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The Psychology of Romantic Relationships

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for
Honors in the Department of Psychology

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Abstract

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Prior research on self-monitoring suggests that high self-monitors are more likely to choose a romantic partner based on status and appearance. Conversely, low self-monitors put a greater emphasis on shared values and interests. In the current research, we examined the self-monitoring differences in both dating relationships and marriages. Participants were given a survey in which they answered personal questions, questions about their past relationships, qualities that are important in potential dating and marriage partners, and the Snyder and Gangestad (1986) 18-item Self-Monitoring scale. Trends were consistent with previous research, such that high self-monitors were more likely to divorce than low self-monitors. The research also suggests that high self-monitors place a greater emphasis on physical attractiveness, creativity, and status, whereas low self-monitors prefer qualities such as fidelity and spiritual values. The research indicates that high and low self-monitors differ in partner preferences both in short-term and long-term relationships.

As social beings, relationships play a significant role in our lives. Throughout our lives, we are constantly affected by our relationships with others. Relationships can vary in several ways. There are good relationships, bad relationships, healthy or unhealthy relationships, friendships, and romantic relationships, all of which contribute to who we are. As Settersten (2015) points out in his research, our identity, opportunities, and actions are all intertwined with our relationships. Because relationships play such an important role in our lives it is crucial that we understand them. Settersten (2015) further explains the changing dynamics of relationships, composed of a beginning, middle, and an end to a relationship and how these changing dynamics also impact how we feel about others and ourselves. While there has been extensive research on friendships and relationships in general, less is known about romantic relationships and underlying psychological factors. Understanding these romantic relationships is important because they are relationships in which we become very invested in and they can be the most impactful relationships in our lives.

As early as adolescence, romantic relationships begin to impact our lives. We admire romance due to its presence in our society. From fairy tales to celebrity weddings on the cover of magazines, romantic relationships are present in our lives regardless of whether we ourselves are in one. Starting at young ages, we aspire to find a romantic partner. Viejo, Ortega-Ruiz, and Sanchez (2015) have found that romantic relationships are associated with greater psychological adjustment and well-being in adolescence. They suggest that different types of romantic relationships can involve different types of love; love that focuses on the partner's well-being, love that focuses on those who are dependent upon us, and love that focuses on passion and intimate

desires (Viejo et al 2015). These different types of love can then influence the perceived quality of the relationship. In their research, Viejo et al (2015) found that involvement in romantic relationships is associated with greater well-being. Further, they found that adolescents who were happy with the quality of their relationship also reported greater well-being than those who were unhappy with the quality of the relationship. They showed that the adolescents who had never been in a committed relationship showed more signs of isolation compared to those currently in a relationship, who showed signs of greater well-being. As we can see, it is important to study and understand the different characteristics of romantic relationships because not only do they play a dynamic role in our lives, but they also potentially impact our well-being from a young age.

Similar to adolescents, adults in romantic relationships also experience increased well-being. In our society, as we get older it is the norm to be involved in a romantic relationship. It is in our nature to want intimate human connection, so we desire these intimate romantic relationships. Johnson, Kent and Yale (2012) examined the associations of identity and romantic relationship intimacy with well-being. They found that romantic relationships that occur during periods of developmental growth play a role in identity formation. They further found correlations between intimacy and well-being, which were positively associated with self-esteem and negatively associated with social anxiety and loneliness, (Johnson et al, 2012). These results imply that romantic relationships play a beneficial role in our lives. Because of the prominence as well as the impact relationships can have on our lives, it is very important that we study them. Relationships are an immense part of our culture and

better understanding them can be beneficial to our understanding of us personally as well.

Self-Monitoring

There are many different factors that are associated with and influence romantic relationships. One factor that has been evaluated is self-monitoring. According to Snyder and Gangestad (1986) there are two types of self-monitors: high and low. They explain that low self-monitors have little motivation or aptitude to change their expressive behaviors and tend to act in a way that reflects their inner beliefs. On the other end of the spectrum, high self-monitors tend to be attentive to social norms, concerned with their public appearances, and possess the ability and motivation to adjust their behavior to be consistent with the situation in which they find themselves. Research has looked at differences in self-monitors in terms of relationships and social behaviors. Where low-self monitors tend to be more consistent throughout differing social situations, high self-monitors often change their behaviors to suit the situation. In their research, Snyder and Gangestad (1986) generated an 18-item Self-Monitoring scale to assess whether one is a high or low self-monitor. This scale asks questions such as, *“I find it hard to imitate the behavior of other people,”* *“In a group of people, I am rarely the center of attention,”* *“I can look anyone in the eye and tell a lie with a straight face (if for a right end),”* and *“In different situations and with different people, I often act like very different persons.”* A high self-monitor would answer true to the first and third statements, and false to the second. Conversely, a low self-monitor would answer false to the first and third, and true to the second. Self-monitoring assessments can be used to determine whether a person will be more interested in the

image they give off or more interested in staying true to their inner thoughts and feelings (Snyder & Gangestad, 1986).

Snyder & Gangestad's (1986) Self-Monitoring scale is significant, as it allows us to make predictions in many different areas about people based on whether they score as a high or low self-monitor. For example, because high self-monitors tend to focus on how they are perceived by others and low self-monitors tend to focus on their inner beliefs, research has also looked for self-monitoring differences in advertising. In their research, Snyder and DeBono (1985) found that high-self monitors have a greater preference for advertisements emphasizing the image associated with a product, and low self-monitors seem to prefer advertisements emphasizing the quality or value of the product. The differences in self-monitoring preferences shown could potentially carry over into other areas of life as well.

Previous research on self-monitoring has shown that there are differences in motivations between high and low self-monitors. Fuglestad and Snyder (2010) looked at what motivates high and low self-monitors in different situations. They found that high self-monitors were more driven by their desire for status achieved through appearance compared to low self-monitors. Through these views, it was suggested that high self-monitors place a greater value on the perceived status of a potential romantic partner, than low self-monitors. Conversely, low self-monitors appeared to value trust and sincerity. Furthermore, they found that low self-monitors value an equal-status relationship, whereas high self-monitors are accustomed to unequal-status relationships (Fugelstad & Snyder, 2010). These findings are consistent with Parks-Leduc, Pattie, Pargas, and Eliason (2013) where they found that understanding the levels of skill and

motivation can predict the likelihood of people to change the way they act in different social contexts. They show that high self-monitors are both better skilled as well as pose a greater motivation to act differently in different situations. They suggest that additional research is required to understand how someone who scores both high or both low in self-monitoring skill and motivation acts compared to someone who scores high in one and low in the other. Fuglestad and Snyder (2010) also showed that because high self-monitors are able to change how they act in different situations, they are more likely to “get along” to “get ahead.” In other words, they are more likely to act certain ways and befriend certain people in order to help themselves, again with the intention to increase their status. Overall, their research has shown that in relationships low self-monitors are more concerned with status equality in relationships than high self-monitors.

Differences between high and low self-monitors have been found to predict how they will act in different situations. Lippa and Donaldson (1990) found a significant association between self-monitoring and consistent behavior throughout interpersonal relationships. Because low self-monitors tend to act in ways that reflect their personal beliefs and values, they tend to be consistent across different situations. However, high self-monitors are more likely to change their behavior and act in ways that are consistent with the different situations in which they find themselves. These findings could potentially suggest that such inconsistencies in behavior could skew perceived compatibility. For example, someone in a relationship with a high self-monitor might perceive greater compatibility because the high self-monitor acts how he or she believes his or her partner or the situation calls for. Conversely, low self-

monitors are acting in ways that are parallel to their values and beliefs, so perceived compatibility is likely more genuine.

Self-Monitoring and Dating Relationships

The difference between the importance of equality in close relationships for high and low self-monitors has been further studied. Oyamoto, Fuglestad, and Snyder (2010) examined the balance of power in high and low self-monitor's relationships. They looked at both perceived balance of power and the quality of the relationship based on satisfaction. Their study found that high self-monitors perceive an asymmetrical balance of power in their relationships, whereas low self-monitors perceive a symmetrical balance of power. Surprisingly, the asymmetrical balance of power in a high self-monitor's relationship seemed to have little impact on their perceived quality of the relationship. This means that equal power in a relationship is more important to a low self-monitor than a high self-monitor. Further, unequal power in a relationship hurts the perceived relationship quality for low self-monitors, but does not do so for high self-monitors. This suggests that other qualities have a greater impact on a high self-monitor's relationship, so they still perceive it as satisfactory, regardless of the hierarchical quality. It would be interesting to further research if these differences of power in close relationships carry over to romantic relationships.

Not only have equality differences between high and low self-monitors been observed, but also differences in the longevity of romantic relationships. Leck and Simpson (1999) found that high self-monitor's romantic relationships do not last as long as low self-monitor's romantic relationships. They suggest that while high self-monitors are better at initiating a relationship than low self-monitors, conversely they

are worse at maintaining them. There could be a wide range of reasons that cause these differences in relationship maintenance, one of which could just be the lack of compatibility that is more prevalent in high self-monitoring relationships than low self-monitors. They noted that high self-monitors tend to continue to look for better options while they are in a relationship. They further show that high self-monitors perceive themselves to be better at, as well as enjoy more flirting with others more than low self-monitors (Leck&Simpson, 1999). This research could also potentially indicate that high self-monitors are more likely to cheat on a partner than low self-monitors, and further indicate an increased likelihood of relationship dissolution.

There are further differences in high and low self-monitors predictions regarding current and possible future relationships. Consistent with previous research, low self-monitors not only engage in longer relationships, but also predict their relationships to last longer. Oner (2002) studied the relationship between self-monitoring and future time orientation in romantic relationships. The results showed that both male and female low self-monitors have an extended future time orientation of relationships. This indicates that low self-monitors anticipate their relationships lasting longer. This is worth noting because it could potentially indicate that high self-monitors are not as invested in their relationships from the beginning. Because high self-monitors have been shown to be less committed in relationships, and more likely to go from partner to partner, it makes sense that they would have less of a future time orientation. This could have implications on a difference in the likelihood of high and low self-monitors to get married, or further to stay married.

Because high and low self-monitors have been found to have different motivations, these motivations carry over to what qualities they look for in a potential dating partner. Melinda Jones (1993) analyzed the relationship between self-monitoring and intrinsic versus extrinsic motivations. She found that high self-monitors tend to have more extrinsic motivations, and low self-monitors tend to have more intrinsic motivations. Extrinsic motivations are such that provide rewarding outcomes, such as approval from others or increased social status. On the other hand, intrinsic motivations are such that provide mutual satisfaction, such as spending time with one another (Jones, 1993). This shows that high self-monitors tend to look for potential partners with a 'what can you do for me' mentality. On the other hand, low self-monitors tend to look for compatible partners who they can achieve joint pleasure from the relationship. These differences in preferences might also influence the quality of the relationship. Seemingly, low self-monitors, who have partners they are compatible with, would likely have a better relationship than high self-monitors with partners they choose on the basis of status or attractiveness.

In dating relationships, research has shown that high and low self-monitors look for different qualities and commit to the relationship differently. Leone and Hawkins (2006) researched such differences. They found that high self-monitors tend to change the way they act in different social situations, are more detached, less personal, and more likely to end a current relationship for a new one. They further found that low self-monitors are more likely to look for a compatible partner and be involved in a stable, committed, intimately personal relationship. Because high self-monitors seek potential dating partners based on perceived status and looks, it begs the question of

whether they also consider the same qualities when choosing a marriage partner. This research also indicates the possibility that these differences in relationship qualities and commitment levels could further influence the likelihood of relationship dissolution, where low self-monitors are less likely to dissolve a relationship than high self-monitors.

In romantic relationships, research has shown that low self-monitors tend to show a preference for other low self-monitors, as well as high self-monitors preference for high self-monitors. Norris and Zweigenhaft (1999) studied self-monitoring and trust in relationships of U.S. college students. They found that high self-monitors are more likely to be a relationship with other high self-monitors than low self-monitors. They explain that this tendency could be a result of the different values of high and low self-monitors. For example, low self-monitors place a greater value on commitment and trust in a relationship. Norris and Zweigenhaft (1999) found that low self-monitoring couples scored higher on a measure of trust and predictions of relationship longevity compared to high self-monitors. These results are consistent with the results of other studies and it seems plausible that people would choose a partner who shares similar desires as them. Therefore, it seems as though low self-monitoring relationships emphasize shared values and beliefs, whereas high self-monitoring relationships emphasize status, attractiveness, and shared activities.

The differences in the values of high and low self-monitors have been investigated deeper. It has been noted that high and low self-monitors are willing to make different types of tradeoffs in their relationships. Snyder, Berscheid, and Glick, (1985) investigated the differences in exterior and interior motives of relationship

initiation for high and low self-monitors. They investigated the differences in attention and then the differences in actual choices. Their research found that while low self-monitors put a greater emphasis on interior qualities, high self-monitors focus on exterior qualities in both the initial attention and actual choices. In the research, participants were forced to make tradeoffs between physical attractiveness and a desirable personality. It was shown that high self-monitors were more willing to give up a desirable personality for a physically attractive partner, and the opposite for low self-monitors. These tradeoffs continue to exemplify the different values of high and low self-monitors and can further demonstrate differences in the qualities of the relationships they have with others.

These differences are further noted in sexual relations. Snyder, Simpson, and Gangestad, (1986) investigated sexual relationships of college students. They looked at self-monitoring differences in restricted versus unrestricted orientation towards sex. Restricted orientation would include people who believe sexual relations should be confined to committed intimate relationships. However, unrestricted orientation would include people who believe that sexual relations do not need to be confined to such relationships and that if they find someone sexually attractive then they would be comfortable engaging in sexual activities with that individual. They found that high self-monitors tended to have an unrestricted orientation towards sexual relationships. On the other hand, low self-monitors had a restricted orientation towards sex as indicated by fewer sexual partners, anticipating less future sexual partners, less one-night stands, and a greater value placed on commitment. High self-monitors reported the opposite; they reported more previous and anticipated future sexual partners, more

one-night stands, and little value on commitment. Snyder et al (1986) predict that such differences could potentially be adaptive. This could indicate that each personality type adapted and exist because they foster two types of successful mating strategies. Further investigation on these differences can be beneficial to society.

Because of the sexual norms today, the understandings of sexual relationships can lead to a better understanding of more intimate dating relationships. Snyder and Simpson (1984) also looked at self-monitoring differences in dating relationships in four different investigations. They examined willingness to change partners, different qualities of dating lives, and the progression of intimacy in relationships. Their results, like previous research, found that low self-monitors were more committed to their relationships and had a more pronounced progression of intimacy. These results could suggest a difference in the likelihood of relationship dissolution, where the less committed high self-monitors are more likely to dissolve a relationship.

Self-Monitoring and Marriage

Prior research has shown that low self-monitors tend to have longer lasting, closer dating relationships than high self-monitors. This raises the question of whether this is also true of marriage relationships. It seems as though with the increased weight and binding notion of marriage, that a high self-monitor might have potential partner preferences more similar to those of low self-monitors. Rowatt, DeLue, and Strickhouser (2001) examined self-monitoring and partner preferences. In general, not accounting for self-monitoring differences, they found four particular qualities were more important in a long-term relationship than a short-term relationship. These include fidelity, dependability, spiritual values, and good parenting. This might suggest

that high self-monitors adjust their values when considering marriage, potentially acting more like low self-monitors. These values include qualities that are typically more closely associated with low self-monitors.

Research on the relationship between self-monitoring and marriage is scarce compared to the friendships and dating relationships. Leone (2003) is one of the few to examine self-monitoring differences in marital relationships. He looked at self-monitoring differences in marital satisfaction as well as divorce. In his first study, he examined marital satisfaction. He found that the majority people satisfied with their marriage were low self-monitors, and the majority of people unsatisfied with their marriage were high self-monitors. In the second study he compared divorce rates of high self-monitors to those of low self-monitors. He found that the majority of participants who had been divorced at least once were high self-monitors, and majority of those who had never been divorced were low self-monitors. He established that high self-monitors tend to perceive themselves as having many more potential partners other than their spouse compared to low self-monitors. These findings are consistent with the findings regarding self-monitoring and dating relationships. However, as little other research has been conducted in this area and due to the small sample sizes, I think further research is needed to understand marital differences between high and low self-monitors.

With the increasing divorce rates, it would be beneficial to understand how exactly self-monitoring differences play a role in the dissolution of a marriage. In recent times, divorce rates are increasing and especially so in older adults. Brown and Lin (2012) looked at divorce statistics from 1990 to 2010 in the United States and

analyzed the changes in divorce rates of middle-aged and older adults. They found that approximately 45% of marriages end in divorce. Of these divorces, in 1990 roughly one in ten of the divorces were those of middle-aged and older adult couples.

However, in 2010 and more recent years they found that nearly one in four of such divorces were those of middle-aged and older adults. These statistics also tend to vary by gender and race, where women are more likely to end a prolonged marriage than men are. It was also found that minorities have increased divorce rates. These findings could have several implications, one of which could indicate that people are getting divorced more than once. For example an older couple in 2010 getting divorced could consist of a partner who had previously been divorced. They found that divorce is approximately two and a half times more likely for remarried people than people in their first marriages. As divorce is becoming less socially stigmatized, people are more likely to get divorced, and in some cases do so multiple times.

When looking at the increasing rates in marriage failures, it is important to understand how couples deal with their problems and eventually choose divorce. Glasser and Palmatier (1996) looked at different ways couples cope with their issues, which sometimes can help avoid divorce and other times ultimately leads to divorce. They examined different factors that seem to increase the likelihood of divorce, as well as recommendations that could potentially prevent divorce. They found that using preventative measures to cope with disagreements is more beneficial than waiting until the couple has reached a breaking point to start treatment measures. They found a more proactive method is better than waiting until the marriage needs saving. Further, they found that couples with compatible personalities and views of the world are better

off. This discovery seems to be more consistent with the tendencies of low self-monitors, who look for a partner with similar values as them. It seems as though couples that are less sincerely compatible will have more marital issues. Less compatible couples seemingly need to be more proactive in dealing with their concerns to avoid marital dissolution.

In addition to compatibility and preventive measures, personality traits can further predict divorce. Solomon and Jackson (2014) examined a nationally representative example looking at different personality traits and their association with relationship satisfaction and the likelihood to continue or end such relationship. Their findings suggest that certain personality traits, such as high levels of neuroticism and openness, and low levels of agreeableness and conscientiousness, are in fact negatively associated with relationship satisfaction. Further, less satisfying relationships are more likely to be terminated than more satisfying relationships. They found that actor effects, partner effects, and combined effects are associated with the relationship satisfaction, and the changes in satisfaction. Actor effects have to do with the individual's personality, partner effects have to do with their partner's personality, and combination effects have to do with the interaction and agreeableness of both personalities. The combination effects seem to be indicative of compatibility. Their results indicate that the more agreeable, conscientious and less neurotic, the less likely divorce is. Over time, the more negative daily experiences due to a deficiency of agreeableness and high levels of neuroticism have been shown to lead to decreased marital satisfaction, further increasing marital dissolution. Such differences in

agreeableness seem to be a result of differing ideals, which prior research suggests being more consistent with high self-monitors.

A deeper understanding the causes of divorce can be important to understand the increasing trends in divorce. Lowenstein (2005) examined the different causes and consequences of divorce. He analyzed several different causes of divorce including: women's independence, early/arranged marriages, economic factors, poor intellectual and educational and social skills, liberal divorce laws, sexual factors leading to incompatibility, role conflicts, alcoholism/substance abuse or risk-taking behaviors, differences between partners leading to hostility, religious factors, and attitudes towards divorce. The absence of similarity in taste and preference has also been shown to predict divorce. As suggested in previous research, low self-monitors tend to choose a partner due to their similar interests and values, suggesting that a lack of similarities would not be as likely in a low self-monitor's relationship. It was found that people who remain in an unhappy marriage have lower marital satisfaction and higher levels of depressive symptoms than people who get a divorce. Like previous research has shown, early interventions can increase the satisfaction and security of a relationship. Understanding the causes of divorce can help us try to understand differences in marital preferences and divorce rates of high and low self-monitors.

Conclusion

Overall, findings about the differences in high and low self-monitors may allow for predictions regarding differences in marriage relationships. If high self-monitors are more often inconsistent with their behavior like Lippa and Donaldson (1990) suggest, then they could likely be changing the way they act around someone to impress them.

This could cause compatibility to be mistaken for what is really an act and potentially explain relationship dissolution. On the other hand, low self-monitors are consistent with their behavior, so they would be more likely to choose a partner based on genuine compatibility. These tendencies of high self-monitors seem to set a marriage up for failure due to the lack of commitment and little personal connection that Leone and Hawkins (2006) noted. It would be interesting to research if high and low self-monitors preferences for a potential dating partners differ from potential marriage partners and if some preferences are better predictors of divorce than others. As Rowatt et. al (2001) suggests, particular qualities are perceived as more important in long-term relationships than short-term relationships. These qualities included fidelity, dependability, spiritual values, and good parenting, which would typically be more important to a low self-monitor than a high self-monitor. Because marriage is a greater and more long-term commitment it seems as though high self-monitors might act more like low self-monitors in terms of preferring a partner more compatible. On the other hand, because divorce is so prevalent, dating relationships and marriage could be similar.

In the current research, the relationship between self-monitoring and marriage is examined on a deeper level through an online survey. We examined self-monitoring using the Snyder and Gangestad (1986) 18-item Self-Monitoring scale. We further looked to see if high and low self-monitors tend to differ in how they consider both a potential dating partner and a potential martial partner. We hypothesized low self-monitors value fidelity and spiritual values to a greater degree, whereas high self-monitors value physical attractiveness and status-wealth to a greater degree. We also asked participants about previous and current relationships so we could analyze

whether there are self-monitoring differences in relationship longevity. We expected to see that both current relationships and previous relationships lasted longer for low self-monitors than they did for high self-monitors. Additionally, using the data about past relationships, we were able to look for self-monitoring differences in divorce rates. Consistent with previous research, we predict that high self-monitors will have higher divorce rates than low self-monitors.

Methods

Participants

Two hundred and forty-nine participants were recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk to participate in the study for monetary compensation. Six participants' data were incomplete and removed from the dataset. An additional fifteen participants' data were removed from the dataset because there was reason to believe they falsified their answers in the dataset, leaving a total of 228 participants. Ninety-eight females and 130 males participated in the study. The ages of our participants ranged from 19 to 69.

Procedure

The study was generated using a survey created on the Internet site, SurveyMonkey. First, participants were shown an informed consent form to read and asked to continue to the survey if they understood and consented (see appendix A). The objective of the study was left unknown, and participants were simply told that we were assessing the psychology behind romantic relationships. Participants were asked to report their age, gender, and sexual preference. Participants were then asked to share information about previous marriages, divorces, lengths of marriages, and whether they had children (see appendix B). We asked participants to select which partner qualities are important to them in a dating relationship, marriage relationship, and what changes in such qualities would constitute a reason to end such relationships. The qualities to choose from included fidelity, vitality, dependability, physical attractiveness, status-wealth, good parenting, and spiritual values. There was an additional option for participants to explain any other partner qualities that they

deemed important. The qualities given were based on the eight dimensions of romantic partner preferences identified by Rowatt et al (2001) (see appendix C). We then asked participants to rate the appropriateness of cheating, divorce, and remarriage based on their personal beliefs on a scale of 1, not appropriate at all, to 5, very appropriate (see appendix D). Participants then took the Snyder and Gangestad (1986) Self-Monitoring questionnaire. The scale is composed of 18 items used to assess whether the participant qualifies as a high or low self-monitor (see appendix E). A filler question was included at the end to ensure participants were paying attention and answering truthfully. This was part of the true/false section and stated “I have four arms and three legs.” Participants who selected true were removed from the dataset. Lastly, participants were debriefed and compensated accordingly (see appendix F).

Results

First, we calculated participants' total self-monitoring scores. Based on prior research, we concluded that there was precedent to divide the population at the median such that the scores above that were considered high self-monitors, and below that were low self-monitors. To calculate self-monitoring scores we gave each participant two points when they answered a question from the Snyder and Gangestad (1986) Self-Monitoring questionnaire as a high self-monitor would, and one point when they answered as a low self-monitor would. Scores 26 and above were considered high self-monitors, and scores of 25 and below were considered low self-monitors. Approximately 47% of our sample was considered to be low self-monitors, and 53% considered to be high self-monitors.

Next, we examined whether high self-monitors were more likely to divorce than low self-monitors. While the results were not significant, the trend was in the predicted direction. Of the 228 participants, 190 were currently or had been married. Only 17 of the 190 (8.95%) participants who had been married had divorced. High self-monitors accounted for 58.82% of the participants that had been divorced. The trend followed that high self-monitors were more likely to be divorced than low self-monitors.

Next, we examined whether self-monitoring was associated with length of previous, failed marriages. Again, the results were not significant, but the trends were in line with our predictions, such that self-monitoring scores were negatively correlated with length of marriages prior to divorce ($r = -.262, p = .346$). We further analyzed the longevity of romantic relationships by looking at the relationship between self-

monitoring and the length of current marriages. Again, the results were not significant, but the trend was consistent with the last analysis. Low self-monitor's current marital relationships have lasted longer those of high self-monitor's ($r = -.125, p = .141$).

We then analyzed the self-monitoring differences between dating and marital relationships. We looked for differences between preferred partner qualities for high and low self-monitors in both dating and marital relationships. Tables A and B depict the percentages of high and low self-monitors that value the given qualities in a potential dating or marital partner and the statistical difference between the percentages. There were no significant differences between the preferred qualities of potential dating or marital partners for high and low self-monitors. However, as seen in tables A and B, the trends are consistent with our predictions. Previous research shows that qualities such as fidelity, spiritual values, and good parenting tend to be preferred by low self-monitors to a greater degree than high self-monitors. In potential dating partners, fidelity and good parenting were more important to low self-monitors (58.3%, 54.6%) than high self-monitors (50.0%, 51.7%). Spiritual values were about the same for both high (47.5%) and low (47.2%) self-monitors. For potential marital partners, fidelity, good parenting, and spiritual values were all more important to low self-monitors (65.7%, 80.1%, 59.3%) than high self-monitors (54.2%, 76.7%, 50.8%). Conversely, prior research indicates that qualities such as creativity, physical attractiveness, and status-wealth are more important to low self-monitors than high self-monitors. Our results did not indicate statistical significance but did exhibit a consistent trend. For potential dating partners creativity and status-wealth were more important to high self-monitors (51.7%, 28.3%) than low self-monitors (49.1%,

21.3%). Inconsistent with our predictions, low self-monitors showed a slightly greater preference for physical attractiveness (78.%) than high self-monitors (77.5%). For potential marital partners, creativity, physical attractiveness, and status-wealth were more important to high self-monitors (65.0%, 74.2%, 32.5%) than low self-monitors (52.8%, 71.3%, 30.6%).

A.) Quality Preferences in Potential Dating Relationship Partners						
Qualities:	High Self-Monitors:		Low Self-Monitors:		Z- Score	P-Value
Fidelity	60/120	50.0%	63/108	58.3%	-1.26	0.21
Dependability	84/120	70.0%	79/108	73.2%	-0.53	0.59
Vitality	49/120	40.8%	42/108	38.9%	0.29	0.76
Spiritual Values	57/120	47.5%	51/108	47.2%	0.42	0.97
Creativity	62/120	51.7%	53/108	49.1%	0.39	0.69
Physical Attractiveness	93/120	77.5%	85/108	78.7%	-0.22	0.83
Good Parenting	62/120	51.7%	59/108	54.6%	-0.45	0.65
Status-Wealth	34/120	28.3%	23/108	21.3%	1.23	0.22

B.) Quality Preferences in Potential Marriage Partners						
Qualities:	High Self-Monitors:		Low Self-Monitors:		Z-Score	P-Value
Fidelity	65/120	54.2%	71/108	65.7%	-1.78	0.08
Dependability	84/120	70.0%	80/108	74.1%	-0.68	0.49
Vitality	57/120	47.5%	51/108	47.2%	0.04	0.97
Spiritual Values	61/120	50.8%	64/108	59.3%	-1.28	0.20
Creativity	78/120	65.0%	57/108	52.8%	1.88	0.06
Physical Attractiveness	89/120	74.2%	77/108	71.3%	0.49	0.62
Good Parenting	92/120	76.7%	87/108	80.1%	-0.71	0.48
Status-Wealth	39/120	32.5%	33/108	30.6%	0.32	0.75

Lastly, we analyzed the self-monitoring differences between what would cause participants to end a dating or marital relationship. We looked self-monitoring differences in quality changes that would cause one to end a dating or marital relationship. Tables C and D show the percentages of high and low self-monitors who would end a dating or marital relationship due to changes in select qualities in a dating

or marital partner, as well as the statistical difference between the percentages. As prior research has suggested, high self-monitors are more likely to end a romantic relationship than low self-monitors. Consistent with this research, we found that in nearly each case other than fidelity, high self-monitors were more likely to end both a dating and a marital relationship due to changes in one of the qualities of their partner. As seen in tables C and D, changes in partner fidelity would cause a low self-monitor (53.7%, 53.7%) to end both a dating and marital relationship more so than a high self-monitor (47.5%, 47.5%). While these results were not significantly different, they are consistent with our predicted trend. There were significant differences between changes in a dating partner's vitality and spiritual values for high and low self-monitors. High self-monitors were more likely (30.83%) to end a relationship due to changes in vitality than low self-monitors (12.04%) ($z = 3.42, p = 0.00062$). High self-monitors were also more likely (22.5%) to end a relationship due to changes in creativity than low self-monitors (12.04%) ($z = 2.07, p = .03846$). The remaining results are consistent with the notion that high self-monitors are more likely to end a relationship than low self-monitors, such that changes in nearly all the other qualities were cause to end a dating or marital relationship to a greater degree for high self-monitors than low self-monitors. Other than fidelity, changes in dependability and spiritual values gave slightly more cause for low self-monitors (43.52%, 25.0%) to end a dating relationship than high self-monitors (43.33%, 22.5%). However, for marital relationships, fidelity was the only quality that a change in would result in greater cause to end a marriage for a low self-monitor than a high self-monitor.

C.) Changes in Partner Qualities That Would Cause One to End a Dating Relationship						
Qualities:	High Self-Monitors:		Low Self-Monitors:		Z-Score	P-Value
Fidelity	57/120	47.5%	58/108	53.7%	-0.94	0.35
Dependability	52/120	43.3%	47/108	43.5%	-0.03	0.98
Vitality	37/120	30.8%	13/108	12.0%	3.42	0.00062
Spiritual Values	27/120	22.5%	27/108	25.0%	-0.44	0.66
Creativity	27/120	22.5%	13/108	12.0%	2.07	0.03846
Physical Attractiveness	32/120	26.7%	27/108	25.0%	0.29	0.77
Parenting	36/120	30.0%	23/108	21.3%	1.49	0.13
Status-Wealth	20/120	16.7%	14/108	12.9%	0.78	0.44

D.) Changes in Partner Qualities that Would Cause One to End a Marriage						
Qualities:	High Self-Monitors:		Low Self-Monitors:		Z-Score	P-Value
Fidelity	57/120	47.5%	58/108	53.7%	-0.94	0.35
Dependability	56/120	46.7%	42/108	38.9%	1.18	0.24
Vitality	33/120	27.5%	19/108	17.6%	1.78	0.08
Spiritual Values	31/120	25.8%	18/108	16.7%	1.68	0.09
Creativity	22/120	18.3%	13/108	12.0%	1.32	0.19
Physical Attractiveness	24/120	20.0%	18/108	16.7%	0.65	0.52
Parenting	49/120	40.8%	31/108	28.7%	1.92	0.06
Status-Wealth	22/120	18.3%	15/108	13.9%	0.91	0.36

Discussion

Self-monitoring appears to contribute to our romantic partner preferences. Previous research has shown that low self-monitors act in ways consistent with their personal values and beliefs. Conversely, high self-monitors are more likely to change their behavior to fit a particular situation (Lippa & Donaldson 1990). Research further demonstrates that high self-monitors tend to perceive themselves as having many other options for potential partners than low self-monitors (Leone 2003). The current research examined self-monitoring differences in both dating and marital relationships.

In the current research, we examined whether high and low self-monitors differ in the ways in which they choose to begin or end a romantic relationship. Further, we researched whether there was a difference between dating and marital relationships. We hypothesized that high self-monitors would value partner qualities such as physical attractiveness and status-wealth, whereas low self-monitors would value qualities such as fidelity, spiritual values, and good parenting. We further hypothesized that high self-monitors would be more likely to end both dating and marital relationships than low self-monitors. Our predictions were only partially supported. The trends of our research were parallel with our predictions, however they were not statistically significant. Results indicated that high self-monitors are more likely to end both a dating and marital relationship due to changes in different qualities. However, low self-monitors were more likely to end a relationship due to changes in fidelity. We also noticed a trend in which low self-monitors' relationships lasted longer than those of high self-monitors.

One factor that appeared to emerge as particularly important for low self-monitors, and less so for high self-monitors was fidelity. More low self-monitors reported that changes in fidelity would cause them to end both a dating relationship and a marital relationship than high self-monitors. This indicates that low self-monitors really value fidelity and are bothered by infidelity to a greater degree than high self-monitors. This could be because low self-monitors tend to have few, but much more intimate relationships than high self-monitors. While high self-monitors create less close relationships with many people, low self-monitors have very close ones with people they share similar values with. Because of the closeness of low self-monitors relationships and their shared values, infidelity may seem like a bigger betrayal than it does to their high self-monitoring counterparts. Further, low self-monitors are less likely than high self-monitors to perceive themselves as having many other partner options available. This could make cheating seem more likely to high self-monitors and therefore less detrimental to their relationships.

Conversely, more high self-monitors than low self-monitors reported that changes in nearly every other partner quality would cause them to end a dating relationship or marriage. This indicates that relationships of high self-monitors are heavily impacted by changes or turmoil. This could be because high self-monitors are typically inconsistent themselves, but desire consistency in others. Because high self-monitors depend on situational context to know how to act and adjust their behavior accordingly, they might depend on the consistency of their partners. The role that the high self-monitor has taken on in a relationship might be severely disrupted if their

partner changes, making them more likely to end the relationship than their low self-monitoring counterparts.

Changes in nearly every partner quality other than fidelity was more likely to cause a high self-monitor to end a relationship than a low self-monitor. Further, high self-monitors indicated that changes in vitality and creativity were causes to end a dating relationship significantly more than low self-monitors. This could indicate that these two qualities could be particularly important to high self-monitors or conversely, particularly unimportant to low self-monitors. I would argue the later because high self-monitors are impacted by changes in partner qualities to a greater degree than low self-monitors in general. I think that the significance difference between high and low self-monitors value on vitality and creativity is due to low self-monitors placing little value on these qualities to begin with.

Implications

Our research indicates that an individual's self-monitoring score can help predict what partner qualities will be important to him or her in a romantic relationship. Changes in these qualities further influence high and low self-monitors differently. Our findings suggest that partner changes are much more troublesome for high self-monitors and hurt their relationships to a greater degree. Further, our research suggests that the longevity of a romantic relationship is also associated with self-monitoring scores. Our findings seem to suggest that low self-monitors may be able to get through changes or difficulties that arise in a relationship to a greater degree than high self-monitors. Overall, our research implies that there are underlying differences between high and low self-monitor's romantic relationships.

Limitations

One limitation of the current research is the extremely small sample size of divorced participants. Because only 17 of our 228 participants were divorced, we did not have a sufficient sample size. Further, this sample size is not generalizable to the public because nearly half of marriages end in divorce. With a larger sample size, we might have gotten results that showed stronger trends, such that high self-monitors divorce significantly more than low self-monitors. Our participants were recruited via Amazon Mechanical Turk, and there is the possibility that there is some underlying similarity between the users taking the surveys. Normally, we would have expected to see about six times more participants having been divorced than we did in the current study.

Another limitation is that 15 of our 21 participants that had to be eliminated for incomplete responses were deemed incomplete due to falsifying their results. These participants answered incorrectly on our trick question in the true-false section. The question stated, "I have four arms and three legs." Because participants naturally had a 50% chance of getting the question correct if guessing, it would follow that approximately 15 more participants also forged the survey and got away with it. Approximately half of the participants that faked the dataset went undetectable, so it is likely that some of our data may be skewed. However, this error is likely minimal and should not have much, if any effect on our results.

Another potential limitation with our research that has become a greater problem with recent online research is that participants cannot ask questions. There was reason to believe that some of the participants did not understand what some of the

qualities such as fidelity or vitality meant, and because it was online, they could not ask the researcher. In the section of the research where we asked participants to indicate what qualities were important to them in a partner and what changes in qualities would cause them to end a relationship we included another section titled “other.” We then asked participants to specify what the quality was if they selected “other.” One participant did not select fidelity, but wrote, “I could deal with anything except cheating.” Statements like this and other instances where participants gave us synonyms of the qualities we had already given, gave us reason to believe that this was a limitation. Participants that did not know the definition of some of our words, and were unable to ask, could have skewed the data.

Directions for Future Research

One potential focus for future research could look at a sample of just divorced participants. Studying a sample in which every participant has been divorced would be interesting because we could analyze the different self-monitoring scores as well as the actual causes of the divorces. In the current research, our questions were merely hypotheticals. However in this case, we would be able to look at the precise reasons why couples were not happy and chose to end their marriages. We would predict that most of the participants would be high self-monitors. Further, we would expect that the causes of the divorces would be different for high and low self-monitors. Because of our results and those of prior research, we would expect that it would take a greater level of disparity to get low self-monitors divorce than high self-monitors.

Another interesting direction for future research would be to examine other relationship aspects that different between high and low self-monitors. It would be

interesting to see whether perceived quality of a romantic relationship differs between high and low self-monitors and how perceived quality may influence one to end a relationship. Because of our findings and the findings of similar research, it seems as though low self-monitors choose a partner with a greater degree of compatibility. High self-monitors on the other hand appear to choose partners using more superficial reasoning. Due to the differences in the true compatibility of low self-monitors and the more superficial or faked compatibility of high self-monitors, I think that low self-monitors will perceive their relationships to be of higher quality than high self-monitors. This area of research would be interesting because they could imply that self-monitoring differences influence relationship quality. Further, perceived relationship quality could also influence the longevity of a relationship. If high self-monitors are less likely to be pleased with the quality of their relationships, it could explain why they are more likely to end a relationship than low self-monitors. This could also explain why high self-monitors tend to look for and perceive themselves as having more potential partner options while currently in a romantic relationship.

Conclusion

There is an abundance of research indicating that self-monitoring scores are associated with differences in romantic partner quality preferences, differences in causes for ending a relationship, and differences in longevity of relationships. Our findings are parallel with previous research, suggesting that high self-monitors value partner attractiveness and status, while low self-monitors value fidelity and values. Further, our research demonstrates that high self-monitors are more likely to end both dating and marital relationships than low self-monitors. Overall, our research provides

evidence that self-monitoring differences in romantic relationships exist. The findings in the current study provide cause to further investigate the differences between high and low self-monitor's partner preferences and romantic relationships.

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Appendix A.)**Informed Consent:**

My name is Darby Dietrich, and I am a student at Union College in Schenectady, NY. I am inviting you to participate in a research study. Involvement in the study is voluntary, so you may choose to participate or not. A description of the study is written below.

I am interested in learning about romantic relationships. You will be asked to fill out a small questionnaire. This will take approximately 20 minutes. The risks to you of participating in this study are minimal. If you no longer wish to continue, you have the right to withdraw from the study, without penalty, at any time.

Your responses will be anonymous, such that it would be impossible to link your name with any of your responses.

Even though all aspects of the study may not be explained to you beforehand (e.g., the entire purpose of the study), during the debriefing session you will be given additional information about the study and have the opportunity to ask questions.

By continuing to the survey, you indicate that you understand the information above, and that you wish to participate in this research study.

Appendix B.)**Personal Information:**

Have you ever been or are currently married?

Yes [] No []

If so, for how long?

[]

Have you ever been divorced?

Yes [] No []

If so, how long did the marriage last (If more than once, please write the duration of each separated by commas)

[]

How many children do you have?

[]

Strongly agree [] Agree [] Neutral [] Disagree [] Strongly disagree []

2.) Divorce is never appropriate.

Strongly agree [] Agree [] Neutral [] Disagree [] Strongly disagree []

3.) Getting remarried is never appropriate.

Strongly agree [] Agree [] Neutral [] Disagree [] Strongly disagree []

Appendix E.)

Personal Reaction Inventory:

Directions: The statements below concern your personal reactions to a number of different situations. No two statements are exactly alike, so consider each statement carefully before answering. If a statement is TRUE or MOSTLY TRUE as applied to you, fill in the T, and if the statement is FALSE or MOSTLY FALSE as applied to you, fill in the F, (e.g. (T) (F))

(T) (F) 1. I find it hard to imitate the behavior of other people.

(T) (F) 2. At parties and social gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things others will like.

(T) (F) 3. I can only argue for ideas that I already believe.

(T) (F) 4. I can make impromptu speeches even on topics about which I have almost no information.

(T) (F) 5. I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain others.

(T) (F) 6. I would probably make a good actor or actress.

(T) (F) 7. In a group of people, I am rarely the center of attention.

(T) (F) 8. In different situations and with different people, I often act like very different persons.

(T) (F) 9. I am not particularly good at making other people like me.

(T) (F) 10. I'm not always the person I appear to be.

(T) (F) 11. I would not change my opinion (or the way I do things) in order to please someone or win their favor.

(T) (F) 12. I have considered being an entertainer.

(T) (F) 13. I have never been good at games like charades or improvisational acting.

(T) (F) 14. I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations.

(T) (F) 15. At a party, I let others keep the jokes and stories going.

(T) (F) 16. I feel a bit awkward in public and do not show up quite as well as I should.

(T) (F) 17. I can look anyone in the eye and tell a lie with a straight face (if for a right end).

(T) (F) 18. I may deceive people by being friendly when I really dislike them.

FILLER QUESTION: (T) (F) 19. I have four arms and three legs.

Appendix F.)**Debriefing:**

Thank you for participating in this study. Our research was done to assess the relationship between self-monitoring and different types of romantic relationships. High self-monitors are people who are concerned with positive social feedback and their image, whereas low self-monitors are people who act in ways consistent with their personal beliefs and values. Low self-monitors typically have committed, personal relationships with people who share similar values. High self-monitors tend to date more often and become involved in less committed relationships with people who they perceive to have high status or are physically attractive.

By collecting your responses to different relationship preferences, past tendencies, and your score on the Self Monitoring Inventory, we will be able to assess the differences in relationships between different high and low self-monitors. Your score on the Self Monitoring Inventory assess whether or not you are a high or low self-monitor. I predict that high self-monitors preference for marriage partners are more closely aligned to those of low self-monitors than their preferences for dating partners. I also expect to see that high self-monitors are more likely to get divorced than low self-monitors.