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Dating-Up: Discrepancy of Inclusion of Other in the Self as a Result of Partner-Self Mate Value Discrepancy

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DATING-UP: DISCREPANCY OF INCLUSION OF OTHER IN THE SELF AS A RESULT

OF PARTNER-SELF MATE VALUE DISCREPANCY

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DATING-UP: DISCREPANCY OF INCLUSION OF OTHER IN THE SELF AS A RESULT

OF PARTNER-SELF MATE VALUE DISCREPANCY

By

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ABSTRACT

Inclusion of other in the self – the experience of closeness as overlapping selves – has a critical role in the success of romantic relationships. Romantic partners, however, might experience differences in their inclusion of each other, which can be problematic. Therefore, it is important to identify what factors can result in a discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self between romantic partners. Study 1 tested how perceived differences in desirability between the self and a romantic partner are associated with inclusion of other in the self and closeness. Romantic couples ($n=122$) completed measures that assessed inclusion of other in the self, closeness, perceived partner-self mate value discrepancy, and self-expansion. Results showed that partner-self mate value discrepancy did not influence levels of inclusion or closeness felt for a romantic partner. Higher self-expansion, however, predicted higher inclusion of and closeness felt for a romantic partner. Study 2 tested how perceived differences in desirability between the self and a potential romantic partner are associated with inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self. Additionally, a new scale to assess willingness to include the other in the self was tested. Singles ($n=103$) completed an online dating profile and were given an online match that varied in mate value. Results showed that the direction of partner-self mate value discrepancy did not influence levels of willingness to include the other in the self or inclusion. Participants, however, reported higher willingness to include the other in the self and inclusion of other in the self for an online match when the online match was high in mate value. Psychometric properties of the Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale are reported. In both studies, additional variables such as time of data collection (pre-pandemic vs during-pandemic) are explored. Results suggest that inclusion of other in the self is lower in couples that were collected during-pandemic but did not influence responses for participants who are single.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Your friend invited you to attend a social gathering. Upon your arrival, your friend introduced you to a couple – Melissa and William. You could not help but think that this couple seemed to be a "mismatch." Melissa is in her early twenties, she is highly attractive, and extroverted. On the other hand, William looks considerably older, he is unattractive, socially awkward, and has a low paying job. You conclude that William is dating-up. You also wonder if Melissa is aware of this "mismatch" and if she is satisfied with her relationship. Differences in desirability between oneself and a romantic partner are not uncommon. The influence of differences in desirability on relationship outcomes, however, is less clear.

Dating-up is a slang phrase used to describe, "dating someone commonly considered to be higher in the social ladder than [one is]" (Urban Dictionary, 2017), with the opposite being true for dating-down. Phrases such as "she is out of your league" or "you can do better" are often expressed to people who find themselves in these kinds of relationships. A "mismatch" within a romantic relationship may exist because partners contribute to the romantic relationship differently. One partner may be more conscientious while the other may be more kind. People have different opinions on what constitutes a desirable romantic partner and who is worth the effort to pursue. However, what happens when one or both partners perceive that the other is not contributing equally to the relationship? The presented studies tested how differences in the perceived worth of romantic partners impact an important aspect of a romantic relationship, the experience of closeness.

1.1 Mate Value

Mate value is the overall value of a person based on non-physical (e.g., being kind/generous) and physical (e.g., being tall) characteristics (Hromatko et al., 2015). Although people can agree overall who is a desirable or undesirable romantic partner, people also differ in how important they consider specific characteristics to be. The value of potential romantic partners is subjectively defined based on the ideal mate preferences of a person. For instance, imagine a person that places a greater value on physical attractiveness than he or she does on a good sense of humor. This person would then be more inclined to date a model than a comedian, as the model is more likely to possess the attribute that it is highly valued. The opposite would be true for a person that places a greater value on a good sense of humor than he or she does on physical attractiveness.

In the dating scene, the mate value of a person influences how they are approached and how they approach others. For example, one's mate value plays a role in the quality of a mate that one can attract, which often results in people mating with others of similar characteristics across different domains such as physical attractiveness (Luo, 2017), personality (Kardum et al., 2017; Luo, 2017; Watson et al., 2004), values (Luo, 2017; Tognetti et al., 2014; Watson et al., 2004), and demographic variables (Luo, 2017; Watson et al., 2004). People, however, tend to be attracted to desirable mates regardless of one's own value as a mate (Bruch & Newman, 2018). Characteristics that people consider important in romantic partners – and thus would describe a partner high in mate value – include warmth, kindness, physical attractiveness, social status, intelligence, sociability, and trustworthiness among others (Sprecher & Regan, 2002; Regan et al., 2000). Some of these characteristics, such as intelligence, are associated with life outcomes. For instance, people who are intelligent are more likely to earn a higher income (Converse et al.,

2016). Research has shown that in romantic couples there is an expectation of shared fate – anticipation that what is associated with a romantic partner is associated with oneself (Pinkus et al., 2012). In other words, if your romantic partner is successful professionally and has a high income, you associate that professional success and income with yourself.

Following this line of reasoning, people high in mate value would have more to offer to a romantic relationship than people low in mate value. Consequently, people are more motivated to seek or retain romantic partners high in mate value. However, not all available romantic partners are high in mate value. Therefore, in the process of selecting a romantic partner, compromises or trade-offs are likely to occur (e.g., a partner is low in physical attractiveness but emotionally supportive). Making these trade-offs result in a partner-self mate value discrepancy – a difference in mate value between romantic partners.

1.2 Mate Value Discrepancy

In most romantic relationships, romantic partners report a partner-self mate value discrepancy (Nowak & Danel, 2014). There are different reasons for why partner-self mate value discrepancies exist in a romantic relationship: potential mates will deceive others about their real mate value, people underestimate or overestimate their own value, compromises are made based on availability, and/or unexpected changes may occur when in a relationship (e.g., one of the partners gets promoted). Partner-self mate value discrepancies between romantic partners can be detrimental for their relationship. Greater partner-self mate value discrepancy is associated with lower relationship satisfaction (Conroy-Beam et al., 2016; Nowak & Danel, 2014); increased feelings of jealousy (Redlick, 2016; Sidelinger & Booth-Butterfield, 2007); increased likelihood of infidelity (Buss et al., 2017); greater experience of relational uncertainty (Redlick, 2016); greater usage of controlling behavior (Danel et al., 2017), violent tactics (Buss & Duntley, 2011),

and behaviors to lower the likelihood of a partner leaving a romantic relationship or being unfaithful (Sela et al., 2017). Partner-self mate value discrepancy can work in the favor of romantic partners with high mate value. For instance, romantic partners with high mate value are more likely to be forgiven for their transgressions (e.g., cheating; Sidelinger & Booth-Butterfield, 2007) or their partners are more willing to change their personality for them (e.g., decrease their sociosexuality levels; Gomula et al., 2014); possibly as an attempt to avoid the loss of a high mate value partner.

People are often aware of their own mate value and their partner's mate value. Consequently, they are also aware of the discrepancy that might exist in their romantic relationships. There are two forms in which partner-self mate value discrepancy can occur in a romantic relationship. If a person is dating a romantic partner that is higher in mate value than them, this is referred to as "dating-up". If a person is dating a romantic partner that is lower in mate value than them, this is referred to as "dating-down". Because mate value is associated with characteristics that can indicate the contributions of a partner in a romantic relationship, it is possible that the direction of the partner-self mate value discrepancy can be important in understanding the impact of partner-self mate value discrepancy on relationship outcomes. One relationship outcome that has been shown to be important for the success of a romantic relationship is referred to as "inclusion of other in the self."

1.3 Inclusion of Other in the Self

One way of experiencing closeness to a romantic partner is by the inclusion of other in the self. Inclusion of other in the self refers to people's sense of being interconnected with another person (Aron et al., 1992). Although closeness and inclusion of other in the self are similar, closeness refers to a sense of intimacy while inclusion of other in the self refers to an

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overlap of one's self and a partner's self. Inclusion of other in the self occurs by including the

resources, perspectives, and characteristics of the other in the self (Aron et al., 1991). Inclusion

of other in the self has important outcomes in a romantic relationship. Specifically, lower

inclusion of other in the self predicts higher relationship dissolution (Le et al., 2010) and higher

likelihood of infidelity (Lewandowski & Ackerman, 2006), while higher inclusion of other in the

self predicts higher grief experienced after romantic dissolution (Boelen & Van Den Hout,

2010). Higher inclusion of other in the self also serves as a motivation to maintain and commit to

a relationship (Ledbetter, 2013; Ledbetter et al., 2010). Greater inclusion of other in the self is

associated with engaging in greater relationship maintenance behaviors (Ledbetter et al., 2010),

greater forgiveness of offenses (Karremans & Van Lange, 2008), and positive global relationship

evaluations of relationship well-being (Auger et al., 2017). Inclusion, however, is not necessarily

reciprocated and if it is reciprocated it might not be to the same extent. Inclusion of other in the

self can be greater for one romantic partner than it is for the other. This can be troublesome. For

example, perceptions of a partner's inclusion of other in the self can impact one's closeness to

the partner (Tomlinson & Aron, 2013).

Because inclusion of other in the self involves the inclusion of the characteristics,

perspectives, and resources of a close other, it is possible that how much a romantic partner is

included in the self can be affected by the romantic partner's mate value. The reason for this

being that the romantic partner's mate value would be associated with characteristics,

perspectives, and resources that can be included in the self. A partner high in mate value would

have more characteristics, perspectives, and resources to offer than a partner low in mate value.

Thus, inclusion would be greater for a romantic partner that is high in mate value than a romantic

partner that is low in mate value. Further, if the romantic partners differ in mate value, then this would also be reflected as differences in their inclusion of each other.

1.4 Discrepancy of Inclusion of Other in the Self

Research on the discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self between romantic partners is limited. Studies have mainly focused on the discrepancy between the desired closeness with a romantic partner (ideal inclusion of other in the self) and the actual closeness experienced with a romantic partner (actual inclusion of other in the self). The discrepancy between "ideal inclusion of other in the self" and "actual inclusion of other in the self" happens when the desired closeness with a romantic partner is lower or greater than the actual closeness experienced. Lower discrepancy between ideal and actual inclusion of other in the self is associated with greater relational well-being and mental health, and a lower likelihood of relationship dissolution (Frost & Forrester, 2013). Similarly, a lower discrepancy of ideal levels of sexual closeness and actual levels of sexual closeness is predictive of higher sexual satisfaction and orgasm frequency (Frost et al., 2017). Although these studies emphasize the importance of studying the discrepancies that occur within one partner (ideal vs actual inclusion of other in the self), they also provide insight into the importance of understanding the discrepancies of inclusion of other in the self between partners.

Understanding what causes a discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self between partners is important because it is related to the success of a romantic relationship. Partner-self mate value discrepancy has been identified as a potential variable that can cause a discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self between romantic partners. However, there is one potential factor that can moderate the relationship between partner-self mate value discrepancy and discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self, and that is self-expansion.

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1.5 Self-Expansion Model

The self-expansion model posits that expansion of the self is a central human motivation and can be achieved by including the resources, perspectives, and characteristics of the other in the self (Aron et al., 2004). Self-expansion occurs by engaging in novel experiences. Our relationship with others can expose us to novel experiences. For example, assume that you have never been to an American football game and that one of the characteristics of your new boyfriend is that he is a Seattle Seahawks fan. Throughout the years of dating him, you have been to multiple football games, you have watched football every Sunday, and you learned the rules of the game. You have now added to your identity being a person who is interested in sports and it is now a Seattle Seahawks fan. Thus, you have expanded who you are. Other simple examples include learning a new skill, playing a new game, or going to a new place.

Although self-expansion may not be a conscious process (Aron et al., 2004), it could act as a motivation to initiate and maintain close relationships (Sprecher et al., 2015). For example, the attraction in initial interactions is associated with perceived self-expansion opportunities (Sprecher et al., 2015), and self-expansion opportunities are perceived to be greater with dissimilar others (Aron et al., 2006). Self-expansion is important for the success of romantic relationships. Engaging in self-expanding activities with a romantic partner can increase sexual desire and indirectly increase relationship satisfaction (Muise et al., 2019). Further, in long-term romantic relationships, active support for a partner's self-expansion is associated with higher relationship satisfaction (Fivecoat et al., 2015). Ending a romantic relationship with a romantic partner that allowed for self-expansion leads to greater contraction of the self-concept – "a lessening of its diversity and complexity" –compared to ending a romantic relationship that did not provide for such opportunities (Lewandowski et al., 2006). Additionally, through self-

reports, people have expressed greater susceptibility to being unfaithful when a partner in a romantic relationship fails to provide self-expansion or potential for self-expansion opportunities (Lewandowski & Ackerman, 2006).

Ideally, a romantic partner should contribute to our search for self-expansion. Partner-self mate value discrepancy can potentially be positive because it involves differences between romantic partners, which leaves room for self-expansion to occur. If the partner-self mate value discrepancy is allowing for self-expansion to occur, then the partner-self mate value discrepancy might not be as harmful to a romantic relationship.

1.6 The Present Studies

Previous research shows that a discrepancy in either mate value or inclusion of other in the self can have negative consequences for a romantic relationship. Nonetheless, research has not yet established a connection between mate value and inclusion of other in the self. The overall mate value of a person is associated with access to resources, the extent of perspectives, and the possession of specific personality traits, while inclusion of other in the self is achieved by incorporating the resources, perspectives, and characteristics of a significant other. Therefore, a partner-self mate value discrepancy can be a potential explanation for why partners in a romantic relationship may experience discrepancy of inclusion of the other in the self. The overall purpose of the proposed studies is to test if partner-self mate value discrepancy influences the experience of inclusion of other in the self, closeness, and willingness to include the other in the self in romantic relationships. Additionally, the proposed studies will attempt to understand some of the underlying mechanisms of this association.

Study 1 will investigate if partner-self mate value discrepancy influences discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self and discrepancy of closeness in ongoing romantic relationships. Additionally, study 1 will test how self-expansion changes the relationship between partner-self mate value discrepancy and discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self/closeness. Our pre-registered hypotheses are the following:

H1: Romantic relationships will experience greater discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self/closeness because of greater partner-self mate value discrepancy.

H2: Romantic relationships will experience greater discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self/closeness when partner-self mate value discrepancy does not allow for self-expansion compared to relationships that do.

Study 2 will investigate if partner-self mate value discrepancy influence inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self towards potential romantic partners. Additionally, study 2 will test the psychometric properties of a measure created to assess willingness to include the other in the self. Our pre-registered hypotheses are the following:

H1: Inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self will be greater in dating-up relationships compared to dating-down relationships or relationships with no partner-self mate value discrepancy.

H2: Inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self will be greater for mates with higher mate value than mates with lower mate value.

H3: Inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self will be greater when one's mate value is low than when one's mate value is high.

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H4: A confirmatory factor analysis will reveal a two-factor structure: offline behaviors

and online behaviors for the Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale.

H5: Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale will have good reliability and will

correlate with the Inclusion of the Other in the Self Scale.

CHAPTER 2: STUDY 1

Method

2.1 Participants

One-hundred romantic dyads were required to achieve power (90%) to detect a medium effect size (β_{Actor}=0.35; $\beta_{Partner}$=0.30) when alpha = 0.05. Effect sizes were selected based on the findings of a previous study on social comparisons between romantic partners (Pinkus et al., 2012). This set of studies tested the association between upward and downward comparisons between romantic partners, and the experienced emotional response to the comparison when there is an expectation of shared fate (Pinkus et al., 2012). In the Pinkus and colleagues (2012) studies, shared fate was conceptualized similarly to inclusion of other in the self. However, because this association is not entirely equivalent to the association of interest for this study, the smallest effect size was selected to be conservative.

Data collection came to a stop in March because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Sixty-eight dyads were recruited before the pandemic. Data collection then resumed remotely, and another sixty-eight dyads were recruited. It was decided to collect the same number of dyads that was collected before the pandemic to compare pre-pandemic vs. during-pandemic groups and to achieve the necessary sample size. One hundred and thirty-six dyads were recruited for this study, but fourteen dyads were excluded from data analyses. It was pre-registered that couples would be excluded from data analyses if the couple met one or more of the exclusion criteria. The exclusion criteria included inconsistencies between romantic partners on questions inquiring about their relationship (e.g., please tell us your anniversary), acceptance that the relationship was not real (e.g., Are both of you really in a romantic relationship with each other?), overly

consistent responses (responses that show a clear answer pattern such as responding 'strongly agree' on all questions), and/or if responses were 2.5 standard deviations away from group norms on scales. None of our couples were excluded for inconsistencies on questions inquiring about their relationship or for overly consistent responses. One couple was excluded because they indicated their relationship was not real. Two couples were excluded because one of the participants in the couple was a minor. Eleven couples were excluded because they had scores that were 2.5 standard deviations away from group norms on one or both of our outcome variables. To test if the extreme responses from these eleven couples demonstrated real experiences in their relationships or inattentive responses, a correlation between inclusion of other in the self and closeness was conducted (See Table 1). Inclusion of other in the self and closeness should positively correlate because these variables are similar. The correlation between inclusion of other in the self and closeness for these eleven couples was negative (r = -.63, p = .028); providing evidence that they were inattentive responders.

Our final sample consisted of one hundred and twenty-two romantic dyads (N = 244, 83.6% Hispanic, 9.8% Caucasian, 2.9% African American, 1.2% Asian, and 2.5% Other) from the University of Texas at El Paso. Eligibility criteria included being at least 18 years of age and being in a heterosexual romantic relationship. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 46 (M = 21.84, SD = 4.47) and reported a relationship length from 1 to 8 years (M = 4.99, SD = 2.18).

Table 1

Correlations for Study 1 Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Inclusion of Other in the Self	----						
2. Discrepancy of Inclusion of Other in the Self	-.59***	----					
3. Closeness	.57***	-.30***	----				
4. Discrepancy of Closeness	-.30***	.51***	-.59***	----			
5. Mate Value (Self)[a]	.18**	-.11	.31***	-.19**	----		
6. Mate Value (Partner)[b]	.24***	-.12	.40***	-.24***	.55***	----	
7. Mate Value Discrepancy[c]	.02	.02	.01	-.003	-.64***	.29***	----
8. Self-Expansion	.35***	-.16**	.52***	-.37***	.30***	.52***	.13*

Note. *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001
[a]Self-reported mate value for oneself
[b]Self-reported mate value for one's romantic partner
[c]Difference between self-reported mate value for one's romantic partner and self-reported mate value for oneself

2.2 Materials

Mate Value Inventory

The Mate Value Inventory is a 19-item measure that assesses a person's mate value (Kirsner et al., 2003; See Appendix A). Participants were asked to complete this measure once thinking about how well these attributes apply to themselves ($M = 1.98$, $SD = 0.63$) and once thinking about how well these attributes apply to their romantic partner ($M = 2.30$, $SD = 0.50$). Sample items include, *"Ambitious"*, *"Loyal"*, and *"Sociable."* Responses were made on a 7-point Likert scale from -3 (Low in this Attribute) to 3 (High on this Attribute). The items *"Shares my values"* and *"Shares my interests"* were removed because participants were asked to assess their own mate value, in which case these items were inappropriate. Overall mate value was computed by averaging participants' responses to all items. Mate value discrepancy between romantic partners in a dyad was computed by subtracting the self-reported mate value for oneself

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from the self-reported mate value for one's romantic partner. Reliability for the self mate value ratings ($\alpha = 0.84$) and partner mate value ratings ($\alpha = 0.79$) were good.

Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale

The Inclusion of Other in the Self scale is a one-item pictorial measure that assesses closeness (Aron et al., 1992; See Appendix B). The picture depicts seven circles that differ in the degree of overlap. Participants were asked to select the set of circles that best represented how close they and their romantic partner are ($M = 5.84$, $SD = 1.06$).

Self-Expansion Questionnaire

The Self-Expansion Questionnaire is a 14-item self-report scale that assesses experienced self-expansion through a romantic relationship (Lewandowski & Aron, 2002 as cited in Wages, 2016; See Appendix C). Sample items include, *"How much does your partner increase your ability to accomplish new things?"* and *"How much does your partner provide a source of exciting experiences?"* Responses are made on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (Not very much) to 7 (Very much). Overall self-expansion was computed by averaging participants' responses to all items ($M = 5.83$, $SD = 0.79$). Reliability for the Self-Expansion Questionnaire was good ($\alpha = 0.87$).

Unidimensional Relationship Closeness Scale

The Unidimensional Relationship Closeness Scale is a 12-item measure that assesses closeness (Dibble et al., 2012; See Appendix D). Sample items include, *"My romantic partner is a priority in my life"* and *"I consider my romantic partner when making important decisions."* Responses were made on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). The item *"I'm sure of my relationship with my romantic partner"* was omitted from the

original measure as the authors of the scale caution that this item may be problematic at times (Dibble et al., 2012). Overall closeness was computed by averaging participants' responses to all items ($M = 6.42$, $SD = 0.52$). Reliability for the Unidimensional Relationship Closeness Scale was good ($\alpha = 0.82$).

2.3 Procedure

Participants were originally scheduled to come to the lab with their romantic partners. Upon arrival, participants were separated and placed in private rooms. Then, participants were asked to complete a survey with all previously described measures and a demographic form (See Appendix E). The order in which the measures were presented was counterbalanced. Then, participants were debriefed and given a list of resources for romantic couples. The list of resources had different options for hotlines they can call, help centers they can visit in person, or websites they can access to find information to help improve the quality of their relationship or learn about what a healthy/unhealthy relationship is. Participants were given the option to select a list of resources in English or Spanish (See Appendix F).

The procedure changed slightly during-pandemic because participants had to complete the study remotely. First, participants were asked to provide a unique email address for themselves and their romantic partners. Then, participants received a link that took them to the described measures and demographic form. The order in which the measures were presented was counterbalanced. Lastly, participants were debriefed and emailed the list of resources for romantic couples in both languages.

2.4 Results

Actor-Partner Interdependence Model

The actor-partner interdependence model is a framework developed for collecting and analyzing dyadic data (Campbell & Kashy, 2002; Kenny & Ledermann, 2010). Figure 1 illustrates a simple actor-partner interdependence model with one causal variable and one outcome variable. The variables X_1 and X_2 are the casual variables, whereas the variables Y_1 and Y_2 are the outcome variables. The subscripts 1 and 2 are used to distinguish between partners in a dyad. For distinguishable dyads, such as heterosexual romantic couples, the subscripts will embody the gender of the participants. Therefore, the findings are discussed separately for males and females. The actor-partner interdependence model allows for the testing of actor effects (a_1 and a_2), how a person's own causal variable influences his/her outcome variable, and partner effects (p_{21}, p_{21}), how a partner's causal variable influences one's outcome variable (Kenny & Ledermann, 2010). Additionally, the actor-partner interdependence model provides information about the covariance between the causal variables (c_1) and the correlation between the error terms (c_2).
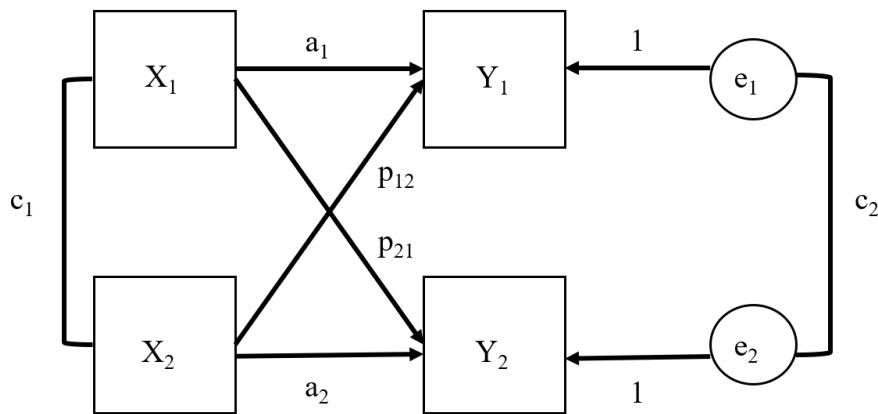
Figure 1: Example of an Actor-Partner Interdependence Model.

Analytic Plan

Study 1 aimed to explore how partner-self mate value discrepancy influence the discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self and the discrepancy of closeness in ongoing romantic relationships. Study 1 also aimed to explore how self-expansion changes the relationship between partner-self mate value discrepancy and discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self, and between partner-self mate value discrepancy and discrepancy of closeness. Although the actor-partner interdependence model is ideal to analyze dyadic data, this model is not appropriate to analyze some questions. The discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self and the discrepancy of closeness are calculated by subtracting one romantic partner's reported inclusion/closeness from the other partner's reported inclusion/closeness. Thus, both partners in the romantic relationship will have the same score for their outcome variables, except for the direction. Positive values will indicate higher reported inclusion of other in the self or closeness of the participant by the romantic partner, while negative values will indicate higher reported inclusion of other in the self or closeness of the romantic partner by the participant. The actor-partner interdependence model will not converge if the value for the outcome variable is the same for both romantic partners. If a model does not converge it means that the data do not fit the model well. In other words, the specified model was unable to find the best solution to explain the relationship between partner-self mate value discrepancy and the discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self/discrepancy of closeness. Because of this, our analytic plan had to be modified. The discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self and the discrepancy of closeness will no longer be included in the actor-partner interdependence models. Instead, the original scores for inclusion of other in the self and closeness as reported by romantic partners will be used. In other words, in the actor-partner interdependence models, our outcome variables are no

longer the discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self and the discrepancy of closeness. Instead, inclusion of other in the self and closeness will be our outcome variables.

Multiple actor-partner interdependence models were employed utilizing structural equation modeling. The first set of actor-partner interdependence models discussed tested how partner-self mate value discrepancy, self-expansion, and the interaction between partner-self mate value discrepancy and self-expansion influence inclusion of other in the self. The second set of actor-partner interdependence models tested how partner-self mate value discrepancy, self-expansion, and the interaction between partner-self mate value discrepancy and self-expansion influence closeness. In these models, partner-self mate value discrepancy between romantic partners in a dyad was computed by subtracting the self-reported mate value for oneself from the self-reported mate value for one's romantic partner. If the value is positive then it means the partner is higher in mate value than the self, while if the value is negative it means the partner is lower in mate value than the self. Self-expansion was grand mean centered before conducting analyses to provide meaning to the value of zero. Mate value discrepancy did not have to be grand mean centered because the value of zero already has a meaning – there is no discrepancy between partners.

Two variables could potentially change our results. The order of the measures used for this study was counterbalanced among participants. Half of the participants first completed the mate value inventories then the inclusion, closeness, and self-expansion measures. The other half of participants first completed the inclusion, closeness, and self-expansion measures and then the mate value inventories. The order of the measures was counterbalanced to avoid any potential priming effects. Additionally, data collection for this study occurred in two stages because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, our romantic couples differ in the time of data collection –

whether the couple was recruited pre-pandemic or during-pandemic. Half of the data was collected in person pre-pandemic and half of the data was collected online during-pandemic. Our pre-pandemic couples were collected between the months of January and March, while our during-pandemic couples were collected between the months of July and November in the year 2020. Although Covid-19 related cases had already been present in the United States during the months in which our pre-pandemic couples were collected, there were no active cases or restrictions in El Paso, Texas until after all our pre-pandemic couples had already been collected. One of the CDC recommendations to flatten the curve of contagion is to limit social interactions. It is possible that some couples do not spend as much time together now as they did before and has affected their inclusion and feelings of closeness to each other. To test how the order of measures and the time of data collection might have influenced our results, we divided our sample (e.g., pre-pandemic couples vs. during-pandemic couples) and ran our original models to compare the findings between groups. If there are meaningful changes to our findings because of the order of measures or the time of data collection, they will be discussed.

Confirmatory Analyses

We conducted multiple actor-partner interdependence models to test if higher partner-self mate value discrepancy results in lower inclusion of other in the self or lower closeness to a romantic partner. Additionally, we used multiple actor-partner interdependence models to test if higher self-expansion weakens the relationship between partner-self mate value discrepancy and inclusion of other in the self, and the relationship between partner-self mate value discrepancy and closeness. Lastly, we tested how order of measures and the time of data collection (pre-pandemic vs. during pandemic) affected our results.

Partner-Self Mate Value Discrepancy as a Predictor of Inclusion of Other in the Self

(Model 1)

Perceived partner-self mate value discrepancy was used to predict inclusion of other in the self in romantic relationships. It was hypothesized that partner-self mate value discrepancy would result in lower inclusion of other in the self. All findings are reported in Table 2. Neither of the partner effects or actor effects was significant for the original models. Partner-self mate value discrepancy was unrelated to how much one included a romantic partner and how much a romantic partner included them.

Partner-Self Mate Value Discrepancy, Self-Expansion, and Interaction as Predictors of

Inclusion of Other in the Self (Model 2)

Perceived partner-self mate value discrepancy, self-expansion, and the interaction between partner-self mate value discrepancy and self-expansion were used to predict inclusion of other in the self. It was hypothesized that the effect of partner-self mate value discrepancy on inclusion of other in the self would be lower if the partner-self mate value discrepancy allowed for self-expansion to occur. All findings are reported in Table 2. Neither of the partner effects was significant, and only two actor effects emerged as significant in the models. Partner-self mate value discrepancy was unrelated to how much one included a romantic partner and how much a romantic partner included them. However, higher male's reported self-expansion because of their female romantic partner was related to higher inclusion of their female romantic partner (B = .38, $p < .001$). Similarly, higher female's reported self-expansion because of their male romantic partner was related to higher inclusion of their male romantic partner (B = .57, $p <$ .001). Finally, the interaction between partner-self mate value discrepancy and self-expansion

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was unrelated to how much one included a romantic partner and how much a romantic partner included them.

Table 2

Actor and Partner Effects for Model 1 and Model 2

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	*p*	B	*p*
Mate Value Discrepancies				
Actor Effects				
Men	-0.03	0.885	-0.13	0.475
Women	0.11	0.538	-0.01	0.978
Partner Effects				
Men	0.11	0.497	0.04	0.788
Women	0.01	0.980	-0.09	0.640
Self-Expansion				
Actor Effects				
Men	----	----	0.38	<0.001
Women	----	----	0.57	<0.001
Partner Effects				
Men	----	----	-0.03	0.810
Women	----	----	0.17	0.171
Mate Value Discrepancies X Self-Expansion				
Actor Effects				
Men	----	----	0.02	0.920
Women	----	----	-0.09	0.662
Partner Effects				
Men	----	----	0.01	0.972
Women	----	----	0.07	0.742

Note. Model 1= Partner-self mate value discrepancy as a predictor of inclusion of other in the self. Model 2= Partner-self mate value discrepancy, self-expansion, and interaction between partner-self mate value discrepancy and self-expansion as predictors of inclusion of other in the self.

Partner-Self Mate Value Discrepancy as Predictor of Closeness (Model 3)

Perceived partner-self mate value discrepancy was used to predict closeness in romantic relationships. It was hypothesized that higher partner-self mate value discrepancy would result in lower closeness. All findings are reported in Table 3. Neither of the partner effects or actor effects was significant in the models. Partner-self mate value discrepancy was unrelated to how much one felt close to a romantic partner and how much a romantic partner felt close to them.

Partner-Self Mate Value Discrepancy, Self-Expansion, and Interaction as Predictors of Closeness (Model 4)

Perceived partner-self mate value discrepancy, self-expansion, and the interaction between partner-self mate value discrepancy and self-expansion were used to predict closeness. It was hypothesized that the effect of partner-self mate value discrepancy on closeness would be lower if the partner-self mate value discrepancy allowed for self-expansion to occur. All findings are reported in Table 3. Neither of the partner effects was significant, and only two actor effects emerged as significant in the models. Partner-self mate value discrepancy was unrelated to how much one felt close to a romantic partner and how much a romantic partner felt close to them. However, higher male's reported self-expansion because of their female romantic partner was related to higher closeness to their female romantic partner (B = .38, $p < .001$). Similarly, higher female's reported self-expansion because of their male romantic partner was related to higher closeness to their male romantic partner (B = .34, $p < .001$). Finally, the interaction between partner-self mate value discrepancy and self-expansion was unrelated to how much one felt close to a romantic partner and how much a romantic partner felt close to them.

Table 3

Actor and Partner Effects for Model 3 and Model 4

	Model 3		Model 4	
	B	p	B	p
Mate Value Discrepancies				
Actor Effects				
Men	-0.03	0.754	-0.14	0.074
Women	0.04	0.643	0.002	0.975
Partner Effects				
Men	-0.01	0.884	-0.07	0.323
Women	0.03	0.781	-0.02	0.864
Self-Expansion				
Actor Effects				
Men	----	----	0.38	<0.001
Women	----	----	0.34	<0.001
Partner Effects				
Men	----	----	-0.08	0.180
Women	----	----	-0.03	0.543
Mate Value Discrepancies X Self-Expansion				
Actor Effects				
Men	----	----	-0.04	0.643
Women	----	----	0.06	0.566
Partner Effects				
Men	----	----	0.03	0.684
Women	----	----	0.01	0.877

Note. Model 3= Partner-self mate value discrepancy as a predictor of closeness. Model 4= Partner-self mate value discrepancy, self-expansion, and interaction between partner-self mate value discrepancy and self-expansion as predictors of closeness.

Partner-Self Mate Value Discrepancy, Self-Expansion, and Interaction as Predictors of Discrepancy of Inclusion of Other in the Self and Discrepancy of Closeness

A linear regression was conducted using partner-self mate value discrepancy to predict discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self and discrepancy of closeness. It was hypothesized

that greater discrepancy of partner-self mate value would result in a greater discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self and a greater discrepancy of closeness. Additionally, it was hypothesized that greater discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self/closeness would result when partner-self mate value discrepancy does not allow for self-expansion. The discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self between romantic partners in a dyad was computed by subtracting the inclusion score reported by the participant from the inclusion score reported by their romantic partner. Similarly, the discrepancy of closeness was computed by subtracting the closeness score reported by the participant from the closeness score reported by their romantic partner. All findings are reported in Table 4. Partner-self mate value discrepancy was unrelated to the discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self and the discrepancy of closeness. A second linear regression was conducted using partner-self mate value discrepancy, self-expansion, and the interaction between partner-self mate value discrepancy and self-expansion to predict discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self and discrepancy of closeness. Partner-self mate value discrepancy was unrelated to the discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self and the discrepancy of closeness. However, self-expansion emerged as a significant predictor. Higher self-expansion resulted in lower discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self (B = -.26, p = .016) and lower discrepancy of closeness (B =-.29, p < .001). Finally, the interaction between partner-self mate value discrepancy and self-expansion was unrelated to the discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self and the discrepancy of closeness. These findings follow the same pattern than those described in the actor-partner interdependence models.

Table 4

Regression Coefficients of Inclusion of Other in the Self and Closeness on Partner-Self Mate Value Discrepancy, Self-Expansion, and Interaction

	Model A		Model B	
	B	p	B	p
Inclusion of Other in the Self				
Mate Value Discrepancy	0.04	0.779	0.27	0.770
Self-Expansion	----	----	-0.26	0.016
Discrepancy*Expansion	----	----	-0.03	0.842
Closeness				
Mate Value Discrepancy	-0.004	0.952	0.09	0.838
Self-Expansion	----	----	-0.29	<.0001
Discrepancy*Expansion	----	----	-0.01	0.927

Note. Model A= Partner-self mate value discrepancy as a predictor of inclusion of other in the self and closeness. Model B= Partner-self mate value discrepancy, self-expansion, and the interaction between partner-self mate value discrepancy and self-expansion as predictors of inclusion of other in the self and closeness.

Exploratory Analyses

Multiple exploratory analyses were conducted to answers one of the following questions: 1) Does the order of measures influence levels of inclusion of other in the self and/or closeness? 2) Does the time of data collection (pre-pandemic vs. during-pandemic) influence levels of inclusion of other in the self and/or closeness? 3) Are there gender differences on inclusion of other in the self/closeness? 4) Can inclusion of other in the self/closeness be used to predict relationship length? And 5) Is the number of previous romantic relationships associated with levels inclusion of other in the self/closeness? Only two variables – the time of data collection and number of previous romantic relationships – significantly explained variance of inclusion of other in the self and/or closeness.

First, to explore the influence of time of data collection (pre-pandemic vs. during-pandemic) we conducted a between-subjects ANOVA to compare both groups. Participants that completed the study during-pandemic reported lower inclusion of their romantic partner, $F(1,$

242) = 4.89, $p = .028$, but the time of data collection had no effect for closeness, $F(1,242) = 3.00$, $p = .084$. The experience of inclusion of other in the self in a romantic relationship was susceptible to whether if the couple completed the study pre-pandemic or if the couple completed the study during-pandemic. Additionally, questions about face-to-face interactions and technology-mediated interactions between the romantic partners during the pandemic were included in the demographic form. Approximately, 89.83% of our couples reported they had seen each other during the pandemic. On average, our couples reported that their during-pandemic face-to-face interactions and technology-mediated interactions were about the same as their pre-pandemic face-to-face interactions and technology-mediated interactions. On average, our couples reported that they saw each other between four to five times a week and that they communicated with each other through the usage of technology (e.g., text messages, social media, video, conferencing apps) more than five times a week. Second, to explore the influence of number of previous romantic relationships we conducted a simple linear regression with number of previous romantic relationships as a predictor and inclusion of other in the self/closeness as an outcome. A higher number of previous romantic relationships was associated with lower inclusion (B = -.11, $p = .047$) and lower closeness (B = -.06, $p = .025$).

2.5 Discussion

This study tested how partner-self mate value discrepancy between romantic partners influence the overall inclusion of and closeness with a romantic partner (not discrepancy). It was hypothesized that greater partner-self mate value discrepancy would result in lower inclusion of other in the self and lower closeness. Our findings did not support this hypothesis. Most of our participants reported a partner-self mate value discrepancy in their romantic relationships. Approximately 68.44% of our participants were in a relationship with a romantic partner that

they perceived had a higher mate value than them, 27.05% of our participants were in a relationship with a romantic partner that they perceived had a lower mate value than them, and 4.51% of our participants were in a relationship with a romantic partner that they perceived had the same mate value as them. Previous studies have also found that people are more likely to report that their romantic partner is higher in mate value than themselves (Nowak & Danel, 2014; Swami & Allum, 2012). One explanation for why people often report they are dating-up is because people have biases towards their romantic partners. For example, romantic partners tend to be idealized and thus people create a positive illusion that their romantic partners are better than they truly are (Murray et al., 2011). People are internally encouraged to maintain this positive illusion as it serves as a buffer against the decline of relationship satisfaction (Murray et al., 2011) and romantic dissolution (Le et al., 2010). However, regardless of the presence of a partner-self mate value discrepancy in most of our couples, different actor-partner interdependence models showed that partner-self mate value discrepancy was unrelated to the inclusion of and closeness with a romantic partner. Differences in the desirability of romantic partners did not influence how much one included a romantic partner and how much a romantic partner included them. Similarly, differences in the desirability of romantic partners did not influence how much one felt close to a romantic partner and how much a romantic partner felt close to them. Although partner-self mate value discrepancy has previously been found to be important in predicting relationship outcomes, it was not the case for inclusion of other in the self and closeness.

This study also tested how self-expansion changes the relationship between partner-self mate value discrepancy and inclusion of other in the self, and the relationship between partner-self mate value discrepancy and closeness. It was hypothesized that the effect of partner-self

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mate value discrepancy on inclusion of other in the self/closeness would be lower if the partner-self mate value discrepancy allowed for self-expansion to occur. Our findings did not support this hypothesis. Higher self-expansion experienced because of a romantic partner predicted higher inclusion of and closeness with a romantic partner. Self-expansion experienced because of a romantic partner, however, was unrelated to how much a romantic partner included or felt close to them. Our findings seem to indicate that the benefits of self-expansion are one-sided regardless of occurring in the context of a romantic relationship. Contrary to our hypothesis, self-expansion did not moderate the relationship between partner-self mate value discrepancy and inclusion of other in the self, or the relationship between partner-self mate value discrepancy and closeness. Regardless of if the partner-self mate value discrepancy allowed for self-expansion to occur or not, romantic partners' levels of discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self and discrepancy of closeness were not changed.

To provide answers to our initial aim of identifying if partner-self mate value discrepancy was associated with discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self and discrepancy of closeness, exploratory regression analyses were conducted. It was hypothesized that greater partner-self mate value discrepancy would results in greater discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self/closeness. Our findings did not support this hypothesis. Partner-self mate value discrepancy was unassociated with discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self and discrepancy of closeness. It was also hypothesized that greater discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self/closeness would result when partner-self mate value discrepancy does not allow for self-expansion. Our findings did not support this hypothesis. The regression tests provided evidence that higher self-expansion experienced because of a romantic partner was associated with lower discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self and lower discrepancy of closeness. However, the interaction between partner-

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self mate value discrepancy and self-expansion did not moderate the relationship between partner-self mate value discrepancy and inclusion of other in the self, or the relationship between partner-self mate value discrepancy and closeness. The findings from these regressions follow a similar pattern as the findings obtained from the actor-partner interdependence models. These findings, however, should be interpreted carefully. The regression tests were conducted on dyadic data as if it were individual data. This is problematic because the statistical test is not taking into consideration the dependence of participants' responses.

Exploratory analyses suggest that there are differences in the experience of inclusion of other in the self in couples based on the time of data collection – whether couples were recruited pre-pandemic or during-pandemic. A study on inclusion of other in the self during the Covid-19 pandemic showed that couples – who did not receive a psychological intervention to help them maintain their levels of closeness during the pandemic – experienced a drop in their inclusion of other in the self (Tsai et al., 2020). These couples were recruited prior to the month of June and were only followed for a week. Our during-pandemic romantic couples were recruited between the months of July and October. It is possible that the duration of the pandemic further exacerbated a drop of inclusion of other in the self among our couples. The difference in the experience of inclusion of other in the self between our pre-pandemic and during-pandemic couples is not explained by a decrease of interaction between romantic partners caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Our couples reported that the number of face-to-face interactions and technology-mediated interactions with their romantic partner during-pandemic had not changed from their face-to-face interactions and technology-mediated interactions with their romantic partner pre-pandemic. However, it is possible that this difference is the result of stay-at-home orders and partial closure of businesses. Inclusion of other in the self for a romantic partner

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increases if self-expansion increases. Self-expansion is achieved through novel experiences which are often generated by our close relationships to others, but engagement in novel experiences during the pandemic might be challenging with the existent restrictions. Therefore, it is possible that during the pandemic, romantic partners are not a good source of self-expansion leading to lower levels of inclusion. Another exploratory analysis suggests that the experience of inclusion of other in the self and closeness in a romantic relationship is affected by the number of previous romantic relationships a person has had. A higher number of previous romantic relationships was associated with lower inclusion and lower closeness of the current romantic partner.

Conclusion

Partner-self mate value discrepancy was not associated with how much one includes a romantic partner or how close one feels to a romantic partner. Further, partner-self mate value discrepancy did not explain why romantic partners experience differences in their inclusion of each other or their closeness felt towards each other. Nevertheless, higher self-expansion explains the overall inclusion of and closeness felt to a romantic partner. Moreover, higher self-expansion results in a lower discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self and lower discrepancy of closeness.

Study 1 assessed the magnitude of the perceived partner-self mate value discrepancy in romantic relationships, but it did not consider the direction of the partner-self mate value discrepancy and its influence on the inclusion of other in the self and closeness. This limitation was addressed in study 2.

CHAPTER 3: STUDY 2

Method

Study 2 expands on the findings from study 1 by experimentally manipulating mate value discrepancy between our participants and an online match. Study 2 differs from study 1 in multiple ways. First, because of the nature of the design of study 1, a causal relationship between mate value discrepancy and inclusion of other in the self cannot be established. Study 2 is an experiment that will allow to test the association between mate value discrepancy and inclusion of other in the self and thus establish a causal relationship. Second, study 1 focused on mate value discrepancy that naturally occurred in ongoing romantic relationships. Study 2 explicitly controls the direction of the mate value discrepancy by randomly assigning participants to dating up, dating down, or no discrepancy condition. Controlling the direction of the mate value discrepancy will help us understand who potentially benefits more in a romantic relationship in which there is a mate value discrepancy. For example, it will allow us to test under which circumstances inclusion of other in the self is higher or lower according to one's mate value and partner's mate value separately. Third, study 1 included closeness as a secondary outcome variable. Study 2 does not include closeness as an outcome variable. Measures of closeness often include item wording that is oriented towards being in a relationship and would not be consistent with the nature of this study. Instead, study 2 will be assessing willingness to include the other in the self. Additionally, study 2 will test the psychometric properties of a measure to assess willingness to include the other in the self. Fourth, study 1 focused on ongoing romantic relationships. Study 2 will be focusing on singles.

It was hypothesized that inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self would be greater in the dating-up condition compared to the dating-down condition or

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no discrepancy conditions. It was also hypothesized that inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self will be greater for mates with higher mate value than mates with lower mate value. It was also hypothesized that inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self will be greater when one's mate value is low than when one's mate value is high. It was also hypothesized that a confirmatory factor analysis will reveal a two-factor structure: offline behaviors and online behaviors for the Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale. Lastly, it was hypothesized that the Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale will have good reliability and will correlate with the Inclusion of the Other in the Self Scale.

In study 2, singles completed an online dating profile and were given an online match that varied in mate value. In the online dating profile, participants completed some measures that included the Fear of Being Single Scale, the Emophilia Scale, and the Mate Value Inventory. Although these measures were included only to add to the credibility of the study, we will use data collected for those measures to make some exploratory analyses. A pilot study was first conducted to validate and assess the materials that would be used to create mate value discrepancies in study 2.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted for multiple purposes. Our main study manipulation consisted of giving participants an evaluation score that ranged from 1 (not at all a good romantic partner) to 10 (very good romantic partner). Participants in the main study would be told that this evaluation score represented their worth as a romantic partner. Hence, it was important to test if people think of their own worth and the worth of others in numbers. The first purpose of the pilot study was to identify if people rate each other numerically (e.g., "He/She is an 8"). Our intention

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was to use those evaluation scores to create a dating-up or dating-down mate value discrepancy between the participant and his/her match. Hence, it was important to understand what numerical values are associated with a high mate value partner and which numerical values are associated with a low mate value partner. The second purpose of this pilot study was to identify numerical evaluations that represent a potential romantic partner that is undesirable, average, and desirable. Our participants should internalize, at least temporarily, the evaluation score that was given to them. Hence, it was important to test the emotional response of receiving different evaluation scores. The third purpose of the pilot study was to identify the emotions elicited from numerical evaluations received. Lastly, our manipulation needed to be credible to our participants. Hence, it was important to assess the credibility of our manipulation. The fourth purpose of this pilot study was to identify if the created materials are perceived to be credible/believable.

3.1 Participants

Twenty-nine students (75.9% Female; 82.8% Hispanic, 10.3% Asian, 6.9% Caucasian; $M_{age} = 20.72$, $SD_{age} = 2.83$) from the University of Texas at El Paso participated in this study.

3.2 Materials and Procedure

Numerical Evaluations

Participants were asked to report if they have ever rated a potential romantic partner in a numerical form. Participants were also asked to indicate which score from 1 (Not at all a good romantic partner) to 10 (Very good romantic partner) they considered to be an indication of an average score, undesirable score, and desirable score for a potential romantic partner. Additionally, participants were asked to indicate how they would feel after receiving an

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evaluation score of 3, a score of 5, and a score of 7 for their value as a potential romantic partner using a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (Not at all good) to 7 (Very good) (See Appendix G).

Credibility

Participants were shown a prototype of how the information would be presented and were asked to imagine that they have an online dating profile and they have been matched with someone. Then, participants were asked to report on how credible this information is using a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (Not at all credible) to 7 (Very credible). Additionally, participants were asked to report on how believable this information is using a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very much). Lastly, participants were asked to provide comments or suggestions to improve the credibility of these materials (See Appendix H).

3.3 Results and Discussion

Numerical evaluations

Sixty-nine percent of participants reported that they had used numerical evaluations to rate a potential romantic partner. Participants reported that a mean score of 3.38 ($SD = 1.78$) is indicative of an undesirable potential romantic partner, a mean score of 6.07 ($SD = 1.49$) was indicative of an average potential romantic partner, and a mean score of 7.14 ($SD = 2.07$) was indicative of a desirable potential romantic partner. A paired sample t-test was conducted to compare the mean average score and mean undesirable score reported by participants. The mean average score was significantly higher than the mean undesirable score, $t(28) = 7.37$, $p < .001$. Similarly, a paired sample t-test was conducted to compare the mean average score and mean desirable score reported by participants. The mean desirable score was significantly higher than the mean average score, $t(28)=-2.18$, $p = .038$. The discrepancy that exists between the mean

scores provided by participants is sufficient to discriminate between an undesirable, average, and desirable potential romantic partner.

Participants were also asked to provide feedback on their emotional response to receiving an evaluation score of 3, a score of 5, and a score of 7 for their value as a potential romantic partner. A paired sample t-test was conducted to compare the emotional response to receiving a score of 5 and receiving a score of 3. Participants reported more positive emotion experienced to receiving a score of 5 ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.07$) than to receiving a score of 3 ($M = 1.86$, $SD = 1.13$), $t(28) = 8.02$, $p < .001$. Similarly, a paired sample t-test was conducted to compare the emotional response to receiving a score of 5 and receiving a score of 7. Participants reported more positive emotion experienced to receiving a score of 7 ($M = 5.38$, $SD = 1.12$) than to receiving a score of 5, $t(28) = -9.41$, $p < .001$. The emotional response changed based on the score received, with participants experiencing a lower positive emotion as scores decreased.

Credibility

Participants evaluated the credibility of the presented information as not good ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 1.69$). Participants also reported that the presented information was not believable ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 1.54$). The most common suggestions to improve the credibility of the materials included to provide more information on why they matched with this person, add more information in the profile about this person (e.g., hobbies/interests), and provide assurance that this person is real. The majority of these suggestions were addressed and implemented in the final materials used in the main study.

Main Study

The materials used in the main study were slightly modified based on the findings of the pilot study. All original materials created for this study will be posted in our Open Science Framework profile.

3.4 Participants

One-hundred participants were required to achieve power (80%) to detect a medium effect size ($f = 0.30$) when alpha $= 0.05$. The effect size for this study was also selected based on the findings of Pinkus and colleagues (2012). The smallest effect size was selected to be conservative.

Data collection came to a stop in March because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Fifty-eight singles were recruited before the pandemic. Data collection then resumed remotely, and another fifty-eight dyads were recruited. It was decided to collect the same number of singles that was collected before the pandemic to compare pre-pandemic vs. during-pandemic groups and to achieve the necessary sample size. One-hundred and eleven singles were recruited for this study, but eight were excluded from data analyses. It was pre-registered that participants would be excluded from data analyses if the participant met one or more of the exclusion criteria. The exclusion criteria included overly consistent responses (responses that show a clear answer pattern such as responding 'strongly agree' on all questions), and/or if responses were 2.5 standard deviations away from group norms on scales. None of our participants were excluded for overly consistent responses. One participant was excluded because he/she had scores that were 2.5 standard deviations away from group norms on one or both of our outcome variables.

Three participants were excluded because they did not re-consent to allow us to use their data. Four participants were excluded because they failed one or more attention/manipulation checks.

Our final sample consisted of one hundred and three singles (73.8% females; 90.3% Hispanic, 1.9% Caucasian, 1.9% Native American, 2.9% Asian and 2.9% Other) from the University of Texas at El Paso. Eligibility criteria included being at least 18 years of age, heterosexual, and single. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 50 ($M = 21.47$, $SD = 5.41$) and reported being single from 1 to 7 years ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 2.16$).

3.5 Materials

Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale

Instructions were slightly modified from those in study 1 (See Appendix B). Participants were asked to select the set of circles that best represent how close they anticipate feeling towards their online match ($M = 2.51$, $SD = 1.53$). Participants were also asked to respond to the question *"How close do you anticipate you will feel towards your match?"* from 1 (Not at all Close) to 7 (Extremely Close) ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.43$). The correlation between these two items was high, r = .73, $p < .001$. Therefore, they were aggregated for data analysis purposes.

Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale

The Willingness to Include the other in the Self scale is a 9-item measure that assesses willingness to include the other in the self (See Appendix I). Some items were adapted from previous findings about the type of shared activities reported by romantic partners used to increase closeness with a romantic partner (Girme et al., 2014). Some items were adapted from previous findings about online behaviors romantic partners will engage in while in a romantic relationship (Seidman et al., 2019; Castañeda et al., 2015). Some items were adapted from

previous findings about shared media that induces closeness (Gomillion et al., 2017).

Participants were asked to indicate their willingness to engage in a range of activities/behaviors

with their match. Responses were made on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (Not at all willing) to 7

(Very willing). Overall willingness to include the other in the self was computed by averaging

participants' responses on all items (M = 3.96, SD = 1.38, $α$ = .93).

Mate Value Scale

The Mate Value Scale is a 4-item measure that assesses a person's mate value (Edlund &

Sagarin, 2014; See Appendix J). Sample items include, *"Overall, how would members of the*

opposite sex rate your level of desirability as a partner?" and *"Overall, how good of a catch are*

you?" Responses were made on 7-point Likert scales. Overall mate value was computed by

averaging participants' responses to all items (M = 4.53, SD = 1.03). Reliability for the Mate

Value Scale was good ($α$ = .85). Scores on the Mate Value scale were used as a manipulation

check.

Distraction Measures

Additional measures and questions were included to make the study more credible and

hide the variables of true interest. The distraction measures include:

Mate Value Inventory. Participants were asked to complete this measure once thinking

about how well these attributes apply to themselves using a 7-point Likert scale from -3 (Low in

this Attribute) to 3 (High in this Attribute) (M = 1.91, SD = 0.58). Reliability for self mate value

ratings was good ($α$ = 0.83).

Emophilia Scale. The emophilia scale is a 10-item measure with two factors that assesses

how fast and frequently a person falls in love (Jones, 2011; See Appendix K). Sample items

include *"I fall in love easily"* and *"I tend to jump into relationships."* Responses were made on a

7-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). Overall emophilia was

calculated by averaging participants' responses on all items ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.80$). Reliability

for the Emophilia Scale was acceptable ($\alpha = 0.74$).

     Fear of Being Single Scale. The Fear of Being Single scale (Spielmann et al., 2013; See

Appendix L) is a 6-item scale that assesses an individual's fear or anxiety provoked by the

current or prospective experience of being without a romantic partner. Sample items include, *"As

I get older, it will get harder and harder to find someone"* and *"I feel anxious when I think about

being single forever."* Responses were made on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (Not at all true) to

7 (Very true). Overall fear of being single was computed by averaging the participants'

responses on all items ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 1.31$). Reliability for the Fear of Being Single Scale was

good ($\alpha = 0.80$).

3.6 Procedure

     The study was composed of three discrete parts: pre-manipulation, at-manipulation, and

post manipulation. All parts of the study took place in one session.

     Pre-manipulation. Participants were given background information about the study and

were informed about the tasks they would be engaging in. Participants were told that the purpose

of this study was to test the efficacy of a matching algorithm created by the principal investigator

in collaboration with an online dating service. Participants were told that the principal

investigator was only interested in knowing if their match was perceived to be successful or not

and thus, they would not be meeting their match. Additionally, participants were informed that

they would be asked to take a photograph, complete an online dating profile, and complete a set of personality measures.

After providing informed consent, participants were asked to stand on a white wall and keep a neutral expression for their photograph. Participants were asked to take a photograph under these conditions because part of the manipulation that was used included pictures from the Chicago Face Database (Ma et al., 2015). Pictures from this database depict individuals wearing a gray t-shirt on a white background. Asking participants to take similar photographs added credibility to the study.

At-manipulation. As part of their online dating profile, participants were asked to complete a demographic form (See Appendix E), the Mate Value Inventory, the Emophilia Scale, the Fear of Being Single Scale, and the Mate Value Scale. Participants were told that their responses to the online profile questions and personality measures were entered in the matching algorithm. Participants were also informed that along with their match, they would receive an evaluation score based on their responses. They were told that this evaluation score reflected their value as a potential romantic partner ranging from 1 (not at all a good romantic partner) to 10 (very good romantic partner).

A 2 Self Mate Value (Low x High) x 2 Partner Mate Value (Low x High) between-subjects design was employed. Participants were randomly allocated to one of four conditions. All participants were told that the algorithm matched him/her with Alejandra/Alejandro, another UTEP student who was a participant in this study. On the monitor participants saw demographic information about their match, a photograph of their match, and a detailed description of their evaluation scores (See Appendix M). Depending on the gender of the participant and their allocated condition, Alejandro/Alejandra was male or female and physically attractive or

unattractive. Physical attractiveness was manipulated by utilizing photographs pretested on attractiveness available in the Chicago Face Database (Ma et al., 2015).

In the self low mate value conditions, participants were told that their own mate value had been evaluated to be 3 out of 10. Similarly, in the partner low mate value conditions, participants were told that their match's mate value had been evaluated to be 3 out of 10. In the self high mate value conditions, participants were told that their own mate value had been evaluated to be 7 out 10. Similarly, in the partner high mate value conditions, participants were told that their match's mate value had been evaluated to be 7 out of 10 (See Appendix M)

Post-Manipulation. After being exposed to faux feedback according to their group allocation, participants were asked to respond to the inclusion of other in the self scale, the willingness to include the other in the self scale, and the mate value scale. Then, participants were debriefed and were asked to reconsent to authorize the principal investigator to use their data and photographs for scientific and educational purposes.

The procedure changed slightly during-pandemic because participants had to complete the study remotely. There were only two differences. First, participants were asked to take a photograph and email it to us. Participants were asked to submit a photograph under the same conditions that the in-person participants had to take their photograph. Second, participants received all instructions through a video. The video detailed the same information that was presented to participants in the in-person sessions. All other procedures remained the same.

3.7 Results

Confirmatory Analyses

We conducted a manipulation check to test if our manipulation changed participants'
perception of their mate value. Additionally, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis and a
principal component analysis to obtain the psychometric properties of the Willingness to Include
the Other in the Self Scale. Lastly, we conducted a between-subjects ANOVA to test if levels of
inclusion of other in the self and levels of willingness to include the other in the self would
change based on the direction of the partner-self mate value discrepancy, one's mate value, and a
romantic partner's mate value.

Manipulation Check

The Mate Value Scale was used as a manipulation check to help verify that our
manipulation of self mate value was effective. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to
compare self-reported mate value between participants in the self low mate value and self high
mate value conditions. There was not a significant difference between the scores for self low
mate value ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.03$) and self high mate value ($M = 4.85$, $SD = 0.94$) conditions,
$t(52) = 1.21$, $p = .503$. This suggests that our self mate value manipulation might not have been
successful.

Psychometric Properties of the Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale

The first set of analyses were designed to identify if the Willingness to Include the Other
in the Self Scale is appropriate for use in this study. A confirmatory factor analysis using
maximum likelihood estimation – which is robust to non-normality and non-independence of
observations – was conducted to test the psychometric properties of the Willingness to Include

the Other in the Self Scale. The model tested two latent variables: offline behaviors (with six indicators) and online behaviors (with four indicators). Although all indicators loaded on their respective factors, two items in the online behaviors subscale appear to be problematic (See Table 5). Items 8 and 9 have a weaker factor loading than the rest of the items in the subscale. Regardless of this, reliability for the offline behaviors subscale ($\alpha = .91$) and the online behaviors subscale ($\alpha = .81$) was good. Model fit was assessed based on the recommendations of Hu & Bentler (1999); a model with a comparative fit index (CFI) greater than .90, root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) lower than .06, and a standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) lower than .08 were used as cutoffs to indicate a good fitting model. The Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale had adequate absolute fit, (X^2 (34, $N = 103$) = 58.81, $p = .005$, SRMR = .055), poor parsimonious fit (RMSEA = .084; 90% CI [0.046, 0.120]), and good incremental fit (CFI = .949). Model fit indices indicate different levels of fit; thus, we make the conservative choice to reject the model. In other words, a model with two latent variables did not fit our data.

A principal component analysis was conducted to explore the number of underlying components in the Willingness to Include the Other in the Self scale. The principal component analysis revealed only two Eigenvalues greater than 1. The two-component structure accounted for 69.86% of variance explained. Items with loadings greater than .4 were retained as indicators for a component. Based on this cutoff, items 1 to 7 and items 9-10 are solely loaded on component 1. Item 8 loaded on both components, but it loaded more on component 2 (See Table 6). Item 8 was the only indicator for component 2. Only the removal of item 8 improved the reliability for the Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale (See Table 6). After the removal of item 8, another principal component analysis was conducted and revealed only one

component that accounted for 63.32% of variance explained. The revised Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale is unidimensional and had good reliability ($\alpha = .93$).

Validity for the revised Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale was assessed by computing the correlation between this scale and the IOS aggregate. The revised Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale positively correlated with the IOS aggregate, $r = .57$, $p < .001$, suggesting that the Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale is assessing a construct similar to that of inclusion of other in the self (See Table 7).

Table 5

Confirmatory Factor Analysis for the Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale

Num.	Item	Factor Loading
	Offline Behaviors	
1	Doing physical activities regarded as sport or recreation that your match enjoys (e.g., going for a run).	1.000
2	Eating or drinking items that your match likes.	1.026
3	Watching movies, TV shows, or videos that your match suggested.	1.028
4	Participating in activities/hobbies that your match has an interest in (e.g., playing chess).	1.050
5	Going to social events that your match suggested (e.g., concerts, parties, social clubs/organization).	1.112
6	Asking for your match's opinion before making a decision (e.g., buying a pair of shoes).	0.769
	Online Behaviors	
7	Sending your match a friend request on social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter).	1.000
8	Sending friend requests to your match's friends/coworkers on social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter).	0.575
9	Liking/following social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter) of people or places that your match likes.	0.746
10	Tagging your match in posts on social medial (e.g., Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter) that you think he/she will enjoy.	1.045

Table 6

Principal Component Analysis for the Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale

Num.	Item	α if deleted	Factor 1	Factor 2
1	Doing physical activities regarded as sport or recreation that your match enjoys (e.g., going for a run).	0.91	0.773	-0.397
2	Eating or drinking items that your match likes.	0.91	0.835	-0.176
3	Watching movies, TV shows, or videos that your match suggested.	0.91	0.831	-0.266
4	Participating in activities/hobbies that your match has an interest in (e.g., playing chess).	0.91	0.837	-0.221
5	Going to social events that your match suggested (e.g., concerts, parties, social clubs/organization).	0.91	0.865	-0.076
6	Asking for your match's opinion before making a decision (e.g., buying a pair of shoes).	0.92	0.686	-0.001
7	Sending your match a friend request on social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter).	0.91	0.782	0.284
8	Sending friend requests to your match's friends/coworkers on social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter).	0.93	0.536	0.713
9	Liking/following social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter) of people or places that your match likes.	0.92	0.703	0.356
10	Tagging your match in posts on social medial (e.g., Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter) that you think he/she will enjoy.	0.91	0.806	0.089

Table 7

Correlations for Study 2 Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
1. Inclusion of Other in the Self	----				
2. Willingness to Include the Other in the Self	.57***	----			
3. Emophilia	.06	-.12	----		
4. Fear of Being Single	-.03	-.14	.15	----	
5. Mate Value (Inventory)[a]	.08	.15	-.10	-.17	----
6. Mate Value (Manipulation Check)[b]	.11	.07	.02	-.17	.49***

Note. *p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

[a] Mate value score calculated from the Mate Value Inventory, which was a distractor measure. This self-report of mate value occurred before our manipulation.

[b] Mate value score calculated from the Mate Value Scale, which was a manipulation check. This self-report of mate value occurred after our manipulation.

Mate Value Discrepancy and Inclusion of Other in the Self

A between-subjects ANOVA was used to compare the main effects of one's mate value and partner mate value, and their interaction on the inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self. It was hypothesized that inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self would be greater in dating-up relationships compared to dating-down relationships or relationships with no partner-self mate value discrepancy. Our findings did not support this hypothesis. The interaction between own mate value and partner mate value was not significant for willingness to include the other in the self, $F(1,102) = 0.01$, $p = .929$, $n_p^2 = .0001$ or for inclusion of other in the self, $F(1,102) = 0.22$, $p = .643$, $n_p^2 = .002$. Neither dating-up (own mate value low/partner mate value high) nor dating down (own mate value high/partner mate value low) discrepancy was associated with willingness to include the other in the self or inclusion for inclusion of other in the self. It was also hypothesized that inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self would be greater for mates with higher mate value than mates with lower mate value. Our findings supported this hypothesis. The main effect of partner mate value was significant for both willingness to include

the other in the self, $F(1,102) = 13.28$, $p < .001$, $n_p^2 = .118$ and inclusion of other in the self,

$F(1,102) = 19.76$, $p < .0001$, $n_p^2 = .166$. Willingness to include the other in the self and inclusion

of other in the self were higher when the online match was high in mate value. Lastly, it was also

hypothesized that inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self

would be greater when one's mate value is low than when one's mate value is high. Our findings

did not support this hypothesis. The main effect of own mate value did not predict willingness to

include the other in the self, $F(1,102) = 1.20$, $p = 0.277$, $n_p^2 = .012$ but did predict the inclusion

of the other in the self, $F(1,102) = 4.76$, $p = .032$, $n_p^2 = .046$. Participants in the high own mate

value condition reported greater inclusion of other in the self of their online match than

participants in the low own mate value condition. All means and standard deviations can be

found in Table 8.

Table 8

Means and Standard Deviations for Main Effects and Interactions

		Willingness		Inclusion	
Self	Partner	M	SD	M	SD
High	---	4.23	1.55	2.75	1.42
Low	---	4.00	1.34	2.28	1.31
---	High	4.60	1.30	3.05	1.41
---	Low	3.63	1.43	1.98	1.12
High	High	4.77	1.39	3.28	1.49
High	Low	3.76	1.56	2.30	1.19
Low	High	4.45	1.23	2.86	1.34
Low	Low	3.49	1.30	1.64	0.94

Exploratory Analyses

Multiple exploratory analyses were conducted to answers one of the following questions:

1) Does the time of data collection (pre-pandemic vs. during-pandemic) influence levels of

inclusion of other in the self and/or willingness to include the other in the self? 2) Are there

gender differences on inclusion of other in the self/willingness to include the other in the self? 3)

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Is the number of previous romantic relationships associated with levels inclusion of other in the self/willingness to include the other in the self? And 4) Can individual differences in fear of being single, emophilia, and self-reported mate value be used to predict levels of inclusion of other in the self/willingness to include the other in the self? None of these additional variables changed the previously reported findings for self mate value, partner mate value, and the interaction between these two. Only one variable – fear of being single – significantly explained variance of inclusion of other in the self and/or closeness.

Number of Previous Serious Romantic Relationships

The number of previous serious romantic relationships was not significant neither for willingness to include the other in the self, $F(1,102) = 0.05$, $p = 0.820$, $n_p^2 = .001$ or inclusion of other in the self $F(1,102) = 2.02$, $p = .159$, $n_p^2 = .020$. Contrary to our findings in study 1, the number of previous romantic partners does not seem to affect how much one is willing to include or includes a new potential romantic partner.

Fear of Being Single

Fear of being single predicted willingness to include the other in the self, $F(1,102) = 3.94$, $p = .050$, $n_p^2 = .039$ but not inclusion of other in the self $F(1,102) = 0.82$, $p = .369$, $n_p^2 = .008$. Higher fear of being single was associated with a higher willingness to include a new potential romantic partner.

3.8 Discussion

It is important to note that our manipulation to influence one's mate value was not successful. Therefore, our results for partner-self mate value discrepancy and one's mate value should be interpreted with caution. There is no assurance that one's mate value is unimportant in

the experience of inclusion of other in the self or willingness to include the other in the self. The null findings for partner-self mate value discrepancy or the unpredicted findings for one's mate value may be due to our failed manipulation.

First, this study tested how the direction (dating-up vs dating-down) of partner-self mate value discrepancy influence levels of inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self. It was hypothesized that inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self would be greater in dating-up relationships compared to dating-down relationships or relationships with no partner-self mate value discrepancy. Our results did not support this hypothesis. The direction of the partner-self mate value discrepancy was unrelated to the willingness to include the other in the self or the inclusion of other in the self. In other words, dating-up or dating-down did not influence how much people were willing to include the other in the self or how much they include the other in the self. These findings complement the findings from study 1 because they complete a narrative. The presence of differences in the desirability of romantic partners and the direction of the differences in the desirability of romantic partners do not affect the experience of inclusion of other in the self and other similar constructs such as willingness to include the other in the self or closeness.

Second, this study also tested how a partner's mate value influences levels of inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self. It was hypothesized that inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self would be greater for mates with higher mate value than mates with lower mate value. Our findings support this hypothesis. Potential romantic partners with high mate value received higher ratings of willingness to include the other in the self and inclusion of other in the self. This finding confirms previous research that claims people are attracted to others of high mate value.

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Third, this study also tested how one's mate value influence levels of inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self. It was hypothesized that inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self would be greater when one's mate value is low than when one's mate value is high. Our findings do not support this hypothesis. Participants who were randomly assigned to be high in mate value reported higher inclusion of other in the self when considering potential romantic partners. This is the opposite of what we hypothesized. According to our hypotheses, people low in mate value should be more interested in including the other in the self when considering romantic partners. The reasoning behind this is that people low in mate value would have a greater motivation to self-expand – and consequently increase their mate value – through the inclusion of other in the self of romantic partners high in mate value. However, the motivation to self-expand is not unique to people in low mate value and it is possible that other factors play a role. Perhaps there are characteristics related to being high in mate value that encourage them to be more open to include others.

Fourth, this study also tested the psychometric properties of a measure created to assess willingness to include the other in the self. The original tested measure had two subscales: online behaviors (6 items) and offline behaviors (4 items). However, the two subscales did not load separately, and a revised scale included 9 of the 10 items as a single factor. The revised Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale was demonstrated to be unidimensional, have good reliability, and validity based on 9 items. Nonetheless, more studies should be conducted to fully validate the Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale. This study was powered to answer our three previous research questions and not to validate this measure. It is possible that we are underpowered to test the psychometric properties of the Willingness to Include the Other

in the Self Scale. Additionally, there are other aspects of the measure that need to be tested (e.g., gender invariance).

There was an interesting exploratory finding. Fear of being single is characterized by a reluctance to be without a romantic partner. In this study, higher fear of being single was associated with a higher willingness to include the other in the self. This finding is consistent with previous research. Previous studies have shown that people high in fear of being single, compared to people low in fear of being single, are more romantically interested in potential romantic partners even when they are unresponsive and unattractive (Spielmann et al., 2013)

Conclusion

The direction of partner-self mate value discrepancy did not explain differences on inclusion of other in the self or willingness to include the other in the self towards a potential romantic partner. In other words, dating-up or dating-down did not influence how much people were willing to include the other in the self or how much they include the other in the self. Our findings also indicate that people who are high in mate value report higher inclusion of other in the self when considering potential romantic partners. Lastly, potential romantic partners with high mate value received higher ratings of willingness to include the other in the self and inclusion of other in the self.

CHAPTER 4: GENERAL DISCUSSION

Inclusion of other in the self – the experience of closeness as overlapping selves – has a critical role in the success of romantic relationships. Romantic partners, however, might experience differences in their inclusion of each other which can be problematic. Therefore, it is important to identify what factors can result in a discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self between romantic partners. Using two different methodologies (observational vs. experimental) and two different samples (romantic couples vs. singles), the presented studies investigated the influence of partner-self mate value discrepancy on inclusion of other in the self, closeness, and willingness to include the other in the self. Study 1 also investigated how the association between partner-self mate value discrepancy and inclusion of other in the self could change depending on experienced levels of self-expansion. Study 2 also investigated the association between mate value (not discrepancy) on inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self and tested the psychometric properties of a measure created to assess willingness to include the other in the self.

4.1 Mate Value Discrepancy Does Not Affect Relationship Outcomes

Across both studies, partner-self mate value discrepancy was unrelated to inclusion of other in the self, closeness, and willingness to include the other in the self. These findings do not support our hypotheses that higher partner-self mate value discrepancy would result in lower inclusion of other in the self, lower closeness, and lower willingness to include the other in the self. In other words, the experience of inclusion of other in the self, closeness, and willingness to include the other in the self in a romantic relationship is not dependent on whether if there are differences in desirability between romantic partners or not. Additionally, exploratory findings did not support our hypothesis that higher partner-self mate value discrepancy would result in a

higher discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self and a higher discrepancy of closeness. In other words, differences in the desirability of romantic partners do not play a role in why romantic partners experience differences in their inclusion of or felt closeness to each other. These findings, however, should be interpreted with caution. In study 1, we did not test for the direction of partner-self mate value discrepancy. Perhaps, the direction of the partner-self mate value discrepancy could explain more about the experience of inclusion of other in the self and closeness in a romantic relationship than testing only the presence of partner-self mate value discrepancy. In study 2, our mate value manipulation was not effective. Our participants did not differ in their perceived mate value regardless of being randomly assigned to be low or high in mate value. The null findings for partner-self mate value discrepancy could be due to our failed manipulation.

Our results contradict previous research findings that have shown that partner-self mate value discrepancy predicts a variety of relationship outcomes such as satisfaction (Conroy-Beam et al., 2016; Hromatko et al., 2015). The constructs of closeness and inclusion of other in the self are moderate to strongly correlated with relationship satisfaction (Dibble et al., 2012). If closeness and inclusion of other in the self are associated with satisfaction, then variables that influence satisfaction – in this case, partner-self mate value discrepancy – could potentially also influence closeness and inclusion of other in the self. One potential reason why partner-self mate value discrepancy did not predict inclusion of other in the self (and discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self), closeness (and discrepancy of closeness), and willingness to include the other in the self is that we did not consider their ideal mate preferences. Participants rated themselves and their romantic partners on a variety of traits that overall provide an indication of mate value. Partner-self mate value discrepancy was calculated by computing the difference between these

scores, but participants did not explicitly state that a partner-self mate value discrepancy existed in their romantic relationship. It is possible that the traits used in these studies to determine mate value did not include one or more traits that our participants find attractive in their romantic partners. Additionally, it is possible that participants give some characteristics more importance than others. It is important to point out, however, that many studies have calculated partner-self mate value discrepancy similar to the way we did and have found significant results.

4.2 Self-Expansion Affects Relationship Outcomes

Contrary to our hypothesis, self-expansion did not moderate the relationship between partner-self mate value discrepancy and inclusion of other in the self or the relationship between partner-self mate value discrepancy and closeness. This was unexpected because self-expansion is perceived to be greater with dissimilar others (Aron et al., 2006). People who are different provide for opportunities for novel experiences which increases self-expansion. A partner-mate value discrepancy is an indication that romantic partners are at least partially different from each other. However, these differences only applied to the traits that participants were asked to rate themselves and their romantic partners on. It is possible that differences in some of these traits – such as being healthy – do not necessarily involve novel experiences. Self-expansion, however, influenced levels of closeness and inclusion of other in the self. Specifically, when self-expansion was high, levels of closeness and inclusion of other in the self were also high. This is consistent with previous research. Self-expansion has been shown to predict relationship outcomes such as relationship satisfaction (Fivecoat et al., 2015). Additionally, inclusion of other in the self is part of the self-expansion model (Aron et al., 2004). Self-expansion is the motivation to self-expand, while inclusion of other in the self is how people expand. Therefore, it makes sense for self-expansion and inclusion of other in the self to influence each other.

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4.3 Mate Value Affects Relationship Outcomes

It was hypothesized that inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self would be greater for people with higher mate value than people with lower mate value. Our findings provide support for this hypothesis. People reported higher levels of willingness to include the other in the self and inclusion of other in the self for romantic partners with high mate value than romantic partners with low mate value. This is consistent with previous research. People are attracted to desirable mates and will make attempts to start a romantic relationship with them (Bruch & Newman, 2018). Additionally, people will engage in behaviors such as gift giving to attempt to keep partners high in mate value (Salkicevic et al., 2014) or if the desired partner is already in a romantic relationship people will engage in behaviors to steal them (Sunderani et al., 2013). It was also hypothesized that inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self for a potential romantic partner would be greater when one's mate value is low than when one's mate value is high. Our findings do not support this hypothesis. Participants who were randomly assigned to be high in mate value reported greater inclusion of other in the self for their online match than participants who were randomly assigned to be low in mate value. This is partially consistent with previous research. Mate value is a combination of physical and non-physical characteristics of a person. Non-physical characteristics include personality traits such as extraversion. Previous research has shown that high mate value men and high mate value women are associated with higher levels of extraversion (Strouts et al., 2017). The personality trait of extraversion is often associated with being outgoing and seeking social interactions. It is possible that our participants randomly assigned to be high in mate value embodied the personality of a high mate value person – being outgoing and seeking social interactions – and thus were more likely to include others in the self.

However, it is important to note that the participants' mate value was randomly assigned to them and did not necessarily reflect their real characteristics. Additionally, this finding should be interpreted carefully because our mate value manipulation was not successful.

4.4 The Covid-19 Pandemic Affects Inclusion of Other in the Self

Data for both studies were collected in two different periods: pre-pandemic and during-pandemic. Many of the associated changes in interactions, such as social distancing or restrictions in activities, have potentially affected interpersonal interactions. Specifically, people are spending less time physically interacting with each other or engaging in exciting activities (e.g., going to the movie theater). The lack of interaction with others and lack of engagement in day-to-day activities could have affected our participants' responses. Exploratory findings indicate that the Covid-19 pandemic affected the responses of our couples collected during-pandemic. Couples collected during-pandemic reported lower inclusion of other in the self of their romantic partners. However, our single participants were unaffected by the pandemic, at least regarding how much they include others or are willing to include others.

4.5 The Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale is Unidimensional

The Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale was originally designed to be a measure with two factors: offline behaviors and online behaviors. Modifications were made after conducting a confirmatory factor analysis and a principal component analysis. The finalized version of the Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale was unidimensional and had good reliability and validity. The Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale can be used in combination with the Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale for future studies. One of the advantages of using the Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale is that it is a one item measure and

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thus requires less time to complete. However, the drawback is that reliability cannot be calculated. The Willingness to Include the Other in the Self is a measure that is short, reliable, can be used to test people's relationship with unknow others, and moderately associates with the Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale. Nonetheless, additional psychometric studies are needed to fully validate this measure.

4.6 Future Directions

The usage of attention checks (e.g., reverse code items) or other strategies to identify participants who are not paying attention when completing a study are important. Study 1 did not have attention checks, which made it harder to identify which couples, if any, had to be excluded from data analysis. Future studies should include one or multiple attention checks. Another option is to include a measure that should negatively correlate or not correlate with the outcome of interest. Scores on this measure can then be used to differentiate between participants' genuine responses and participants' careless responses.

There were multiple statistical limitations in study 1. The actor-partner interdependence model did not allow for the test of partner-self mate value discrepancy on discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self and discrepancy of closeness. Future studies should identify better statistical models that allow for the test of partner-self mate value discrepancy predicting discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self or discrepancy of closeness. Additionally, our data for study 1 were cross-sectional. This did not allow for the proper test of self-expansion as a mediator in the relationship between partner-self mate value discrepancy and discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self or between partner-self mate value discrepancy and discrepancy of closeness because all variables were assessed at the same time. A mediational analysis assumes a causal relationship, and for a variable to affect another variable time must pass. Instead, a

longitudinal study would be a better approach to study this association. A longitudinal study would also allow to ask other interesting questions such as how fluctuations of partner-self mate value discrepancy affect inclusion of other in the self.

In study 2 we manipulated our participants mate value by randomly assigning them a low or high score of mate value. Our manipulation check revealed that our mate value manipulation might have not been effective. Although failed manipulation checks do not necessarily indicate the manipulation did not work, researchers should identify different approaches to manipulate participant's mate value and should pilot test the manipulation before usage in a study. Additionally, our hypotheses were made with the premise on mind that people can indirectly benefit from the characteristics of a partner high in mate value because there is an expectation of shared fate – an anticipation that what it is associated with a romantic partner will be associated with the self. Although our findings do provide support that people in general tend to be attracted to potential partners high in mate value, it does not tell us much about why. Participants only received a numerical evaluation of their online match but did not received specifics about the traits that their online match had that made him/her worthy of that evaluation. Future studies should manipulate mate value evaluations and pair them with traits that can be "included in the self" (e.g., financially secure) or with traits that can't be "included in the self" (e.g., being lucky). It is also important for future studies to consider which variables could influence the level of expected shared fate in a romantic relationship. For example, the level of dependence to a romantic partner can influence the level of shared fate experienced. If a person is highly dependent to a romantic partner, then shared fate will be higher. Another example is the level of commitment in a romantic relationship. Shared fate will be higher in more serious romantic relationships (e.g., marriage vs. dating).

Future studies should focus on conducting a more naturalistic experiment to test the ideas of study 2. In study 2, participants were presented with an online match and were asked to report on their expected inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self. It is possible, however, that the judgments people make based on online interactions (e.g., how much they will like the potential romantic partner) are not the same judgments people make when they meet in person. People believe they know what they want in a romantic partner but many times their initial stated ideal preferences do not overlap with actual choices when they meet romantic partners face-to-face (Eastwick & Finkel, 2008). There is a line of research that has focused on modality switching – when potential romantic partners transition from meeting online to meeting in person – to understand what aspects of online interactions predict the success of face-to-face encounters (Finkel et al., 2012; Sharabi & Caughlin, 2017).

One exploratory finding in study 1 suggested that the experience of inclusion of other in the self and closeness in a romantic relationship is affected by the number of previous romantic relationships a person has had. Higher number of previous romantic relationships was associated with lower inclusion of and lower closeness felt for the current romantic partner. It is possible that people who have had multiple romantic partners have already experienced many relationship-related milestones and thus have less new experiences to share with a new romantic partner. Therefore, people who have had multiple romantic partners may have more targeted areas of growth. A potential future study idea is to identify how people's desired areas of growth is associated with inclusion of other in the self and closeness to a romantic partner depending on whether the romantic partner can provide that growth. For example, if a person desires to explore their sexuality but their romantic partner is sexually inexperienced the inclusion of other in the self and closeness would be low compared to if their romantic partner is sexually experienced.

4.7 Conclusion

Study 1 tested how perceived differences in desirability (mate value) between the self and a romantic partner are associated with inclusion of other in the self and closeness. Romantic couples completed measures that assessed inclusion of other in the self, closeness, perceived partner-self mate value discrepancy, and self-expansion. Results demonstrated that partner-self mate value discrepancy did not influence levels of inclusion of other in the self or closeness felt for a romantic partner. Exploratory results also demonstrated that partner-self mate value discrepancy did not influence discrepancy of inclusion of other in the self or discrepancy of closeness. Additionally, self-expansion did not moderate the relationship between partner-self mate value discrepancy and inclusion of other in the self, or the relationship between partner-self mate value discrepancy and closeness. Higher self-expansion, however, predicted higher inclusion of and closeness felt for a romantic partner.

Study 2 tested how perceived differences in desirability (mate value) between self and a potential romantic partner are associated with inclusion of other in the self and willingness to include the other in the self. Singles completed an online dating profile and were given an online match that varied in mate value. Results demonstrated that the direction of a partner-self mate value discrepancy did not explain why romantic partners experience differences in their inclusion of each other or their closeness felt towards each other. Results also demonstrated that people who are high in mate value report higher inclusion of other in the self when considering potential romantic partners. Lastly, potential romantic partners with high mate value received higher ratings of willingness to include the other in the self and inclusion of other in the self.

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Mate Value Inventory (MVI-7)

Study One Instructions:

How well do you feel that these attributes apply to you currently?

How well do you feel that these attributes apply to your romantic partner currently?

Study Two Instructions:

How well do you feel that these attributes apply to you currently?

1. Ambitious
2. Attractive Face
3. Attractive Body
4. Desires Children
5. Enthusiastic About Sex
6. Faithful to Partners
7. Financially Secure
8. Generous
9. Good Sense of Humor
10. Healthy
11. Independent
12. Intelligent
13. Kind and Understanding
14. Loyal
15. Responsible
16. Shares my Values*
17. Shares my Interests*
18. Sociable
19. Emotionally Stable

| -3 Low on this Attribute	-2	-1	0 Neutral	1	2	3 High on this Attribute

*Items were omitted.

Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale

Study One Instructions:

Please select the set of circles that best represent how close you and your romantic partner currently are.

Study Two Instructions:

Please select the set of circles that best represent how close you anticipate feeling towards your match.
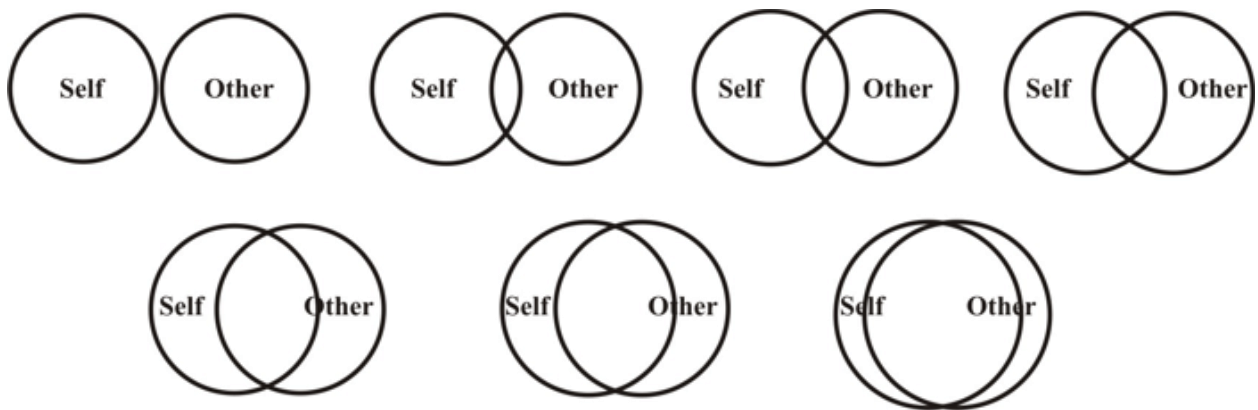
Participants will also be asked:

Study 1

How close do you think you and your romantic partner currently are?

1 Not at All Close	2	3	4	5	6	7 Very Close

Study 2

How close do you anticipate you will feel towards your match?

1 Not at All Close	2	3	4	5	6	7 Very Close

APPENDIX C

Self-Expansion Questionnaire

Study One Instructions:

The following questions are regarding your current romantic partner. Answer each question according to the way you personally feel, using the following scale.

1 Not Very Much	2	3	4	5	6	7 Very Much

1. How much does being with your partner result in you having new experiences?
2. When you are with your partner, do you feel a greater awareness of things because of him or her?
3. How much does your partner increase your ability to accomplish new things?
4. How much does being with your partner make you more appealing to potential mates?
5. How much does your partner help to expand your sense of the kind of person you are?
6. How much do you see your partner as a way to expand your own capabilities?
7. Do you often learn new things about your partner?
8. How much does your partner provide a source of exciting experiences?
9. How much do your partner's strengths as a person (skills, abilities, etc.) compensate for some of your own weaknesses as a person?
10. How much do you feel that you have a larger perspective on things because of your partner?
11. How much has being with your partner resulted in your learning new things?
12. How much has knowing your partner made you a better person?
13. How much does being with your partner increase the respect other people have for you?
14. How much does your partner increase your knowledge?

Unidimensional Relationship Closeness Scale

Study One Instructions:

The following questions refer to your relationship with your romantic partner. Please think about your relationship with your romantic partner when responding to the following questions. Please respond to the following statements using the scale below.

1 Strongly Disagree	2	3	4	5	6	7 Strongly Agree

1. My relationship with my romantic partner is close.
2. When we are apart, I miss my romantic partner a great deal.
3. My romantic partner and I disclose important personal things to each other.
4. My romantic partner and I have a strong connection.
5. My romantic partner and I want to spend time together.
6. I'm sure of my relationship with my romantic partner. *
7. My romantic partner is a priority in my life.
8. My romantic partner and I do a lot of things together.
9. When I have free time, I choose to spend it alone with my romantic partner.
10. I think about my romantic partner a lot.
11. My relationship with my romantic partner is important in my life.
12. I consider my romantic partner when making important decisions.

*Item was omitted

Demographic Form

Gender: Male _____ Female _____   **Age:** _____

Ethnicity:
African American _____   Asian _____
Caucasian _____   Hispanic _____
Native American _____   Other: _____

What is your relationship status?
Single _____ Married _____ In a Relationship _____ Widowed _____ Divorced _____
Other (Specify): _____

Questions Specific for Study One

How many serious romantic relationships did you had before your current romantic partner?

None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	More than five

For how long have you dated your significant other? Select the option that most closely approaches your answer.

3 Months	6 Months	9 months	One Year	Two Years	Three Years	More than Three Years

For how long did you knew him/her before starting a relationship?

3 Months	6 Months	9 months	One Year	Two Years	Three Years	More than Three Years

How did you met your significant other?

Text Entry Response.

When is your anniversary or monthiversary (if you have dated less than a year)?

Text Entry Response.

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, many couples have spent a considerable amount of time separated. It is important for this study to know how this pandemic has affected your relationship. Please answer the following questions honestly. Your answers to these questions can greatly impact the results of the study.

How has your physical interaction (face-to-face interactions) with your romantic partner changed because of the Covid-19 pandemic? Please select the answer that most closely reflect your current situation.

I interact a lot less with my partner	I somewhat interact less with my partner	I interact the same amount with my partner	I somewhat interact more with my partner	I interact a lot more with my partner

How has your virtual interaction (technology mediated interactions) with your romantic partner changed because of the Covid-19 pandemic? Please select the answer that most closely reflect your current situation.

I interact a lot less with my partner	I somewhat interact less with my partner	I interact the same amount with my partner	I somewhat interact more with my partner	I interact a lot more with my partner

Have you seen your romantic partner during quarantine?

Yes	No

If participant responds yes, they will see the following question:

How often do you see your romantic partner during quarantine?

Once a week	Twice a week	Three times a week	Four times a week	Five times a week	More than five times a week	Other

If other, please explain (Text Entry Response)

All participants will see the following questions:
How often have you been in touch with your romantic partner during quarantine through the usage of technology (e.g., text messages, social media, video conferencing apps)?

Once a week	Twice a week	Three times a week	Four times a week	Five times a week	More than five times a week	Other

Are both of you really in a romantic relationship with each other? You will still receive credit even if this is not the case. It is very important for this study that both of you truly are a couple, so we need to know.

Yes ___   No____

Questions Specific for Study Two

Have you ever been in a romantic relationship that lasted more than six months?

Yes_____   No_____

For how long have you been single? Select the option that most closely approaches your answer.

3 Months	6 Months	9 months	One Year	Two Years	Three Years	More than Three Years

To add credibility to study two, typical questions asked in online dating profiles will also be asked:

What is your religion/spirituality (Text Entry Response)

What is your political affiliation? (Text Entry Response)

What is your current job? (Text Entry Response)

What kind of relationship would you be interested in?

_____ Casual/Short-Term Relationship

_____ Serious/Long-Term Relationship

_____ I don't Know

Are you open to meet someone who already has children?

Yes _____   No_____

Do you smoke?

Yes _____   No_____

Do you drink?

Yes _____   No_____

Do you work-out?

Yes _____   No_____

Name three things that you enjoy doing during your free time (Text Entry Response)

Describe yourself in four words (Text Entry Response)

What is your favorite kind of food? (Text Entry Response)

What kind of music do you enjoy the most? (Text Entry Response)

What is your favorite movie? (Text Entry Response)

What is your favorite book? (Text Entry Response)

Do you have pets? If yes, what kind of pets do you have? (Text Entry Response)

APPENDIX F

List of Resources for Romantic Couples

English

Hotlines

- Love is Respect
  - Call: 1.866.331.9474
  - Text: "loveis" to 22522
- National Domestic Violence Hotline
  - Call: 1.800.799.7233
- Center Against Sexual and Family Violence
  - Call: 593-7300

Help Centers

- Counseling Center at UTEP
  - Address: 202 Union West 500 W University, El Paso, TX.
  - Couple's counseling is available but both partners must be UTEP students
- Center Against Sexual and Family Violence
  - Address: 580 Giles Road, El Paso, TX

Websites

- Love is Respect
  - https://www.loveisrespect.org/for-yourself/contact-us/
- Center Against Sexual and Family Violence
  - https://casfv.org/
- National Domestic Violence Hotline
  - https://www.thehotline.org/help/

Spanish

Líneas Directas

- Love is Respect
  - Llama: 1.866.331.9474
- Linea Nacional contra la Violencia Domestica
  - Llama: 1.800.779.7233
- Centro Contra la Violencia Sexual y Familiar
  - Llama: 915.593.7300 o 1.800.727.0511

Centros de Ayuda

- Counseling Center at UTEP
  - Dirección: 202 Union West 500 W University, El Paso, TX.

- o El asesoramiento para parejas está disponible para estudiantes. Ambas personas deben ser estudiantes de UTEP.
  - Centro Contra la Violencia Sexual y Familiar
    - o Dirección: 580 Giles Road, El Paso, TX

Sitios Web

- Love is Respect
  - o https://espanol.loveisrespect.org/
- Centro Contra la Violencia Sexual y Familiar
  - o https://es.casfv.org/
- Linea Nacional contra la Violencia Domestica
  - o https://espanol.thehotline.org/

Pilot Study - Numerical Evaluations

Pilot Study Instructions:

We are interested in learning how people think about others when evaluating them as a potential romantic partner. Please answer the following items based on the guidelines provided below.

Have you ever rated a potential romantic partner in a numerical form (e.g., "He/She is an 8")?

- Yes
- No

From a range between 1 (not at all a good romantic partner) to 10 (very good romantic partner), what score do you consider to be an **average score** (neither an undesirable potential romantic partner nor a desirable potential romantic partner)?

- Score of 1
- Score of 2
- Score of 3
- Score of 4
- Score of 5
- Score of 6
- Score of 7
- Score of 8
- Score of 9
- Score of 10

From a range between 1 (not at all a good romantic partner) to 10 (very good romantic partner), what score do you consider to be an indication of an **undesirable** potential romantic partner?

For example, if you select the option "score of x" you are telling me that a "score of x" and any score below this would be considered an undesirable potential romantic partner.

- Score of 1
- Score of 2
- Score of 3
- Score of 4
- Score of 5
- Score of 6
- Score of 7
- Score of 8
- Score of 9
- Score of 10

From a range between 1 (not at all a good romantic partner) to 10 (very good romantic partner), what score do you consider to be an indication of a **desirable** potential romantic partner?

For example, if you select the option "score of x" you are telling me that a "score of x" and any score above this would be considered a desirable potential romantic partner.

- Score of 1
- Score of 2
- Score of 3
- Score of 4
- Score of 5
- Score of 6
- Score of 7
- Score of 8
- Score of 9
- Score of 10

If you were to receive a score of 3 from a range between 1 (not at all a good romantic partner) to 10 (very good romantic partner), how would you feel about yourself as a romantic partner?

1 Not at all good	2	3	4	5	6	7 Very good

If you were to receive a score of 5 from a range between 1 (not at all a good romantic partner) to 10 (very good romantic partner), how would you feel about yourself as a romantic partner?

1 Not at all good	2	3	4	5	6	7 Very good

If you were to receive a score of 7 from a range between 1 (not at all a good romantic partner) to 10 (very good romantic partner), how would you feel about yourself as a romantic partner?

1 Not at all good	2	3	4	5	6	7 Very good

Pilot Study - Credibility

Pilot Study Instructions:

We are interested in testing the credibility of some of the materials that will be used for an online dating study. Imagine that you have an online dating profile and you have been matched with someone based on a new matching algorithm. You get information below. Please answer the following items based on the guidelines provided below.

Name: XXXXX
Age range: 18-24
Ethnicity: Hispanic

Based on the responses for your online dating profile, our algorithm has matched you with XXXXX.

Your responses on your online dating profile have been evaluated and received a score of # out of # based on the preferences of a group of students from the University of Texas at El Paso. Your match's responses to his/her online dating profile were evaluated and received a score of # out of # based on the preferences of a group of students from the University of Texas at El Paso.

How credible is this information?

1 Not at all credible	2	3	4	5	6	7 Very credible

If you were to be presented with this information, how much would you believe it?

1 Not at all	2	3	4	5	6	7 Very much

Comments/Suggestions to improve the credibility of the presentation of this information:

Text Entry Response.

APPENDIX I

Willingness to Include the Other in the Self Scale

Study Two Instructions:

Please indicate your willingness to engage in these activities/behaviors with your match.

1 Not at all Willing	2	3	4 Neutral	5	6	7 Very Willing

Off-line Behaviors

1. Doing physical activities regarded as sport or recreation that your match enjoys (e.g., going for a run).
2. Eating or drinking items that your match likes.
3. Watching movies, TV shows, or videos that your match suggested.
4. Participating in activities/hobbies that your match has an interest in (e.g., playing chess).
5. Going to social events that your match suggested (e.g., concerts, parties, social clubs/organization).
6. Asking for your match's opinion before making a decision (e.g., buying a pair of shoes).

Online Behaviors

7. Sending your match a friend request on social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter).
8. Sending friend requests to your match's friends/coworkers on social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter). *
9. Liking/following social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter) of people or places that your match likes.
10. Tagging your match in posts on social medial (e.g., Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitter) that you think he/she will enjoy.

*Item was omitted.

APPENDIX J

Mate Value Scale

Study Two Instructions:

Overall, how would you rate your level of desirability as a partner on the following scale?

1 Extremely Undesirable	2	3	4	5	6	7 Extremely Desirable

Overall, how would members of the opposite sex rate your level of desirability as a partner on the following scale?

1 Extremely Undesirable	2	3	4	5	6	7 Extremely Desirable

Overall, how do you believe you compare to other people in desirability as a partner on the following scale?

1 Very Much Lowe than Average	2 Lower than Average	3 Slightly Lower than Average	4 Average	5 Slightly Higher than Average	6 Higher than Average	7 Very Much Higher than Average

Overall, how good of a catch are you?

1 Very Bad Catch	2 Bad Catch	3 Somewhat of a Bad Catch	4 Average Catch	5 Somewhat Good of a Catch	6 Good Catch	7 Very Good Catch

Emophilia Scale

Rate your agreement using the guidelines below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	*Disagree*	*Slightly Disagree*	*Neither Agree nor Disagree*	*Slightly Agree*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*

1. I fall in love easily.
2. For me, romantic feelings take a long time to develop. *
3. I feel romantic connections right away.
4. I love the feeling of falling in love.
5. I am not the type of person who falls in love. *
6. I often feel romantic connections to more than one person at a time.
7. I have been in love with more than one person at the same time.
8. I fall in love frequently.
9. I tend to jump into relationships.
10. During your entire life, how many people have you fallen in love with?

None	One	Two	Three	Four	Five	More than Five

Scoring: Higher scores indicate greater emotional promiscuity.

*Reverse coded items.

APPENDIX L

Fear of Being Single Scale

Rate your agreement using the guidelines below.

1 *Not at All True*	2 *Untrue*	3 *Somewhat Untrue*	4 *Neutral*	5 *Somewhat True*	6 *True*	7 *Very True*

1. It scares me to think that there might not be anyone out there for me.
2. I feel it is close to being too late for me to find the love of my life.
3. I feel anxious when I think about being single forever.
4. I need to find a partner before I'm too old to have and raise children.
5. If I end up alone in life, I will probably feel like there is something wrong with me.
6. As I get older, it will be harder and harder to find someone.

Scoring: Higher scores indicate greater fear of being single.

Dating-Up/Dating-Down Manipulation

Self Low/Partner High

Name: Alejandra
Age range: 18-24
Ethnicity: Hispanic

Your Evaluation Score: 3 out of 10
Alejandra's Evaluation Score: 7 out of 10

Based on your responses for your online dating profile, our algorithm has matched you with Alejandra. Our algorithm takes into account similarities in your and Alejandra's responses to our personality measures and reported interests. Alejandra is also a student from the University of Texas at El Paso and has agreed to participate in this study.

Your responses on your online dating profile have been evaluated and received a score of 3 out of 10 based on the preferences of a group of female students from the University of Texas at El Paso. Alejandra's responses to her online dating profile were evaluated and received a score of 7 out of 10 based on the preferences of a group of male students from the University of Texas at El Paso.

Self High/Partner High

Name: Alejandra
Age range: 18-24
Ethnicity: Hispanic

Your Evaluation Score: 7 out of 10
Alejandra's Evaluation Score: 7 out of 10

Based on your responses for your online dating profile, our algorithm has matched you with Alejandra. Our algorithm takes into account similarities in your and Alejandra's responses to our personality measures and reported interests. Alejandra is also a student from the University of Texas at El Paso and has agreed to participate in this study.

Your responses on your online dating profile have been evaluated and received a score of 7 out of 10 based on the preferences of a group of female students from the University of Texas at El Paso. Alejandra's responses to her online dating profile were evaluated and received a score of 7 out of 10 based on the preferences of a group of male students from the University of Texas at El Paso.

Self High/Partner Low

Name: Alejandra
Age range: 18-24
Ethnicity: Hispanic

Your Evaluation Score: 7 out of 10
Alejandra's Evaluation Score: 3 out of 10

Based on your responses for your online dating profile, our algorithm has matched you with Alejandra. Our algorithm takes into account similarities in your and Alejandra's responses to our personality measures and reported interests. Alejandra is also a student from the University of Texas at El Paso and has agreed to participate in this study.

Your responses on your online dating profile have been evaluated and received a score of 7 out of 10 based on the preferences of a group of female students from the University of Texas at El Paso. Alejandra's responses to her online dating profile were evaluated and received a score of 3 out of 10 based on the preferences of a group of male students from the University of Texas at El Paso.

Self Low/Partner Low

Name: Alejandra
Age range: 18-24
Ethnicity: Hispanic

Your Evaluation Score: 3 out of 10
Alejandra's Evaluation Score: 3 out of 10

Based on your responses for your online dating profile, our algorithm has matched you with Alejandra. Our algorithm takes into account similarities in your and Alejandra's responses to our personality measures and reported interests. Alejandra is also a student from the University of Texas at El Paso and has agreed to participate in this study.

Your responses on your online dating profile have been evaluated and received a score of 3 out of 10 based on the preferences of a group of female students from the University of Texas at El Paso. Alejandra's responses to her online dating profile were evaluated and received a score of 3 out of 10 based on the preferences of a group of male students from the University of Texas at El Paso.

Self Low/Partner High

Name: Alejandro
Age range: 18-24
Ethnicity: Hispanic

Your Evaluation Score: 3 out of 10
Alejandro's Evaluation Score: 7 out of 10

Based on your responses for your online dating profile, our algorithm has matched you with Alejandro. Our algorithm takes into account similarities in your and Alejandro's responses to our personality measures and reported interests. Alejandro is also a student from the University of Texas at El Paso and has agreed to participate in this study.

Your responses on your online dating profile have been evaluated and received a score of 3 out of 10 based on the preferences of a group of male students from the University of Texas at El Paso. Alejandro's responses to his online dating profile were evaluated and received a score of 7 out of 10 based on the preferences of a group of female students from the University of Texas at El Paso.

Self High/Partner High

Name: Alejandro
Age range: 18-24
Ethnicity: Hispanic

Your Evaluation Score: 7 out of 10
Alejandro's Evaluation Score: 7 out of 10

Based on your responses for your online dating profile, our algorithm has matched you with Alejandro. Our algorithm takes into account similarities in your and Alejandro's responses to our personality measures and reported interests. Alejandro is also a student from the University of Texas at El Paso and has agreed to participate in this study.

Your responses on your online dating profile have been evaluated and received a score of 7 out of 10 based on the preferences of a group of male students from the University of Texas at El Paso. Alejandro's responses to his online dating profile were evaluated and received a score of 7 out of 10 based on the preferences of a group of female students from the University of Texas at El Paso.

Self High/Partner Low

Name: Alejandro
Age range: 18-24
Ethnicity: Hispanic

Your Evaluation Score: 7 out of 10
Alejandro's Evaluation Score: 3 out of 10

Based on your responses for your online dating profile, our algorithm has matched you with Alejandro. Our algorithm takes into account similarities in your and Alejandro's responses to our personality measures and reported interests. Alejandro is also a student from the University of Texas at El Paso and has agreed to participate in this study.

Your responses on your online dating profile have been evaluated and received a score of 7 out of 10 based on the preferences of a group of male students from the University of Texas at El Paso. Alejandro's responses to his online dating profile were evaluated and received a score of 3 out of 10 based on the preferences of a group of female students from the University of Texas at El Paso.

Self Low/Partner Low

Name: Alejandro
Age range: 18-24
Ethnicity: Hispanic

Your Evaluation Score: 3 out of 10
Alejandro's Evaluation Score: 3 out of 10

Based on your responses for your online dating profile, our algorithm has matched you with Alejandro. Our algorithm takes into account similarities in your and Alejandro's responses to our personality measures and reported interests. Alejandro is also a student from the University of Texas at El Paso and has agreed to participate in this study.

Your responses on your online dating profile have been evaluated and received a score of 3 out of 10 based on the preferences of a group of male students from the University of Texas at El Paso. Alejandro's responses to his online dating profile were evaluated and received a score of 3 out of 10 based on the preferences of a group of female students from the University of Texas at El Paso.

CURRICULUM VITA

Jacqueline Lechuga was born and raised in El Paso, Texas. She received her Bachelor of Science in Psychology (*summa cum laude*) with a double minor in honors and biological sciences from The University of Texas at El Paso in May 2017. She is currently a doctoral student in the Social-Cultural Psychology program at The University of Texas at El Paso.

Her research interests primarily involve understanding the dark side of romantic relationships. Specifically, she focuses on understanding why people are receptive of abusive behaviors and/or understanding why people are inclined to behave aggressively with their romantic partner. She will continue working on this line of research under the mentorship of Dr. Michael A. Zárate in the Social Cognition Lab until her expected graduation date.

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