

# Attraction and Rejection (Part 5)

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## a) **Similarity in different aspects**

Findings suggest that similarity and attraction are multidimensional constructs (Lydon, Jamieson & Zanna, 1988), in which people are attracted to others who are similar to them in demographics, physical appearance, attitudes, interpersonal style, social and cultural background, personality, interests and activities preferences, and communication and social skills. A study conducted by Theodore Newcomb (1961) on college dorm roommates suggested that individuals with shared background, majors, attitudes, values, and political views became friends. He conducted an extensive study of friendship by taking over a large house at the University of Michigan and running it on an experimental basis. Students lived there just as they would have in any other dormitory except they agreed to take part in the study and were questioned at periodic intervals. Newcomb had control over room assignments and in the basis of information from tests and questionnaires; he assigned some boys who were similar to each other to be roommates and others who were dissimilar to be roommates. He then intervened very little in their affairs. Under these circumstances, the effect of similarity proved to be powerful. Those roommates who were selected as being similar generally liked each other and ended up as friends; those who were chosen to be dissimilar tended to dislike each other and not to be friends. thus, this study gave evidence that the computer dating services are correct in assuming that putting similar people together usually leads to a more successful, friendlier relationship than putting dissimilar people together.

- **Physical appearance**

The matching hypothesis proposed by Goffman (1952) suggests why people become attracted to their partner. It claims that people are more likely to form long standing relationships with those who are equally physically attractive as they are. It can be represented in the following equation: physical attractiveness x the probability of acceptance (Miller, 2006). The

study by Walster and Walster (1969) supported the matching hypothesis by showing that partners who were similar in terms of physical attractiveness expressed the most liking for each other. Murstein (1972) also found evidence that supported the matching hypothesis: photos of dating and engaged couples were rated in terms of attractiveness. A definite tendency was found for couples of similar attractiveness to date or engage.

- **Attitudes**

According to the 'law of attraction' by Byrne (1971), attraction towards a person is positively related to the proportion of attitudes similarity associated with that person. Clore (1976) also raised that the one with similar attitudes as yours was more agreeable with your perception of things and more reinforcing s/he was, so the more you like him/her. Based on the cognitive consistency theories, difference in attitudes and interests can lead to dislike and avoidance (Singh & Ho, 2000; Tan & Singh, 1995) whereas similarity in attitudes promotes social attraction (Byrne, London & Reeves, 1968; Singh & Ho, 2000). Miller (1972) pointed out that attitude similarity activates the perceived attractiveness and favorability information from each other, whereas dissimilarity would reduce the impact of these cues. The studies by Jamieson, Lydon and Zanna (1987, 1988) showed that attitude similarity could predict how people evaluate their respect for each other, and social and intellectual first impressions which in terms of activity preference similarity and value-based attitude similarity respectively. In intergroup comparisons, high attitude similarity would lead to homogeneity among in-group members whereas low attitude similarity would lead to diversity among in-group members, promoting social attraction and achieving high group performance in different tasks (Hahn & Hwang, 1999). Although attitudinal similarity and attraction are linearly related, attraction may not contribute significantly to attitude change (Simons, Berkowitz & Moyer, 1970).

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