

DISSERTATION

PERCEIVED SIMILARITY OF DESIRED INTIMACY IN SAME-SEX COUPLES

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ABSTRACT

PERCEIVED SIMILARITY OF DESIRED INTIMACY IN SAME-SEX COUPLES

Past literature has discussed gender differences in romantic partners' desires for intimacy and has suggested that these gender differences have negative effects on some relationships. Much of this literature has discussed heterosexual relationships. The current study sought to explore the validity of these claims within same-sex relationships. Participants completed surveys assessing their own desires for intimacy, their perceptions of their partners' desires for intimacy, and relationship outcome variables (satisfaction/commitment). Results indicated that perceived similarity to one's partner in overall desired intimacy is associated with relationship satisfaction and commitment. The effects of perceived similarity varied across types of intimacy, such that perceived similarity in desires for intellectual intimacy and recreational intimacy were most associated with relationship outcome variables, though slightly differently for men and women. The importance of direction of perceived discrepancy was also explored. Comparisons to previous research and implications for counseling and future research are discussed.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

While research on same-sex relationships and lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals has grown in recent years, historically, research with this population has been lacking (Peplau & Fingerhut, 2007; Quam, Whitford, Dziengel, & Knochel, 2010). Relationship research, specifically, has tended to focus on heterosexual married couples (Mackey, Diemer, & O'Brien, 2000). The research that has been conducted on LGB individuals has generally followed a few different themes. Peplau and Fingerhut (2007) reviewed the research on gay and lesbian relationships. The authors pointed out the historical tendency to view LGB individuals as abnormal or dysfunctional, although they noted a recent shift to research centering around themes of societal stigma and social support, parenting, and legalization of same-sex marriage.

Generally, relationship research has found that same-sex relationships are, on the whole, similar to heterosexual relationships (Kurdek, 2006a). Some areas that appear to be more heavily emphasized within same-sex relationships than heterosexual relationships have been identified, including how stigmatization and minority stress impact the quality of the relationship (Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006; Mohr & Daly, 2008; Frost, 2011a) and the role of social support (Blair & Holmberg, 2008). Individuals in same-sex relationships also tend to report struggles relating to stigma, such as experiencing greater devaluation of intimacy and more barriers to pursuing or achieving intimacy (Frost, 2011b).

Peplau and Fingerhut (2007) noted the importance of research on same-sex relationships and the role such research plays in testing the generalizability of heterosexual relationship theories and in exploring the impact of gender on romantic relationships. As will be discussed, intimacy is a central topic in the romantic relationships literature that has not been researched

sufficiently with same-sex couples. It is important to investigate the construct of intimacy specifically in same-sex relationships.

The purpose of this research is to explore partner similarity in intimacy in same-sex relationships. In order to do this, it is important to first address the topic and importance of the construct of intimacy. It will also be essential to understand how intimacy has been defined in the literature and how it will be conceptualized for the present research. Much of the literature that discusses similarity and dissimilarity in romantic relationships focuses on gender differences. Thus, the issue of gender differences in intimacy will be addressed, followed by a discussion of the implications that this literature has for the importance of partner similarity in all couple relationships. Existing research on the impact of partner similarity on relationships and, specifically, similarity in intimacy, will be then be discussed as well as reasons that this construct should be further explored in same-sex relationships.

Intimacy

Intimacy is a construct that has been continuously alluded to in the literature as having an important role in couple relationships. Prager (1995) reviewed some of the factors related to intimacy and discussed the psychological and physiological benefits associated with intimacy. Individuals in intimate relationships, for example, seem to be less affected by stress. People who are not involved in intimate relationships are more likely to contract illnesses, and individuals who are in poorly functioning relationships tend to exhibit low self-efficacy, depression, and physical complaints (Prager, 1995). Based on these and other effects of intimate relationships, Prager concluded that intimacy is a concept that is worth researching and understanding, explaining that overall, it appears to be “good for people” (1995, p. 1).

The connections between intimacy in couple relationships and well-being are supported throughout the literature. Intimacy has been connected to lower levels of daily cortisol secretion (Ditzen, Hoppman, & Klumb, 2008). It has also been found that intimacy mediates the effects of daily stressors on marital quality (Harper, Schaallje, & Sandberg, 2000) and reduces maternal stress in the first three years of a child's life (Mulsow, Caldera, Pursley, Reifman, & Huston, 2002). Prager and Buhrmester (1998) collected daily reports of intimacy in couples and concluded that intimate interactions fulfill important psychological needs in individuals, such as needs for love and affection, companionship, belonging, and nurturance. A lack of intimacy in relationships is often cited as a reason for seeking psychotherapy and divorce (Horowitz, 1979; Waring, 1984). In same-sex couples, intimacy has been reported to be the most important factor in stopping partners from ending their relationships (Kurdek, 2006b). Furthermore, intimacy has been repeatedly associated with relationship satisfaction for both men and women in heterosexual and same-sex relationships (Eldridge & Gilbert, 1990; Kurdek, 1998; Greeff & Malherbe, 2001; Patrick, Sells, Giordano, & Tollerud, 2007). In one study, psychological intimacy was found to be one of only two factors that uniquely predicted relationship satisfaction in long-term same-sex and heterosexual relationships (Mackey, Diemer, & O'Brien, 2004). It has also been demonstrated that closeness to one's same-sex partner buffered the negative impact of stress on relationship satisfaction (Totenhagen, Butler, & Ridley, 2012). The literature contains strong support indicating that intimacy is beneficial to both individuals and couples. Further research regarding factors affecting the experience of intimacy in relationships will contribute to both a greater understanding of the process of intimacy as well as ways in which intimacy and its positive effects can be facilitated in couple relationships.

What is Intimacy?

Much discussion in the intimacy literature concerns how to define intimacy. Researchers have struggled to arrive at one clear definition for intimacy. There have been attempts to integrate the multiple discussions used in intimacy research. In one such effort, Moss and Schwebel (1993) reviewed 61 definitions of intimacy and derived seven themes based upon them. These themes were: exchange or mutual interaction, in-depth affective awareness-expressiveness, in-depth cognitive awareness-expressiveness, in-depth physical awareness-expressiveness, shared commitment and feeling of cohesion, communication or self-disclosure, and a generalized sense of closeness to another. The authors thus proposed their own definition of intimacy, stating that “intimacy in enduring romantic relationships is determined by the level of commitment and positive affective, cognitive, and physical closeness one experiences with a partner in a reciprocal relationship” (Moss & Schwebel, 1993, p. 33).

A major component of the struggle researchers have had in defining intimacy has been due to their difficulty in determining the locus of intimacy (Laurenceau & Kleinman, 2006). Intimacy has been defined on three levels: as a quality of the individual, a quality of interactions, and a quality of relationships. Vangelisti and Beck (2007) described these levels in more detail. At the individual level, researchers discuss how individuals may have differing capacities for intimacy or abilities to develop and maintain close relationships. Constructs such as attachment and fear of intimacy are related to the conceptualization of intimacy at the individual level (Vangelisti & Beck, 2007). Attachment researchers, such as Collins and Feeney (2004), note that attachment style, which can be described as an individual difference, has influence on one’s intimate experiences. They point out that individuals who have a secure attachment style are more comfortable with intimacy and report experiencing higher levels of intimacy (Collins &

Feeney, 2004). Other researchers discussed intimacy at the individual level in terms of desire for closeness and fear of intimacy. Mashek and Sherman (2004) noted that individuals who are not satisfied with the level of closeness in their relationship tend to demonstrate a greater fear of intimacy than those who are more satisfied with the level of closeness in their relationship. Intimacy conceptualized at the individual level is discussed in terms of these types of individual difference variables.

At the interactional level, researchers discuss intimate interactions or behaviors that result in the creation of intimate relationships (Vangelisti & Beck, 2007). Prager and Roberts (2004) distinguished intimate interactions from other interactions in that intimate interactions involve self-revealing behavior, positive involvement with the other, and shared understandings. A model of intimate interactions was created by Reis and Shaver (1988). Components of intimate interactions in this model include self-disclosure and expression, emotional responses, experiences of validation, motivations, needs, goals, and fears. Reis and Shaver describe intimacy as “an interpersonal process within which two interaction partners experience and express feelings, communicate verbally and nonverbally, satisfy social motives, augment or reduce social fears, talk and learn about themselves and their unique characteristics, and become ‘close’” (1988, p. 387). Thus, intimacy at the interactional level concerns components involved in an interaction that allow it to be experienced as “intimate.”

At the relational level, researchers describe intimate relationships as relationships characterized by a history of intimate interactions and in which the couple expects these interactions to continue over time (Vangelisti & Beck, 2007). Intimacy at the relational level was defined by Sternberg (1986) as “feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bondedness in loving relationships [including] those feelings that give rise to the experience of warmth in a

loving relationship” (p. 119). Waring’s (1984) conceptualization of intimacy at the relational level included the eight facets of conflict resolution, affection, cohesion, sexuality, identity, compatibility, expressiveness, and autonomy.

A few definitions of intimacy exist that include aspects of intimacy at both the interactional and relational levels. Schaefer and Olson (1981) provide one such definition, distinguishing between intimate experiences and intimate relationships. They describe an intimate experience as a feeling of closeness with another that can occur in multiple areas. An intimate relationship, then, is a relationship in which one has intimate experiences in several areas and an expectation that these experiences will continue over time. The multiple areas of intimacy described by Schaefer and Olson (1981) are emotional, social, sexual, intellectual, and recreational intimacy. A similar distinction between intimate interactions and intimate relationships was made by Prager (1995), who noted that intimate interactions are “exchanges in which one or both partners share something private or personal with the other” that result in positive feelings about one’s partner and oneself (p. 28). Intimate relationships, on the other hand, are relationships characterized by affection, trust, and cohesiveness that exist over time and are characterized by a history of intimate interacting along with an expectation that intimate interactions will continue in the future (Prager, 1995).

The field of close relationships has yet to accept a specific definition of intimacy. It is evident, however, that the process of intimacy is affected by characteristics of the individual, the interaction, and the relationship. It is thought to be a goal or product of a relationship that is in constant development and variable over time (Laurenceau & Kleinman, 2006). The current study approaches the construct of intimacy from Schaefer and Olson’s (1981) perspective, which is frequently utilized in relationship research and examines the five types of intimacy: emotional,

social, sexual, intellectual, and relational intimacy. It approaches intimacy from both the individual and relational level, in terms of the association between an individual's desire for intimacy and the level of relational intimacy experienced.

Intimacy and Gender

The construct of intimacy is often discussed in relation to gender. While there is some evidence to support gender differences in intimacy, researchers continue to debate the topic on the whole. While some researchers claim that there are large differences in desires for and experiences of intimacy between men and women, others maintain that these gender differences are much smaller than many claim.

The literature that suggests strong gender differences related to intimacy discusses both friendships and couple relationships. For example, Orosan and Schilling (1992) asked their participants to describe intimate relationships. Their results showed that while women and men tend to describe intimacy as containing similar components of trust, openness, and honesty, their descriptions of relationships tend to differ. Women tended to first discuss the role of emotional sharing, closeness, and trust in intimate relationships, followed by the importance of shared activities. Men, however, tended to describe these in the opposite order. Thompson and Walker (1989) indicated that women tend to express more emotion, be more affectionate, and be more responsible for creating intimacy in relationships while men tend to experience closeness through sex, shared activities, practical help, and economic support. Similar results have been found by other researchers, who emphasize that while men and women place equal value on intimacy and spend an equal amount of time with friends, men tend to emphasize shared activities while women emphasize emotional sharing in intimate friendships (Caldwell & Peplau, 1982).

In researching couple relationships, Greeff and Mahlerbe (2001) reported that heterosexual men and women did not differ in their desires for intimacy but did show differences in their experiences of intimacy. Within marital relationships, women reported experiencing less social intimacy than men while men reported experiencing less sexual and relational intimacy than women. Talmadge and Dabbs' (1990) study on intimacy and conversation revealed similar findings. Their results indicated that heterosexual men reporting higher sexual intimacy and heterosexual women reporting higher emotional intimacy in their relationships exhibited more positive affect. Furthermore, some researchers have noted that women desire more intimacy than men in the form of love, affection, and emotional sharing in relationships (Hook, Gerstein, Detterich, & Gridley, 2003).

The literature discussing gender differences in intimacy is not confined to heterosexual relationships. Crowe (1997) claims that because of differences in desires for intimacy, gay men's relationships tend to be more sexual while lesbian women tend to desire more emotional closeness in their relationships. Mackey et al. (2000) claim that gay men's relationships tend to exhibit more autonomy while lesbian women's romantic relationships tend to be characterized by higher intimacy and fusion. Greenberg and Goldman (2008) state that lesbian relationships are characterized by "closeness and connectedness" and "emotional intensity" that is stronger than gay male relationships (p. 131). Schreurs and Buunk (1997) point this out as well, noting that much literature makes assumptions about lesbian couples having little autonomy and high emotional dependence because of the general conclusion that women tend to desire more intimacy overall as well as emotional intimacy, specifically. Much of the literature does not provide evidence to support or refute these claims.

The research previously discussed emphasizes observed gender differences in desires for and experiences of intimacy between men and women. Others argue that these differences either do not exist or are actually much more negligible than researchers have typically acknowledged. Mackey et al. (2000) give a possible explanation for gender differences, proposing that due to gender socialization, men may experience intimacy through shared experiences while women experience intimacy through shared affect. While the authors did find a moderate effect for gender, they concluded that it was not as powerful a factor in shaping intimacy as often discussed.

According to Patrick and Beckenbach (2009), the differences between men and women on the construct of intimacy are not well understood. One complication of the issue is the gender bias that is present within the concept of intimacy (Patrick & Beckenbach, 2009). Intimacy tends to be associated with words such as communication, affection, and closeness, which are all concepts that are closely tied to women's gender-role socialization and not men's gender roles. Patrick and Beckenbach qualitatively studied men's perceptions of intimacy. Their participants described intimacy as involving multiple levels of sharing, an acceptance of oneself by the other, and vulnerability. Men in heterosexual relationships discussed the influence of gender on intimacy, especially in terms of the need to protect their female partners and the ability to be vulnerable in relationships with women. Men in same-sex relationships did not discuss the impact of gender on intimacy in Patrick and Beckenbach's (2009) study. This research does support the idea that gender may have a relationship with individuals' experiences of intimacy, but it also demonstrated that all individuals may experience intimacy to a similar degree or in similar ways to each other. The differences emphasized in previous literature may not be as extreme as often believed.

Despite the fact that much of the literature has emphasized gender differences in intimacy, there remains much confusion around the issue. Further clarity is provided by researchers who have summarized the intimacy and gender literature. In one such summary, Gaia (2002) pointed out that the literature has emphasized gender difference, especially in research showing that women score higher on intimacy measures than men. Despite this, Gaia stated that meta-analyses show little differences in the experience of intimacy based on gender. She claimed that there is not enough evidence to reach a conclusion that intimacy is perceived differently by men and women. Gaia (2002) also posited that if there are slight differences, they may represent social expectations that influence the way in which intimacy is expressed by men and women. Salas and Ketzenberger (2004) reported that while heterosexual men tend to feel less close to their friends than heterosexual women do, men and women have similar levels of intimacy in heterosexual romantic relationships. Wester, Pionke, and Vogel (2005) provided evidence to dispute previous claims that men tend to experience less intimacy in same-sex relationships due to the traditional gender socialization of men. Many researchers have concluded that although some gender differences may exist in the expression of intimacy, they do not seem to affect men's and women's experiences with regard to the level and type of intimacy. Furthermore, multiple researchers have suggested that gender differences in intimacy may not be as strong as other researchers and popular culture have led us to believe. Reis' (1998) review of the research on gender differences in intimacy concluded that men and women "define intimacy and closeness in largely the same way and aspire to essentially the same relationship qualities" (p.226). Furthermore, he called for researchers to move "beyond arguments about whether men and women really differ to questions about causes, consequences, and moderators" (Reis, 1998, p. 226) of the inhibition and facilitation of intimacy. One purpose

of the current research is to answer this call to explore causes, consequences, and moderators of intimacy.

While some of the previously discussed research on gender differences in desires for intimacy has been conducted with individuals who are involved in same-sex relationships, the majority of the research has either not asked about sexual identity or has utilized primarily heterosexual participants. Thus, an important focus of the present research is to explore gender differences in desires for intimacy within same-sex relationships.

Implications for Similarity

The importance of the gender research for this topic lies in the assumed implications of partner differences in desired intimacy. The degree of gender differences in desires for and experiences of intimacy remains an unresolved issue in the literature. Regardless of these existent or nonexistent gender differences, a question remains with regard to the importance of these gender differences. If these differences in desired intimacy do exist, large or small, what is their impact? Much of the literature emphasizing these differences implies that differences in desires for intimacy cause problems for achieving intimacy in couple relationships. The research discussing this implied issue with achieving intimacy largely focuses on gender and intimacy in heterosexual relationships. While the present study will be exploring only same-sex relationships, the underlying assumptions of this literature are vital to the topic at hand.

While Ridley (1993) acknowledged that not all heterosexual couples will experience gender differences in the same manner, she also discussed multiple potential areas in which men and women may differ with regard to intimacy. Furthermore, the author wrote that “clinical experience” of hers suggests that many individuals experience distress in their relationships regarding gender differences. Hook et al. (2003) noted that gender differences in intimacy lead

to marital difficulties and that counselors working on intimacy issues with couples “must be able to bridge the gender gap that exists in close relationships” (Hook et al, 2003, p. 471). This gender gap was also emphasized by Parker (1999), who explained that in order to create deeper intimacy, couples need to bridge the differences that put them on “distant planets” (p. 2). Crowe (1997) further discussed the implications for intimacy in couples therapy, saying that “men and women seem to have predictable differences in their wishes for intimacy, and sometimes it is difficult for a couple to achieve a comfortable compromise in this area” (p. 235). In exploring the issues that often bring couples into therapy, Rampagne (2003) discussed gendered preferences for interactions in relationships and pointed out that gender issues are often a part of the constraints that heterosexual couples do not realize are keeping them from achieving intimacy. Yet another researcher claimed that “gender is frequently seen as preventing the creation of intimacy in [heterosexual] partnerships because of either differences in conceptions of intimacy or a mismatch in partners’ motivation for engaging in the strategies necessary to create it” (Brown, 2001, p. 137).

Durana (1997) conducted a psychoeducational program designed to enhance intimacy in heterosexual married couples. Differences were found in intimacy needs and reported intimacy levels prior to the intervention. After the program, however, men and women were more similar to each other in their ratings of aspects of intimacy such as sharing, acceptance, caring, and decrease in conflict. Durana concluded that the program created agreement between genders about the factors that are essential to intimacy. He noted that “as the gender differences began to blur with more uniformity of responses, intimacy and marital satisfaction levels increased” (Durana, 1997, p. 212). He further explained that psychoeducation decreased the gender gap in intimacy that often causes distress in relationships.

The literature discussing the implications of gender differences in intimacy has importance for the current study because of its underlying assumptions. The first of these assumptions is that men and women have differing desires for intimacy. Because of this, there is an assumption that individuals in heterosexual relationships are bound to experience disagreement regarding intimacy and that this will cause distress in the relationship. The unstated assumption underlying this that has implications for all types of relationships, regardless of gender, is that differences in partners' desires for intimacy are associated with decreased satisfaction and result in struggles in intimate relationships. It seems that these previously mentioned authors believe that partners who have more similar desires for intimacy in their relationships may also be more satisfied. This literature, however, does not provide empirical support for these assumptions.

Similarity in Relationships

It is not surprising that the previously discussed literature suggests the importance of similarity between partners. The role of partner similarity in intimate relationships has been empirically studied across many variables. Much research has demonstrated that romantic partners tend to be similar to each other on various physical, demographic, and psychological characteristics (see Gonzaga, Campos, & Bradbury, 2007). Furthermore, couples have a tendency to converge and become more similar to each other over time. This has been shown to occur in domains such as emotional responses (Anderson, Keltner, & John, 2003) and personality (Gonzaga et al., 2007).

Research has explored the connection between partner similarity and relationship outcome across many variables, including similarity in personality, attitudes, values, and demographic characteristics such as religion, ethnicity, and age (Luo, 2009). One researcher, for

example, found that partner similarity in both emotional experience and personality was positively correlated with relationship quality in heterosexual dating and married couples (Gonzaga et al., 2007). Some areas of similarity have been found to be more important for relationship satisfaction than others. Luo and Klohnen (2005) indicated that similarity in personality-relevant domains was predictive of relationship satisfaction, whereas similarity in attitude-related domains was not.

The previously cited research on similarity in relationships largely included samples from the United States, but this connection has also been demonstrated in samples from other countries. Gaunt (2006) found that similarity of values and gendered personality traits predicted marital satisfaction and lower levels of negative affect among a sample of Jewish Israeli, heterosexual, married couples. The relationship between similarity and relationship outcome has been found among various domains for early dating couples (Luo, 2009) and married couples (Luo & Klohnen, 2005; Gonzaga et al., 2007).

Some researchers have found that instead of actual partner similarity, one's *perceptions* of partner similarity are related to relationship quality. Rusbult, Kumashiro, Kubacka, and Finkel (2009) studied perceptions of similarity by exploring an individual's perceptions that his/her partner is similar to the individual's ideal self. Perceived similarity to ideal self was found to be related to the amount of affirmation the individual experienced regarding being more congruent with his/her ideal self. This, in turn, predicts movement toward one's ideal self and is related to couple well-being. Other research has supported the importance of perceived partner similarity by demonstrating that one's perception of partner similarity leads to feelings of being understood by one's partner, which leads to greater relationship satisfaction in both heterosexual

(Murray, Holmes, Bellavia, Griffin, & Dolderman, 2002) and same-sex relationships (Conley, Roesch, Peplau, & Gold, 2009).

Similarity and perceived similarity between intimate relationship partners has been found to be associated with relationship outcome variables such as couple well-being, relationship quality, relationship satisfaction, and decreased levels of negative affect. While the presence and strength of this correlation depends upon the domain of similarity that is being assessed, much evidence points to the importance of similarity as an important factor in relationships.

Similarity in Intimacy

Although the literature on gender and intimacy makes assumptions about the importance of partner similarity in intimacy and its contribution to relationship quality, this association has not been explored empirically to a significant extent. Some suggestion has been made that similarity in level of intimacy may be predictive of relationship quality, however. For example, Vangelisti and Beck (2007) discussed the idea that whether or not intimacy is jointly experienced by relationship partners is a central factor in intimacy. The authors suggest that partners who report similar levels of intimacy may experience their relationship differently than those who report different levels of intimacy. Thus, Vangelisti and Beck (2007) emphasize the importance of examining discrepancies in the degree to which intimacy is experienced by each partner. This suggests that partner similarity in the level of intimacy in the relationship may be important. Empirical support for this idea was found by Heller and Wood (1998), who reported a correlation between similarity in partner ratings of intimacy and the couple's overall intimacy level, such that those partners who differ in their feelings of intimacy reported a lower overall intimacy level. These findings, however, were somewhat contradicted by Kenny and Acitelli's (1994)

results indicating that partner similarity in intimacy level, as measured by comparing each partner's self-reported intimacy, did not significantly predict marital well-being.

In discussing intimacy, it is important to distinguish experienced level of intimacy from expected or desired level of intimacy. In Schaefer and Olson's (1981) measure of intimacy, the authors distinguished between actual/experienced intimacy and desired intimacy. The previously cited research that discussed connections between similarity in level of intimacy and relationship quality measured experienced intimacy in the relationship (Heller & Wood, 1998; Kenny & Acitelli, 1994). The literature discussing gender differences in intimacy, on the other hand, made suggestions about similarity in desired intimacy. Other researchers have also pointed to the negative impact of differing desires for intimacy on relationship quality. Prager (2000) suggested that when partners have incompatible intimacy needs they may become frustrated and experience distress. Wynne and Wynne (1986) indicated that couples often experience intimacy differently, noting that partners sometimes disagree about when they have had intimate moments. Additionally, Schaefer and Olson (1981) pointed out the importance of comparing one's scores on both expected and experienced intimacy to one's partner's scores in order to identify areas in which the couple may agree and disagree.

The underlying assumption of the literature in this area, that needs to be further examined, is how a discrepancy between partners' desired intimacy affects their relationship. Durana's (1997) research provides some empirical evidence to suggest that discrepancy in desires for intimacy may be associated with relationship dissatisfaction. These results, however, only show that both a decrease in the 'gender gap' in desires for intimacy and an increase in relationship satisfaction are a result of Durana's intervention. It is not clear whether the decrease in gender differences in desires for intimacy is directly correlated with relationship satisfaction in

these heterosexual relationships. The only published evidence cited to both support and refute the idea that such a discrepancy causes problems in the relationship is “clinical evidence” from the authors’ experiences (Ridley, 1993; Bagarozzi, 2001). Although multiple researchers have suggested that comparisons of partners’ desired intimacy is important, it has been explored very minimally in general and to an even smaller degree in same-sex relationships.

Current Study and Hypotheses

Much of the research discussed to this point claims that there are large gender differences in the desire for and experience of intimacy. Furthermore, there are many claims that these gender differences cause problems for couples in their intimate relationships. There is, however, much confusion over whether or not these gender differences actually exist or are as large as researchers have portrayed them to be. If these differences do exist, there is not much empirical evidence to support or refute the claim that gender differences in intimacy cause distress in relationships. Additionally, the claim that these differences cause problems in relationships rests upon the assumption that all intimate relationships exist between partners of different sexes. The reality is that much of this research has been conducted with heterosexual, and often only married, couples (Mackey et al., 2000). To assume that gendered differences in intimacy act as a barrier to improving intimacy ignores the intimacy that exists for same-sex couples. It may be that the gender of one’s partner does not have implications for differences in intimacy. Regardless of one’s gender or one’s partner’s gender, differing desires for intimacy may serve as a barrier to improving intimacy and relationship satisfaction.

The current author previously collected data to explore this issue within heterosexual relationships (Schultz, 2011). The results indicated that heterosexual women had greater desires for overall, intellectual, sexual, and recreational intimacy than heterosexual men. There were

also significant findings regarding perceived partner similarity in desires for intimacy. For heterosexual women, perceiving oneself to be more similar to one's partner in desires for emotional and social intimacy was associated with relationship satisfaction and commitment. For heterosexual men, perceiving oneself to be more similar to one's partner in desires for sexual intimacy was associated with relationship satisfaction but not relationship commitment. There were not enough participants involved in same-sex relationships to statistically examine this correlation within non-heterosexual relationships. The purposes of the current study were (1) to answer Reis' (1998) call to move beyond discussing gender differences in intimacy and to examine the underlying assumption in the literature that partner differences in desired intimacy cause problems for relationships and (2) to do so in a manner that adds to the literature on same-sex relationships. The main focus of the current study was to explore the association between similarity of desired intimacy and relationship outcomes in same-sex relationships.

The previously discussed findings provide evidence to suggest that lack of similarity in intimacy may be associated with negative outcomes for the relationship. Other authors have provided evidence for this as well. Acitelli, Kenny, and Weiner (2001) reported that partner similarity in ideals was negatively correlated with frequency of conflict and tension in the relationship. These ideals included things such as talking about important issues, doing things together, being sexually satisfied, and showing affection, which may be closely related to some of the types of intimacy outlined by Schaefer and Olson (1981). Other evidence suggests that conflict over intimacy negatively affects relationship satisfaction. Kurdek (1994) found that conflict in general is negatively related to relationship satisfaction. Intimacy, which was an area of high conflict for gay, lesbian, and heterosexual couples, was more salient in predicting relationship satisfaction than most other areas of conflict (Kurdek, 1994). These findings

suggest that similarity in intimacy may be an important variable to explore. If dissimilarity in intimacy is associated with more conflict over intimacy, this lack of similarity may affect relationship satisfaction. Another piece of evidence to suggest that similarity in intimacy needs leads to benefits for the relationship comes from Fletcher, Simpson, Thomas, and Giles' (1999) study on intimate relationship ideals. The results indicated that the more an individual's relationship resembles his or her ideal, the greater his or her relationship satisfaction. It would seem that the more similar an individual's intimacy ideals are to his or her partner's intimacy needs, the more likely those ideals are to be met, which would result in greater relationship satisfaction.

As previously indicated, intimacy in this study was conceptualized as outlined by Schaefer and Olson (1981). The five types of intimacy defined by these researchers (Schaefer & Olson, 1981, p. 50) are as follows:

1. *Emotional intimacy*—the experience of closeness of feelings.
2. *Social intimacy*—the experience of having common friends and similarities in social networks.
3. *Intellectual intimacy*—the experience of sharing ideas.
4. *Sexual intimacy*—the experience of sharing general affection and/or sexual activity.
5. *Recreational intimacy*—shared experiences of interests in hobbies and mutual participation in sporting events.

Based on the evidence supporting the association between similarity and positive variables in intimate relationships in both the published literature and the current author's previous findings, this author hypothesized that, overall, perceived partner similarity in desired

level of intimacy, along with perceived similarity of each separate type of desired intimacy, would be positively correlated with relationship-enhancing outcome variables.

Hypothesis 1: Overall perceived partner similarity in desired intimacy will positively correlate with relationship satisfaction and commitment.

Hypothesis 2: Perceived partner similarity in each of the 5 types of desired intimacy (emotional, social, sexual, intellectual, and relational) will positively correlate with relationship satisfaction and commitment.

Based on previous findings, it was expected that emotional, social, and sexual intimacy may be most important in contributing to overall measures of relationship satisfaction. It is, however, important to explore all types of intimacy. Thus, the analyses explored which specific types of intimacy contributed most to relationship satisfaction.

It was also important to explore any gender differences or similarities in desired intimacy in this study. Previous literature does not reach clear conclusions on gender differences in desires for intimacy. Based on previous research conducted by this author, however, the following hypothesis was proposed:

Hypothesis 3: There will be no difference between men and women in their desires for overall, emotional, social, sexual, recreational, and intellectual intimacy.

Based on gender differences in intimacy discussed by previous research, the types of intimacy that are most predictive of relationship outcome variables may differ for women and men. Research discussed previously in this paper indicated that sexual intimacy may be more important to men while emotional intimacy may be more important to women. Based on this research, the author hypothesized the following:

Hypothesis 4: Higher perceived partner similarity in desired sexual intimacy will be more positively associated with relationship satisfaction for men than for women.

Hypothesis 5: Higher perceived partner similarity in desired emotional intimacy will be more positively associated with relationship satisfaction for women than for men.

Furthermore, because data were only collected from one partner, noting the direction of any perceived difference in desired intimacy was important. For instance, individuals who perceived their partners to desire less of a particular type of intimacy than they do may have responded differently to measures of relationship quality than individuals who perceived their partners to desire more of a particular type of intimacy than they do. The direction of this potential difference was unknown, and therefore no specific hypothesis was forwarded.

METHODS

Participants

Participants were recruited to complete the online survey via recruitment materials posted on websites, discussion boards, organization social networking pages, and distributed via email through various organizations. All participants were eligible for a drawing for a gift card as compensation for their participation. Five hundred sixty-one individuals clicked on the link to begin the survey. Three hundred seventeen of these participants did not complete the first measure. Because these individuals did not provide enough data for any analyses to be conducted, they were removed from the data set. Of the remaining individuals, three indicated that they were under the age of 18, ten endorsed that either themselves or their partner had completed the survey previously, three stated that they were not dating the individual they answered the survey about (i.e. endorsed relationship status as “Friends” or “Single”), and two pairs of participants had identical IP addresses, indicating that they may have completed the survey more than once. All of these participants were removed from the data set.

While the recruitment materials and cover letter to the survey did indicated that participants were required to currently be in a same-sex dating/romantic relationship, there was no specific question asking if the participant identified his/her relationship as a same-sex relationship. Thus, it is possible that participants in heterosexual relationships could have completed the survey if they did not read the cover letter completely. There were 24 participants who appeared to be in heterosexual relationships. This included 12 individuals who identified as heterosexual males with partners whom they identified as heterosexual females, 10 individuals who identified as heterosexual females with partners whom they identified as heterosexual males, 1 individual who identified as a bisexual male with a bisexual female partner, and 1 individual who identified as a bisexual female with a heterosexual male partner. Because these

24 participants did not meet the main criteria for participation in the research, they were also removed from the data set. This left 201 participants to be included in the data set. Ten of these participants stopped at various points prior to the end of the survey. They were included in the data set but were unable to be included in certain analyses, especially given that they did not complete demographics.

The sample included participants from a variety of geographic locations. The majority of participants (84.6%) were from the United States and the remainder of participants resided in Canada (2.5%), Australia (1.5%), France (1.0%), Croatia (0.5%), Germany (0.5%), Ireland (0.5%), Japan (0.5%), Mexico (0.5%), New Zealand (0.5%), Perú (0.5%), Portugal (0.5%), South Africa (0.5%), and Spain (0.5%). Participants who endorsed living in the United States resided in a variety of states including California (24.4%), Colorado (6.0%), North Carolina (4.5%), Illinois (4.0%), Florida (3.5%), Texas (3.0%), Minnesota (2.5%), Ohio (2.5%), Pennsylvania (2.5%), Tennessee (2.5%), New Jersey (2.0%), Virginia (2.0%), Washington (2.0%), Kentucky (1.5%), Louisiana (1.5%), Maryland (1.5%), Missouri (1.5%), Oregon (1.5%), Wisconsin (1.5%), Arizona (1.0%), Georgia (1.0%), Kansas (1.0%), Michigan (1.0%), Mississippi (1.0%), Vermont (1.0%), Washington D.C., Connecticut (0.5%), Idaho (0.5%), Indiana (0.5%), Iowa (0.5%), Massachusetts (0.5%), Montana (0.5%), Nebraska (0.5%), Nevada (0.5%), New Hampshire (0.5%), New Mexico (0.5%), New York (0.5%), and Oklahoma (0.5%). Participants reported that they found the link to the survey in a variety of ways. Response to this question was optional, but popular responses included from an online survey list (11.4%), from a website provided by a course instructor (10.4%), from friends, personal, contact, or e-mail (15.0%), on Facebook (22.4%), on Twitter (5.0%), on the Marriage Equality USA website (6.0%), and from a university LGBT listserv (6.5%).

The identified gender of participants was 46.3% (93 individuals) female, 43.8% (88 individuals) male, 1.0% (2 individuals) transgender – male to female, and 1.0% (2 individuals) transgender – female to male. The remaining individuals (3.0%, 6 individuals) did not identify with these genders. Examples of identified genders for these individuals are genderqueer, dyke, non-cisgendered, non-gendered, and neutered. The identified gender of participants' partners was 49.3% (99 individuals) female, 43.8% (88 individuals) male, and 1.5% (3 individuals) who did not identify with these genders. The partners who identified as other were indicated to be neutered, genderqueer, and cisgender. With respect to racial/ethnic background, participants were able to choose as many options as applied. The participants' identification was as follows: 4.5% Black, non-Hispanic, 5.0% Asian/Pacific Islander, 80.1% White, non-Hispanic, 8.5% Hispanic/Latino/a, 1.5% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 5.0% Other. Individuals indicating their racial identifications as other than the options given noted identities of Coloured, Filipino, Iranian, Mexican, Maori/English/Scots, Polish/Puerto Rican, Métis, and Roma/Sinti. The ethnic/racial background of participants' partners was: 5.5% Black, non-Hispanic, 5.0% Asian/Pacific Islander, 74.1% White, 9.0% Hispanic/Latino/a, 1.0% American Indian/Pacific Islander, and 5.0% Other. Participants endorsing their partners' racial identities as being other than those given noted identities of: Biracial, Black/Puerto Rican, Egyptian, Mexican/White, Indian, Mexican, Middle Eastern, and African American/German.

Regarding sexual orientation, 34.8% of participants indicated that they identified as lesbian, 43.8% of individuals identified as gay, 9.5% identified as bisexual, and 6.0% endorsed their identity as being other than these categories. Endorsed sexual identities for those electing "other" included queer, dyke, and pansexual. Participants' partners' sexual orientations were identified as 36.3% lesbian, 39.8% gay, 10.9% bisexual, 1.0% heterosexual, and 5.5% as other

than these categories. Endorsed sexual identities for partners in the “other” category included Queer, Gender Queer, Dyke, Nonsexual, and Pansexual. The age of participants ranged from 18 to 65 ($M = 33.44$, $SD = 11.59$), and the age of participants’ partners ranged from 18 to 69 ($M = 34.19$, $SD = 11.00$). Relationship length ranged from .083 years (1 month) to 32 years ($M = 5.53$, $SD = 6.88$). The relationship status of participants was 5.5% casually dating, 26.4% seriously dating not cohabiting, 13.9% seriously dating and co-habiting, 41.3% married/committed cohabiting, 3.0% married/committed not cohabiting, and 3.0% other. Participants who endorsed their relationship satisfaction as “other” described statuses such as engaged, domestic partnership, and married/committed in open or non-monogamous relationships. Most of the participants (82.1%) reported that they were sexually active with their partners, while the remaining who responded reported that they were not (12.9%).

Materials

Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships. Desired intimacy was measured with the Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships (PAIR) Inventory (Schaefer & Olson, 1981). This scale was developed to measure the multidimensional nature of intimacy, as conceptualized by its authors. The PAIR assesses the five types of intimacy (emotional, social, sexual, recreational, and intellectual) that were defined previously and includes a sixth scale to assess *conventional intimacy*, which measures socially desirable responding.

The measure contains 6 questions for each type of intimacy, each on a 5-point Likert Scale. Traditionally, the questionnaire is given twice. The first time the individual is asked to respond to the item “as it is now” to give a measure of *realized* intimacy, and the second time the individual is asked to respond to each item “how he/she would like it to be” to give a measure of *expected* intimacy (Schaefer & Olson, 1981). For the purposes of this study, the PAIR was given

twice. For the first set of questions the participants were asked to respond how he/she would like it to be, to give a measure of the individual's desired intimacy. The second time the participant was asked to respond how he/she thinks his/her partner would like it to be, to give a measure of perception of partner's desired intimacy.

The PAIR was originally developed for use in heterosexual relationships, but it has since been utilized to assess intimacy in same-sex relationships (Eldridge & Gilbert, 1990). Alpha reliabilities for the current study are as follows: .90 (self overall intimacy), .78 (self emotional intimacy), .62 (self social intimacy), .80 (self sexual intimacy), .68 (self intellectual intimacy), .60 (self recreational intimacy), .91 (partner overall intimacy), .84 (partner emotional intimacy), .70 (partner social intimacy), .79 (partner sexual intimacy), .77 (partner intellectual intimacy), and .68 (partner recreational intimacy), .78 (self conventional intimacy/socially desirable responding), and .81 (partner conventional intimacy). Although reliability for a few of the subscales (self social intimacy, self intellectual intimacy, self recreational intimacy, and partner recreational intimacy) fell slightly below the typical cutoff of .7, the scales have been deemed reliable in the past. Alpha reliabilities reported by Schaefer and Olson (1981) for each scale are .75 (emotional intimacy), .71 (social intimacy), .77 (sexual intimacy), .70 (intellectual intimacy), and .70 (recreational intimacy). Furthermore, Pallant (2005) notes that low Cronbach's alpha coefficients are common for short scales containing less than ten items and that in these cases it may be appropriate to report mean inter-item correlations for the items making up these shorter subscales. For the indicated scales with alpha reliabilities of less than .7, the inter-item correlations are as follows: 0.253 (self social intimacy), 0.277 (self intellectual intimacy), 0.202 (self recreational intimacy), and 0.279 (partner recreational intimacy). These meet the optimal

range of .2 to .4 suggested by Briggs and Cheek (1986) and further discussed by Piedmont and Hyland (1993). This measure can be found in Appendix A.

Self-report of Similarity in Intimacy. Although one may rate his or her partner as different from him or her on the PAIR, his or her explicit perception and awareness of this difference may not mirror this. Perceived similarity in desired intimacy was thus also assessed by an explicit self-report measure. This measure allowed exploration of one's explicit awareness of his or her partner's similarities and differences in desired intimacy. Participants were given a description of each type of intimacy defined by Schaefer and Olson (1981). They were then asked to report how similar their partner is to them in each type of intimacy needs. They answered this on a 5-point Likert scale. These questions were previously used by the author but have not been used in other research. This measure can be found in Appendix B.

Self-report of Realized Intimacy. Realized, or actual, intimacy was measured by a similar measure as the self-report of similarity in intimacy. Data gained from this measure can be used to explore the potential role of actual intimacy, but it will not necessarily address the main hypotheses of the study. Participants were given a description of each type of intimacy defined by Schaefer and Olson (1981). They were then asked to report how intimate they are with their partner for each type of intimacy. They answered this on a 5-point Likert scale. These questions were previously used by the author but have not been used in other research. This measure can be found in Appendix C.

Relationship Satisfaction. Relationship satisfaction was measured with the Satisfaction Level questions of the Investment Model Scale (Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998). The questions are intended to assess the amount of positive versus negative affect an individual experiences in a relationship and is noted to be affected by the degree to which one's partner fulfills his or her

needs (Rusbult et al., 1998). The measure consists of five items assessing satisfaction at a global level. The items are answered on an 8-point Likert Scale. Alpha reliability of the scale has been reported to range between .92 and .95 (Rusbult et al., 1998). Alpha reliability for the current study was .90. This scale can be found in Appendix D.

Commitment. One's commitment to his/her relationship was measured with the Commitment Level questions of the Investment Model Scale (Rusbult et al., 1998). This measure consists of seven items answered on an 8-point Likert Scale. The items are meant to assess one's intent to persist in a relationship. Alpha reliability of the scale is reported to range between .91 and .95 (Rusbult et al., 1998). Alpha reliability for the current sample was .81. This scale can be found in Appendix E.

Inclusion of Other in the Self Scale. The Inclusion of Other in the Self (IOS) Scale was designed as a measure of interpersonal closeness and interconnectedness (Aron, Aron, & Smollman, 1992). It is a one-item, pictorial measure in which participants are shown 7 different Venn diagrams, each having a different amount of overlap. The participants are asked to look at the pictures and indicate which picture "best describes your relationship." Research has shown that the IOS has been positively correlated with measures of relationship closeness (reported correlations of .22 and .34) and intimacy (reported correlation of .45) and positive emotions about the other (reported correlation of .45; Aron et al., 1992). The scale has also been used to measure cognitive interdependence (Agnew, Van Lange, Rusbult, & Langston, 1998). This scale can be found in Appendix F.

Demographics Questionnaire. Demographic information and specific information about participants' relationships were gathered. This information included age, sex, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, geographical information, and partner's age, sex, and race/ethnicity. It also

included information specific to the relationship, such as relationship length, sexual activity, and relationship status. This scale can be found in Appendix G.

Procedure

As previously indicated, the survey for this study was completed on-line. Participants were recruited via Internet advertising, and the survey was administered through the Internet. Previous research has discussed some of the benefits and obstacles to Internet data collection. Gosling, Vazire, Srivastava, and John (2004) explored concerns that are frequently expressed about data obtained through Internet samples. The researchers found that although participants are not entirely representative of the population, they are often more diverse and just as well adjusted as traditional samples. Furthermore, the authors noted that Internet data is not impacted by the presentation format, correlates with other non-internet measures, and that although repeat responders do occur, steps can be taken to prevent this. Gosling et al. (2004) concluded that data gathered from Internet samples is at least as good, if not better than, data gathered from traditional sampling methods, based on the greater diversity present in Internet samples. Thus, conducting this research over the Internet is an appropriate method for the purposes of this study. Effort was taken, however, to ensure that individuals did not respond to the survey more than once. One method that was utilized in this study was to record IP addresses for each completed survey and remove data from the survey containing repeat IP addresses. Additionally, participants were asked if they or their partners had already completed the survey. If they responded positively to either of these questions, they were removed from the data set.

The survey was advertised on websites and online discussion forums that have main audiences of individuals in same-sex relationships. Permission was obtained from website or forum moderators prior to posting the advertisement, and no information was posted to sites

from which permission was not granted. Examples of specific websites that were utilized to advertise included Marriage Equality USA, E-health Forums Research Board, City Data, Craigslist, and Backpage. Recruitment information was also posted on a number of online survey lists, including through the Social Psychology Network, Psychological Research on the Net, Online Psychology Research, Web Experiment Net, and The Inquisitive Mind. Specific organizations and groups whose main audiences were individuals in same-sex relationships were also contacted via email, Facebook messages, or online contact forms to request permission to post the information and/or for the organization to distribute the information to individuals who may have been eligible to participate.

During recruitment, participants were asked for their participation in a study on romantic relationships. They were instructed that in order to complete the survey, they needed to be at least 18 years-old and currently involved in a same-sex romantic relationship. The recruitment advertisement also informed participants that after completing the survey they would be eligible to enter a drawing to receive one of two \$40 gift cards.

The participants who chose to complete the survey clicked on the link to take them to the survey site. Once on the survey website, they were directed to read the cover letter explaining the purpose of and risks and benefits associated with participation. The page reminded them that participation was voluntary and that they would be able to exit the study at any time. The page also instructed them that by clicking the link to continue on to the next page they were giving their consent to participate in the study. If participants continued on, they were presented with a statement to discourage socially desirable responding, which stated, “At times individuals answer survey questions the way in which they believe people want them to answer. Remember that your answers will not be tied to your information in any way and that only the researcher

will see your answers. Please answer the following questions honestly without considering what others may expect or want you to say.” They were also given information about the bar indicating their progress in the survey. This information stated, “The progress bar at the bottom of the page measures progress based on the page in the survey. Be aware that the majority (two thirds) of the survey questions are on the first two pages of the survey.”

The next page contained the first set of PAIR items, for which individuals were asked to respond regarding how they would most like their relationship to be. They were then directed to another page that contained the second set of PAIR items, for which they were asked to respond regarding how they think their partner would most like their relationship to be. The following pages contained the relationship satisfaction and commitment items and the IOS scale. The last page of the survey contained the demographic questionnaire. Upon completion of all survey questions, the participants were directed to a page that offered a short debriefing regarding the purpose of the study. They were given the option to enter their email address to be entered into the lottery to receive one of two \$40 gift cards. They were also provided with ways to locate further information about the topic of intimacy and resources to help facilitate discussions of intimacy between partners.

RESULTS

Data Management and Analyses

Data management and analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 21. As previously indicated, participants who were under age 18, who had completed the survey before, whose partners had completed the survey before, with repeat IP addresses, who did not complete more than the first measure (the PAIR), who reported that they were not in a romantic/dating relationship with the partner about whom they answered the survey, and who appeared to be in a heterosexual relationship were removed from the data set. A missing values analysis indicated that approximately 1.75% of the data were missing. As noted in the participants section, ten individuals completed the first measure but stopped before the end of all questions. When they were excluded from the analysis, only 0.32% of the data were missing. Thus, the majority of missing data came from these ten cases. Because this percentage was small, missing data were excluded from analyses using pair-wise deletion for all correlational and mean comparison analyses and using list-wise deletion for all regression analyses, as these are the default methods for handling missing data on these analyses in the data management software.

In order to assess the hypotheses of this study, similarity of each participant's own and perceived partner's expected intimacy was calculated. While there is debate about the best method of calculating similarity, researchers seem to agree that the most accurate calculation depends upon the construct being studied (Gaunt, 2006; Luo, 2009; Luo & Klohnen, 2005). Kenny, Kashy, and Cook (2006) discussed multiple methods for examining similarity and dissimilarity in couples. They noted that a discrepancy score is acceptable when the main focus of similarity is the level of the variable, as it is in this case. For this reason, absolute discrepancy scores (ADS) were utilized to calculate similarity for the current research. With this type of

score, similarity is represented by lower scores and difference is represented by higher scores. Because of this, a negative correlation coefficient between an ADS and a second variable would indicate that greater similarity is associated with higher values of the second variable. Each scale was first summed for self (participant's desired intimacy) and partner (participant's perception of their partner's desired intimacy). An ADS was then computed for each type of intimacy (overall, emotional, social, sexual, intellectual, and recreational intimacy) by subtracting each partner scale from its respective self scale and computing the absolute value of this number.

The previously mentioned measure of similarity is designed for dyadic data and thus ignores the direction of the difference between partners. The data collected in this study represents only one, and not both, partners. As previously noted, for this reason, it is important to examine the direction of any perceived difference that exists between partners. It may be beneficial to look at these groups separately or to calculate a discrepancy score that maintains the sign to indicate direction of difference. In order to prepare for these analyses, a discrepancy score was calculated for each of the types of intimacy by subtracting the participants' perception of his/her partner's desired intimacy from the participant's desired intimacy. For these variables, negative scores indicate that the participant perceives themselves to desire less intimacy and positive scores indicate that the participant perceives themselves to desire more intimacy than their partner for that specific type of intimacy. A second method of addressing the concept of direction of perceived difference is to create a dichotomous variable indicating the direction (more or less) of the difference without the amount of difference. A dichotomous variable was created to indicate this direction for each type of intimacy (overall, emotional, social, sexual, intellectual, and recreational).

Primary Analyses

Descriptive data and variable correlations. To assess the first two hypotheses, a number of correlations were computed. Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for each ADS variable, relationship satisfaction, and relationship commitment.

Hypothesis 1: Overall Intimacy. As can be observed in Table 1, a significant negative correlation was found between ADS of overall intimacy and relationship satisfaction, suggesting that individuals with less perceived difference in desires for overall intimacy from their partners are more satisfied with their relationships. A significant negative correlation was also found between ADS of overall intimacy and relationship commitment, suggesting that individuals who perceive less difference in overall intimacy from their partners tend to be more committed to their relationships. These correlations support the hypothesis that greater perceived similarity in desires for intimacy would be associated with greater relationship satisfaction and commitment.

Hypothesis 2: Types of Intimacy. The correlational results for each type of intimacy can be found in Table 1.

Correlation Analyses. As the results in the table indicate, absolute discrepancy of emotional intimacy, social intimacy, sexual intimacy, intellectual intimacy, and recreational intimacy were found to negatively correlate with relationship satisfaction. This supports the hypothesis and suggests that individuals who perceive themselves as more similar to their partners in their desires for emotional, social, sexual, intellectual, and recreational intimacy also tend to be more satisfied with their relationships.

The absolute discrepancy scores for emotional intimacy, intellectual intimacy, and recreational intimacy were found to negatively correlate with relationship commitment. This supports the hypothesis and suggests that individuals with greater perceived similarity to their

partners in their desires for these types of intimacy tend to be more committed to their relationships. Absolute discrepancy scores of desires for social intimacy and sexual intimacy, however, did not significantly correlate with relationship commitment, suggesting that the perceived similarity or difference between one's desires and their partner's desires for social intimacy and sexual intimacy is not associated with commitment to the relationship. The hypothesis was not supported for the subtypes of social and sexual intimacy.

Regression Analyses. Because the five types of intimacy are constructs that correlate with one another, it is important to examine the relative contribution of each type of intimacy, independent of the contributions of the other types. To explore the unique relationship between each type of intimacy and relationship satisfaction and commitment, multiple linear regression analyses were conducted. Results from these analyses can be seen in Tables 2 and 3.

A multiple linear regression was conducted with relationship satisfaction as the dependent variable and ADS for each of the five types of intimacy as the independent variables. The results indicated that, overall, discrepancy in the five types of intimacy significantly predicted 18.7% of the variance in relationship satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.167$, $F(5, 170) = 7.81$, $p < .001$). Specifically, discrepancy in both intellectual ($\beta = -0.238$, $t = -2.87$, $p < .01$) and recreational ($\beta = -0.219$, $t = -2.79$, $p < .01$) intimacy significantly predicted relationship satisfaction, beyond the association of other types of intimacy and relationship satisfaction. This suggests that, of the five types of intimacy, greater perceived similarity in intellectual and recreational intimacy are most associated with greater relationship satisfaction.

A second multiple linear regression was conducted with relationship commitment as the dependent variable and ADS for each of the five types of intimacy as the independent variables. The results of the second analysis indicated that, overall, perceived discrepancy in the five types

of intimacy significantly predicted 15.9% of the variance in relationship commitment ($R^2 = 0.159$, $F(5, 169) = 6.37$, $p < .001$). Specifically, perceived discrepancy in desires for recreational intimacy ($\beta = -0.325$, $t = -4.05$, $p < .001$) significantly predicted relationship commitment, beyond the contribution of the other types of intimacy. This suggests that, of the five types of intimacy, greater perceived similarity in recreational intimacy is most associated with greater relationship commitment.

Hypothesis 3: Gender - Comparisons of Means. The third hypothesis stated that there would be no differences between men and women in their desires for overall, emotional, social, sexual, recreational, and intellectual intimacy. To assess this hypothesis, six independent samples t-tests were conducted, one for overall intimacy and one for each of the five types of intimacy. Each t-test utilized gender as the grouping variable. Due to low numbers of transgender individuals, only participants identifying as male or female were included in these analyses. Of these t-tests, only the analyses assessing the difference between male and female participants on desires for recreational intimacy was significant ($t(167.3) = -3.00$, $p < .01$). This indicated that women tended to have higher desires for recreational intimacy than men. Means for these groups can be found in Table 4. The hypothesis was supported for overall intimacy, emotional intimacy, social intimacy, sexual intimacy, and intellectual intimacy. It was not supported with regard to recreational intimacy.

To assess additional differences across genders, independent samples t-tests were conducted on other independent variables and dependent variables, including relationship satisfaction, relationship commitment, perceptions of partners' desires for all types of intimacy, ADS of all types of intimacy, IOS, and the one-item self-report measures. Each t-test utilized gender as the grouping variable. Only significant results are presented. There were no

significant differences between males and females in their perceptions of their partners' desires or in their absolute discrepancy scores for the intimacy scales. The only significant group differences indicated that female participants self-reported greater similarity to their partners than male participants on the one-item questions assessing perceived similarity of emotional intimacy ($t(177.4) = -2.88, p < .01$), sexual intimacy ($t(179.0) = -2.17, p < .05$), and recreational intimacy ($t(178) = -2.05, p < .05$). All means for significant group differences can be found in Table 4.

Hypotheses 4 and 5: Gender – Split File Comparisons. The fourth and fifth hypotheses proposed gender differences in the relationships between perceived partner similarity of desired intimacy and relationship outcome variables. To assess these hypotheses, the data file was split by gender and two multiple regressions were conducted. For the first analysis, relationship satisfaction was regressed on the ADS of the five types of intimacy. The results can be found in Table 5. The overall model predicted 19.8% of the variance in relationship satisfaction for men ($R^2 = 0.198, F(5,75) = 3.71, p < .01$) and 24.7% of the variance in relationship satisfaction for women ($R^2 = 0.247, F(5,79) = 5.19, p < .001$). Specifically, perceived similarity in desires for recreational intimacy was the only independent variable that uniquely contributed to the prediction of relationship satisfaction for males ($\beta = -0.333, t = -2.94, p < .01$). It may be informative to note, however, that perceived similarity in desires for intellectual intimacy was marginally significant for males ($\beta = -0.203, t = -1.76, p = .083$). For females, perceived similarity in desires for intellectual intimacy was the only independent variable that uniquely contributed to the prediction of relationship satisfaction ($\beta = -0.370, t = -2.76, p < .01$). This suggests that for women, greater perceived similarity in desires for intellectual intimacy may be most associated with relationship satisfaction, as compared to similarity in other forms of

intimacy. For men, however, it seems that greater perceived similarity in desires for recreational intimacy is more predictive of relationship satisfaction than similarity of other forms of intimacy. These findings do not support Hypotheses 4 and 5.

Relationship commitment was also regressed on the ADS of the five types of intimacy with the file split by gender. The results can be found in Table 6. The overall model was significant for males, predicting 18.3% of the variance in relationship commitment ($R^2 = 0.183$, $F(5,75) = 3.36$, $p < .01$). For women, the overall model significantly predicted 14.5% of the variance in relationship commitment ($R^2 = 0.145$, $F(5,78) = 2.64$, $p < .05$). With regard to the specific types of intimacy, perceived similarity in desired recreational intimacy uniquely contributed to the prediction of relationship commitment for males ($\beta = -0.311$, $t = -2.77$, $p < .01$) and for females ($\beta = -0.260$, $t = -2.02$, $p < .05$). This suggests that for both males and females in the sample, greater perceived similarity in desires for recreational intimacy is associated with greater relationship commitment, above and beyond the association between similarity of other types of intimacy and relationship commitment.

Power analyses using an online post-hoc power calculator indicated that this sample size provided sufficient power to conduct these multiple regressions (Soper, 2013). The observed statistical power, at a probability level of 0.05, for each test was .932 (males, relationship satisfaction), .987 (females, relationship satisfaction), .904 (males, relationship commitment), and .813 (females, relationship commitment).

Direction of Discrepancy

Because testing for the importance of direction of discrepancy in desires for intimacy was exploratory in nature, it was done in multiple ways, using difference scores, comparisons of means, and interaction terms.

Difference Scores. The first method was to conduct all of the major analyses (Hypotheses 1 and 2) using a difference score instead of an ADS (absolute discrepancy score). A difference score maintains the sign of the difference, thus including the direction in the analysis. Results of the correlational analyses indicated small negative correlations between the difference score for overall intimacy and both relationship satisfaction ($r = -0.241$, $n = 176$, $p < .01$) and relationship commitment ($r = -0.180$, $n = 175$, $p < .05$). As previously noted, the difference score is such that the largest negative scores indicate an individual who perceives themselves to desire less intimacy than their partner and the largest positive scores indicate an individual who perceives themselves to desire more intimacy than their partner. Scores that are closer to zero signify individuals who perceive themselves to have more similar desires to their partners' than scores that are further from zero. The negative correlations indicate that as one's difference score for overall intimacy decreases, relationship satisfaction and commitment tend to increase. In other words, individuals who perceive themselves to desire less overall intimacy than their partners tend to be more satisfied and committed than individuals who perceive themselves to desire more overall intimacy than their partners.

The multiple regressions used to assess Hypothesis 2 were also conducted again, using difference scores instead of ADS variables. These regressions included difference scores for emotional intimacy, social intimacy, sexual intimacy, intellectual intimacy, and recreational intimacy as independent variables. One analysis utilized relationship satisfaction as the dependent variable, and the second analysis utilized relationship commitment as the dependent variable. Results indicated that the overall model was significant for relationship satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.095$, $F(5,170) = 3.58$, $p < .01$). Difference in emotional intimacy was the only independent variable that significantly contributed to the prediction of relationship satisfaction (β

= -0.214, $t = -2.39$, $p < .05$). Consistent with the correlational analyses, the direction of this relationship was negative. This indicates that as an individual's difference score on emotional intimacy decreases (i.e. one desiring less emotional intimacy than their partner), their relationship satisfaction tends to increase.

With respect to relationship commitment, the overall model was significant ($R^2 = 0.078$, $F(5,169) = 2.85$, $p < .05$). Difference in sexual intimacy was the only independent variable that significantly contributed to the prediction of relationship satisfaction ($\beta = -0.176$, $t = -2.18$, $p < .05$). These findings indicated that as an individuals' difference score on sexual intimacy decreases (i.e. one desiring less sexual intimacy then their partner), their relationship commitment tends to increase.

Comparison of Means. The second method to assess the importance of the direction of perceived differences in desires for intimacy was to compare means based on the dichotomous variables indicating the direction of the discrepancy for each type of intimacy. For these analyses, six independent samples t-tests were conducted for each of the dependent variables (relationship satisfaction and commitment). The t-tests utilized direction of overall, emotional, social, sexual, intellectual, and recreational intimacy as grouping variables. Results from these analyses are easier to interpret than the correlational analyses, given that they do not include the size of the discrepancy as well as the direction. It is important to note, however that individuals who perceived themselves to be exactly similar to their partners on a certain type of intimacy (ADS and difference scores of zero) did not receive a dichotomous direction variable and thus were excluded from analyses. Only significant group differences are discussed.

Participants who perceived themselves to desire less emotional intimacy than their partners were found to have greater relationship satisfaction ($t(99) = 3.29$, $p < .01$) and greater

relationship commitment ($t(99)= 2.89, p<.01$) than those who perceived themselves to desire . more emotional intimacy than their partners. Additionally, participants who perceived themselves to desire less sexual intimacy than their partners tended to have greater relationship commitment ($t(101)= 2.30, p<.05$) than those who perceived themselves to desire more sexual intimacy than their partners. Lastly, individuals who perceived themselves to desire less intellectual intimacy than their partners tended to report greater relationship satisfaction ($t(134.9)= 2.26, p<.05$) than partners who perceived themselves to desire more intellectual intimacy than their partners. Group statistics can be found in Table 7.

Interaction Analyses. The third method of testing the relationship between direction of perceived difference and relationship satisfaction and commitment involved creating interaction variables to describe the interaction between the direction (dichotomous variable) for each type of intimacy and its respective ADS. Prior to creating these interactions, the ADS variables were centered to prevent multicollinearity of the interaction term with other variables (Aiken & West, 1991). Six hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted for each of the two dependent variables, each containing the direction variable and the centered ADS of each specific type of intimacy (overall, emotional, social, sexual, intellectual, and recreational) in the first step and the respective interaction between the two in the second step. Meaningful results from these analyses that would add to the information already gained by the previous tests would contain a significant interaction term.

The analyses for overall, social, and recreational intimacy did not show significant main effects for direction or interactions between direction and ADS of intimacy variables. The analyses for emotional intimacy and sexual intimacy contained some significant main effects that mirror the significant findings of the mean comparisons previously discussed. The specific

results of these tests are not reported, as doing so would simply repeat the significant results previously reported. The interaction terms in these analyses were not significant.

The only regression that contained a significant interaction term was that of ADS of intellectual intimacy, direction of difference in intellectual intimacy, and the respective interaction on relationship satisfaction. The results from this regression can be found in Table 8. They indicated that the first model (without the interaction term) was significant ($R^2 = 0.124$, $F(2,136) = 9.64$, $p < .001$). The overall model (containing the interaction term) predicted 15.2% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.152$, $F(3,135) = 8.06$, $p < .001$). The addition of the interaction to the model provided a significant change in the prediction of variance ($\Delta R^2 = .028$, $F \text{ Change} = 4.42$, $p < .05$). As can be seen from the table, the model contains a significant main effect for ADS of intellectual intimacy ($\beta = -0.748$, $t = -3.35$, $p < .01$) and a significant interaction ($\beta = 0.472$, $t = 2.10$, $p < .05$). This interaction suggests that the relationship between perceived difference in desires for intellectual intimacy and relationship satisfaction depends on the direction of the perceived difference. Simple slopes (Aiken & West, 1991; Preacher, Curran, & Bower, 2006) for the association between ADS of intellectual intimacy and relationship satisfaction were tested for individuals who desire less intimacy and individuals who desire more intimacy than their partners. Both of the simple slopes revealed a significant negative association between ADS of intellectual intimacy and relationship satisfaction, but the perceived discrepancy of desired intimacy was more strongly related to relationship satisfaction for individuals who desired less intimacy than their partner ($B = -1.509$, $SE_B = .391$, $\beta = -.452$, $t = -3.86$, $p < .001$) than for individuals who desired more intimacy than their partner ($B = -0.490$, $SE_B = .195$, $\beta = -.275$, $t = -2.51$, $p < .05$). A graph of this interaction can be seen in Figure 1. The graph was created with a worksheet created by Dawson (2013).

As can be seen in the graph, the main effect is such that individuals who perceive themselves to be more similar to their partners in their desires for intellectual intimacy (low ADS) tend to be more satisfied in their relationships than those that perceive themselves to be less similar to their partners (high ADS). The interaction is such that the association between perceived similarity in desires for intellectual intimacy and relationship satisfaction is stronger for individuals who desire less intimacy than their partners than for individuals who desire more intimacy than their partners. The previously described differences in simple slopes can be observed in the graph.

Self-report Items

As previously noted, the self-report items described in the methods have not been used in other research besides one previous study by the current author. These questions assessed one's level of realized intimacy and explicit perception of partner similarity of desired intimacy for each of the five types of intimacy. The IOS is a measure of closeness that has been utilized in previous research but was not directly related to the main hypotheses. Because these measures were not directly assessed in the main analyses, correlational data are reported here in order to provide some description of the ways in which these measures relate to other variables in the study. Furthermore, because the self-report items have not been used in previous literature, it may be helpful to understand the nature of the variables in this research.

Correlational analyses were conducted to assess the relationships between the IOS, self-report of similarity of emotional, social, sexual, intellectual, and recreational intimacy, self-report of realized emotional, social, sexual, intellectual, and recreational intimacy, and ADS of emotional, social, sexual, intellectual, and recreational intimacy, relationship satisfaction, and relationship commitment. Results of these analyses are presented in Table 9. As can be seen in

the table, all of the similarity self-report variables have medium positive correlations with each other. The realized intimacy self-report variables have small to medium positive correlations with each other. Each similarity of desired intimacy variables seems to have a large positive correlation with its respective realized intimacy variable (i.e. similarity of emotional intimacy with realized emotional intimacy). Most of the similarity variables have at least small positive correlations with all other realized intimacy variables. The exception to this is that similarity of intellectual intimacy is not correlated with realized social intimacy.

With respect to ADS, all similarity self-report items negatively correlated with their respective ADS. This indicates that reported similarity on the one-item measures tended to increase as perceived difference decreased for each type of intimacy. Furthermore, nearly all self-report items of realized intimacy negatively correlated with their respective ADS. ADS of emotional intimacy was not significantly correlated with realized emotional intimacy, however.

The IOS scale is positively correlated with similarity of emotional intimacy, similarity of sexual intimacy, and all types of realized intimacy. This indicated that individuals who endorse having higher levels of intimacy with their partners also tend to endorse greater closeness on the IOS scale. This scale was also negatively correlated with ADS of intellectual intimacy, indicating that participants who reported greater perceived difference in desires for intellectual intimacy endorsed less closeness. All of the included variables (IOS, all similarity items, and all realized intimacy items) have significant positive correlations with relationship satisfaction. Nearly all are positively correlated with relationship commitment, with the exception of similarity of recreational intimacy.

Additional Demographic Correlations

Additional correlational analyses were conducted on the demographic variables of age and relationship length to provide more complete knowledge of the ways in which these factors related to the relationship variables being examined. Correlations were examined between these two demographic variables and relationship satisfaction, relationship commitment, participant desires for all types of intimacy, reported realized levels of all types of intimacy, and ADS of all types of intimacy. Significant correlations are reported.

Age and relationship length had a strong positive correlation with each other ($r = .796$, $n = 190$, $p < .001$), such that participants who were older tended to also have longer relationships. Relationship length, but not age, had small, negative correlations with participant desires for emotional intimacy ($r = -.188$, $n = 181$, $p < .05$), sexual intimacy ($r = -.283$, $n = 180$, $p < .001$), and intellectual intimacy ($r = -.166$, $n = 181$, $p < .05$), such that individuals in longer relationships tended to report lower desires for these types of intimacy. Furthermore, relationship length was negatively correlated with participant desires for conventional intimacy ($r = -.199$, $n = 180$, $p < .01$), indicating that participants who had been in their relationships longer were less likely to endorse idealistic or socially desirable desires for their relationship.

Both age and relationship length had small negative correlations with realized sexual intimacy ($r = -.237$, $n = 189$, $p < .01$; $r = -.248$, $n = 186$, $p < .01$). Age was positively correlated with ADS of overall intimacy ($r = .166$, $n = 175$, $p < .05$), and relationship length was positively correlated with ADS of intellectual and recreational intimacy ($r = .200$, $n = 180$, $p < .01$; $r = .159$, $n = 177$, $p < .05$). These correlations indicate that older individuals were more likely to report greater difference in desires for overall intimacy and participants in longer relationships were more likely to have perceived differences in desires for intellectual and recreational intimacy.

Age and relationship length also had small negative correlations with relationship satisfaction ($r = -.170, 96, n = 189, p < .05$; $r = -.178, n = 182, p < .05$). Individuals who are older and in relationships longer tended to report lower levels of relationship satisfaction. Relationship commitment was not significantly correlated with either age or relationship length.

DISCUSSION

Recent literature has suggested that differing intimacy needs in couple relationships may be associated with negative outcomes for the relationship. Some research, furthermore, has indicated that similarity to one's partner across many variables, including level of intimacy and relationship ideals, is beneficial for the relationship. Same-sex relationships have been historically underrepresented in the literature, and there is an overall need for research on the construct of intimacy within same-sex relationships. The current study sought to investigate the empirically unsupported and disputed claims that differing desires for intimacy in couple relationships cause distress for the couple. It specifically explored the relationships between these variables within same-sex couple relationships.

The hypothesis that perceived similarity to one's partner in overall desired intimacy would be related to relationship satisfaction and commitment was supported. Results of the correlation analyses demonstrated that similarity between one's own overall desired intimacy (the sum of the five separate types of intimacy) and one's perceptions of her/his partner's overall desired intimacy is significantly related to both relationship satisfaction and relationship commitment. This finding suggests that individuals who perceive their partners as having similar desires for intimacy as themselves tend to be more satisfied and more committed to their relationships. Perceived similarity thus seems to be positively associated with relationship variables that most desire to be high, such as satisfaction and commitment.

The present study also hypothesized that perceived similarity in desires for each type of intimacy, as opposed to overall intimacy, would be related to relationship satisfaction and commitment. The results generally supported this hypothesis, with a few exceptions. The statistical analyses indicated that perceived partner similarity of all types of intimacy (emotional,

social, sexual, intellectual, and recreational) were positively correlated with relationship satisfaction. With regard to relationship commitment, perceived partner similarity of emotional, intellectual, and recreational intimacy were positively related to commitment. Perceived partner similarity of social intimacy and sexual intimacy were not associated with relationship commitment. The lack of significant relationships in these two cases does not support the hypothesis. It is interesting to note that while perceived partner similarity of social and sexual intimacy were positively related to relationship satisfaction, they were not related to relationship commitment. This indicates that although people who perceive themselves to be more similar to their partners in terms of desires for social and sexual intimacy tend to be more satisfied in their relationships, they do not tend to be more committed than those who do perceive more dissimilarity in desires for social and sexual intimacy.

Additionally, the current study examined the relative strength of the association of each type of intimacy and relationship satisfaction and commitment, taking into account the contributions of all five types of intimacy. Because each of the variables representing the perceived partner similarity of each of these types of intimacy are correlated with each other, it is important to assess which of the variables are uniquely related to the relationship outcome variables. Results indicated that perceived partner similarity of intellectual and recreational intimacy are most uniquely associated with relationship satisfaction, while recreational intimacy is the only variable uniquely related to relationship commitment. Thus, while similarity across all five types of intimacy seem to be related to greater satisfaction, similarity in desires for intellectual and recreational intimacy seem to be the most important in terms of their association with relationship satisfaction. Furthermore, while greater similarity across emotional, intellectual, and recreational intimacy tend to be related to greater relationship commitment,

similarity in desires for recreational intimacy seems to be the most important in the terms of its association with relationship commitment.

An important difference can be observed between the results of the present study and the results of this author's previous research, exploring the same construct in heterosexual relationships (Schultz, 2011). In the previous study, relationship commitment was correlated with perceived partner similarity of social intimacy, although this relationship was not present in the current data with same-sex couples. Furthermore, with respect to the unique associations of each type of perceived partner similarity and relationship satisfaction and commitment, the data from the previous study indicated that for heterosexual participants, perceived similarity in desires for emotional and social intimacy were most uniquely associated with relationship satisfaction. Perceived partner similarity in desires for emotional intimacy were most uniquely associated with relationship commitment. While these data sets are separate and were collected at different times, these results indicating the importance of intellectual and recreational intimacy in the current study seem vastly different than the results from the previous study, suggesting the importance of similarity in emotional and social intimacy. Further differences between these data sets, as well as potential reasons for these differences, will be explored later in this discussion.

Just as with the previous data, the current findings that perceived partner similarity in desires for intimacy is related to greater relationship satisfaction and commitment challenges the "clinical evidence" that Bagarozzi (2001) provided claiming that differences in desires for intimacy are not related to negativity in couples. It also supports the idea alluded to by Durana (1997) and suggested by some other research findings regarding ideals and the relationship between intimacy and conflict (Acitelli et al., 2001; Fletcher et al., 1999; Kurdek, 1994). In

terms of Durana's (1997) intervention, the current findings suggest that the merging of partner's desires and views of intimacy that occurred during the course of the psychoeducational intervention program may have been related to the change in relationship satisfaction that was observed after the intervention. The current results support the previously untested underlying assumption of intimacy literature that partner differences, or in this case perceived partner differences, in desired intimacy have negative implications for the relationship. They are, in fact, associated with less relationship satisfaction and commitment.

In discussing the results of this study, it is important to note that the data are correlational in nature. It can be easy to assume a direction in the relationship between perceived partner similarity in desired intimacy and relationship satisfaction and commitment. Because partner desires for intimacy presumably exist before the relationship and are independent from the relationship, it is natural to discuss this topic as if perceived partner similarity generally causes greater relationship satisfaction. Based on the results of this study, however, it is impossible to conclude that and incorrect to state that it is the case. It is also possible that the opposite direction of the relationship is true; greater relationship satisfaction may result in greater likelihood of perceiving oneself as being similar to or having similar desires as one's partner. As individuals feel more optimistic about their relationships, they may change their desires for intimacy or the way in which they view their partner's desires for intimacy, resulting in greater perceived or actual similarity. Additionally, there is potential for a third variable to be related to and cause both perceived partner similarity and relationship satisfaction and commitment.

Some possible explanations for the association between partner dissimilarity and less positive relationship variables are found in evidence from previous research. Kurdek's (1994) data showed that intimacy is a high area of conflict in romantic relationships and that it is more

salient in predicting relationship satisfaction than other areas of conflict. Acitelli et al. (2001) found similarity in partner's ideals to be negatively correlated with conflict in the relationship. The construct of relationship ideals bears some similarity to the construct of desired intimacy, or in other words, one's ideals for closeness. Greater perceived similarity in desires for intimacy may result in less conflict in the relationship, which in turn may result in more relationship satisfaction and commitment. On the other hand, a couple that has greater dissimilarity in desires for intimacy may have more conflict about their desires for or realized level of intimacy, potentially impacting relationship satisfaction and commitment. Another possible explanation comes from Fletcher et al.'s (1999) research on relationship ideals. It is possible that greater similarity between partners' desires for intimacy results in more likelihood that the relationship resembles the ideal relationship. Closer resemblance between the relationship and one's ideals is associated with relationship satisfaction (Fletcher et al., 1999).

Furthermore, greater perceived similarity in partners' desires for intimacy may be associated with greater actual similarity in intimacy desires. When one's partner has similar desires for intimacy, one's desires may be more likely to be achieved, resulting in greater realized intimacy. As previously discussed, greater intimacy is associated with greater relationship satisfaction (Eldridge & Gilbert, 1990; Kurdek, 1998; Greeff & Mahlerbe, 2001; Patrick et al., 2007). Thus, perceived partner similarity in desires for intimacy may be associated with greater relationship satisfaction and commitment because of factors such as less frequency of conflict, less frequency of intimacy related conflict, closer resemblance of the relationship to one's ideals, and greater levels of realized intimacy.

An additional goal of the present study was to explore gender differences in perceived partner similarity of desires for intimacy and the relationship between perceived partner

similarity and relationship satisfaction and commitment. In comparing genders on each of the main variables involved in the study, it was observed that female participants were more likely to endorse higher desires for recreational intimacy than male participants. Females also demonstrated differences on some of the one-item self-report measures. They tended to report that they were more similar to their partners in their desires for emotional, sexual, and recreational intimacy than male participants reported. Interestingly, despite reporting that they perceived more similarity on the one-item measures, women did not actually rate themselves as more similar to their partners than men on any type of intimacy in the PAIR. Previous literature suggested that women tend to desire more emotional and social intimacy while men tend to desire more sexual and recreational intimacy than women (e.g. Orosan & Schilling, 1992; Thompson & Walker, 1989). These trends were not supported by the current research. Other literature has suggested that women tend to report greater desires for and levels of intimacy, overall, than men do (Heller & Wood, 1989). The current findings do not support their claims, besides women reporting greater desires for recreational intimacy than men. In fact, given gender differences discussed in previous literature, it is noteworthy that there were not many differences between male and female participants for many of the variables, and it is somewhat surprising that one of the differences was that women desired more recreational intimacy than men. The findings are also in conflict with the results from the previous study conducted by this author, examining mainly heterosexual individuals, in which women reported having higher desires for overall, sexual, intellectual, and recreational intimacy than did men (Schultz, 2011).

Further analyses of gender differences in the current study assessed the relative strength of the relationships between relationship outcome variables and perceived partner similarity of desired intimacy for each type of intimacy, for males and females. The results indicated that

while perceived partner similarity in desires for intellectual intimacy was significantly uniquely related to relationship satisfaction for women, perceived partner similarity in desires for recreational intimacy is significantly associated with relationship satisfaction for men.

Furthermore, for both men and women, perceived partner similarity of recreational intimacy was the only variable uniquely related to relationship commitment. This finding is in contrast with previous literature, as well as previous research by the current author, suggesting that sexual intimacy is more important for men while emotional intimacy is more important for women (Talmadge & Dabbs, 1990; Schultz, 2011).

The results of the present study appear vastly different than the results of the previous study on heterosexual relationships. As noted, in the data assessing heterosexual relationships, results showed more gender differences in desires for intimacy and in the importance of similarity for different types of intimacy. Furthermore, the previous study highlighted the roles of perceived partner similarity in emotional, social, and sexual intimacy (Schultz, 2011). The results of the current data seem to highlight the importance of perceived partner similarity of intellectual and recreational intimacy. These differences between the data from same-sex couples and the data from heterosexual couples are surprising. They seem to be quite different in that the heterosexual couple data appears to be in line with gender stereotypes regarding emotional and sexual intimacy while the data from same-sex couples is not. The results highlighted indicate that the relationships between perceived similarity in desired intimacy and satisfaction and commitment are slightly different for heterosexual women, heterosexual men, and same-sex couples. These differences are such that same-sex couples tend to be most satisfied when they perceive themselves to have similar desires for recreational and intellectual intimacy as their partner, heterosexual women tend to be most satisfied when they perceive

greater similarity to their partners in their desires for social and emotional intimacy, and heterosexual men tend to be most satisfied when they perceive themselves to be similar to their partner in desires for sexual intimacy.

It may be that emotional and social intimacy are uniquely important constructs in terms of their association with relationship satisfaction and commitment for heterosexual females and sexual intimacy is a uniquely important construct for heterosexual males, while recreational and intellectual intimacy are uniquely important constructs for lesbian females and gay males. If this is the case, it is possible that gender is less salient for same-sex couples than heterosexual couples. Huston and Schwartz (2002) emphasized the fluidity of gender for individuals in same-sex relationships. They claimed that as compared to heterosexual couples, gay and lesbian couples may be less constrained by gender roles. Because of this, individuals in same-sex relationships may be less impacted by gendered messages about intimacy in romantic relationships. The lack of observed differences between men and women in same-sex relationships in the present study may reflect this. For example, individuals in heterosexual relationships may be more aware of stereotypes that women tend to desire more intimacy than men, thus responding to questionnaires in line with these expectations that may be less relevant for individuals in same-sex couples. Furthermore, because gender may be more salient for heterosexual couples, the types of intimacy that are surrounded by many gendered messages (i.e. emotional and sexual) may be more related to relationship satisfaction for these couples, while they may be less vital for same-sex couples.

There are additional differences between the two samples that should be taken into account when considering the different results. The present sample was older and tended to be in longer relationships than the sample from the previous study. Specifically, the mean age of

participants in the present study was 33.4 years, while the mean from the previous study was approximately 23 years. The majority of the sample from the previous study was recruited from a research pool of undergraduate students, many of whom were between the ages of 18 and 20. The mean relationship length from the present study was 5.5 years, while the mean relationship length from the previous study was 2.7 years. It may be that the different results can be explained by age and length of relationships, rather than genders of partners. Results from the present study showed that participants who were older and in longer relationships tended to report less desires for specific types of intimacy and appeared to be less idealistic in their desire for intimacy. It may be that older individuals who have been in their specific relationship longer, and likely have had more experience in romantic relationships in general, may be less impacted by gender stereotypes than individuals who are younger and have had less experience both with their partner and with romantic relationships in general. Middle-aged adults may report less stereotypical and idealistic desires for intimacy than young adults. Continued research in this area may provide greater insight with regard to the specific nature of these similarities and differences between heterosexual and same-sex relationships, relationships of younger adults and older adults, and shorter and longer relationships.

The current study also explored the role of direction of similarity/differences in desires for intimacy. Overall, it was found that individuals who desired less intimacy than their partners were more satisfied and committed than individuals who desired more intimacy than their partners. It seems that individuals who desire more intimacy in their relationships than their partners desire tend to be less positive about their relationships. The direction of the difference in desired intimacy appeared to be more important for certain types of intimacy than others. Specifically, desiring more emotional intimacy than one's partner seems to be related to being

less satisfied and committed to the relationship. Individuals who desire more intellectual intimacy than their partners tend to be less satisfied in their relationships, and individuals who desire more sexual intimacy than their partners tend to be less committed to their relationships than individuals who desire less intimacy than their partners. Additionally, the one significant interaction effect indicated that within the construct of intellectual intimacy, perceived similarity of desired intimacy did not seem to be as important for individuals who desired more intimacy than their partners. The association between relationship satisfaction and perceived similarity of desired intellectual intimacy was stronger for individuals who desired less intimacy than their partners. Relationship satisfaction for individuals who desire more intimacy than their partners may tend to be more associated with the direction, rather than the size, of the difference. Thus, individuals who desire less intimacy than their partners may tend to be much less satisfied when the discrepancy is larger, as opposed to individuals who desire more intimacy, for whom the size of the discrepancy has a smaller association with relationship satisfaction. The findings concerning direction are also in contrast to the results from the previous study of heterosexual relationships, in which no significant effects were found for direction of perceived difference in desired intimacy (Schultz, 2011). Based on the results of the current study, it seems that individuals who desire less intimacy than their partners may be more likely to get their needs met in their relationships than individuals who desire more intimacy than their partners. They may be more satisfied and committed because their needs are being met. Furthermore, for some constructs, direction may be more important for individuals who perceive themselves to be less similar to their partners rather than those who have greater perceived similarity. Further research may help to clarify the nature of the construct of direction of perceived difference.

Lastly, because perceived partner similarity is a concept that has not typically been explored, the present study explored relationships between some other variables related to the construct. Overall, the self-report measures of partner similarity and realized intimacy were correlated with each other. Perceptions of partner similarity seem to be strongly related to reports of realized intimacy for each type of intimacy, at least on one-item measures of these constructs. The questions that explicitly assessed perceived partner similarity in the one-item measures had a small correlation with ADS. This indicates that participants responded to the PAIR in line with their explicit perception of similarity or difference to their partner. The small size of the correlations, however, may indicate that the PAIR did not accurately measure this similarity or that individuals may not be fully aware of their similarity or difference from the partner. The accuracy of using the PAIR for this purpose and/or asking face-valid questions about similarity could be explored further. Results exploring the demographic variables of age and relationship length indicated that individuals who are older and in their relationships for longer tend to be less satisfied but not less committed. It was also found that individuals who have been in relationships for longer report less desires for certain types of intimacy. They may also be less idealistic about their relationship and tend to report greater difference from their partners on desires for certain types of intimacy.

Limitations

As with all research, there are some limitations to the current study. The correlational nature of the research was previously discussed. While this is a difficult limitation to avoid in certain types of relationship research, it is important to note and can be quite limiting. Because of the correlational nature of the data, directions of established significant relationships and statements about cause and effect cannot be made.

As previously indicated, the reliabilities of a few of the subscales were below conventional standards for reliability. While the scales have all been shown to have adequate reliability in previous research and they did meet suggested mean inter-item correlation criteria (Briggs & Cheek, 1986), it is important to note that this is the case. Specific subscales that were of concern in the present study were the self social, self intellectual, and self and partner recreational subscales. In examining the items comprised in these scales, some of the items appear to be somewhat specific rather than general, such as, “We enjoy the out-of-doors together.” Effort should be made to continue to explore the reliability of these subscales, and potential revisions to the PAIR may need to be considered.

The current study was specifically assessing same-sex relationships. One concern with the data collection was that a number of individuals who appeared to be heterosexual completed the survey. Future research may wish to include a specific question in which they participant answers if they consider their relationship to be same-sex or non-heterosexual. This may have prevented individuals who did not fit the direct participation criteria from completing the survey. It also would have allowed for participants to directly address if they fit criteria, rather than the researcher having to remove participants who appeared to not fit the criteria based on the gender identities of each partner. In order to conduct gender analyses within this sample, individuals who did not identify as male or female were not included in the analyses. There were not enough individuals who identified as gender queer, transgender, or anything other than “male” and “female” in order to conduct specific analyses. While these individuals were included in all other analyses, the comparisons regarding gender were not representative of individuals whose gender identities were not “male” or “female.” Furthermore, interesting differences were noted between the present study and a previous study assessing same-sex relationships. The present

study did not collect data from heterosexual individuals. Thus, no statistical analyses were conducted to compare and contrast these groups.

It is also vital to discuss the generalizability of the sample, especially given that it was not a random sample. Snowball sampling was very helpful in collecting enough data within this minority population, and thus the participants were not randomly selected. They were recruited specifically based on their identification as an individual in a same-sex relationship. Recruitment materials were sent to organizations serving LGBT communities, and these organizations and other contacts were encouraged to pass the survey link on to others who may have been eligible to complete the survey. This likely strongly influenced the type of participants that completed the study. The majority of the sample identified as White. While there were participants from other racial identities, the generalizability of the results to a different population is unknown. Furthermore, while data on socioeconomic status and education level were not collected in the current study, individuals who decided to participate may have certain characteristics that may make them different from the population as a whole. For example, the survey was completed on the Internet, which means that all participants had to have access to a computer and be well-versed in utilizing the Internet. Additionally, many of the participants reported that they found the link to the survey from a list of online research that was provided to them by their college professors. Other participants indicated that they accessed the survey from various groups and organizations that advocate for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals. Some participants received the link to the survey from a university listserv for LGBT faculty and/or students at certain universities. It seems likely that many of the participants in the survey have either studied at the college level, and some participants may even be university faculty. Many participants are likely active in the LGBT community. Thus, based on how participants found

the survey, the sample may generalize to a population of mostly White individuals in same-sex relationships that are well-educated, oriented towards working for LGBT rights, and motivated to participate in survey research, rather than to a sample of all individuals in same-sex relationships.

A further limitation of the current research is that it explored perceptions of similarity between partner's desires. This was the focus of the current study and intended to answer theoretical assumptions that were present in the literature. While this may be the most important construct in determining relationship satisfaction and commitment based on similarities in intimacy, there is no way to conclude this based on the present data. It can be easy to assume that one's perceptions of their partner's desires for intimacy correlate with their partner's actual desires for intimacy. This should not be assumed, however, as this relationship is unknown. It may be that perceived differences and actual differences are quite similar and have similar associations with relationship satisfaction and commitment, but it also may be that one or the other is more associated with satisfaction and commitment. It is important to remember that the current study did not assess actual differences in partners' desires for intimacy and that no conclusions can be drawn from the present data regarding actual differences. The results presented only highlight one's perceptions of differences in desired intimacy.

Implications for Counseling Practice

The results of the current study have important implications for counseling practice. In terms of individual and couples counseling, perceived similarity in desired intimacy should be included as an important issue related to couple relationships and problems that couples may face. Couples counselors should be aware of the role that perceptions of difference may play. It may be important within couples counseling to facilitate communication about each partner's

desire for intimacy and the ways in which the partners compromise to meet each other's needs. It is likely that couples experience conflict regarding how to negotiate differences in desires for intimacy, especially based on Kurdek's (1994) finding that intimacy is an area of high conflict that is strongly related to relationship satisfaction. It may help to make explicit the differences in partners' desires for intimacy, as they may be causing difficulty without the couple being explicitly aware of this. Discussing intimacy in this way may help give the couple the words to communicate about this. Couples counselors could utilize the PAIR (Schaefer & Olson, 1981) or one-item questions to assess each partner's desires for different types of intimacy. It may also help facilitate insight regarding one's own desires for intimacy and to guide discussion and communication about intimacy in the relationship.

At this point the role of communication in the relationship between perceived differences in desired intimacy and relationship outcome variables is unknown. If communication does help lessen the association between perceived difference in desires and satisfaction/commitment, discussing the topic in couples therapy could be beneficial for the relationship. Furthermore, communication about each partner's perceptions of their own and their partner's desires may help to clarify the accuracy of these perceptions, which may have implications for relationship satisfaction, commitment, and general couple well-being.

Furthermore, psychoeducational workshops, such as the one conducted by Durana (1997), may benefit from this knowledge of the connection between perceived similarity of desired intimacy and satisfaction and commitment. Incorporating measures of intimacy needs/desires and clarifying perceptions versus actual desires may be extremely beneficial. While the specific roles of perceptions of partner similarity and actual partner similarity in

desires for intimacy are not currently known, helping partners to clarify their perceptions of the others' desires may be helpful.

The findings with regard to gender and type of relationship (same-sex and heterosexual) may be important for individual and couples counseling as well. Facilitating discussion with individuals and couples regarding factors related to their desires for intimacy, as well as their perceptions of their partners' desires, may help them to better understand how it plays out in their relationships. Encouraging each partner to explore their beliefs and desires as they relate to their culture and personal identities may be vital to creating effective communication about intimacy in the relationship. It would seem important for counselors to allow space for conversation of similarities and differences in the ways each partner's identities are related to their desires for intimacy. It may be helpful for therapists to have knowledge of the research related to the topic while also learning from each unique individual and couple about their own experiences with desires for intimacy, relationship satisfaction, and relationship commitment.

Implications for Future Research

The results of the current study have implications for future research, many of which have been alluded to throughout this discussion. With regard to the representativeness of the sample from the present study, future research could be conducted with broader populations, including individuals who may not typically participate in Internet research. Furthermore, it may be helpful to gather data from a sample containing heterosexual men, heterosexual women, gay men, lesbian women, and transgender or gender queer individuals. It would be important to continue to examine similarities and differences among these groups, including the role that gender plays in the relationship between similarity of desired intimacy and satisfaction/commitment in couples. Future research could seek to replicate these results and the

results of the previous study, as well as to explore the nature of the differences reported in the two studies conducted by the current author. It may seek to illuminate whether these differences were between same-sex and heterosexual relationships or were due to other demographic variables, such as age or relationship length. Additional comparisons may include assessing differences in the strength of the relationship of perceived partner similarity and relationship outcome variables between different types of couples.

With specific respect to same-sex relationships, there are multiple factors that were not assessed in the current study. These include variables such as one's own sexual orientation concealment, whether one's partner's sexual identity is concealed, how public or private the relationship is, and relative levels of support from both one's own and one's partner's family and friends. Previous research has explored the roles of mental health, internalized homophobia, stigma, and sexual minority stress on same-sex relationships (Frost, 2011a; Mohr & Daly, 2008; Otis, Riggle, & Rostosky, 2006). The experiences that same-sex couples have in navigating these layers of their relationships are often not experienced by heterosexual couples. They may have important implications for intimacy, as well. For example, if an individual is not "out" to their family or friends, creating social intimacy by spending time with their partner and their group of friends may be difficult. Exploring these factors may provide even further insight into intimacy, relationship satisfaction, and commitment in same-sex relationships.

Continuing to explore the role of relationship length in the association of perceived partner similarity in desired intimacy and relationship outcome variables would be useful in future research as well. Some differences related to relationship length and perceived partner similarity were noted in the present study. These analyses could be expanded in future studies. It is possible that individuals who are in relationships longer may be more likely to report

perceived differences in theirs and their partners' desires because they are less idealistic or may know their partners more accurately. Additionally, individuals in longer relationships may have been influenced by their partners and may tend to become more similar to them over time, which would result in them reporting less perceived difference and greater similarity. Longitudinal research could be conducted to assess for the ways in which these variables are associated with relationship breakup, as well.

Future research could seek to clarify the relationship between perceived partner desires and actual partner desires for intimacy. As previously discussed, these constructs may be the same or may be different. If they are different, they may be equally related to relationship satisfaction or one may be more associated with satisfaction/commitment than the other. If this is the case, it has implications for couple's counseling and the need to clarify their perceptions versus their partner's actual desires. Additionally, it is unclear why similarity in recreational and intellectual intimacy seemed to be most uniquely related to relationship satisfaction and commitment in the present study while the other types of intimacy were not. This is especially unclear given the observed differences between the results of this study and the findings reported from the previous study. It may be important for future research to continue to explore the role and nature of each of these types of intimacy and their association with other variables. In addition, given the lower levels of scale reliability noted for some of the subscales of the PAIR in the present study, future research may wish to create newer, more reliable, and potentially more generalizable measures to assess these types of intimacy. Also, a unique finding of the current results surrounded the direction of perceived difference in desired intimacy. Further exploration of the role of direction may provide a fruitful area of continued research, especially given the conflicting results between the present and previous study by this author.

Lastly, future research may wish to explore other variables that may be involved in the relationship between perceived partner similarity in desired intimacy and relationship satisfaction/commitment. The role of any mediating or moderating factors should be examined. For example, greater perceived similarity may be associated with actual similarity or with greater realized intimacy. If this is the case, it is possible that these variables could account for the association perceived partner similarity has with relationship satisfaction and commitment. It is also possible that while greater similarity tends to be associated with greater satisfaction/commitment, there may be other factors that help couples navigate differences in their desires. Potential factors could include communication, conflict, and honesty, among others. Conducting research on factors that help couples navigate their differences in desired intimacy to ensure that both partners' needs are met may shed light on the ways in which couple's counselors or workshops can assist couples in improving their relationships.

Table 1.
Variable Means, Standard Deviations and Intercorrelations

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. ADS Overall Intimacy	6.63	7.37	1	–	–	–	–	–	–
2. ADS Emotional Intimacy	1.57	2.26	.615**	1	–	–	–	–	–
3. ADS Social Intimacy	2.65	2.40	.420**	.171*	1	–	–	–	–
4. ADS Sexual Intimacy	1.94	2.71	.591**	.296**	.108	1	–	–	–
5. ADS Intellectual Intimacy	1.91	2.11	.658**	.451**	.126	.358**	1	–	–
6. ADS Recreational Intimacy	1.72	2.09	.515**	.321**	.236**	.252**	.395**	1	–
7. Relationship Satisfaction	21.02	4.06	-.359**	-.261**	-.146**	-.206**	-.381**	-.345**	1
8. Relationship Commitment	50.55	7.34	-.241**	-.159*	-.102	-.134	-.271**	-.352**	.587**

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

Table 2.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Emotional, Social, Sexual, Intellectual, and Recreational Intimacy on Relationship Satisfaction

Variable	<i>B</i>	SE <i>B</i>	β	R^2
Constant	23.140	.495		
ADS of Emotional Intimacy	-.033	.167	-.017	
ADS of Social Intimacy	-.107	.125	-.062	
ADS of Sexual Intimacy	-.085	.118	-.056	
ADS of Intellectual Intimacy	-.491	.171	-.238**	
ADS of Recreational Intimacy	-.435	.156	-.219**	.187***

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 3.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Emotional, Social, Sexual, Intellectual, and Recreational Intimacy on Relationship Commitment

Variable	<i>B</i>	SE <i>B</i>	β	R^2
Constant	53.522	.881		
ADS of Emotional Intimacy	.134	.301	.038	
ADS of Social Intimacy	-.061	.227	-.020	
ADS of Sexual Intimacy	-.100	.211	-.037	
ADS of Intellectual Intimacy	-.477	.309	-1.545	
ADS of Recreational Intimacy	-1.133	.280	-.325***	.159***

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 4.

Means and Standard Deviations of Significant Variable Comparisons by Gender

Variable	Female (N=93)		Male (N=88)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Desired Recreational Intimacy	27.56	2.53	26.30	3.05
Self-Report Similarity of Emotional Intimacy	4.25	.905	3.85	.941
Self-Report Similarity of Sexual Intimacy	3.90	1.29	3.50	1.21
Self-Report Similarity of Recreational Intimacy	4.00	1.02	3.72	.839

Table 5.

Multiple Regression Analysis of Relationship Satisfaction on Emotional, Social, Sexual, Intellectual, and Recreational Intimacy, Split by Gender

Gender	Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>R</i> ²
Male (N=80)	Constant	22.74	.670		
	ADS of Emotional Intimacy	.208	.245	.101	
	ADS of Social Intimacy	-.087	.159	-.059	
	ADS of Sexual Intimacy	-.028	.144	-.025	
	ADS of Intellectual Intimacy	-.373	.213	-.203 ^a	
	ADS of Recreational Intimacy	-.613	.205	-.333**	.198**
Female (N=84)	Constant	23.32	.789		
	ADS of Emotional Intimacy	-.028	.250	-.015	
	ADS of Social Intimacy	-.091	.197	-.049	
	ADS of Sexual Intimacy	-.085	.214	-.043	
	ADS of Intellectual Intimacy	-.830	.301	-.370**	
	ADS of Recreational Intimacy	-.270	.244	-.132	.247***

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

^a Result nears but does not reach significance ($.05 < p < .10$)

Table 6.

Multiple Regression Analysis of Relationship Commitment on Emotional, Social, Sexual, Intellectual, and Recreational Intimacy, Split by Gender

Gender	Variable	<i>B</i>	SE <i>B</i>	β	R^2
Male (N=80)	Constant	54.71	1.49		
	ADS of Emotional Intimacy	.002	.543	.000	
	ADS of Social Intimacy	-.038	.353	-.012	
	ADS of Sexual Intimacy	-.319	.318	-.130	
	ADS of Intellectual Intimacy	-.490	.472	-.121	
	ADS of Recreational Intimacy	-1.257	.454	-.311**	.183**
Female (N=83)	Constant	52.75	1.26		
	ADS of Emotional Intimacy	.083	.408	.029	
	ADS of Social Intimacy	-.072	.324	-.025	
	ADS of Sexual Intimacy	.292	.346	.099	
	ADS of Intellectual Intimacy	-.695	.496	-.205	
	ADS of Recreational Intimacy	-.797	.394	-.260*	.145*

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 7.

Means and Standard Deviations of Significant Variable Comparisons by Direction

Dependent Variable	Type of Intimacy	Desire Less Intimacy than Partner			Desire More Intimacy than Partner		
		Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N
Relationship Satisfaction	Emotional	21.90	3.05	49	19.33	4.60	52
	Intellectual	21.37	3.78	60	19.80	4.40	79
Relationship Commitment	Emotional	51.96	6.10	49	47.73	8.38	52
	Sexual	52.19	7.42	48	48.97	7.38	68

Table 8.

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis of Relationship Satisfaction on the ADS of Intellectual Intimacy and the Direction of Difference in Intellectual Intimacy

Model	Variable	B	SE B	β	R^2
1	Constant	21.36	.512		
	ADS Intellectual Intimacy (Centered)	-.629	.168	-.312***	
	Direction of Difference in Intellectual Intimacy	-.845	.706	-.100	.124***
2	Constant	21.35	.505		
	ADS Intellectual Intimacy (Centered)	-1.51	.451	-.748**	
	Direction of Difference in Intellectual Intimacy	-.996	.701	-.118	
	ADS Intellectual Intimacy (Centered) X Direction of Difference in Intellectual Intimacy	1.019	.485	.472*	.152***

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 9.

Correlations between Self-Report of Similarity of Desired Intimacy, Self-Report of Realized Intimacy, and ADS of Intimacy Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. IOS	1	–	–	–	–	–
2.Sim.Emotional Int.	.280**	1	–	–	–	–
3.Sim.Social Int.	.106	.301**	1	–	–	–
4.Sim. Sexual Int.	.226**	.441**	.314**	1	–	–
5.Sim. Intellectual Int.	.094	.492**	.220**	.320**	1	–
6.Sim. Recreational Int	.108	.421**	.306**	.273**	.300**	1
7.Real. Emotional Int.	.399**	.592**	.206**	.338**	.407**	.274**
8.Real. Social Int.	.205**	.229**	.593**	.225**	.104	.241**
9.Real. Sexual Int.	.199**	.417**	.144*	.712**	.256**	.212**
10.Real. Intellectual Int.	.242**	.396**	.209**	.282**	.726**	.296**
11.Real. Recreational Int.	.181*	.228**	.222**	.243**	.205**	.612**
12. ADS of Emotional Int.	-.060	-.172*	-.162*	-.187**	-.185*	-.086
13. ADS of Social Int.	-.069	-.053	-.294**	.010	-.044	-.089
14. ADS of Sexual Int.	-.100	-.274**	-.118	-.213**	-.391**	-.127
15. ADS of Intellectual Int.	-.211**	-.281**	-.131	-.326**	-.279**	-.218**
16. ADS of Recreational Int.	-.092	-.146**	-.208**	-.191**	-.264**	-.188**
17. Relationship Satisfaction	.469**	.560**	.250**	.470**	.439**	.356**
18. Relationship Commitment	.476**	.324**	.153*	.213**	.276**	.100

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

Int. =Intimacy; Sim.=Similarity; Real.=Realized

Table 9 (Continued).

Correlations between Self-Report of Similarity of Desired Intimacy, Self-Report of Realized Intimacy, and ADS of Intimacy Variables

	7	8	9	10	11
1. IOS	–	–	–	–	–
2.Sim.Emotional Int.	–	–	–	–	–
3.Sim.Social Int.	–	–	–	–	–
4.Sim. Sexual Int.	–	–	–	–	–
5.Sim. Intellectual Int.	–	–	–	–	–
6.Sim. Recreational Int	–	–	–	–	–
7.Real. Emotional Int.	1	–	–	–	–
8.Real. Social Int.	.269**	1	–	–	–
9.Real. Sexual Int.	.373**	.261**	1	–	–
10.Real. Intellectual Int.	.432**	.195**	.290**	1	–
11.Real. Recreational Int.	.335**	.360**	.315**	.348**	1
12. ADS of Emotional Int.	-.135	-.052	-.051	-.180*	-.026
13. ADS of Social Int.	-.130	-.288**	-.046	-.175*	-.195**
14. ADS of Sexual Int.	-.170*	-.056	-.280**	-.220**	-.050
15. ADS of Intellectual Int.	-.301**	-.087	-.243**	-.343*	-.181*
16. ADS of Recreational Int.	-.223**	-.210**	-.177*	-.220**	-.328*
17. Relationship Satisfaction	.655**	.315**	.566**	.538**	.434**
18. Relationship Commitment	.520**	.172*	.257**	.392**	.173*

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

Int. =Intimacy; Sim.=Similarity; Real.=Realized

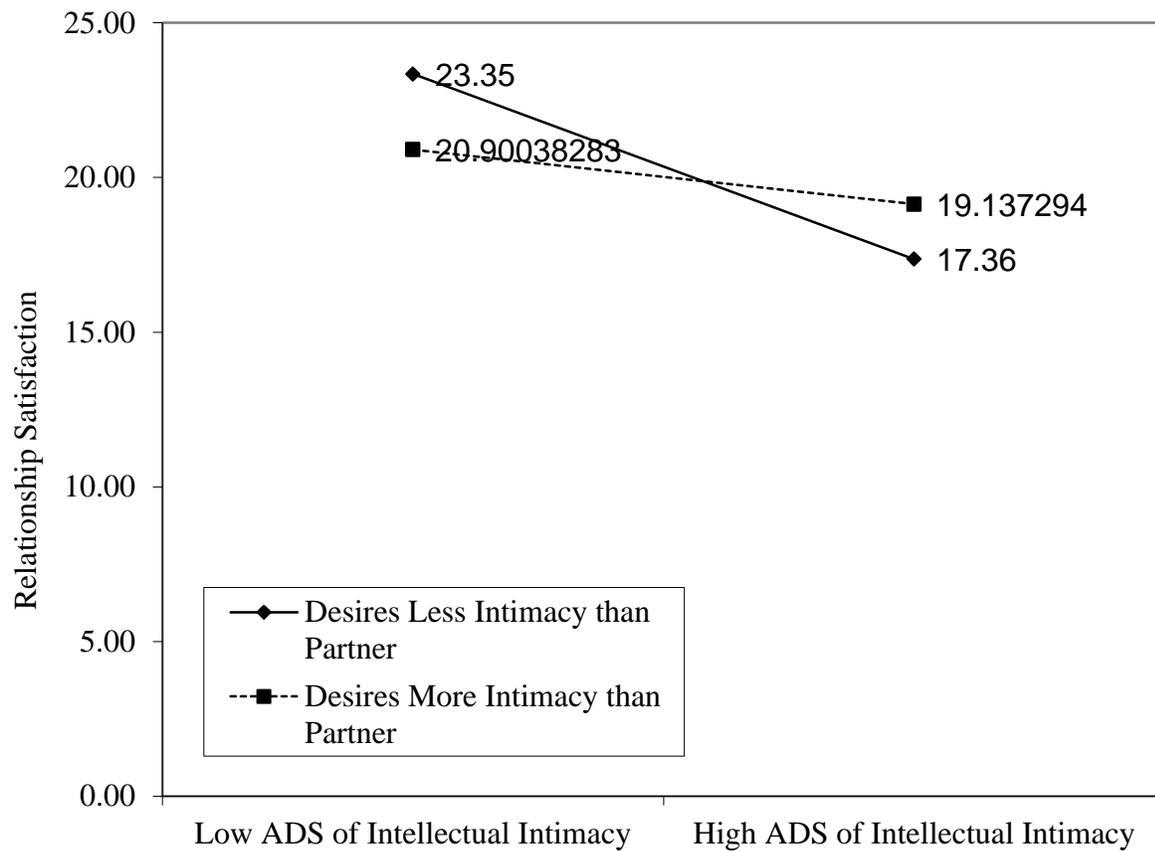


Figure 1. Group means representing the interaction between ADS of intellectual intimacy and direction of difference of desired intellectual intimacy. Regression conducted with ADS of Intellectual Intimacy centered.

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Appendix A

Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships

Imagine your relationship with your partner **as you would like** it to be. Please answer the following questions as if your relationship were exactly **HOW YOU WOULD LIKE** it to be.

(The second time the measure is given:)

Think about how your partner would like his or her relationship with you to be. Please answer the following questions **AS IF YOU WERE YOUR PARTNER**, answering with regard to **HOW YOUR PARTNER WOULD LIKE** his or her relationship with you to be.

1	2	3	4	5
Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Agree

1. My partner listens to me when I need someone to talk to.	1	2	3	4	5
2. We enjoy spending time together with other couples.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am satisfied with our sex life.	1	2	3	4	5
4. My partner helps me clarify my thoughts.	1	2	3	4	5
5. We enjoy the same recreational activities.	1	2	3	4	5
6. My partner has all the qualities I've ever wanted in a mate.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I can state my feelings without him/her getting defensive.	1	2	3	4	5
8. We usually "keep to ourselves."	1	2	3	4	5
9. I feel our sexual activity is just routine.	1	2	3	4	5
10. When it comes to having a serious discussion it seems that we have little in common.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I share in very few of my partner's interests.	1	2	3	4	5
12. There are times when I do not feel a great deal of love and affection for my partner.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I often feel distant from my partner.	1	2	3	4	5
14. We have very few friends in common.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I am able to tell my partner when I want sexual intercourse.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I feel "put down" in serious conversation with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5
17. We like playing together.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Every new thing that I have learned about my partner has pleased me.	1	2	3	4	5

19. My partner can really understand my hurts and joys.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Having time together with friends is an important part of our shared activities.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I “hold back” my sexual interest because my partner makes me feel uncomfortable.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I feel it is useless to discuss some things with my partner.	1	2	3	4	5
23. We enjoy the out-of-doors together.	1	2	3	4	5
24. My partner and I understand each other completely.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I feel neglected at times by my partner.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Many of my partner’s closest friends are also my closest friends.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Sexual expression is an essential part of our relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
28. My partner frequently tries to change my ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
29. We seldom find time to do fun things together.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I don’t think anyone could possibly be happier than my partner and I when we are with one another.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I sometimes feel lonely with we’re together.	1	2	3	4	5
32. My partner disapproves of some of my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
33. My partner seems disinterested in sex.	1	2	3	4	5
34. We have an endless number of things to talk about.	1	2	3	4	5
35. I think that we share some of the same interests.	1	2	3	4	5
36. I have some needs that are not being met by my relationship.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix B

Self-Report of Perceived Partner Similarity

Emotional intimacy is an experience of closeness of feelings.

How similar is your partner's desire for emotional intimacy to your desire for emotional intimacy in your relationship?

Not at all similar 1 2 3 4 5 Completely similar

Social intimacy is the experience of having common friends and similarities in social networks.

How similar is your partner's desire for social intimacy to your desire for social intimacy in your relationship?

Not at all similar 1 2 3 4 5 Completely similar

Intellectual intimacy is the experience of sharing ideas.

How similar is your partner's desire for intellectual intimacy to your desire for intellectual intimacy in your relationship?

Not at all similar 1 2 3 4 5 Completely similar

Sexual intimacy is the experience of sharing general affection and/or sexual activity.

How similar is your partner's desire for sexual intimacy to your desire for sexual intimacy in your relationship?

Not at all similar 1 2 3 4 5 Completely similar

Recreational intimacy is the experience of interests in hobbies and mutual participation in activities such as sporting events.

How similar is your partner's desire for recreational intimacy to your desire for recreational intimacy in your relationship?

Not at all similar 1 2 3 4 5 Completely similar

Appendix C

Self-Report of Realized Intimacy

Emotional intimacy is an experience of closeness of feelings. How similar emotionally intimate are you with your partner?

Not at all intimate 1 2 3 4 5 Completely intimate

Social intimacy is the experience of having common friends and similarities in social networks. How socially intimate are you with your partner?

Not at all intimate 1 2 3 4 5 Completely intimate

Intellectual intimacy is the experience of sharing ideas. How intellectually intimate are you with your partner?

Not at all intimate 1 2 3 4 5 Completely intimate

Sexual intimacy is the experience of sharing general affection and/or sexual activity. How sexually intimate are you with your partner?

Not at all intimate 1 2 3 4 5 Completely intimate

Recreational intimacy is the experience of interests in hobbies and mutual participation in recreational activities. How recreationally intimate are you with your partner?

Not at all intimate 1 2 3 4 5 Completely intimate

Appendix D

Relationship Satisfaction

1. I feel satisfied with our relationship.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Do not agree at all Agree somewhat Agree completely

2. My relationship is much better than others' relationships.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Do not agree at all Agree somewhat Agree completely

3. My relationship is close to ideal.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Do not agree at all Agree somewhat Agree completely

4. Our relationship makes me very happy.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Do not agree at all Agree somewhat Agree completely

5. Our relationship does a good job of fulfilling my needs for intimacy, companionship, etc.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Do not agree at all Agree somewhat Agree completely

Appendix E

Commitment Level

1. I want our relationship to last for a very long time.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Do not agree at all Agree somewhat Agree completely

2. I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Do not agree at all Agree somewhat Agree completely

3. I would not feel very upset if our relationship were to end in the near future

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Do not agree at all Agree somewhat Agree completely

4. It is likely that I will date someone other than my partner within the next year.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Do not agree at all Agree somewhat Agree completely

5. I feel very attached to our relationship—very strongly linked to my partner.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Do not agree at all Agree somewhat Agree completely

6. I want our relationship to last forever.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Do not agree at all Agree somewhat Agree completely

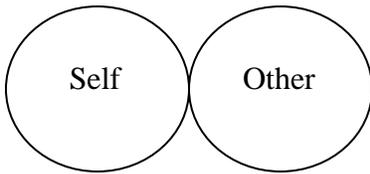
7. I am oriented toward the long-term future of my relationship (for example, I imagine being with my partner several years from now).

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
Do not agree at all Agree somewhat Agree completely

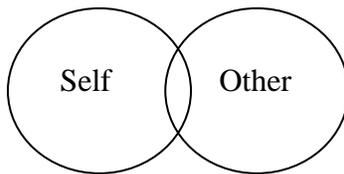
Appendix F

Inclusion of Other in the Self

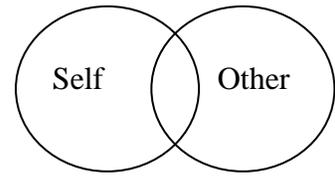
Look at the pictures below. Please indicate which picture best describes your relationship with your partner.



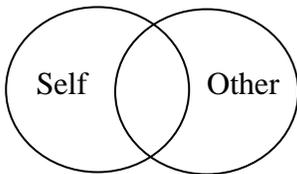
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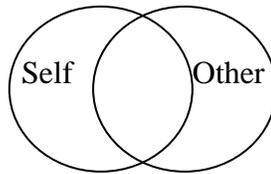
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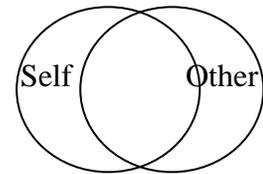
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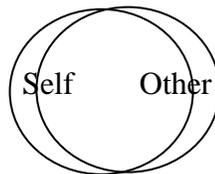
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5



6



7

Appendix G

Demographics Questionnaire

1. Have you completed this survey before? Yes No
2. Has your partner completed this survey before? Yes No
3. What country do you live in?
4. If you live in the United States, what state do you live in?
5. Please indicate your age, in years. _____
6. Please indicate your partner's age, in years. _____
7. Please indicate your gender: Male Transgender – Male to Female Other
Female Transgender – Female to Male
If you selected 'other' for the previous question, please indicate your gender identification here:

8. Please indicate your partner's gender: Male Transgender – Male to Female Other
Female Transgender – Female to Male
If you selected 'other' for the previous question, please indicate your partner's gender identification here:

9. Please indicate your race/ethnic background (Select all that apply):
Black, non-Hispanic Asian or Pacific Islander White, non-Hispanic Hispanic
American Indian or Alaskan Native Other

If you selected 'other' for the previous question, please indicate your racial/ethnic background here: _____
10. Please indicate your partner's race/ethnic background (Select all that apply):
Black, non-Hispanic Asian or Pacific Islander White, non-Hispanic Hispanic
American Indian or Alaskan Native Other

If you selected 'other' for the previous question, please indicate your partner's racial/ethnic background here: _____

11. What is your sexual orientation? Lesbian Gay Bisexual Heterosexual Other
If you selected 'other' for the previous question, please indicate your sexual identity here:

12. What is your partner's sexual orientation? Lesbian Gay Bisexual Heterosexual Other
If you selected 'other' for the previous question, please indicate your partner's sexual identity here:

13. Please indicate your relationship status:

Friends	Casually dating	Seriously dating, not co-habiting
Seriously dating, Co-habiting	Married/Committed, Co-habiting	
Married/Committed, not co-habiting	Other	

If you selected 'other' for the previous question, please indicate your relationship status here: _____

14. How long have you been in your relationship? Please indicate whether you give your answer in months or years. _____

15. Are you currently sexually active with your partner? Yes No