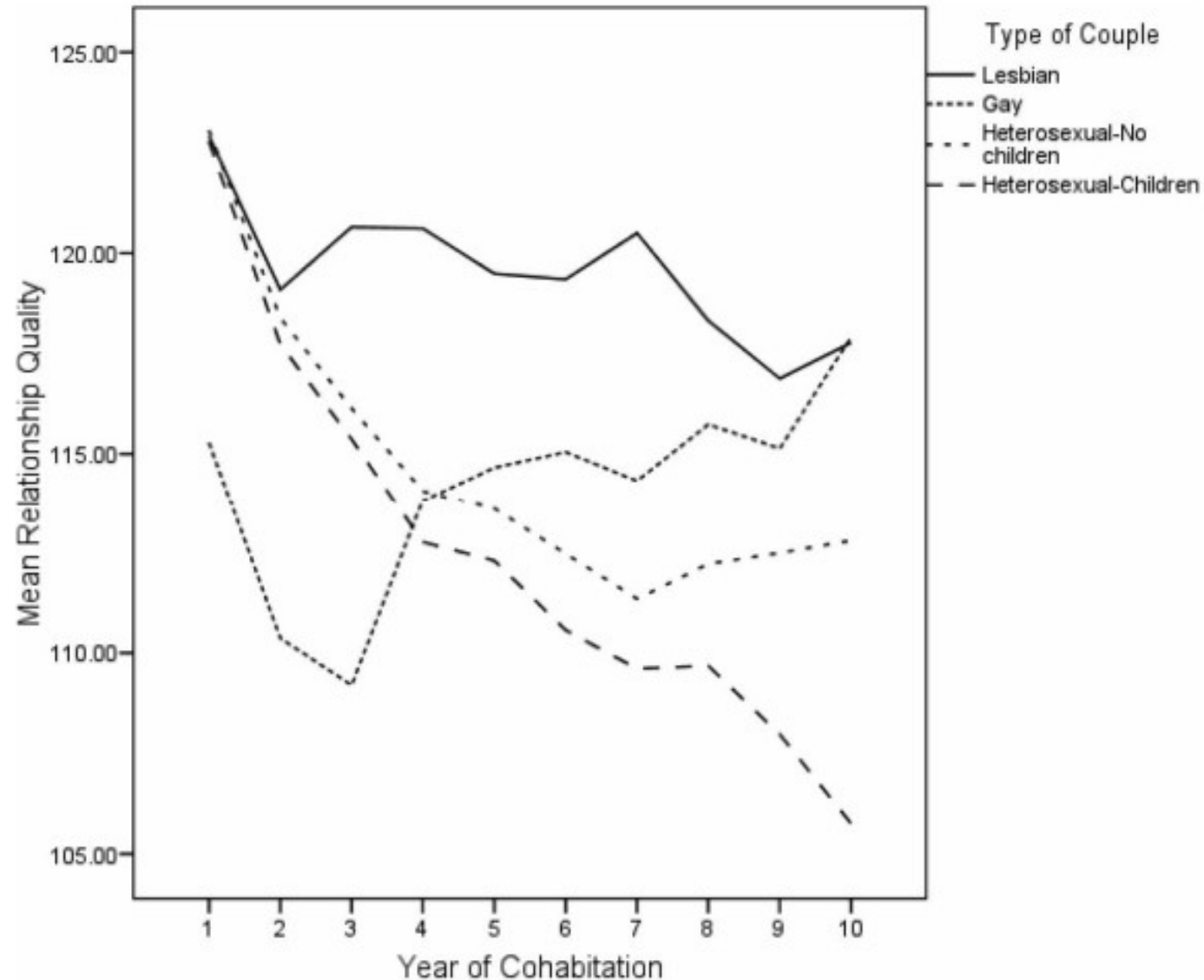


Sternberg, 1986

Marriage

- Married couples are even more similar than close friends and dating couples
 - Also, they think they are more similar than they actually are
- Secure attachment style is related to greater marital satisfaction (Li & Chan, 2012)
 - Anxious (Fearful) style → higher relationship conflict
 - Avoidant (Dismissing) style → lower satisfaction and emotional support
 - But both of these effects can be minimized if both partners are sexually satisfied (Little et al, 2010)

Marriage



Kurdek, 2008

Figure 2. Estimated mean relationship quality scores by year of cohabitation for each type of couple, controlling for separation.

Marriage

- Marriages face many challenges, and about 40% of first marriages end in divorce
- Well replicated finding that married men (regardless of marital satisfaction) derive health and happiness benefits, but that women only receive benefits when marriage satisfaction is high
 - A 40-year study of mortality (Sbarra et al, 2009) found that divorce was one of the best predictors of early mortality
 - Personality factors? Length of separation?

Marriage

- Parenthood associated with decline in marital satisfaction
 - But parents typically report satisfaction with the decision to have children
- There has been considerable research into effects of non-heterosexual parenting, most of which finds virtually no differences
 - The exception is the rate of child abuse, which is equal among gay couples and heterosexual couples, but vanishingly rare among lesbian couples

Divorce

- Over time, dissimilarity becomes more obvious and more dissatisfying
- Jealousy
 - Women are more bothered by emotional attraction
 - Men are more bothered by sexual attraction
- When discussing marital conflicts men more likely to avoid talking about problems, but both genders are likely to use direct (criticizing, rejecting) or indirect (attributions, hostile questions) negative interactions
- Does divorce cause problems from children? Or does the relationship conflict preceding divorce cause problems?